Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR REGIONAL AND COUNTRY OFFICES

Second edition

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMIS	Agricultural Market Information System
CCA	Common Country Analyses
CDP	Committee for Development Policy
CO	Country Office
CSO	civil society organization
DAD-IS	Domestic Animal Diversity Information System
DIEM	Data in Emergencies
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAM	Food and Agriculture Microdata
FPMA	Food Price Monitoring and Analysis
FRA	Global Forest Resources Assessment
GAEZ	Global Agro-Ecological Zones
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture
GIFT	Global Individual Food consumption data Tool
GLRD	Gender and Land Rights Database
GSDR	Global Sustainable Development Report
HiH	Hand-in-Hand
HLPF	high-level political forum on sustainable development
ICSU	International Council for Science
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INFOODS	International Network of Food Data Systems
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISDG	Integrated Sustainable Development Goals
ISSC	Inter Sectoral Steering Committee
LNOB	leave no one behind
NSDS	National Strategies for the Development of Statistics
ODP	Open Data Platforms
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGRFA	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RF4SD	Regional Fora for Sustainable Development
RuLIS	Rural Livelihoods Information System
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Small Area Estimation
SNCC	Special National Coordination Committee
SSC	South–South Cooperation
TrC	Triangular Cooperation
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNCT	United Nations Country Team

ABBREVIATIONS

UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Carribbean
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WaPOR	Water Productivity Open-access portal
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIEWS	World Information and Early Warning System

INTRODUCTION

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In previous years, FAO has been engaged, to varying degrees, in high-level political fora on sustainable development, Regional Fora for Sustainable Development and the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews. With only a few years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), FAO must scale up its contribution to the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review processes through a more dedicated engagement with national and regional partners, key groups and donors.

The present **Guidance note for** FAO Regional and Country Offices is part of a more comprehensive **2030 Agenda follow-up and review toolkit**, which aims to support the process of repositioning FAO as a **vital** member of the UN family, supporting its Member Nations in the process of transforming agrifood systems as an SDG accelerator to ensure better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life for all, leaving no one behind. It aims to provide a framework to support national authorities and other partners with VNR preparation.

CHAPTER 1

2030 AGENDA FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW

2030 AGENDA FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW PROCESS

Effective and systematic follow-up and review is an integral and essential part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Reviews take place at national, regional and global levels.

The global level of follow-up and review is operationalized through the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), the central UN platform on sustainable development. HLPF convenes all UN Member States, the United Nations system and other international and national organizations to review progress through the lens of a specific theme, including an in-depth review of a subset of goals. The means of implementation are under review each year. The HLPF meets annually in July under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years under the auspices of the UN General Assembly (SDG Summit).

Drawing on national reviews, follow-up and review processes at the regional level emphasize peer-to-peer learning and the exchange of good practices, providing an opportunity to discuss challenges and opportunities in the regional context. Outcomes of the regional-level review contribute to shaping the process at the global level.

Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are prepared by Member Nations, presented during the HLPF and published in the **global VNR database**. National reviews (UN, 2015) should be voluntary and country-led; they need to be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent; to be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind; and to be rigorous and based on evidence,

informed by country-led evaluations and data. They must maintain a longer-term orientation, identify achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors, and support countries in making informed policy choices.

The follow-up and review process, and the VNRs specifically, serve to:
- track progress in implementing the universal Goals and targets, including the means of implementation, in all countries;
- promote accountability to citizens;
- support effective international cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda;
- foster exchanges of best practices and mutual learning;
- mobilize support to overcome shared challenges; and
- identify new and emerging issues.

VNRs are presented at the HLPF, where they serve as a platform for:
- peer-to-peer learning;
- catalysing multistakeholder partnerships;
- promoting commitment to enhanced monitoring, accountability and reporting;
- strengthening policy integration and coherence;
- mobilizing various national and international resources; and
- raising awareness of the countries' priorities and advocating for change and transformation.

BOX 1:
VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS (VLRS)

Paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda calls on major groups and other stakeholders, including local authorities, to report on their contribution to implementation.

Voluntary local reviews (VLRs), also known as local government reviews of SDG implementation, are becoming more and more popular among local and regional governments. Even though the VLRs do not have any official standing, the process of carrying out these sub-national reviews benefits both the participating organizations and the overall SDG implementation. Additionally, by complementing and contributing to the national Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of SDG implementation, these VLRs can strengthen vertical coherence.

The follow up and review architecture at the national, regional, and global levels is shown in *Figure 1*.
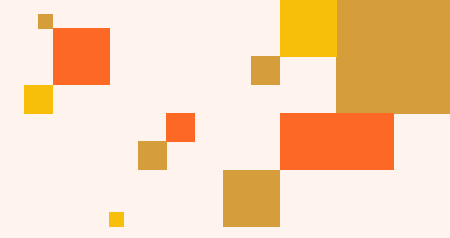
FIGURE 1:
FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW ARCHITECTURE

2030 AGENDA FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW ARCHITECTURE

	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST FORWARD
COUNTRY-LEVEL ACTIVITIES	Initial preparation and organization		VNR preparation (assessment, analysis, drafting, revisions, editing)						VNR submission — Main messages / VNR report / Audiovisuals			Post-VNR presentation follow-up activities
						Stakeholder engagement						
REGIONAL-LEVEL ACTIVITIES		Regional (and subregional) VNR workshops and clinics				Regional Fora for Sustainable Development (one per each region)						
GLOBAL-LEVEL ACTIVITIES			Global (DESA) VNR preparation workshop I		Global (DESA) VNR preparation workshop II						Global (DESA) VNR preparation workshop III / High-level political forum	

*Please note that these dates are subject to change and may vary from year to year

PREPARATION OF THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

Each year, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) prepares an updated **Handbook for the preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews** with the deadlines relevant for that year's submission of key documents, as well as adding new country examples and encouraging advanced planning for effective VNRs.

The review typically involves several major phases, some of which coincide. These include initial preparation and planning, data collection and analysis, drafting main messages and the VNR report, finalizing the report and presentation at the HLPF, and post-VNR actions. Stakeholder engagement and communication should be integrated in all phases of the process.

BOX 2:
VNR'S STRUCTURE

As per **UN Secretary-General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines**, VNRs normally include the following components.

1. Opening statement
2. Highlights
3. Introduction
4. Methodology and process for the preparation of the review
5. Policy and enabling environment
    a. Creating ownership of SDGs and the VNRs
    b. Incorporation of the SDGs in national frameworks
    c. Integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions
    d. LNOB
    e. Institutional mechanisms
    f. Systemic issues and transformative actions
6. Progress on Goals and targets and evaluation of policies and measures taken so far
7. New and emerging challenges
8. Means of implementation
9. Conclusions and next steps
10. Annexes

VNR LESSONS LEARNED AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

VNRs are regularly analysed by various UN and non-UN entities, organizations and institutions. According to a 2023 report from the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP), while VNRs are instrumental to peer learning, they *"remain largely descriptive, lack analytical foundations in identifying problems, are weak in policy assessments and do not focus on lessons learned. They are systematically under-reporting on the most transformative aspects of the agenda, including the means of implementation, inequality, environmental sustainability and structural constraints"* (CDP, 2023).

CDP advocates for a new approach to VNRs to enhance the quality of the report and the process. To serve as a tool to rescue the SDGs, 2nd generation VNRs need to conduct a more thorough analysis of policy successes and failures and identify significant challenges and actions to drive transformative and long-term change, including the means of implementation. Additionally, peer review, learning and feedback mechanisms and stakeholder participation should all be strengthened during VNR processes.

VNR reports should:
- Focus and reflect on lessons learned from SDG implementation, analysing the progress made and the drivers behind the change.
- Provide analytical solid content that looks at the integrated nature of sustainable development, has a human-right approach and considers planetary boundaries.
- Include information on budgets to facilitate the assessment of policy efficacy and promote accountability.
- Identify key challenges, including structural obstacles to progress, such as long-standing policies and norms that vested interests may resist.
- Evaluate key transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda, including the means of implementation.

To this end, VNR processes need to:
- Be open, participatory and transparent, creating space for civil society's inputs and views.
- Build on previous reports.
- Implement a national learning process that incorporates feedback loops.
- Rely on support from the UN system for capacity development and technical assistance.
- Include civil society shadow reports in global and regional review processes.

All points above provide a significant scope of work and open entry points for FAO to provide high-quality support to Members.

CHAPTER 2
FAO AND THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION AS SDG ACCELERATORS

A more integrated approach is needed to address multiple Goals simultaneously and speed up progress toward achieving the 2030 Agenda. Agrifood systems transformation offers a unique chance to realize the global Goals in an integrated manner. The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) emphasized that managing the complex linkages between the various Goals in a systemic manner would harness the transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda and identified the transformation of agrifood systems and nutrition patterns as one of the entry points for transformation towards sustainable development.

Achieving the 2030 Agenda's vision for sustainable development requires scaled-up investments, programmes, policies and partnerships to foster national transformation. Investment in sustainable agriculture, agrifood systems and rural peoples are proven accelerators of sustainable development that help countries realize multiple SDGs: ending extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition; promoting sustainable management of natural resources, including biodiversity, fisheries, forests, land, soils, water and oceans; and mitigating while also adapting and building resilience to climate change. Policies and programmes improving the livelihoods and resilience of smallholder farmers, foresters, fishers, pastoralists and labourers, with a particular focus on rural women, indigenous peoples and youth, can make or break the achievement of the SDGs in most countries.

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that we can no longer look at food, livelihoods and managing natural resources separately. Transforming agrifood systems, shifting to more sustainable and diversified consumption and production patterns, improving governance and securing the political will to act are part of the changes needed to ensure the 2030 Agenda's ambition of nourishing more people while nurturing the planet becomes a reality.

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WHY SHOULD FAO SUPPORT VNR PREPARATION?

The key priority for FAO in the process of supporting its national partners with their VNRs is to maximize the quality of the review process by:

- Supporting evidence- and science-based review and subsequent policy-making concerning future policies, actions and investments that promote integrated assessment and analysis.
- Enhancing the transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda and the implementation efforts, focusing on agrifood systems.
- Ensuring the means of implementation targets (i.e. women's access to land) are included in the scope of the review.
- Promoting an integrated assessment, analysis and discussion of agrifood systems transformation.
- Encouraging discussion on the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic challenges and solutions.
- Facilitate the participation of different partners and stakeholders and increase their awareness of the role of agrifood systems for broader sustainable development transformations.
- Identifying accelerators to speed up transformative processes.
- Supporting the capacity development of national partners to undertake robust, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review.
- Building long-term partnerships during the VNR process to promote further transformative change on the ground.

For FAO, engagement in the VNR process is an opportunity to reposition itself with its Member Nations and within the UN system to support the best transformative changes leading to achieving the four Betters and the SDGs.
The process of VNR preparation presents many opportunities for FAO engagement, including:
- process-related aspects (during the initial preparation and organization of the process);
- content-related aspects (what the VNR document reflects);
- stakeholder engagement; and
- post-VNR action.

The sections below provide detailed information regarding FAO engagement opportunities and support Member Nations may need.

FAO SUPPORT AT COUNTRY LEVEL FOR VNR PREPARATION

Engagement opportunities may vary based on the country's context and the approaches taken by the Member Nations. FAO Country Offices (FAO COs) are best placed to identify activities that align with the country context and needs of the national partners.

INITIAL PREPARATION AND ORGANIZATION

After a Member Nation communicates to the President of ECOSOC its commitment to prepare and submit the VNR, they will typically undertake the following:

- Designate a national coordination entity and establish a national VNR team (can be the same as the VNR drafting team);
- Develop a work plan;
- Consider the scope of review and agree on the methodology exercise;
- Organize data collection process;
- Develop a stakeholder engagement plan, making targeted efforts to reach marginalized groups; and
- Establish awareness-raising and public outreach component.

