

Annex 1

Overall strengths and challenges of SDG monitoring, follow-up and review

Dimension	Strengths	Challenges
National institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased institutionalization of SDG monitoring, follow-up and review systems, with diverse institutional designs. Wide definition of roles and responsibilities for SDG monitoring, follow-up and review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear, fragmented, duplicated monitoring responsibilities in some cases. Monitoring responsibilities not always supported with adequate processes and resources. Changes in SDG monitoring, follow-up and review not always conducive to stronger systems.
Data and indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong focus on identification of indicators at the national level, conducting assessments and prioritization exercises to identify indicator availability and gaps. Some gains in the availability of indicators over time in specific countries. Increased awareness and knowledge of tested set of tools for data collection. Regional complementary frameworks. For example, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development includes indicators instrumental for the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda through a regional lens. Emerging efforts to enhance data disaggregation through more systematic approaches. Multiple initiatives and efforts to support the development of indicators and enhance data availability at subnational level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition of national targets, baselines and benchmarks. Identification of additional national indicators to complement the global indicator system. Align existing national indicator systems and national statistical strategies to the SDGs. Coordination and consistency of indicators across levels of government and across subnational governments. Specific challenges on availability of indicators for SDGs such as SDG 16 and environmental SDGs. Data lags (data being outdated) and data gaps (data being unavailable for many indicators). Lack of expertise and capacities at the national/subnational/local/city levels to collect, analyse and interpret all the data collected for the various indicators. Building alliances and effective coordination between traditional data producers (such as National Statistical Offices and national level ministries/agencies) and local authorities, private sector and the academia.
Subnational (including local) government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased consultation of subnational governments to develop VNRs. Increasing number of localization activities. Positive impact of VLRs (and subnational reviews) beyond monitoring and reporting, as levers for transformation and grounding subnational sustainable development strategies on disaggregated and localized data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster systematic participation of subnational governments in SDG coordination and monitoring, follow-up and review mechanisms at the national level. Support subnational institutions to set up and strengthen SDG monitoring, follow-up, review systems. Apply common definitions of urban concepts and standards for monitoring and reporting on the performance of cities within and across countries. Strengthen reporting processes at subnational level.
VNR process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traction of global reporting, with increasing number of countries submitting more than one VNR. Diversification of tools to collect information for VNR. More systematic engagement of stakeholders in VNR process. Increased compliance with global voluntary guidelines. Spillover processes at subnational level. A few examples of well-defined processes for the VNR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VNR process not understood as a continuous cycle - weak linkages between successive VNRs. Lack of follow-up activities to the VNR process. VNR process not well integrated with national reporting processes. Some areas receive less attention in VNRs (e.g. local processes, international public finance, good practices). Foster independent assessments and validation of VNR process and reports, and to incorporate such information into VNRs.

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National reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attention to reporting processes, driven by VNR success and drawing on existing reporting processes in some countries. Increased leverage of ICTs for reporting and communication with the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition of specific processes for national reporting (e.g. frequency, responsibilities, templates). Subnational, national and global reporting not coordinated/integrated. Limited reporting to legislatures, undermining oversight and accountability. Failure to report on actions from subnational level and non-state stakeholders. Challenges to link actions to results in national reports.
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing stakeholder involvement & number of different stakeholders in the VNR process. Diversification of stakeholders' tools for conducting independent assessments of SDG implementation, including shadow reports. Interest to engage in SDG monitoring by private / state actors (e.g. business and finance sector). Increasing use of digital solutions for stakeholder involvement and data monitoring, both in the VNR process and other monitoring frameworks. Stakeholders' contributions to development of indicators. Positive spillovers from independent assessment and reporting by stakeholders (e.g. networking, engagement with government, inputs to official reports). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention to challenges to civic space and other enabling conditions for stakeholder engagement. Limited transparency and information on SDG implementation efforts create asymmetries and undermine effective engagement of stakeholders. Government mapping of relevant stakeholders. Development of technical guidance and tools for engagement.
Policy coherence & integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of some institutional spaces for collaboration across levels of government in SDG monitoring and reporting. Emerging convergence between SDG reporting and performance-based reporting and indicators. Some efforts to align national evaluation systems to use them for SDG evaluations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster coherence and coordination in SDG monitoring, reporting and follow-up, across levels of government and with existing national monitoring/evaluation systems. Alignment of existing policies and their monitoring and evaluation frameworks with related SDG targets and indicators to enable linking implementation with results and reporting on progress. Monitoring and reporting on synergetic delivery of multiple SDGs. Reporting and monitoring on impacts outside national borders (i.e. spillover impacts) and factoring these into overall national progress on SDGs. Capitalize synergies, and address linkages and tradeoffs between the SDGs in monitoring and reporting. Strengthen alignment of existing performance systems and indicators with SDG frameworks to report on progress.
Feedback loops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good practice of alignment of independent SDG evaluation with electoral and legislative cycles, which favors uptake of recommendations into government programmes and accountability. Strong uptake of SDG audit findings and recommendations, with some examples of changes in SDG implementation and governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited use by governments of information and evidence from SDG monitoring to strengthen SDG implementation. Limited use of performance information for decision-making and for accountability purposes.

Sources: Based on analysis presented in this chapter, data collected and inputs received in preparation for the report.