

1:35-2:15 Panel Discussion

1:35-1:55 Topic 1: Leverage data for evidence-based VNRs

Questions for **statisticians** in the panel; chair to share her experience as well

How have/are you currently supporting the VNR process in your country? What are some of the challenges that you have faced in supporting the VNR process?

The VNR Process in Albania was coordinated by the Prime Minister Office who is also leading the Agenda 2030 for the SDGs.

Nevertheless the document was prepared by a technical working group composed by line ministries where Instat is part.

There were other parties contributing in drafting the report like Local government unites, civil society, academia and business community, UN agencies and other international organisations.

The preparations for the VNR followed the guidelines on VNRs for the structure of the report and deadlines and I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate UN DESA for the Handbook prepared as it is a very valuable tool to assist countries who are preparing for the reporting.

The VNR presented the Progress on Goals and Targets in Albania, giving an Overview of baseline status and SDG priorities in the alignment of Agenda 2030 with the NSDI and other national strategies. It identified priorities at the national level in achieving the 2030 Agenda. The document presented the key priorities in Albania before introduction of the agenda 2030 and their linkages to the goals as well as the integration of the 2030 agenda with national EU integration agenda.

INSTAT, as part of the technical working group on SDG, played an active role by giving opinions and sharing the necessary data needed to measure the progress towards the Agenda. In addition INSTAT volunteered to prepare a statistical annex which accompanied the report.

The major challenges in preparing the report were linked to its structure focused on key priorities of the Government, which is positive in terms of showing the strong ownership of the government towards the agenda, but it needs to be followed by national sdg indicators and national sdg targets which should integrate indicator to measure national strategies, EU integration indicators and SDG indicators. In this context official statistics were the key tool to measure progress but the statistical annex didn't include all the data reported in the VNR.

In addition stakeholders who should play a role in supporting data production were mainly involved in workshops and consultative round tables but not as an integral part of the VNR production. External stakeholders should be more proactive.

There are lots of challenges in data production and disaggregation but I must say

The VNR preparation process gave us a good example of what we can achieve with good coordination. It showed that the mechanism in place worked and it was also the first attempt to produce a publication on indicators. The challenge will be keeping that path.

Still some questions remain and need to be addressed before the next VNR. Do statistical offices have the power to lead and coordinate the process of data production by ensuring that we will

produce indicators for all leaving no one behind? Will the indicators be nationalized, who will be in charge of this and if it will be the NSO to what extent this indicators will be used nationally for policymaking purposes?

We will continue our mission to produce indicators but we need to work together to have better evidence based VNR's.

Questions for policy makers/representatives from the missions

what important role does data play in the implementation of the SDGs and the VNR process? What are your data needs in the VNR process? What are the main challenges to incorporate data into the VNR?

Data and Statistics are critical to successfully implement SDG. We need data to track performance, to design policies and to hold the government accountable. Data needs are immerse to measure the progress and to make sure that no one is left behind. INSTAT, as the main producer of official statistics have the duty to produce quality data with the right disaggregation and most importantly to communicate the data. Other institutions are responsible for several indicators but most of them lack resources, coordination and also capacities to produce the indicators. High-quality disaggregated data is not always available especially for the administrative data. The main challenge for the next VNR will be to have more disgregated data that can measure the progress of the Agenda 2030. Albania is working on the next NSDI plan to better align agenda 2030with the national plans in order for NSI to support with the monitoring of the SDGs. The upcoming PHC 2020 it will be crucial to the SDG process and the next reporting of Albania will be with more data reflecting the progress of the SDGs in Albania.

1:55-2:15 Topic 2: Working together in the VNR process

Questions for all panelists

What are some suggestions on ways to bring the statistical and policy communities together in the VNR process? What are some of the tools that can be used to facilitate this collaboration? What are some of your data needs in future rounds of VNR? And how can those needs be meet?

- Resources
- More communication on the VNR process
- NSI to have a more inclusive and important role on the process