To align with these activities of the national authorities, FAO should:

1. Designate a FAO VNR focal point;
2. Contact the national coordination entity and/or national VNR team through RC/UNCT to identify the national work plan and timeline;
3. Identify key FAO stakeholders (groups and networks) who should be consulted;
4. Identify resources available in FAO offices and inform respective Regional Office and Headquarters (i.e., Office of Sustainable Development Goals, Office of Chief Statistician) of the resources needed for the process;
5. Prepare a list of available resources on the progress towards the SDGs and the overall state of agrifood systems transformation;
6. Develop a communications strategy and awareness-raining component; and
7. Define the scope of peer-to-peer learning needed.

These action points for FAO COs are described below in greater detail.

1. Designate an FAO focal point to lead the process.

The FAO Country Office (CO) will need to appoint a focal point or a team to lead and support the VNR preparation process. The focal point can be technical (i.e. to submit inputs and share documents) or substantive, with responsibilities to liaise with national partners or participate in respective United Nations Country Team (UNCT) meetings. The country context and availability of resources and capacities in the FAO CO determine the best solution. An FAO data focal point (statistician) should be involved in this process.

2. Contact the national coordination entity and/or VNR team through RCO/ UNCT to identify the national work plan and timeline.

It is recommended that the FAO Representative or the FAO VNR focal point requests that the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), through the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), share the government's roadmap/work plan for the VNR preparation. The government's roadmap facilitates an FAO CO to develop its own work plan, collecting and providing requested inputs and comments on schedule. The FAO CO can also contact its national partners to request information and better understand their role in VNR preparations.

3. Identify key FAO stakeholders (groups and networks) to be involved in the preparation process.

The keys to success are ensuring that FAO target groups and constituents are aware of the VNR preparation process, are willing to participate and contribute to it, and are committed to joining the follow-up actions to ensure the continuity of the process. FAO needs to be aware of the stakeholder engagement plan of the national authorities and, if the latter does not exist or is not publicly circulated, have their own stakeholder engagement plan and support national authorities with developing their own.

The process of stakeholder identification may include the need to undertake (a) a mapping of stakeholders involved in SDG implementation and to assess their mandates, expertise, resources, opinions and interests and (b) an analysis of the potential overlapping, diverging or conflicting interests, mandates and values to build inclusive participation, coordination and cooperation among them.

Below is a sample list of questions to ask to identify key actors and partners relevant to the VNR preparation process. The questions list should be tailored to the specific context of the country. Additional information may be collected based on the country's context and the set-up suggested by the national authorities.

BOX 3:
IDENTIFYING KEY ACTORS AND PARTNERS

- Who are the stakeholders involved in the different aspects and dimensions of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs within the area of agrifood systems?
- What is the mandate/mission of this organization in relation to the 2030 Agenda and the agrifood systems? What is its main area of operation? Its main target groups?
- What is its actual involvement with the 2030 Agenda implementation, follow-up and review through the lens of the agrifood systems?
  - What are the past, ongoing and planned activities in this field?
  - Does it collect data on SDG indicators?
  - Does it provide its own assessment or analysis of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?
- How active is (or can be) its role in promoting and catalysing agrifood systems transformation for sustainable development and in follow-up actions after the VNR?

4. Identify resources available at FAO COs and inform respective Regional Offices and headquarters of the resources needed.

VNR preparation requires significant human, intellectual, financial and other resources from the national partners. FAO can assist its Member Nations in several ways, such as contributing to data collection and analysis; bearing travel costs of national partners to capacity building activities – including at the national level; supporting the organization of national- and/or local-level consultations with stakeholders, including by providing premises for the consultations; taking part in the drafting of the main messages; and VNR report, among others.

When there are needs for resources that FAO Country Offices cannot support their national partners with, FAO Representatives are encouraged to contact FAO Regional Offices and centralized offices.

Below is a short checklist to help FAO Country Offices plan their support for VNR preparation:

BOX 4:
IDENTIFYING THE RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THE VNR PREPARATION PROCESS

- What are national partners' needs for the VNR preparation? What are the gaps?
- Are the national- and local-level consultations and meetings with stakeholders planned? Can FAO provide support to those that have been already announced? Can FAO CO experts contribute their expertise and knowledge to these meetings and workshops? Can FAO CO facilitate the participation of its counterparts in these meetings and consultations?
- How can FAO support the drafting, editing, translation, and production of the Main Messages and the VNR report?
- Is the UNCT actively involved in proving support? Will co-financing some of the VNR activities with the UNCT multiply the impact of UN support?

5. Prepare a list of available resources on progress towards the SDGs and the overall state of agrifood systems transformation.

VNRs provide a snapshot of the progress made by countries on reaching the SDGs. It is necessary that they have a solid evidence base and that all available and reliable data are utilized. The United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) has developed a **Practical guide** to help countries produce evidence-based VNRs.

As custodian agency of 21 SDG indicators and contributors to other 5, FAO has a wealth of resources to support VNR preparation. These may include SDG databases, reports, country profiles and factsheets, policy briefs and other knowledge products on agrifood systems.

BOX 5:
PULLING TOGETHER ALL AVAILABLE DATA

- ☑ Check the availability of SDG data on the **UN global database**, updated quarterly
- ☑ Review previous VNRs to assess the data quality used.
- ☑ Make use of **FAO statistical progress assessment** report tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators.
- ☑ Check national SDG dashboard/tracker to identify available SDG data, including national focal points and the metadata for any complementary national indicators.
- ☑ Analyse national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS).
- ☑ Check **FAO Statistical Capacity Assessment** 2019 exercise to compare stated plans with the actual status of SDG reporting and whether planned activities (census, surveys) were conducted.
- ☑ Review national SDG indicator frameworks to understand how the country prioritizes targets and indicators.
- ☑ Review countries **national pathways**, outlining specific actions to be undertaken for agrifood systems transformation at country level.
- ☑ Locate non-traditional data sources.
- ☑ Review **Common Country Analyses** (CCAs).

BOX 6:
NON TRADITIONAL DATA SOURCES

- citizen science for SDG monitoring;
- real-time data collection for crime capture and prevention;
- use of social media for SDG monitoring;
- integrated database of the bottom 40% of the population – for poverty alleviation acceleration;
- data from international non-governmental organisations;
- data from civil society organizations, academia and other stakeholders;
- private sector data (statistics in company sustainability reports); and
- big data – large-scale process-collected data from different sources (i.e. social media platforms, cell phone data), satellite or sensor collected data (i.e. geospatial data, earth observation data, smart-meter data)

6. Prepare a communications campaign on the importance of the VNR process and the role of FAO.

FAO Country Offices (COs) are encouraged to have a set of key messages that can either be used in the FAO-led communications campaign or be incorporated into UNCT, government or civil society-led communication campaigns about the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review processes, as well as the role of agrifood systems transformation in accelerating the achievement of SDGs.

The main objectives of the communication campaign are to:
- Raise the awareness of FAO stakeholders and the general public of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the follow-up and review process.
- Inform FAO stakeholders and the general public of the importance of agrifood systems transformation in accelerating the achievement of multiple SDGs.
- Share FAO recommendations and latest publications about the role of agrifood systems transformation in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Communicate the role played by FAO in supporting the government and other partners in carrying out VNR preparation.
- Raise awareness about the need for a participatory preparation process.

BOX 7:
PREPARING AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

- What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs?
- What is a Voluntary National Review? Why should the VNR preparation process be participatory?
- What is the role of FAO in supporting VNR preparation?
- How can agrifood systems transformation be used as a lever to accelerate the achievement of multiple SDGs?
- What are the latest data, recommendations and analysis concerning agrifood systems transformation based on FAO flagship or regional and country publications?

To develop a communications campaign (or support its development for the FAO CO) it is important to define the following:

- target audience(s): urban or rural population, level of education, level of digital literacy and digital residency;
- most accessible communication channels available to reach the target audience(s): television, radio, messages (SMS), the type of social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn); and
- duration of the communication campaign and frequency of the communication.

Identifying famous personalities or trusted persons for different groups can also effectively reach the target audience. **Innovative communication approaches and the involvement of young people** in the design of the communication campaign is also highly recommended: for instance, engaging students of higher educational establishment through competitions for the best short video or poster about the 2030 Agenda and the importance of the review process; collaborating with movie theatres to showcase short videos about the 2030 Agenda and the importance of the review process before the scheduled movies; and organizing lessons for school children about the 2030 Agenda and the importance of the review process.

7. Define the scope for peer-to-peer learning.

South–South (SSC) and Triangular Cooperation (TrC) in the VNR process can also facilitate the exchange of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned while fostering multistakeholder collaborations to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. Learning from other peers is increasingly essential as more countries present their second, third or fourth reviews. FAO can promote and support peer-to-peer dialogue with other countries developing VNRs. FAO Country Offices can suggest countries with FAO presence and facilitate such dialogues for the mutual benefit of two or more countries (with the support of FAO Offices and UNCTs).

The UN Office for South–South Cooperation (UNOSSC) has developed a **Handbook on integrating South–South and Triangular Cooperation in the VNRs**. For example, when developing its VNR, Denmark established contact with the governments of Norway and Kenya to initiate collaboration and dialogue regarding the preparation and content of the report. The aim was to exchange experiences and provide an opportunity for comments and recommendations on each other's reports. See how Denmark's VNR presented the results of this process in *Figure 2*.

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FIGURE 2:
DENMARK'S VNR PRESENTING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ITS VNR FROM NORWAY AND KENYA

4.3 Main Messages from the Peer Dialogue

In pursuit of the goal of an open and inclusive fol-low-up process, the Danish Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark esta-blished contact with the Norwegian Government and initiated a collaboration and dialogue regarding the preparation and content of the report. The aim here was to exchange experiences and provide an opportunity for comments and recommendations on each other's reports, thus illuminating strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately improving the qua-lity of both countries' reports. Furthermore, contact was established with the Kenyan Government, who presented a VNR in 2020 and expressed interest in reading and commenting on the first draft of the Danish VNR.

The main messages from the dialogue are presented below. Denmark greatly appreciates the comments and valuable recommendations on future work.

Box 4.1

Norway's main messages to Denmark

Norway is grateful to be given the opportunity to collaborate with Denmark throughout the VNR-process resulting in this peer review. Denmark has provided Norway with excellent support in the preparation the VNR-report, and we highly appreciate the insight and experience that has been shared in the process.

The following comments are based on the first draft of Denmark's VNR-report.

- Denmark's second VNR is logically structured in accordance with the VNR-handbook. This provides the reader with a good structure for reading the report and enables them to easily navigate to the topics they are most interested in.
- The report provides a comprehensive overview of how Denmark works towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, and how far the country has progressed since the first VNR-report.
- Norway is impressed by how the Danish society as a whole works together to ensure progress on the SDGs. In particular, it is interesting to read about how the 2030 panel and the Expert Councils had a positive effect on implementing the 2030 Agenda.
- Denmark has successfully integrated views and recommendations from civil society, business organisations and other stakeholders in the report. This provides valuable knowledge and a more in-depth perspective on how Denmark works towards the SDGs.
- Engagement with stakeholders is key to a meaningful VNR-process, and Denmark demon-strates that it is prioritised, especially by including the assessment of the progress on each goal from civil society.
- Norway welcomes how Denmark included how much local and regional governments con-tribute to the SDGs, and we would take the opportunity to congratulate the municipality of Gladsaxe with the completion of their first Voluntary Local Review.
- Denmark includes a chapter on Leaving no one behind (LNOB) which provides the reader with an informative overview of Danish policies. The list of policy initiatives clearly shows that LNOB is a priority in the country's work towards the 2030 Agenda. Norway would however for the next VNR recommend that the digital aspect of LNOB is also addressed.
- The chapter on the recovery after COVID-19 is thorough and it is interesting to read how the recovery plan is connected to achieving the SDGs. This is something everyone should consider. Norway recommends expanding this part in Denmark's next VNR in order for lessons learned and best practice to be shared further.

Norway would like to thank Denmark for being an excellent partner in the VNR-process and to send our congratulations for delivering an inclusive and thorough VNR-report.

