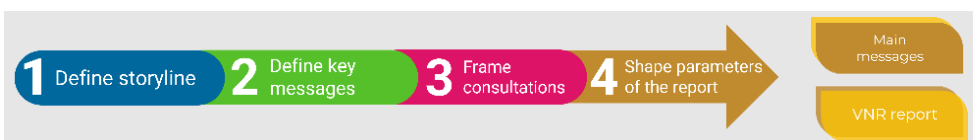


Telling your story and main messages: Drafting a VNR using a storyline

The most powerful way to get the main messages across in a VNR is to develop a storyline that ties together the report. A storyline is the overarching message of the report, which runs through the different sections. It ties together the report and helps ensure that readers come away with a clear understanding of the country's priorities and how the country addresses its main challenges. It is important to let the report 'tell a story' about the national priorities and what the country has accomplished given its context and communicating this clearly with the rest of the world.

Developing a storyline



TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A STORYLINE



First step

Developing the storyline should be one of the first steps of the VNR process. Spending time on the storyline from the beginning will help finalise the report in a consistent manner.



Stakeholder consultations

Holding a consultation early on with stakeholders on the main messages and the overarching storyline on SDG progress will help stakeholders to re-engage with what the SDGs are about. It will also help steer the direction of data collection and further analysis to understand the 'story'.



Think about audience

It will be important to think about audience(s) for the report and how to focus down on specific SDGs to help tell your country's story (see box).

MAIN MESSAGES

The **main messages** (700 words max) which are due in May are an opportunity to outline the VNR storyline. As they are sent to UN DESA before the final VNR report, these main messages provide clarity on the country's storyline before the report is finalised.

The main messages are also an opportunity to tell the world how successful your actions from previous VNRs have (or have not) been. They serve to communicate the country's story about what has been accomplished given the country's context, to outline setbacks or problems the country has faced, and highlight what support and resources the country needs to address main challenges.

While the main messages should emerge from the evidence and data collected on the SDGs, it is important that there is some consensus on the main messages and the overarching storyline of the report early on to ensure buy-in and a smooth sign-off of the final report.

These main messages will help shape the story of the VNR report and the narrative of any potential audio-visual material such as a video content.

Thinking about the audience for the VNR

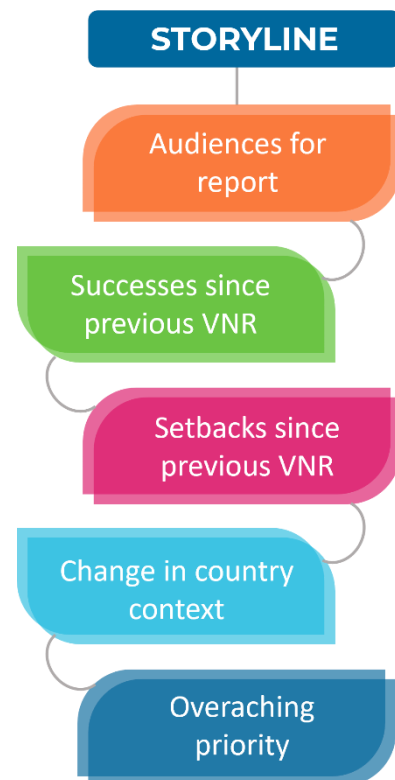
What was the primary audience(s) for the previous VNR? How did this affect the focus and analysis of the report? Was it the UN and member states? Was it the national political audience?

Have you modified the audience(s) for the current VNR? What changes will this bring about?

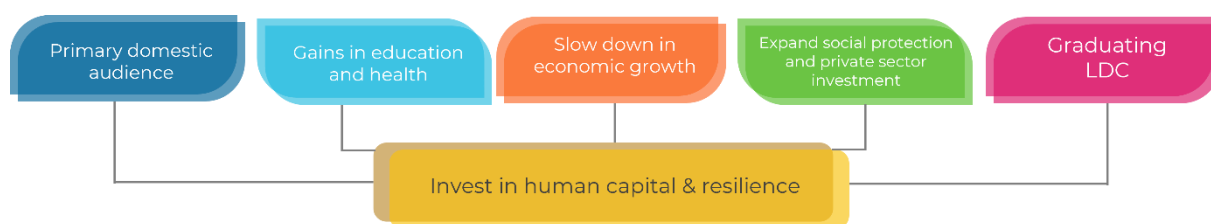
The primary audience(s) for the report might affect the following:

- Storyline
- Translation of the report into local languages
- Focus/in-depth SDGs
- Linking VNR into national reviews and planning processes

How to develop a storyline



Example of a storyline



HOW A STORYLINE SHAPES SECTIONS OF THE VNR REPORT

Selecting focus SDGs

The storyline will affect the choice of specific SDGs to focus on in-depth in the VNR report and the proposed objectives of the VNR. It will also affect whether you choose to narrow the choice of reported on SDGs and indicators to align more directly with your national plan, priorities and context.

Policy & enabling environment

The storyline ideally should reflect how the country has adapted to changing contexts and how your national development plan and sequencing of priorities is geared towards, or aligns with, implementing the SDGs.

Update from previous VNR

The storyline should summarise how the country has changed since the previous VNR if applicable. The storyline is an opportunity to pull together the setbacks and successes of the country since its last VNR.

Progress on the Goals

The storyline reflects the overarching story of your country's progress on the Goals and whether the country is on track, accelerating, improving and/or slowing down, especially since previous VNRs.

Leaving no one behind

The storyline should reflect how progress on the Goals, especially since previous VNRs, has improved the situation for those most left behind. The storyline will share how the government focuses interventions to address those at risk and how it will address main setbacks especially for the most vulnerable. It can draw on newly disaggregated data and innovations in producing disaggregated data.

Means of implementation

The storyline will highlight the main setbacks and success that have hindered or aided the implementation of the SDGs since the last VNR.

PART TWO: VNR PLANNING

VNR Milestones

(exact dates to be defined by UN DESA shortly)

EARLY MAY	Submission of main messages (700 words)
END MAY	Submission of questionnaire to UN DESA (listing HLPF presenters & use of video)
MID JUNE	Submission of VNR report
MID-LATE JUNE	Submission of audio-visual (video) for HLPF
MID JULY	High-Level Political Forum

There are generally four main phases in the VNR development process (5th phase being post-VNR period which we encourage countries to consider planning earlier). Stakeholder engagement & communication can be integrated into all phases (rather than considered as stand-alone activities).

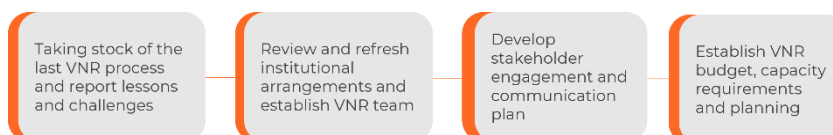
PHASES OF THE VNR PROCESS

AUG-OCT	Phase 1	Preparatory & planning phase
OCT-DEC	Phase 2	Data collection & analysis
JAN-APRIL	Phase 3	Drafting & review
MAY	Phase 4	Submit main messages
JULY	Phase 4	VNR report finalisation/approval, HLPF preparation & presentation
JULY-SEPT	Phase 5	Post-VNR period

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Listed below are some suggested main activities for the first and second phase. Also see the stakeholder engagement planning tool on integrating stakeholder engagement into all VNR phases (below).

First phase: Preparatory & planning



Second phase: Data collection & analysis



PART THREE: Integrating Stakeholder Engagement into all Phases of the VNR Process

