



**Scotland's place in the UK
Voluntary National Review**

Views from our members

August 2018

ABOUT US

Scotland's SDG Network has been formed out of a demand to increase working together and partnership across Scotland and beyond. The coalition is here to build awareness and engagement across civil society and with business and government. Where possible, it will support the implementation of the SDGs in Scotland and aims to ensure that the voice of those committed to sustainability is heard by key decision makers. Visit our website – globalgoals.scot – for more information.

INTRODUCTION

The UK Government's commitment to undertaking a Voluntary National Review in 2019 of the UK's progress towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals is a key milestone in its delivery of the SDGs, and Scotland's SDG Network - a coalition of people and organisations committed to building awareness and engagement across Scottish society - wants to work with you and other stakeholders to achieve a fully national and ambitious review.

Scotland's SDG Network is a partnership that links third sector organisations, communities, academics, government and business representatives to create a space to share lessons, resources and ideas regarding the SDGs. From the development of a national website for the SDGs to a special pop-up exhibition and the inception of Scotland's SDG Network, our organisations have worked to mobilise people in Scotland around the SDGs since their adoption. We have worked closely with the Scottish Government through the alignment of its National Performance Framework (NPF) with the SDGs, and now look to work with both the UK and Scottish Governments on this upcoming review.

Scotland's SDG Network recognise that this is the UK's first Voluntary National Review on the SDGs and that the UK Government has set itself a tight timeframe to deliver this review; it is vital that the UK Government begins its engagement with civil society and business in the best possible way as we look to build on this partnership throughout future National Reviews. National Governments working in partnership with civil society during the VNR process are championed at UN High Level Political Forums and the UK Government should be setting firm foundations and aiming high with its first National Review.

PROPOSALS

Following the first stakeholder meeting with the UK Government on the UK VNR engagement process on 31st July, Scotland's SDG Network has put together the following points for the Government to consider, with specific focus on engagement with Scotland, both in terms of devolved government and civil society. We have also approached DfID to meet in person in September to build on these initial communications, and our members would welcome the opportunity to host the team on a visit to Scotland during the VNR engagement process to hear more on the UK Government's plans.

Approach

In order for the VNR to be useful it must be "self-critical and honest". There must be co-creation with all stakeholders, including devolved nations, businesses and civil society, and the UKSSD's "Measuring Up" report is a great starting point for the UK VNR. An inclusive and participative process is all the more necessary with the High Level Political Forum 2019 addressing the theme 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.'

A focus on co-creation

This must mean more than stakeholders giving feedback on a draft through a consultation after the bulk of the document has already been

written. In other words, co-creation means input by stakeholders from the outset of the writing process. Scotland's SDG Network are happy to support and advise on the UK Government's undertaking of face to face meetings in Scotland and the promotion of an online process for engaging the public and other stakeholders.

Devolved Government coordination

Work should be undertaken in an open and transparent way with the respective SDG leads in the Scottish Government and other devolved nations to ensure implementation plans across the UK are as consistent and as comparable as possible. A transparent approach is required throughout the reporting and monitoring process and will help secure further input beyond the 'usual suspects.'

Framework

The VNR should cover all goals and all targets, and each chapter of the VNR should make reference to devolved nations, both in terms of civil society and devolved governments. An annex with reference to devolved nations would not be sufficient, and would stifle opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning.

SDGs in focus

The High Level Political Forum 2019 will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), in addition to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals) which is reviewed each year. Where engagement events take place on specific Goals, these could be run in parallel in Scotland and Scottish networks should be notified of events in England.

Measurement

Close attention should be given to the National Performance Framework (NPF) in Scotland, and the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 in Wales, which are examples of best practice in aligning

national reporting mechanisms to the SDGs. Devolved policy areas – such as education – and data collected at sub-national level should be considered and included.

Public engagement

Engaging devolved and regional stakeholders is critical, and as lead authors of this report, DfID should hold stakeholder engagement events early in the process in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, as well as offer opportunities for representatives to join further meetings in London as and when they happen. Real stories and visual representations of the progress the UK is making are required for the report, and the UK Government should look to Ireland for examples of how best to represent the impact of SDGs delivery on day-to-day life.

Openness

In the spirit of the UK Government's commitment to open government and the Open Government Partnership, we would like to see a clear and transparent timeline and process set out so we can share this with our members and stakeholders to increase participation in the VNR.

National Implementation Plan

The UK Government currently do not have an implementation plan for delivering the SDGs. Those Governments that are leading the way on the SDGs - such as Ireland - have clear implementation plans outlining how stakeholders will play a collaborative role with Government. We support calls that an implementation plan is developed at the same time as the VNR.

NEXT STEPS

The SDGs are a call to action on the most serious and challenging issues facing our society and environment throughout the next decade. We hope to discuss the role of Scottish civil society in more detail and

invite you to respond with the action points your Government will take to make sure this is a fully national and ambitious review.

We will publish the response on our website, globalgoals.scot. The purpose of collating this information is to inform the direction of activities in Scotland and the decisions the Network and its members will take to compliment the UK's 2019 Voluntary National Review and our engagement with the global Action for Sustainable Development.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact our Network Coordinator: Paul Bradley, paul.bradley@scvo.org.uk

This note was developed collaboratively by members of Scotland's SDG Network which includes over 130 members.