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Box 4.2

Kenya's main messages to Denmark

- First, we thank the Government of Denmark for the honour bestowed on the Government of Kenya together with Norway to review their 2021 Voluntary National Review. We consider this process important as it provides an opportunity for the members states to share experiences and also for mutual learning which is critical in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

- We congratulate the Government of Denmark and the technical staff for the comprehensive VNR document.

- Denmark is perceived a good performer in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and is placed at top positions in several SDGs ranking. This could be attributed to the high level of SDGs awareness where according to the VNR, 3 out of 4 Danes (75%) are aware or heard about SDGs. The SDGs awareness is critical for their implementation as it creates genuine ownership and support. It is recommended that the VNR include an analysis of what Denmark government has done to achieve this high level of awareness within a very short time where the awareness level has increased from 16% in 2017 to 75% in 2020. This would be a good practice to be replicated by other member states. The civil society has done a commendable job in awareness raising as outlined in the report and which other civil societies internationally can benefit from.

- The Government of Denmark has a strong commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda which is evidenced by the National Action Plan for the implementation of the SDGs. This action plan is a strong instrument to strengthen coordination of all the stakeholders in SDGs process. We consider this a good practice as the Agenda puts more emphasis on multistakeholder partnership. It is recommended that an elaboration of its preparatory process which is important for ownership, how this action plan is aligned to the mandates of the ministries and how it is monitored to ensure stakeholders adhere to its implementation be included in the report. It is also important to show how it is linked to the finance bill and budget negotiations to ensure adequate funding.

- Denmark has a long history of sustainable development. The integration of sustainable development into Denmark's annual finance act and budget negotiations is something worth emulating by the international community as a good practice. This is in line with the 2030 Agenda which emphasises on domestic resource mobilization to implement the Agenda.

- The Government is committed to working with other stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs. Specifically, the implementation of the SDGs has benefited from close working relationship with Danish parliament. This is well reflected in the different structures that have been put in place to advance this course. Owing to the critical role of parliament in advancing the SDGs through financing and legislative functions, the VNR could benefit more from highlighting the level of interaction between this parliamentary engagement on SDGs and the Government specifically the Ministry of Finance which is the SDGs Coordinating entity in Denmark.

- The approach of capturing in the VNR how the private sector, civil society, parliament, academic institutions, municipalities and regions integrate the SDGs into their core strategies is a clear indication that the Government is willing to let the voices of other stakeholders be heard which is quite commendable. Owing to the many stakeholders working on SDGs, the VNR could give a detailed description on how these stakeholders were identified, the methodology used by the Government in engaging these stakeholders both in the implementation and the review process.

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Building resilient agrifood systems that cope with disruptions, such as food insecurity, malnutrition, rural poverty, biodiversity loss and climate change, requires a stronger connection between policymakers, the business community, civil society, academia and research institutions. A systemic, multi-level, and multistakeholder participatory approach to governance is required to transform agrifood systems holistically across their economic, social and environmental dimensions. UNEP, FAO and UNDP (2023) have developed a guide for multistakeholder collaboration called Rethinking our Food Systems, which is a methodology on how to convene, implement, facilitate or support a multistakeholder initiative that contributes to the sustainable transformation of food systems at different levels.

VNRs offer the opportunity to strengthen and revive partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders. While VNR processes have become more participatory through the years, there is still a need (UN, 2022) to both promote and support the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is primarily the responsibility of the national government leading VNR preparation and should occur throughout the entire VNR preparation process and follow-up activities. For FAO, it is essential to promote the participation of partners from different sectors in a manner that enables all actors' equal understanding of the process and their role in it so they can accurately decide on their inputs. FAO can facilitate engagement through the entire process, such as including these diverse stakeholders after the VNR presentation, ensuring the wide dissemination of the VNR report, and taking action on the agreed-on next steps.

The questions below can guide FAO Country Offices' work with the stakeholders.

BOX 8:
DEVELOPING A STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- Have the national authorities announced a call for open engagement with different target groups and stakeholders? If so, can FAO further disseminate information to its national and local stakeholders and networks of partners?
- If there is no generic stakeholder engagement plan, does FAO CO have its own strategy on how to promote and facilitate stakeholder engagement?
- Has FAO CO been requested by any of its stakeholders to facilitate their engagement in the VNR preparation process?
- Can FAO CO support the capacity building of the national and local stakeholders to ensure that they can contribute and provide high quality inputs into the VNR?
- Does FAO CO have a strategy for a longer-term engagement of the national and local stakeholders to ensure their active contribution to the post-VNR follow-up action?

Effective multistakeholder engagement for the VNR generally includes three building blocks:

1. Initiation of the process

The first step is to clarify the engagement objectives, the main milestones in the consultation process, and modalities for sharing information and collecting inputs.

If FAO is requested to lead the engagement process with the stakeholders from the agrifood sector or to advise the government, then the initial discussions should occur within the established communities or groups of partners such as civil society organizations, think tanks, farmers and youth groups. Their inclusion helps target the messages, adjust the language and highlight their role and relevance in the VNR process. An example of how this can be done is initiating safe platforms for discussions or leveraging existing ones. When creating these platforms, it is essential to consider the key stakeholders and the interests, fears, expectations, power relationships, and politics involved.

It is essential to build a shared understanding of the process concerning:

- What are the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs?
- Why are the follow-up and review processes important?
- What are the main steps of a voluntary national review?
- What are the roles of different groups?
- Who are the coordinators and facilitators of the process?
- How will different intermediary results be communicated?
- How can feedback be provided?

2.   Build sustainable collaboration and participation

Building sustainable collaboration and meaningful participation is essential. Different stakeholder groups may have diverging priorities. Thus, to create a shared understanding, separate discussions should happen at various levels and on various topics:

i.   Discussion over progress toward the SDG goals and targets

Mixed groups of stakeholders (i.e. CSOs, the private sector and academia) are presented with the same data and analysis and informed whether there is a positive, negative or no trend to SDG achievement. This ensures a shared understanding of the data and the factual situation.

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iii. Analysis of synergies/trade-offs and policy coherence

Held separately in key stakeholder groups' platforms, this allows interests, values and diverging approaches to trade-off and synergy or minimal spillover to be captured. Identifying and revealing these differences and developing strategies to harmonize them is essential.

iii. Joint discussion of the analysis of synergies, trade-offs, and policy coherence

Holding collective debate on the positive or negative interaction between the Goals and how these interactions play out in the national context. To constructively shape the discussion, it is vital to be aware of conflicting interests, biases, and mutually reinforcing beliefs. It is important to level the playing field and ensure that a capture risk by one or more groups is identified and mitigated.

iv. Discussion over the next steps to transform agrifood systems

Held in mixed groups, it builds on the results of the previous discussion to create a shared understanding of what changes need to occur in the future and who will play what role in the process. These discussions are to be forward-looking and detail actionable next steps.

For FAO, it is essential to ensure that consultations and decision-making processes are inclusive and participatory, that trust is built by sharing each other's values, concerns and interests, and that outcomes are communicated regularly to all stakeholders, including those who cannot participate in person.

3. Manage collaboration

Sustaining collaboration requires detailed and concrete action plans and an established collaboration mechanism. While in-person meetings and discussions are recommended, it is also essential to think about ways to capture the process online and allow the wider public to participate and contribute to the process. In this respect, FAO can support the creation of a dedicated online space to facilitate the dialogue between the set meetings and to store information and relevant documentation for the participants and general public to access throughout the entire process.

FAO can also encourage different groups to develop their own SDG assessments and share them as inputs to the VNR or create stand-alone spotlight reports on SDG progress. See the examples of the VNRs in Zambia and Mongolia in *Figures 3* and *4*.

FIGURE 3:

ZAMBIA'S VNR PRESENTING CIVIL SOCIETY'S ASSESSMENTS OF THE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SDGS

Civil Society, a Partner in Policy Formulation, Monitoring and Accountability

The technical support from civil society organisations (CSOs) has ridden on the immense and diverse capacities of CSOs in various fields needed for effective support towards attainment of the SDGs. Some examples include their active participation in the development of both the 7th and 8th National Development Plans, which the Government has used as tools to integrate and cascade set SDGs as benchmarks for national development. The development process of these plans benefitted from significant consultations and input from a broad range of CSOs through the Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs), especially on Human and Social Development, Good Governance, Economic Transformation, and Environmental Sustainability. These structures are now being used to both guide national budget prioritisation and as platforms for monitoring the progress being made on the SDGs.

The second aspect relates to technical reviews informed by monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning work by various CSOs. The Government has benefitted from this body of evidence and unique perspective that is used for both policy and economic reforms to support the implementation and actualisation of the SDGs. Covering all 17 Goals, CSOs have been able to advocate for and monitor the implementation of the Goals and hold the Government to account where they notice a lag based on the evidence and technical experiences in specific sectors.

Civil Society, a Partner in Service Delivery

CSOs have played a significant role in service provision and financial support to complement government programmes and impact communities in the quest to ensure the realisation of the SDGs. Several organisations and networks across the country are involved in direct service provision, responding to a range of goals including in education, health, climate change and social protection. In many areas, CSOs have collaborated with the Government in improving the WASH sector, supporting supplementary assistance in social protection services, building and supporting education infrastructure, expanding access to health, and promoting gender and inclusive participation in the development and governance of the nation, among others. This has positively contributed to the levels of access in line with the various indicators of the SDGs targets. Many people benefit from these services and advocacy efforts of CSOs.

Civil Society, an Advocate for the SDGs

CSOs have been instrumental from the outset in engaging the Zambian National Assembly to promote the SDGs discussions at the national level. The office of the Clerk of the National Assembly has played a key role in enhancing coordination among the CSOs, the Parliament and the Government. For example, parliamentary committees have carried out several activities in fostering and developing SDGs engagement in the inter-parliamentary context and other legislative bodies, with the collaboration of the civil society.

Lastly, CSOs have played a critical role in mobilising partnerships for the SDGs. Best known for holding the Government to account, the organisations have endeavoured to engage the Government to ensure adherence to the implementation of the Goals. In Zambia, the emergence of COVID-19 and the protracted public debt burden have been major blows to achieving the desired progress on the Goals. The voice of the civil society has been instrumental in ensuring that as the Government navigates this tough phase, it strikes a balance in policy implementation and fiscal management that does not leave anyone behind. CSOs are resolved to support the implementation of the SDGs with a view of ensuring that significant strides are made in meeting set targets in the next seven years.

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FIGURE 4:
MONGOLIA'S VNR PRESENTING SDG IMPLEMENTATION SCORES, CSO AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT
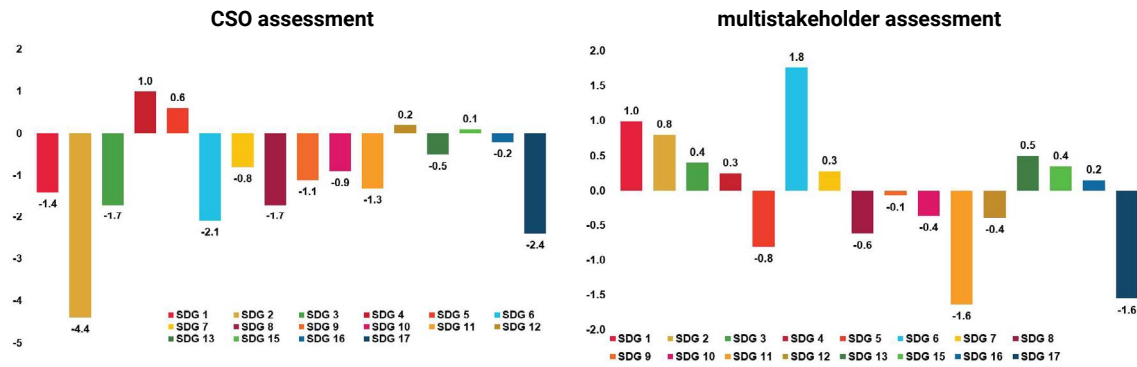
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BOX 9:
BENEFITS OF MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR THE VNR

Relevance
Local stakeholders best understand which activities are truly relevant to their needs and are realistic in a specific context.

