Integrating SDG evaluations and VNR reporting, drawing from the discussion paper on VNRs and SDG evaluations in Latin America and Anglophone Africa
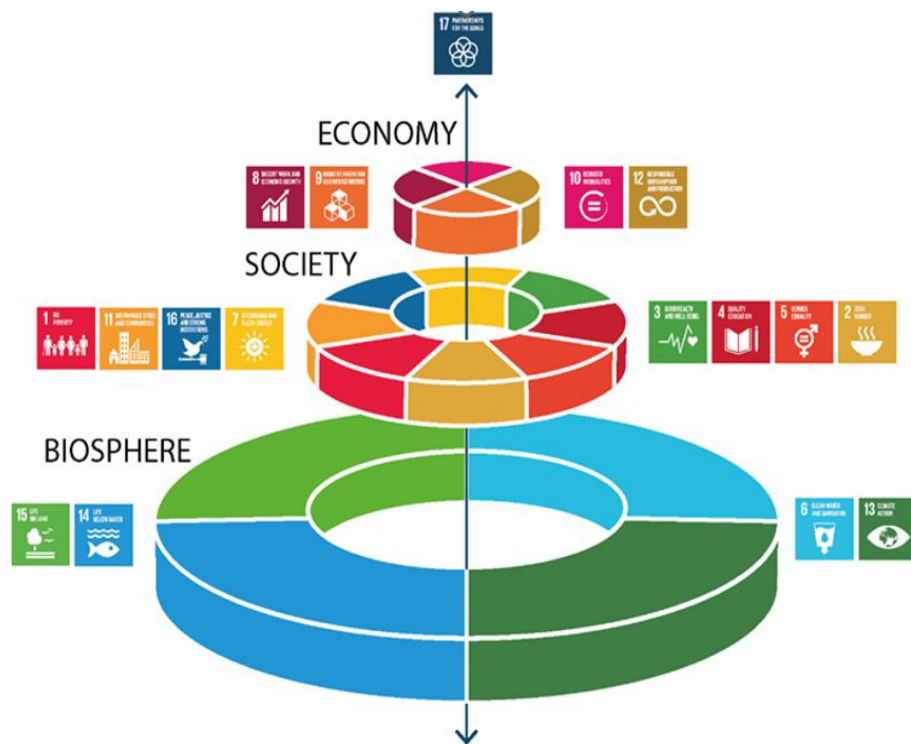
Eval Forward webinar

Dirk Hoffmann

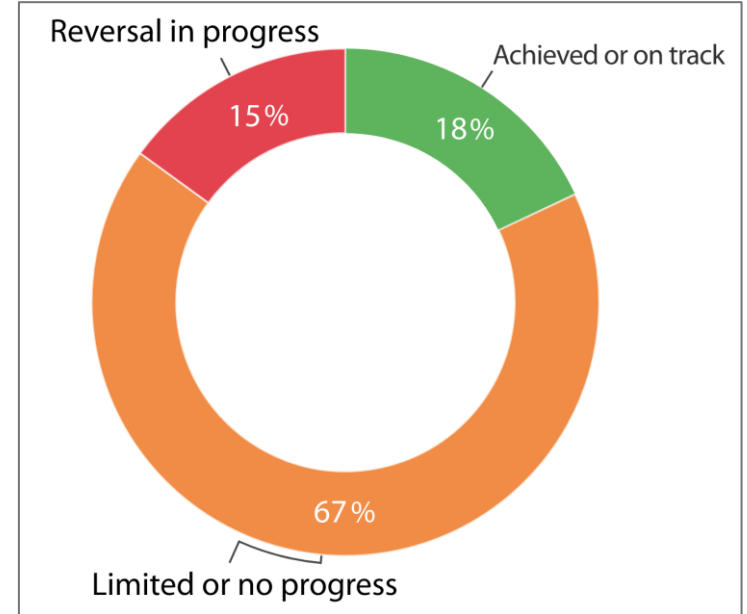ECD-Project Focelac+, German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval)

11 June, 2024

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- Formally adopted in 2015

- Establishes the **17 Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs)

  - Establishes a **follow-up** and **review mechanism: VNRs**

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG SUMMIT 2023
We are people and planet   We are people and planet
HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly
September 2023   New York

- Most SDGs not on track

- Annual SDG funding gap is growing

Reversal in progress — 15%
Achieved or on track — 18%
Limited or no progress — 67%

Source: Global Sustainable Development Report 2023.

Why evaluate the SDGs?

- Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, countries around the world have rallied to **include the SDGs in their national development planning**.

- Despite these efforts, this approach has not been operationalized in the guidance, discussion, statements and analysis of **VNRs**.

- VNR reporting is heavily **centered on monitoring**, with very little relation or reference to evaluation.

