

SDG Network Meeting Notes



Tuesday 16th October 2018

1pm – 4pm

Glasgow Caledonian University
Campus Life Seminar Rooms CL1 CL2 George Moore Building
Cowcaddens Road
Glasgow
G4 0BA

Session One: Listening tour of the UK's 2019 Voluntary National Review on SDGs

1:00 – 1:10 Arrivals. Tea and Coffee

1:10 – 1:20 Introduction from Professor Cam Donaldson, Pro Vice Chancellor, Glasgow Caledonian University

- Introduction to Glasgow Caledonian University
- Commitment to SDGs comes right from the top
- Cam Donaldson oversaw integration and alignment of the SDGs with the University's research strategy
- Research architecture framed around three levels (3 main Schools)
- Staff are organised thematically to encourage cross-discipline working
- Recent audit showed research strategy addresses all of the SDGs
- Flagship research project: Common Health. A five year programme of work base on partnerships of 34 social enterprises and other universities.
- Approach to SDGs is institution wide, such as involvement with Principles of Responsible Management Education, involvement with UN Global Compact and Change Maker campus status.
- GCU will be keen to continue to support and host Network events.

1:20 – 1:35 Update from UK Government – Robyn Skerratt, Department for International Development

- Department for International Development have a key role to play in delivery of the Voluntary National Review and are working with other departments, devolved governments and Cabinet Office
 - VNR will have a consultative process, it will be underpinned by data and will work across all four nations
 - Working very closely with the Office of National Statistics
 - Similar event was held earlier this year in England to set the tone
 - Voluntary National Review website has been set up. This not only includes relevant information but also opportunity to submit stories to capture good work across the UK before 16th November.
 - UK Government are working closely with devolved administration colleagues
 - There will be a commitment lead in the UK Government for each chapter
 - The VNR will be presented at the UN High Level Political Forum in July 2018
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1:35 – 1:50

Update from Scottish Government – Victoria Loughlan, Scottish Government National Performance Unit

- Introduction to the National Performance Framework and the vision set out through an open consultation process.
- NPF has been around since 2007 and the refreshed NPF was launched in June 2018
- NPF describes a vision for where we want to get to, but the 81 cross cutting indicators give us a snap shot of where we are.
- The NPF website also includes a data dashboard to provide a national picture.
- NPF is all about reducing inequalities within and between the National Outcomes in the NPF.
- NPF is now in statute. Due to the Community Empowerment Act 2015 Scotland must review the NPF every five years. NPF belongs to the whole of Scotland and not only a Scottish Government framework.
- Critically, the NPF embeds the Sustainable Development Goals and they are natural allies.
- 17 Goals are mapped across each of the Scottish National Outcomes. Indicators have also been aligned where appropriate and possible – spider web of delivering the outcome to deliver the goals.
- Open Government Action Plan 2017 was a driver in aligning the SDGs to the NPF
- NPF helps us with the SDGs as it will be refreshed on a rolling cycle every five years. This can help us to break down what we need to do in each cycle.
- From a Government perspective, we need to align thinking and tell contribution story, we need to build capacity and we need to build and work on our partnerships. We also need to use evidence to form action and evaluate.
- Draft environment strategy highlights how National Outcomes and SDGs link to their actions and plans.
- Qualitative aspects of the review is just as important as the statistics to understand what people's experiences are. Evidence must be wider than just quants.

1:50 – 2:00

Update from SDG Network – May East, Chief Executive Gaia Education

- Explanation of High Level Political Forum and Voluntary National Reviews.
- Reflections on shadow and official reviews and where we might want to go in Scotland
- High Level Political Forum replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2013
- 2014 High Level Political Forum focused very much on Millennium Development Goals.
- 2016 HLPF - 22 countries presented their voluntary national reviews but there were very few shadow reports.
- Shadow reports come from business, civil society, academics and international non-governmental Organisations.
- 2017 HLPF - 43 countries presented their Voluntary National Reviews
- May East to share with Paul folder of shadow reports for inspiration
- 2018 HLPF - Scottish Government and Gaia Education shared a spot at the High Level Political Forum and promoted the links between NPF and SDGs
- In September 2019 there will be a retrospective review and prospective view taken of how the High Level Political Forums have worked and will work in the future.