Ownership and sustainability
Local stakeholders share information and jointly decide what actions to take. This leads to greater local ownership of activities and outcomes, making them more sustainable.

Partnerships and alliances
Having a common goal strengthens partnerships and creates opportunities for dialogue and sharing resources.

VNR PREPARATION

FAO has extensive expertise, capacities, knowledge, information and data at the country, regional and global levels, all essential for effective preparations, and can be made available to national partners. Moreover, when these resources are coupled with the resources of other partners (think tanks, academia, target groups, civil society, and others), they can profoundly and positively impact the quality of the VNR.

ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS TOWARDS SDG 2

Based on the scope of review undertaken by a Member Nation (coverage by key themes or Goals and targets), FAO should support this process by preparing a country assessment of progress towards SDG 2 and other SDGs, focusing on the indicators under FAO custodianship, minimally.

Assessment is the process of identifying where the country currently stands concerning specific SDG indicators (global or national) in absolute numbers. See an example from the VNR of Portugal, assessing how the indicators changed from 2015 until 2021.

FIGURE 5:
ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS SDG 2

5.2.2   SDG 2 - END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

TARGETS	EVOLUTION	
2.1 Access by all to quality, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	✅	
2.2 End all forms of malnutrition and address the nutritional needs of adolescents, pregnant and breastfeeding women and the elderly	◆	
2.3 Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly the most vulnerable, securing equal access to land and other productive resources	✖	
2.4 Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices	✅	
2.5 Maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species	✖	
2.a Increase investment in rural infrastructure, genetic research, technology and gene banks	✅	
2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets	✅	
2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information	❌	☀

SDG 2 has 57% indicator coverage

✅	⊝	❌	◆	☀	✖	◎
Positive evolution	No evolution	Negative evolution	No evaluation	Impacted by COVID-19	No indicators	The target has been reached in at least one of the indicators

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FAO should promote not just assessment of the progress but also its analysis. **Analysis** needs to put the numbers in perspective by **comparing them with the baseline** or the year when the previous assessment occurred and indicating whether there is a **positive or a negative trend**, no change or whether the indicator is impossible to measure. *Figure 6* is an example of a simple colour coding that demonstrates the trends.

FIGURE 6:
COLOUR CODING OF THE PROGRESS TOWARDS SDG 2 IN TIMOR-LESTE'S VNR

2.1	Undernourishment and food security
2.2	Malnutrition
2.a	Investment in agriculture
2.c	Food price anomalies
2.3	Small-scale food producers
2.4	Sustainable agriculture
2.5	Genetic resources of agriculture
2.b	Agricultural export subsidies

MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
ACCELERATE progress to achieve target
REVERSE trend to achieve target
CANNOT be measured

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The analysis also needs to put the numbers into context by **demonstrating how close the country is to 2030**, by extrapolating the current trends, taking into account the progress observed during the previous years or by forecasting progress based on the reports and evaluations made of national country plans or programmes.

FIGURE 7:
ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS SDG 2 IN THE VNR OF UKRAINE [1]

Goal/Target: progress and estimates of probability of achievement

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS: CONSIDERABLE PROBABILITY

Goal has been achieved or will be achieved

MIXED PROGRESS: MEDIUM / MODERATE PROBABILITY

SMALL PROBABILITY

2.2.1

2.1.5   2.2.2   2.4.1

2.1.3*   2.3.1

2.3.2

2.1.4*

2.1.1

2.1.2

2.3.3

Target might not be met

Target might be met, subject to the availability of sufficient resources and the commitment

Target will be met, if substantial efforts are taken

Target will be met, if respective actions are taken immediately

* Indicator 2.1.3, 2.1.4 – expert estimations.

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The **2019 Global Sustainable Development Report** (GSDR) (UN, 2019) points out that "The most efficient – or sometimes the only – way to make progress on a given target is to take advantage of positive synergies with other targets while resolving or ameliorating the negative trade-offs with yet others" (p. xxi).

After the initial screening of the progress on SDG 2, it is vital to scrutinize the interactions between different SDGs and targets in a given country to establish where actual interactions exist and whether they contribute to a positive outcome (synergies), negative impacts (trade-offs) or even lead to spillovers across policy domains.

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[1] The data in the Ukraine examples comes before the 2022 invasion by Russia started and may not be entire accurate as of the date of publication. It serves, however, as an example to showcase estimates and forecasts by the country with regard to its progress and probability of achievement of the targets and indicators.

BOX 10:
DEFINING SYNERGIES, TRADE-OFFS AND SPILLOVERS

- Synergies occur when making progress on one policy objective (in this case, an SDG) makes it easier to make progress on another.

- Trade-offs occur when making progress in one area leads to worse outcomes in another area.

- Spillover effects occur when progress in one Goal generates synergies or trade-offs across sustainable development's economic, social or environmental dimensions, including across national boundaries. Documenting and quantifying potential spillovers is an important step, as not all are large enough to matter for policy coherence.

Source:
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021). Making Better Policies for Food Systems OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/ddfba4de-en

For instance, in its 2022 Voluntary National Review, Switzerland summarized trade-offs, synergies, positive or negative multipliers, and spillovers under each SDG under analysis.

FIGURE 8:
SIDE-EFFECTS AND TRADE-OFFS FOR SDG 2 IN THE VNR OF SWITZERLAND

Multiplier of positive side-effects Efforts to achieve Target 2.4 (farms engaged in especially environment and animal-friendly production) further the achievement of targets under SDG 6 (drinking water quality), SDG 12 (material and carbon footprint, food waste), SDG 13 (resilience and adaptability to the consequences of global warming) and SDG 15 (soil function, intact ecosystems).

Trade-off Economic growth supports efforts to reduce poverty, which is a key objective from the point of view of social justice. At the same time, economic growth must be decoupled from the consumption of natural resources and from greenhouse gas emissions, so that the targets of SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) can be achieved. A shift in understanding of what constitutes prosperity in society is conducive to this decoupling.

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FIGURE 9:
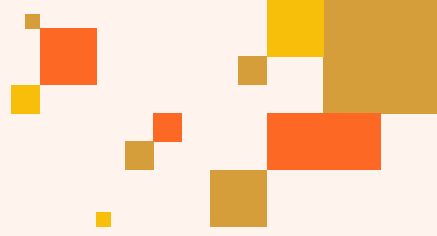## SYNERGIES OF SDG 2 WITH OTHER SDGS
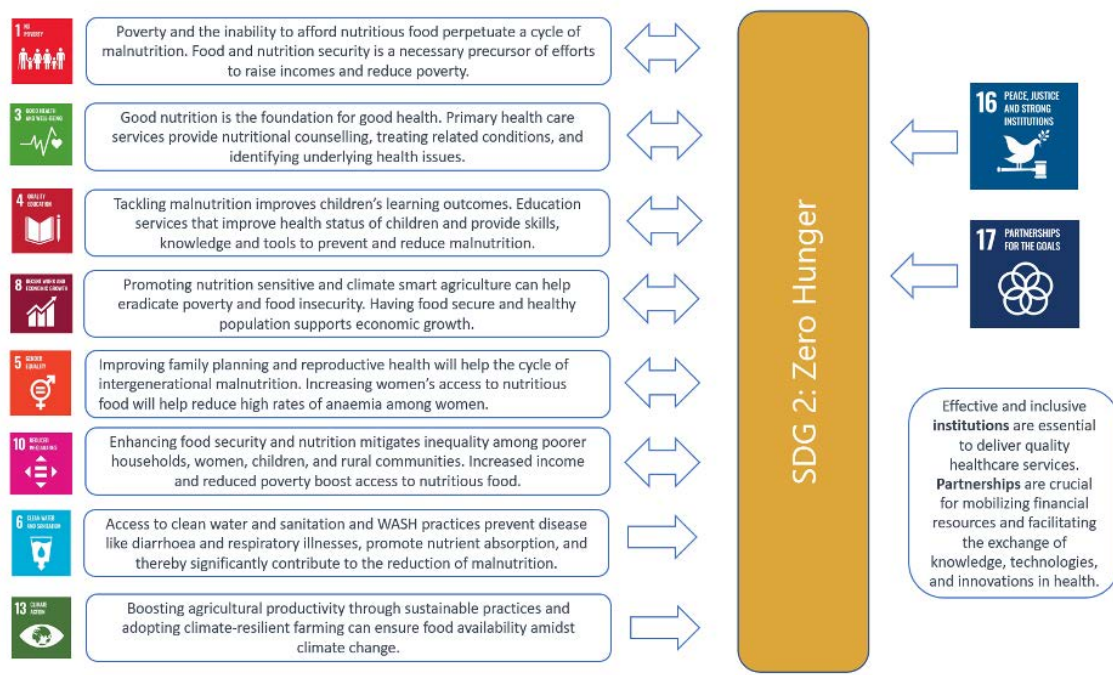
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Different tools exist for addressing synergies, integration and trade-offs among the SDGs (see Annex I). A starting point for the analysis of interlinkages between the SDGs can be a seven-point scale developed by the International Council for Science (ICSU) used in the 2019 GSDR, as seen in *Figure 10*.

FIGURE 10:
INTERACTIONS AMONG THE SDGS
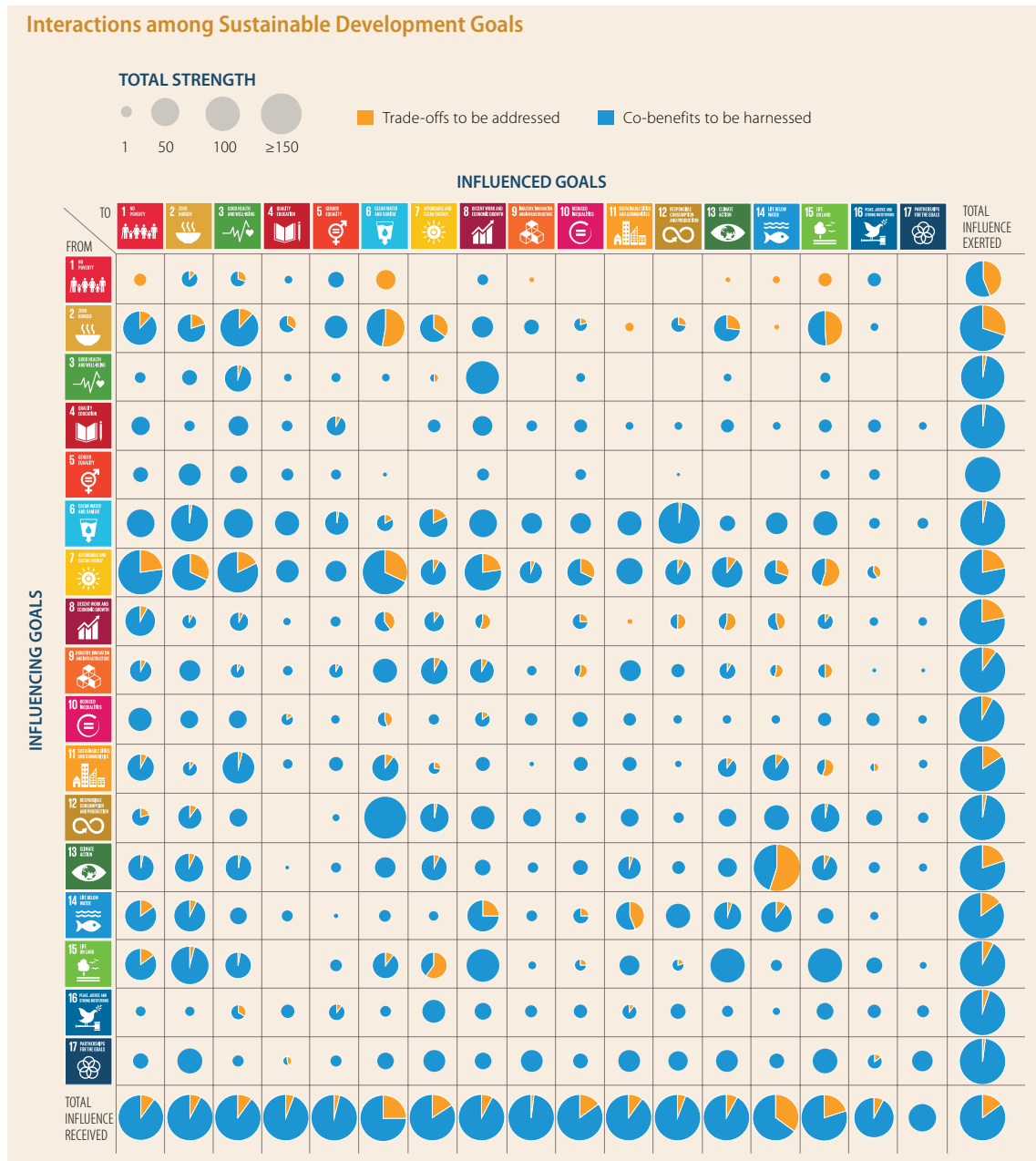
Interactions among Sustainable Development Goals

Source:
United Nations. 2019. *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development.* Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, New York. https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf
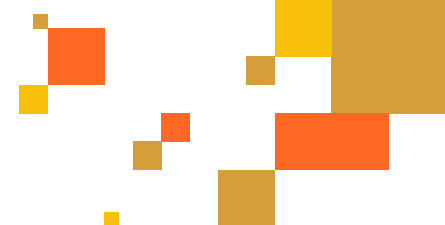
The example from the 2023 VNR of Poland presents the interconnections relevant in the Polish context.