UN resolution on VNRs and SDG evaluation

United Nations

A/RES/77/283

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 May 2023

Seventy-seventh session
Agenda item 18
Sustainable development

**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 26 April 2023**

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/77/L.64)*]

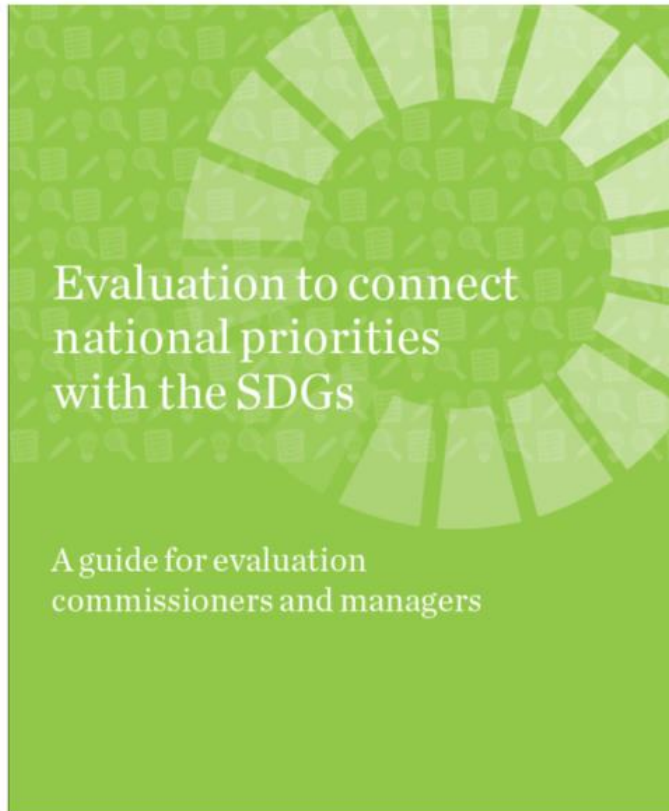**77/283.** **Strengthening Voluntary National Reviews through
Country-led Evaluation**

UN Resolution 77/283

"Strengthening Voluntary National Reviews through Country-led Evaluation"

- *Encourages* all Member States to present regular Voluntary National Reviews with a <u>Country-led Evaluation component</u> (…)

- *Encourages* all Member States to <u>use evidence from evaluations of the Sustainable Development Goals implementation</u> for decision-making and reporting on their progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda (…)

- *Requests* the United Nations agencies (…) to <u>provide support at the request of Member States</u> on their efforts to undertake evaluations of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (…)

SDG evaluation guide book

Evaluation to connect national priorities with the SDGs

A guide for evaluation commissioners and managers

iied · unicef · Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland · EVAL SDGs
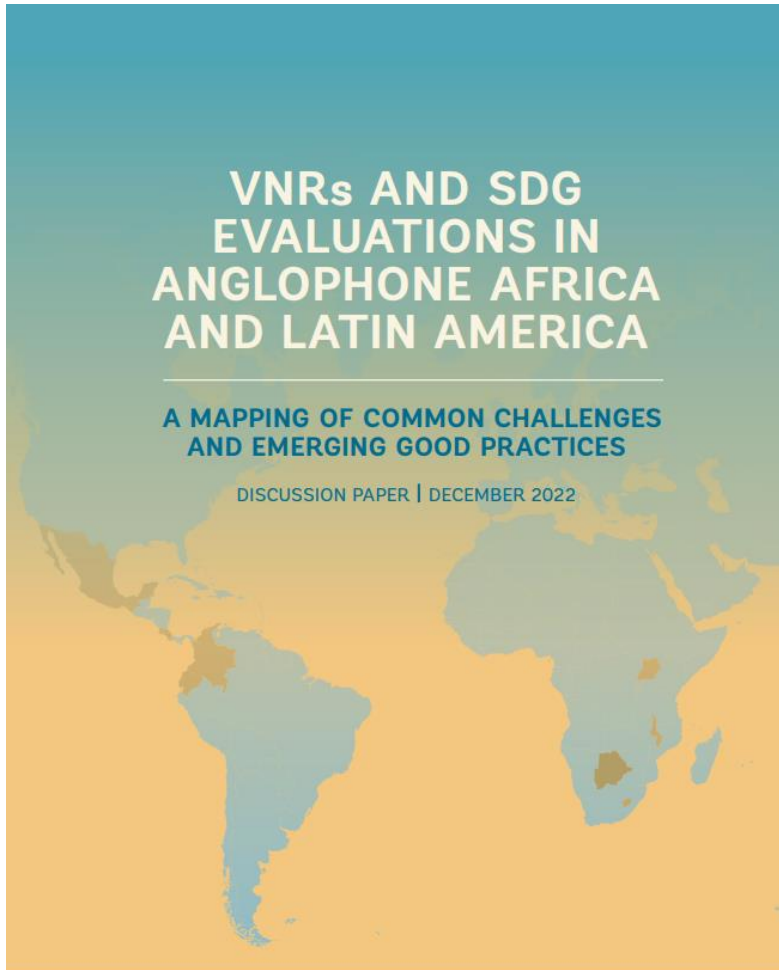
Country cases — Finland, Nigeria, Costa Rica