FIGURE 11:
IDENTIFIED INTERCONNECTIONS OF THE MAIN GOAL AGAINST THE OTHER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

	Main goal	Interconnected goals
1	**SDG 1 – No poverty**	SDG 3, 8, 10
2	**SDG 2 – Zero hunger**	SDG 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15
3	**SDG 3 – Good health and well-being**	SDG 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17
4	**SDG 4 – Quality education**	SDG 7, 8, 9, 11, 13
5	**SDG 5 – Gender equality**	SDG 1, 8, 10
6	**SDG 6 – Clean water and sanitation**	SDG 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
7	**SDG 7 – Affordable and clean energy**	SDG 1, 3, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17
8	**SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth**	SDG 1, 4, 9, 10, 16, 17
9	**SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure**	SDG 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17
10	**SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities**	SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11
11	**SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities**	SDG 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17
12	**SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production**	SDG 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15
13	**SDG 13 – Climate action**	SDG 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16
14	**SDG 14 – Life below water**	SDG 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
15	**SDG 15 – Life on land**	SDG 6, 11, 13
16	**SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions**	SDG 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17
17	**SDG 17 – Partnerships for the goals**	SDG 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16

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MOVING FROM SDG-BY-SDG ANALYSIS TO AN INTEGRATED ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS

SDGs and their targets and indicators are a results framework of the 2030 Agenda. By adopting the 2030 Agenda, Member Nations have ultimately committed to work towards transition to sustainable development pathways.

VNRs need to analyse not just progress towards an individual Goal or all Goals but look beyond the results framework to understand:
drivers, challenges and structural issues contributing to the current state of unsustainability; policies and their coherence, institutional mechanisms and enabling environment; and accelerators that can be used to promote the achievement of the SDGs.

ANALYSING DRIVERS, CHALLENGES AND PERSISTENT BOTTLENECKS

Data on SDG 2 reveals how far a given country is from sustainable agrifood systems. These are complex systems influenced by a complex set of drivers of change, often with uncertainty and unforeseen consequences that feed back into the system. These drivers of change and their relationships must be analysed to understand why the progress on specific targets is stalled and what needs to happen to address them effectively to transform agrifood systems.

Figure 12 presents the complexity of drivers that impact agrifood systems.

FIGURE 12:
DRIVERS THAT IMPACT AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS
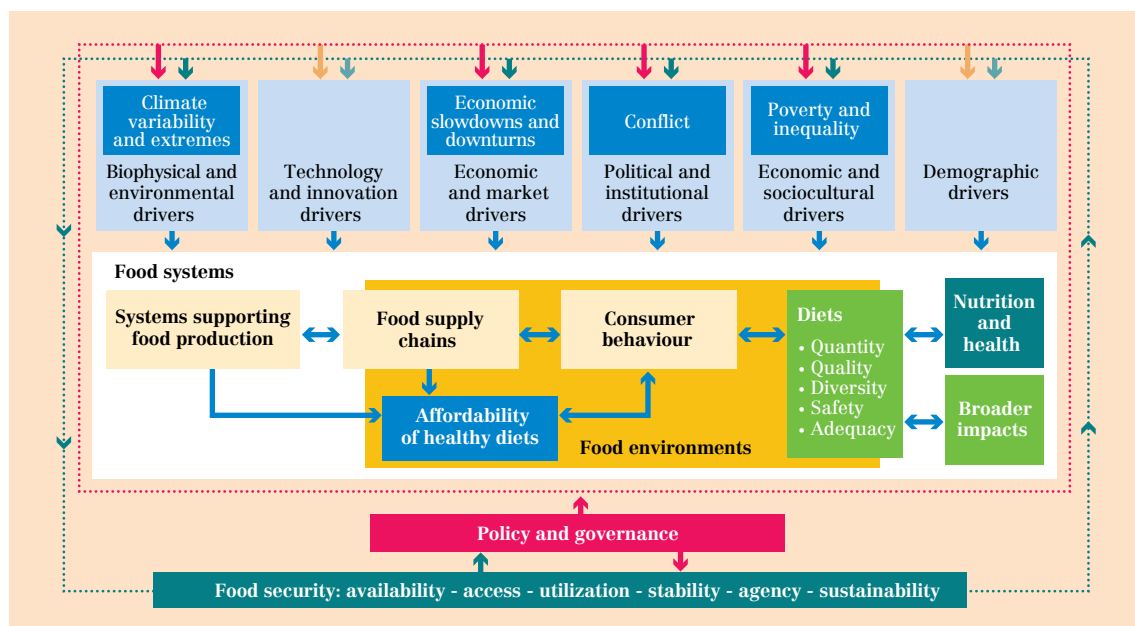
Source:
Carrasco Azzini, G., Conti, V., Holleman, C. & Smulders, M. 2022. *Best practices in addressing the major drivers of food security and nutrition to transform food systems.* Background paper for The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. FAO Agricultural Development Economics Technical Study, No. 23. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc2622en

FAO CO could use the framework above to encourage national partners to look at the drivers contributing to the current state of agrifood systems. A brief analysis of these drivers and their impact can be captured in the VNR section on systemic issues.

ANALYSING POLICIES AND THEIR COHERENCE FOR TRANSFORMING AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

Agrifood systems are sustainable when they *"deliver food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised"* (FAO, 2018).

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all report by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO identifies six possible pathways toward agrifood systems transformation:

1. Integrating humanitarian, development and peacebuilding policies in conflict-affected areas.
2. Scaling up climate resilience across agrifood systems.
3. Strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable to economic adversity.
4. Intervening along agrifood supply chains to lower the cost of nutritious foods.
5. Tackling poverty and structural inequalities, ensuring interventions are pro-poor and inclusive.
6. Strengthening agrifood environments and changing consumer behaviour to promote dietary patterns positively impacting human health and the environment.

Based on the country context, a different set of pathways determines which driver or combination of drivers impacts the identified agrifood system most and related food security and nutrition outcomes. Undertaking policy analysis within these pathways can help uncover the gaps in policies, enable the environment and define alternative policy measures to promote the transformation of agrifood systems as a means of SDG acceleration. *Figure 13* below shows a set of policy areas that can be analysed to understand the effectiveness of a policy environment for the transformation of agrifood systems.
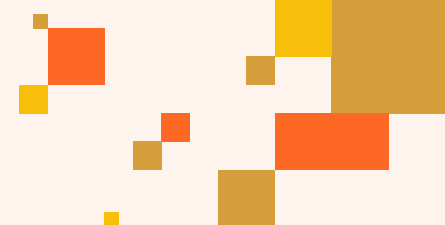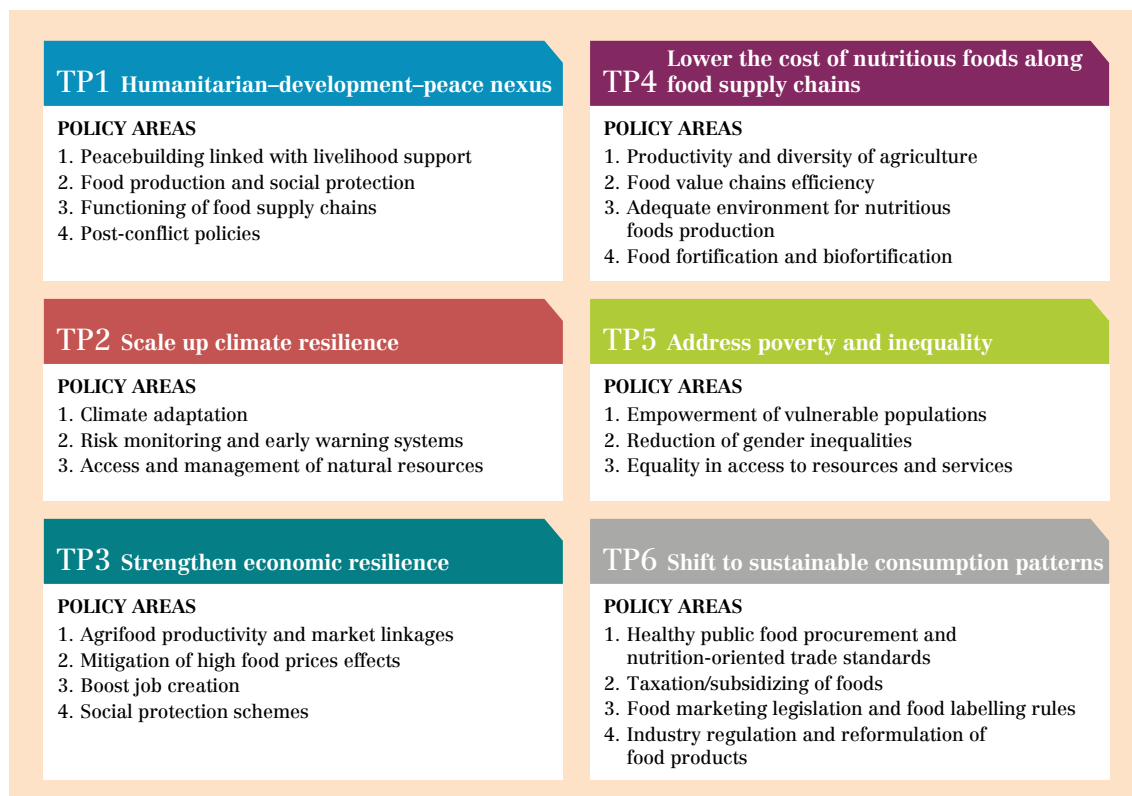
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FIGURE 13:
KEY POLICY AREAS FOR ANALYSIS

TP1 Humanitarian–development–peace nexus

POLICY AREAS
1. Peacebuilding linked with livelihood support
2. Food production and social protection
3. Functioning of food supply chains
4. Post-conflict policies

TP4 Lower the cost of nutritious foods along food supply chains

POLICY AREAS
1. Productivity and diversity of agriculture
2. Food value chains efficiency
3. Adequate environment for nutritious foods production
4. Food fortification and biofortification

TP2 Scale up climate resilience

POLICY AREAS
1. Climate adaptation
2. Risk monitoring and early warning systems
3. Access and management of natural resources

TP5 Address poverty and inequality

POLICY AREAS
1. Empowerment of vulnerable populations
2. Reduction of gender inequalities
3. Equality in access to resources and services

TP3 Strengthen economic resilience

POLICY AREAS
1. Agrifood productivity and market linkages
2. Mitigation of high food prices effects
3. Boost job creation
4. Social protection schemes

TP6 Shift to sustainable consumption patterns

POLICY AREAS
1. Healthy public food procurement and nutrition-oriented trade standards
2. Taxation/subsidizing of foods
3. Food marketing legislation and food labelling rules
4. Industry regulation and reformulation of food products

Source:
Carrasco Azzini, G., Conti, V., Holleman, C. & Smulders, M. 2022. *Best practices in addressing the major drivers of food security and nutrition to transform food systems.* Background paper for The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. FAO Agricultural Development Economics Technical Study, No. 23. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc2622en

An analysis of the key areas under FAO's six transformative pathways reveals the level of policy coherence or the lack thereof (i.e. when ambitious but divergent goals of agricultural production and environmental performance create more complex problems of policy incoherence).

While the DESA Handbook does not refer to the analysis of financing for sustainable development, it is important to remember that the review of the progress towards 2030 through a VNR is an opportunity that can be used to review and discuss financing and make it part of the VNR.

ENSURING THAT LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND PRINCIPLE IS APPLIED THROUGHOUT THE VNR

Member Nations are encouraged to detail how they apply the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Reaching the furthest behind is crucial for resilient agrifood systems. Integrating the LNOB principle in agrifood systems requires identifying vulnerable populations, the roots of vulnerability and marginalization, and adequate measures for enhancing their livelihoods and welfare.

Data disaggregation is key to this end. In the context of VNR preparation, FAO must ensure that its key target groups (i.e. rural populations, women, youth, indigenous peoples, migrants) are accounted for. It is essential to analyse the groups left behind and the barriers that hinder their access to services and opportunities. FAO has a wealth of resources that can support LNOB analysis.

- Guidelines on integrating the "leave no one behind" principle into development planning in Europe and Central Asia (FAO, 2023) present a methodological guide for policymakers, planners and other experts to assist with the integration of the LNOB principle in policy and strategy development for agrifood systems.

- An indirect estimation approach for disaggregating SDG indicators using survey data – Case study based on SDG Indicator 2.1.2 (FAO, 2022) discusses the adoption of the so-called projection estimator to produce indirect disaggregated estimates of SDG indicator 2.1.2 by integrating data from two independent surveys.

- Using small area estimation for data disaggregation of SDG indicators – A case study based on SDG Indicator 5.a.1 (FAO, 2022) presents a case study based on the use of an SAE approach to produce disaggregated estimates of SDG Indicator 5.a.1 by sex and at granular subnational level. The discussed estimation approach could be extended or customized to integrate survey data with alternative data sources, such as administrative records and/or geospatial information, and disaggregate other (SDG) indicators based on survey microdata.

- Guidelines on data disaggregation for SDG Indicators using survey data (FAO, 2021) offer methodological and practical guidance for producing direct and indirect disaggregated estimates of SDG indicators, with surveys as their main or preferred data source. Furthermore, the publication provides tools to assess the accuracy of these estimates and presents strategies for improving output quality, including Small Area Estimation (SEA) methods.

In its 2023 Voluntary National Review, Zambia identified not only the groups left behind but also the collective or individual barriers (institutional or structural) and causal and staggered risk factors for falling behind and included measures to leave no one behind.
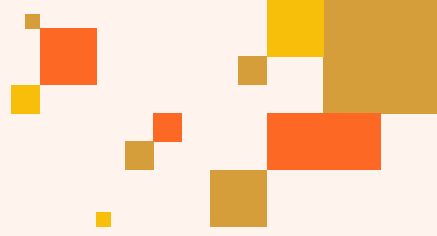
FIGURE 14:
VNR OF ZAMBIA ADDRESSING THE LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND PRINCIPLE

Implementation of the Principle of Leaving No One Behind
———

Leaving no one behind is an integral principle of sustainable development and is a focus area of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, Zambia, like many other developing countries, faces numerous challenges in achieving this principle.

One of the significant impediments to achieving the principle of leaving no one behind in Zambia is poverty. Poverty creates a vicious cycle of deprivation and exclusion that often is difficult to break and often perpetuates itself over generations, making it hard to leave no one behind. Meanwhile, poverty affects a large proportion of Zambia's population. As at 2015, national poverty levels stood at 54.4 percent, while extreme poverty or the proportion of individuals whose consumption was less than the cost of the food basket, stood at 41 percent. Poverty is particularly acute in rural areas, where the poverty rate was 76.6 percent compared to the urban areas where it was 23.4 percent.

Another significant challenge to ensuring that no one is left behind in the development process in Zambia, is inequality. It has been observed that the gap between the rich and the poor in has been widening, leading to increasing levels of social exclusion. Women, children, and persons with disabilitiesare particularly vulnerable to exclusion because they often lack access to basic services and opportunities. At national level, income inequality, as measured by the Gini Coefficient, worsened to 0.69 in 2015 from 0.60 in 2006. Between 2006 and 2015, rural income inequality remained constant at 0.60 while urban income inequality worsened to 0.65 in 2015 from 0.60 in 2006. Addressing inequality is critical to leaving no one behind in Zambia as it is both a cause and an effect of poverty.

Access to basic services such as health care, education, and water and sanitation is another significant challenge in Zambia. Many people do not have access to these services, particularly in rural areas. The percentage of the population that had access to an improved water source increased to 72.3 percent in 2018 from 41.1 percent in 2007. With regard to sanitation, the percentage of households with access to an improved sanitation facility at national level increased to 54.4 percent in 2018 from 35.5 percent in 2007. In rural areas, access increased to 37.2 percent in 2018 from 17.3 percent in 2007, while in urban areas it increased to 77.7 percent from 70 percent over the same period.

This lack of access to basic services can lead to further exclusion and perpetuation of poverty and inequality. Therefore, improving access to basic services is essential to leaving no one behind in Zambia.

It should be noted that the challenges of poverty and inequality have been further exacerbated by the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods. Efforts to address poverty, inequality and to enhance access to basic services are being undertaken to ensure that no one is left behind in Zambia's development.

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For FAO, it is important to consider barriers to access to food and nutrition, access and rights to land, and opportunities to benefit from ecosystem services. The LNOB analysis needs to reveal if the policies:

- Promote and ensure food security and nutrition for the vulnerable, the extremely poor and other marginalized groups;
- Promote the economic inclusion of vulnerable groups in agriculture and agrifood systems;
- Foster environmentally sustainable livelihoods; and
- Strengthen resilience against shocks and the restoring of livelihoods

Furthermore, FAO can promote its cross-cutting themes outlined in the FAO Strategic Framework (*gender, youth and inclusion*). A multi-dimensional look at inequalities and vulnerabilities along with their interconnections and interdependencies for agrifood systems, is vital to producing a high-quality VNR report.

IDENTIFYING FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The review of the state of implementation of the 2030 Agenda needs to be forward-looking and identify next steps and post-VNR follow-up action points. In line with the Secretary-General's common reporting guidelines for preparing VNRs, the section on **conclusions and next steps** *"could outline what steps are planned to enhance and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda... It could highlight what lessons the country has learned from the review process, how it will apply them in the continuing implementation and what support it would need in the future for preparing such reviews. Next steps should be as concrete as possible, to allow targeted follow-up in subsequent VNRs or related documents"* (UN DESA, 2023, p.57).

This step makes it possible to identify and discuss steps towards agrifood systems transformation and ensure alignment with countries' national pathways.

Building on the analysis of the use of transformative pathways, national stakeholders could identify portfolios of policies, investments and legislation for agrifood systems transformation by:

- Ensuring coherence with other systems: agrifood, environmental, health, social protection, and others.
- Examining win-win opportunities and trade-offs.
- Identifying actions to address drivers along alternative pathways (best practices).
- Defining accelerators to support and speed up transformative processes.

Identifying accelerators is key to ensuring that the country can leapfrog from the current transformation rate towards an accelerated pathway to sustainable development by identifying and using breakthrough points of acceleration.

The Future of Food and Agriculture 2022 (FAO, 2022b) has identified 18 drivers and triggers (see *Figure 15*) that influence agrifood systems in the country.

FIGURE 15:

AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS: KEY DRIVERS, ACTIVITIES, OUTCOMES AND PRIORITY TRIGGERS FOR TRANSFORMATION
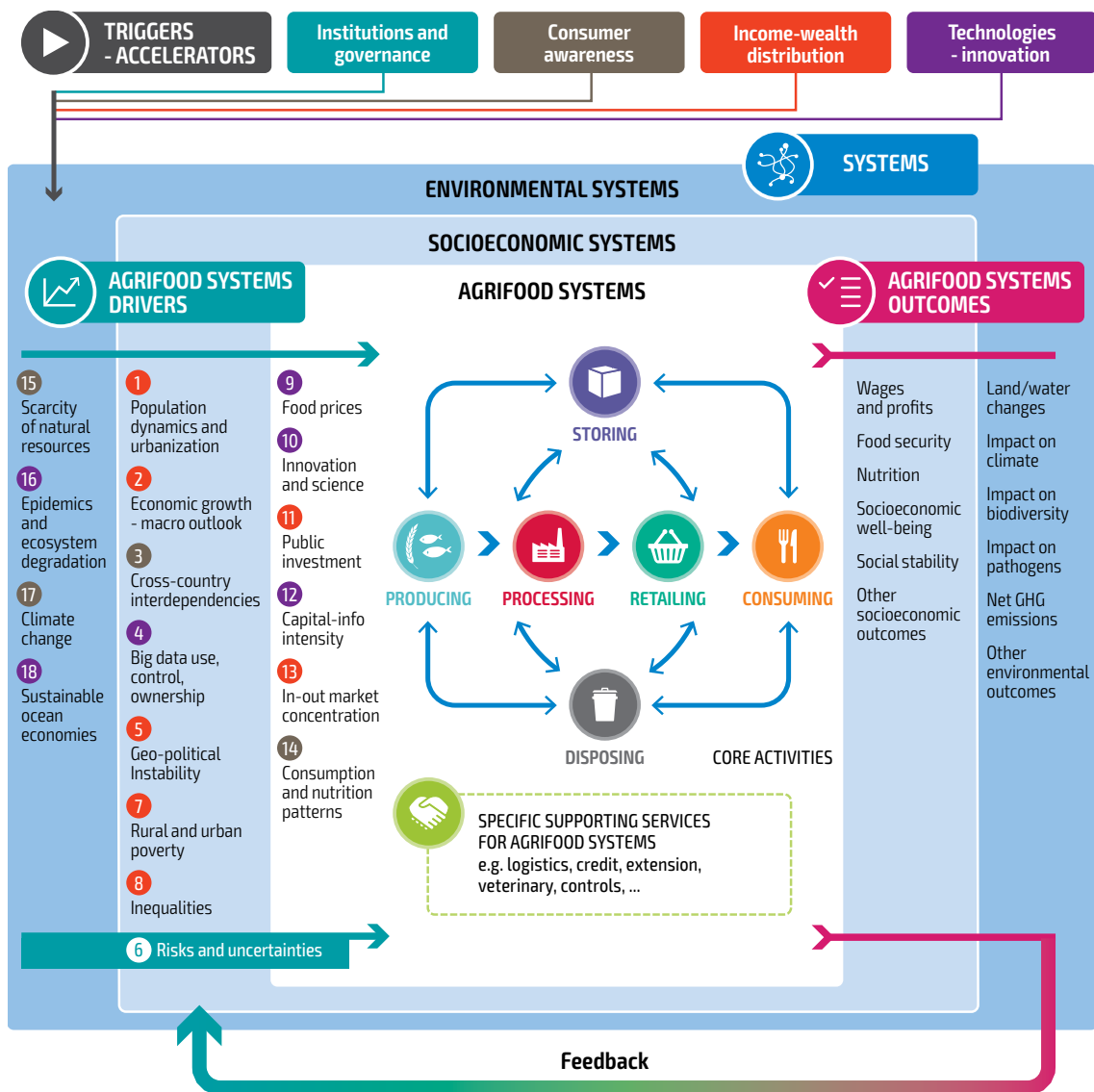
Source:
FAO. 2022b. *The future of food and agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation.* The Future of Food and Agriculture, No. 3. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0959en