- Informed by emerging national practice (Finland, Nigeria, Costa Rica)
- Offers guidance, ideas and examples that countries can use to design and implement their own evaluation of the SDGs

SDG Evaluation Guidebook

VNRs and Country-led SDG Evaluations

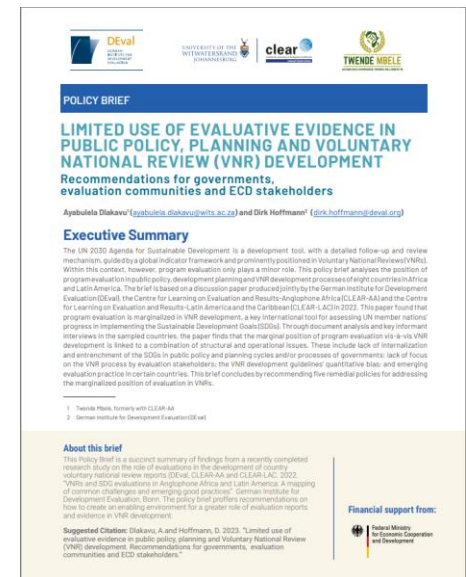| VNRs	Country-led Evaluations
Measure and report on national progress towards achieving the SDGs	Explain the targets and progress and support decisions, by addressing the complexity of the SDGs and their achievement, in relation to national policies and programmes
Track ongoing progress in programme implementation in outputs and in outcomes	Make use of VNR monitoring data but are primarily concerned with how well implementation, outputs and development outcomes were achieved, as well as with determining long-term development impact
Report on indicators against targets	**Examine and help answer 'why' targets are achieved (or not achieved)**
Driven by accountability to achieve the SDG targets	Driven by evaluative thinking and hence balance accountability with learning aspects to inform policy choices and influence programmes
Engage a variety of stakeholders at all levels	

Study and Policy brief

DEval
GERMAN
INSTITUTE FOR
DEVELOPMENT
EVALUATION

VNRs AND SDG
EVALUATIONS IN
ANGLOPHONE AFRICA
AND LATIN AMERICA

A MAPPING OF COMMON CHALLENGES
AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

DISCUSSION PAPER | DECEMBER 2022

Study „VNRs and SDG evaluations in Latin America and Anglophone Africa"

A mapping of common challenges and emerging good practices

Policy brief:
Limited use of evaluative evidence in public policy, planning and Voluntary National Review (VNR) development

Aim of the Study

- Contribute to the discussion on the **role of evaluation** in SDG reporting.

- Inform and provide inputs to global and regional **knowledge sharing among key stakeholders**.

- Provide data and analysis to inform further action to **advocate for improved reporting requirements** at the global level (VNR Guidelines).

Selected country cases in Anglophone Africa and Latin America

1. Mexico

2. Costa Rica

3. Colombia

4. Ecuador

Botswana

Lesotho

Malawi

Uganda

Contents and use of the study

- Assessment of the use of **SDG evaluation evidence** when measuring progress made by African and Latin American countries *vis-à-vis* achieving the 17 SDGs.

- Identification of **emerging lessons and good practices** in AA and LAC.

- **Presentation of the findings** of our research to VNR stakeholders, policymakers, evaluators and evaluation advocacy stakeholders.

Conclusions of the study

While all countries mapped for this analysis have integrated the SDGs in their **national planning**, only limited progress has been made to ensure that SDGs are taken as key references for sector-level planning.

There is a profound need to raise awareness as well as a common language on what SDG evaluation entails since there is a concentration of efforts on data-driven monitoring of the SDGs that has led to a shortage of time and resources to invest in building the necessary conceptual and methodological ground for SDG evaluation.

Policy recommendations

1. **For governments**: Integrate the SDGs and their indicators into public policymaking and planning systems.

2. **For parliaments**: Enact legislation or regulations that promote the mandatory evaluation of public policies and development plans.

3. **Evaluation stakeholders** should advocate for greater participation in VNR development processes.

4. The **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs** (UNDESA) should update the VNR development guidelines.

5. **ECD institutions** and **development partners** should augment their capacity building activities.

Thank you for your attention

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