The **2023 Global Sustainable Development Report** (UN, 2023) refers to the need to identify the tipping points when current dominant unsustainable pathways can lead to the breakdown and phase out of unsustainable approaches. Further, to identify the levers that can support emerging sustainable pathways accelerate and then stabilize as accepted and dominant pathways (see *Figure 16*).
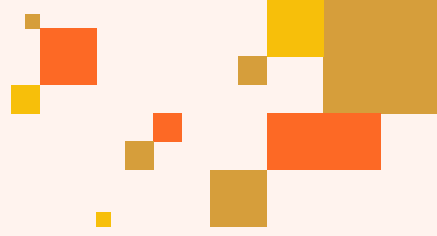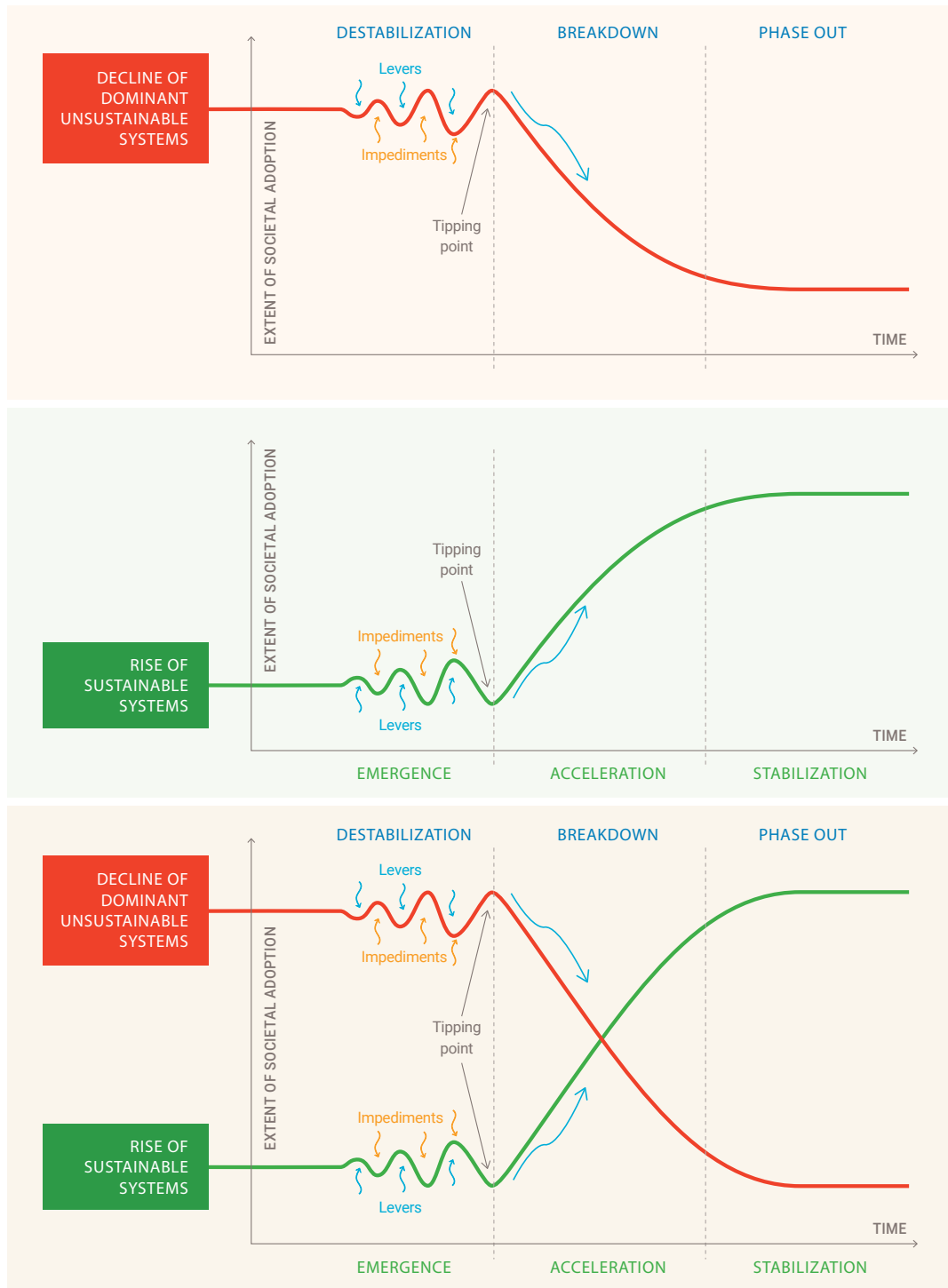
© FAO/Bhutan Department of Agriculture

FIGURE 16:
PHASES OF SYSTEM TRANSFORMATIONS

Source:
United Nations. (2023). *Global Sustainable Development Report 2023: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*. Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, New York.

BOX 11:
IDENTIFYING TIPPING POINTS

- For the pathways defined as unsustainable, what levers and impediments can lead to a breakdown away from the unsustainable practice towards the phase out of its elements?
- What can this breakdown point look like? What is needed to accelerate it?
- For the pathways defined as sustainable, what levers can lead to a breakthrough towards acceleration towards sustainability and later stabilization? What impediments can prevent or affect this emergence of an emerging pathway?
- What can this breakthrough point look like? What is needed to accelerate it?

The significance of this step in the analysis lies not in precisely identifying the tipping and breakdown points but in reviewing and considering different options for the future and coming to a common understanding that the current approaches to agrifood systems are not sustainable.

BOX 12:
UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021 AND NATIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS PATHWAYS

The UNFSS 2021 focused on possible solutions to a range of global challenges to make the transformative effects of food systems a driver for the achievement of the 2030 Development Agenda. Many national governments around the world organized Food Systems Summit Dialogues in the run up to the UN's Food Systems Summit. The Dialogues helped shape national pathways to food systems that are sustainable and equitable. They provided opportunities for many of the people who work in agrifood systems - across the public sector, private sector and civil society – to identify priorities, pursue opportunities and solutions. National food systems pathways need to be examined to see how forward-looking and evidence-based analysis for the VNR preparation can align and support the implementation of the national pathways as well as other national strategic programmes, plans and policies to contribute to the transition towards sustainability.

DRAFTING THE REPORT AND PREPARING FOR THE HLPF

1. Drafting the Main Messages and the full VNR document

The Main Messages is a short document (700 words max) that precedes finalizing the main VNR report. They summarize the country's main achievements, constraints and setbacks. If FAO is part of the VNR drafting team, FAO Country Office can support the narrative by providing an overall country's status and progress on the SDG targets under FAO custodianship.

Developing a storyline can be a powerful way to create a strong narrative, helping readers grasp the major national accomplishments and challenges, national priorities, and how the country addresses its main challenges. FAO can support developing a storyline around agrifood systems transformations.

BOX 13:
USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- **FAO Country Profiles**
  Collected information from the entire FAO website and provide a fast and reliable way to access country-specific information without needing to search individual databases and systems.
- **FAO's annual SDG Progress Report**
  A report that includes a statistical SDG progress assessment.
- **FAO Country profile tool**
  Provides both SDG data and visualizations to support assessments of trends.
- FAO **Country Gender Assessments (CGA)**
  Provides an update about women and men in agriculture and the rural sector by county.
- FAO **Food Systems Assessments. Country Profiles**
- **Member States Dialogues** and National Pathways
  Prepared for the Food Systems Summit and UN Food Systems Summit +2.
- **Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks**

Furthermore, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) prepared a **Practical Guide to Data Storytelling in Voluntary National Reviews** and SDG reporting to help countries and national statistics offices effectively tell data stories for their audience. This practical guide helps statisticians, data scientists, policymakers, analysts, managers and communicators tell convincing data stories in VNRs and SDG reporting, focusing on understanding the context and constructing the narrative. It contains examples drawn from VNRs and SDG reporting as well as external sources.

2. Interventions in various sections of the VNR report

FAO can provide inputs to the main messages and the overall VNR report. Inputs could address individual sections of the VNR report (see *Table 1*) and check the degree of inclusion of SDG data by indicators and other FAO contributions.

TABLE 1:
OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE INPUTS INTO DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE VNR

Sections of the VNR report	FAO Country Office's inputs
☑ **Opening statement**	
☑ **Highlights**	*If available, offer salient points or case studies that could be emphasized to the international community, including key successes and challenges where support is needed.*
☑ **Introduction**	*An opportunity to highlight agrifood systems can be portrayed as a country-level best practice for SDG acceleration.*
☑ **Methodology and process for the preparation of the review**	*Methodology and scope of the review, including the consultations held with stakeholders and the support received by UNCT.*
Policy and enabling environment	
☑ **Creating ownership of SDGs and the VNRs**	*It is important to describe the stakeholders' consultations that have taken place and emphasize the participatory approach in preparing the VNR, including a focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups.*
☑ **Incorporation of the SDGs in national frameworks**	*Emphasis should be placed on the analysis of policy coherence to leverage transformations in agrifood systems.*
☑ **Integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions**	*Agrifood systems should be included as an example of how different dimensions of sustainable development are integrated and how these can be achieved coherently through the transformation of agrifood systems.*
☑ **LNOB**	*Analysis of the key groups at risk for being left behind, the barriers that prevent their access to agrifood systems services and benefits, potential solutions and measures to be taken.*
☑ **Institutional mechanisms**	*Analysis of existing institutional mechanisms to support or promote policy coherence in agrifood systems, which levers can be used to promote agrifood systems transformation, and other available mechanisms.*

Sections of the VNR report	FAO Country Office's inputs
☑ Systemic issues and transformative actions	*This subsection needs to include the results of the analysis of policies and mechanisms in place that present systemic challenges in the context of transformative pathways towards sustainable agrifood systems. It can, similarly, help to use the critical drivers of agrifood systems and related trends as a lens for looking at structural issues, which define the state of agrifood systems, and negative externalities – such as labour exploitation, obesity, poverty and natural resource depletion – and how they are or can be, accounted for.*
☑ Progress on Goals and targets and evaluation of policies and measures taken so far	*FAO can support the report's identification of trends, successes and challenges in SDGs implementation backed by evidence. It can also include explanations of the SDGs monitoring system, including gaps in data and areas where support is needed.*
☑ New and emerging challenges	*This section can include results from the analysis and discussion of current unsustainable versus emerging sustainable pathways and the tipping and breaking points that indicate when to phase out current dominant unsustainable practices and accelerate the adoption of sustainable agrifood systems transformation.*
☑ Means of implementation	*FAO Country Offices can provide information on the current status of financing, capacity-building and technology (digital agriculture, geospatial data, big data), gaps and opportunities of financing sources (public/private, domestic/international) and non-financing means of implementation, such as capacity development and data needs, technology and partnerships.*
☑ Conclusions and next steps	*This section needs to be forward-looking include actionable next steps to ensure agrifood systems transformation.*
☑ Annexes	*Ensure the inclusion of a statistical annex using the global SDG indicators and adding priority indicators identified at the regional and national levels where appropriate.*

Based on the methodology developed for the VNR, some countries prepare a review based on a specific thematic storyline. For instance, the 2023 VNR of Tajikistan focuses on the green transition towards sustainability (see *Figure 17*).
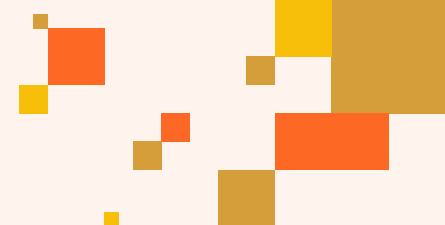
FIGURE 17:
GREEN TRANSITION AS A STORYLINE FOR A VNR REVIEW

CONTENT

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FAO Country Offices (CO) can encourage and support the preparation of a VNR with a transformation of agrifood systems as a main topic or storyline.

3. Preparation of the audiovisual files to support the presentation of the VNR at HLPF

Preparing accompanying audio or visual files for the HLPF presentation of a VNR has become a widely accepted practice. Audio and visual files help the presenting countries transmit their key points to other Member Nations and the HFLP audience with greater clarity and a more decisive outcome.

POST-HLPF ACTIONS

Preparation of a Voluntary National Review is not a goal or an end. It is a tool to review progress, identify lessons learned of what worked and what hasn't, engage the broadest range of partners and stakeholders in discussions about the progress towards 2030 and come to a joint understanding and commitment of what needs to be done in the future.

For instance, Brunei Darussalam has organized a 2023 Pre-HLPF workshop to discuss the way forward after its VNR presentation at the HLPF (see *Figure 18*).
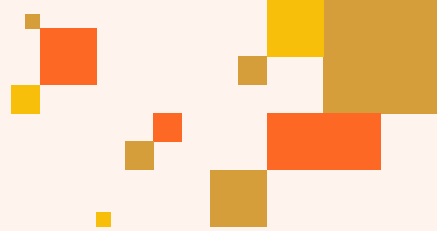
© FAO/Gianfranco Chirichilli

FIGURE 18:
WAY FORWARD AFTER THE HLPF

Pre-2023 High Level Political Forum Workshop

To conclude the VNR Process for Brunei Darussalam, a Pre-2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) Workshop was held on 17 to 18 May 2023 organised by the PMO as the Special National Coordination Committee on the SDG for Brunei Darussalam (SNCC). The workshop, attended by the members and SNCC Secretariat as well as representatives from the Government, United Nations agencies, the private sector, NGOs, academic institutions, youth, and financial institutions; discussed preliminary findings from the second VNR Report for Brunei Darussalam which will be presented to the 2023 HLPF in July 2023. Various discussions also focused on the way forward which would help to accelerate the SDGs through post-VNR actions. This includes strengthening the SDG ecosystem, data availability and integrated actions for the SDGs.

The Pre-2023 HLPF workshop was also organised to bring together stakeholders to chart the way forward for the country. The session is built to achieve two outcomes: i) To share Brunei Darussalam's SDG progress so far and other findings from the VNR process; and ii) To bring together diverse perspectives and experiences, and identify areas to improve for the next implementation stage.

The two-day workshop was attended by 86 participants, with 60 government representatives, 17 from the private sector, and nine representatives from NGOs and academia. The workshop included two discussion sessions. The first discussion focused on reflections on implementation and progress in the areas of environment, economy, and people and development. The second session delved deeper into the three areas that emerged as areas requiring improvements; data monitoring, whole-of-nation actions, and the SDG ecosystem in Brunei Darussalam. Participants were put into groups with diverse stakeholders to discuss their specific themes, with representatives from UNRCO, and the UNESCAP as discussion moderators. The workshop also heard from both UN representatives on the topic of global and regional progress for the 2030 Agenda, and best practices for post-VNR actions, respectively.

Post-HLPF actions can include a publication of the VNR report in all national languages, further discussions among the broad community of actors and stakeholders, and a national awareness-raising campaign on future steps and commitments. FAO has an important role in supporting post-HLPF implementation of the way forward identified in the VNR regarding the agrifood systems transformation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The practice of VNR preparation shows that time constraints may affect the quality of the inputs and materials provided. Therefore, FAO Country Offices must start with strategic planning of what is already available, what support can be provided (i.e. materials, resources, financing, expertise) and what needs to be advanced to respond to last-minute requests.

The VNR process extends the possibility to recognize clearly:

- The role of agrifood systems transformations as a key accelerator for all SDGs and integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.
- The importance of utilizing available data and statistics to assess progress and promote the data collection of food and agriculture statistics.
- The importance of policy coherence in agrifood systems and inclusive policy-making.
- The role of wider inclusion of the FAO target groups (i.e. farmers, youth, women) in addressing the leave no one behind commitment.
- Partnerships with the FAO and its stakeholders are an important element of implementing the 2030 Agenda.
- The role of governance, technology, science, and innovation as key drivers of agrifood systems transformation and achieving the SDGs.

Proactive support and engagement in the VNR preparation process present opportunities for FAO to further share its expertise and knowledge with its Member Nations and contribute to more comprehensive global efforts to support accelerating the 2030 Agenda implementation.

ANNEX 1 – FAO CO'S ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Initial preparation and organisation	▪ Designate FAO VNR focal point ▪ Contact national coordination entity and/or national VNR team through RCO/UNCT to identify national workplan and timeline ▪ Identify key FAO stakeholders (key groups and networks) that should be consulted ▪ Identify resources available in FAO office and inform respective Regional Office and HQ (OSG, Office of Chief Statistician, etc.) of the resources needed for the process ▪ Prepare a country assessment of progress on SDGs in areas under FAO mandate (using the resources provided in the Guidance Note) ▪ Prepare a list of available resources on the progress towards the SDGs and the overall state of agrifood systems transformation ▪ Organize consultations with FAO target groups if they are not included in government-led consultation process ▪ Support participation of stakeholders in consultations
VNR preparation	▪ Provide FAO inputs to the VNR (country assessment of progress towards the SDGs, analysis of the state of agrifood systems, etc.) to national partners directly or through RC/UNCT by the requested deadline ▪ Share results of stakeholder consultations with the national partners if relevant ▪ Promote an integrated and systems thinking approach among the national partners to ensure a deep analysis of the trade-offs, synergies and spillover effects in the VNR ▪ Promote analysis of policy coherence with regard to agrifood systems state and leave no one behind principles ▪ Promote forward-looking lens of the VNR through key gaps, opportunities and next steps. ▪ Review the zero draft to ensure accuracy of data, inclusion of the least available indicators, statistical annexes, etc.
VNR submission	▪ Support the process by providing access to FAO case studies, videos, etc.
Post VNR-presentation activities	▪ Encourage the government to share the report widely through RCO/UNCT ▪ Encourage FAO national partners to promote sharing the report ▪ Offer national partners support with the implementation of the next steps

ANNEX 2 - USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

SELECTED DATA-RELATED RESOURCES

UN databases and other resources

- SDG Global Database
- Data for evidence-based VNRs
- UNINFO: the UN Sustainable Development Group's data portal. The portal contains key programmatic documents such as the UNSDCFs (or UNDAFs) and Common Country Analysis (CCAs), constituting the basis of UNSDCF formulation. CCAs draw from and add to existing data, statistics, analysis, reviews, research, capacities, and resources from within and outside the UN system and are updated periodically.
- Tools supporting VNRs
- Good practices and lessons learnt in VNR reporting

Tools to address SDG interlinkages

- SDG Interlinkages Analysis & Visualisation Tool
- SDG Synergies
- The Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDG)

Regional and national SDG platforms (examples)

- Arab SDG Gateway
- SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: Statistical Knowledge Management Hub
- Africa UN Data for Development Platform
- SDG Gateway Asia Pacific
- ESCAP Sustainable Development Goals Helpdesk
- Africa Information Highway (network of live open data platforms (ODPs) electronically linking all African countries and 16 regional organizations)
- SDG Reporting Platforms (links to various national SDG reporting platforms)

FAO databases and resources

- FAO webpage on SDG indicators
- Accelerating FAO support on SDG monitoring – Resources to support Decentralized Offices
- FAO Country Profiles – these profiles combine information from the entire FAO website and provide a fast and reliable way to access country-specific information. They also include direct links to the Country website for in-depth information.
- FAO Statistics webpage
- FAO. 2021. Guidelines on data disaggregation for SDG Indicators using survey data. Rome, FAO.
- FAOSTAT – free access to food and agriculture data for over 245 countries and territories.

Country profiles

- FAO. 2022. Food Systems Assessments. Country Profiles. Rome, FAO.
- FAO. 2022. Country Gender Assessments. Rome, FAO
- FAO. 2023. Member State Dialogues and National Pathways

Surveys and census data

- Food and Agriculture Microdata Catalogue (FAM) – inventory of data collected through farm and household surveys containing information related to agriculture, forests, food security and nutrition.
- RuLIS – Rural Livelihoods Information System – supports monitoring SDG indicators 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 5.a.1. The platform has harmonized indicators, standardized micro-variables (as available) and a tool to build customized indicators and documentation on surveys processed.

Natural resources

- Water Resources and Management – AQUASTAT
- Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) – produced every five years, is based on two primary sources of data: Country Reports prepared by national correspondents and remote sensing conducted by FAO with national focal points and regional partners.

Plant, animal and fishery resources

- [Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS)](#) – provides access to searchable databases of breed-related information and photos and links to other online resources on livestock diversity.
- [WIEWS](#) – World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) is used for the preparation of periodic, country-driven global assessments of the status of conservation and use of PGRFA and for monitoring the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
- EMPRES-i+ (Global Animal Disease Information System) – supports veterinary services by facilitating the organization and access to regional and global disease information.
- [FishStat](#) - Fishery and Aquaculture

Food prices monitoring

- [Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA)](#)
- [Agricultural Market Information System](#) – AMIS is an inter-agency platform to enhance food market transparency and policy response for food security. It provides information on: wheat, maize, rice and soybean.
- [GIEWS - Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture](#) – monitors food supply and demand and other key indicators for assessing the overall food security situation in all countries. GIEWS Country Briefs provide up-to-date information on the food security situation of monitored countries in the current agricultural season and harvest prospects for the main staple food crops and livestock situation, as well as estimates and forecasts of cereal production and imports, together with food price and policy developments.

Food consumption and nutrition

- [International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS)](#) – a worldwide network of food composition experts aiming to improve the quality, availability, reliability and use of food composition data.
- [FAO/WHO GIFT](#) – Global Individual Food consumption data Tool –provides food-based indicators in nutrition, food safety, and microdata.
- [Food Loss and Waste Database](#) – contains data and information from openly accessible databases, reports and studies measuring food loss and waste across food products, stages of the value chain, and geographical areas.

Geospatial data/Geographic information

- Remote Sensing for Water Productivity (WaPOR) – near real-time database using satellite data that allows the monitoring of agricultural water productivity at different scales.
- GAEZ v4 Data Portal – comprises a large volume of spatial natural resources indicators and results of agroecological crop analysis.
- Hand-in-Hand (HiH) Geospatial Platform – provides open-access geographic information, key food security indicators and agricultural statistics sourced from FAO and external stakeholders.

Legal databases and policy resources

- Gender and Land Rights Database (GLRD) – provides country profiles analysing national legal frameworks, land-related statistics disaggregated by gender and a legal assessment tool that uses available information to identify areas where action is required and to advance gender-equitable land tenure.
- Family Farming Knowledge Platform – contains digitized quality information on family farming worldwide (national laws and regulations, public policies, best practices, relevant data and statistics, research, articles and publications) and country profiles with information on family farming-related issues by country.
- FAOLEX Database – database of national legislation, policies and bilateral agreements on food, agriculture and natural resources management.
- Right to Food around the Globe – platform to access the extensive commitments on the right to adequate food made at national level.

Emergencies

- Data in Emergencies (DIEM) Hub – provides regularly updated and highly accessible picture of food insecurity in fragile environments.
- Locust Hub – provides information, maps and resources about the state of the locust upsurge and UN's ongoing response efforts.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

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Guidane Note for Regional and Country Offices

Corrigendum

26 February 2024

The following corrections were made to the publication following its release.

Page	Location	Text in printed PDF	Text in corrected PDF/ Notes
28	Para 3	Assessment is the process of identifying where the country currently stands concerning specific SDG indicators (global or national) in absolute numbers. See an example from the VNR of Saint Kitts and Nevis, assessing how the indicators changed from 2015 until 2021.	Assessment is the process of identifying where the country currently stands concerning specific SDG indicators (global or national) in absolute numbers. See an example from the VNR of Portugal, assessing how the indicators changed from 2015 until 2021.
28	Figure 5	© 2023 Voluntary National Review of Saint Kitts and Nevis	© 2023 Voluntary National Review of Portugal

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