Questions:

1. Lewis: Asked Robyn whether the UK Government chapter leads have been confirmed and whether there will be stakeholder sessions with specific sectors in the process
2. Robyn (UK Gov): Finalising chapter lead list at the moment and the ambition will be to share it as soon as available. Should use the VNR website to keep checking back for updates and use the VNR website for submitting case studies and targeted conversations can come after this.
3. Lesley: Welcomed the alignment of the National Performance Framework with the SDGs but for this to be take forward it needs resource.
4. Victoria (Scot Gov): New team working on performance and outcomes and we are currently looking at resources. Team sees itself as enabling to support partners to take commitment to SDGs and NPF.
5. Janey: Strathclyde University Vertically Integrated Projects are supporting different groups to work in partnership and collaboration.
6. June: Focus on aspect of monitoring and reporting and the duty on the public sector. There are many strands of reporting and there is an increasing burden for us. How can we rationalise and harmonise this better?
7. Victoria: Scottish Government are currently looking at how public bodies are reporting and how they could do so in the future.
8. Daphne: How do we make sure that the VNR is not just an English review and that devolved nations are included? Also, how can we make sure that the outcomes and indicators result in policy change?
9. Robyn: We are still working on the details and in close contact with devolved governments. Cabinet Office have responsibility for Single Departmental Plans linked to SDGs and more information can be found on the website.
10. Victoria: Recognisable coherence is needed and we are not there yet but we are working on this to build capacity and work through the flow of how this all links together with policy.
11. Fran: We need to recognise the negative impacts of our actions on various SDGs. To get to where we need to by 2030 we need incredible transformation and this could cost 5-7trillion dollars a year and we are about 2 trillion dollars short. How do we make sure business and investors are involved in this discussions?
12. Robyn: Signpost to Ministers speech on 9th October on business contribution to SDGs.
13. Rob: How do you expect to get evidence and information into the VNR and will there be space in the VNR to look at how we work together?
14. Victoria: While there is the UK portal we will be having a conversation about the best way to collect data and stories for this in Scotland.

Session Two: Collaborating on next steps

2:35 – 2:40 Introduction to session from Paul Bradley, SDG Network

2:40 – 3:15 Breakout session A) Scotland's approach to the National Review
How can the Scottish Government ensure a meaningful and far reaching National review is conducted?

Group One:

- Challenges: creative disruption → Oil sector, is there a future?
- Parameters: policies, resources, activities, possible report framework?
- Meaning: Approach to the Voluntary National Review should include awareness raising
- Timeframe: For efficiency build on good work already out there
- Important to include National Performance Framework for maximum impact
- Meaningful = granularity = SDG Targets. No business as usual
- Framework for the report: opportunities and challenges or chapter four of measuring up as a good example
- Integration: NPF and SDGs as they have cross party and government support.

Group Two:

- Scope: Must link with format for UK Report.
- Should be a celebration but recognise and highlight progress and gaps.
- Must focus on Goals → Outcomes → Indicators (possible data annex).
- Snapshots of achievements and learning (case studies)
- Should not be a desktop exercise and must be realistic including capacity to deliver the SDGs
- Must be as honest and inclusive as possible – nationwide effort, geographical, SIMD
- Take a different approach to others – set a new way whilst learning from others
- Use SDG Networks and sub networks, possibly like the NPF review process (consultation) or UKSSD approach (goal leads)

Group Three:

- Goal 17 is a priority – partnership
- All 17 goals will be covered
- Scottish Government must work with partners aware of change throughout reports
- Need to acknowledge where we are not doing so well. Reference to Spain and Ireland doing well.
- How can we embed knowledge of most vulnerable people to ensure their voices are heard and acted on?
- Environmental data needs to go further – SDGs should be a vehicle for improvements to data.
- Domestic needs to be focused on and not get lost. Need to work on international and domestic and maintain the links between them.
- There are coherence issues. How does civil society include private sector views?
- Avoid meetings for tick box reasons – collect data on the groups, such as foodbanks.

Group Four:

- Representatives from diversity groups – young people
- Grassroots involvement and a methodology that supports this
- Level of engagement with civil society in implementing the NPF
- Risk – NPF could distract others from SDGs
- SDGs is a framework to interrogate government.
- Timing is an issue. Not a lot of individuals know about the SDGs
- Need to be in a space where the NPF can be used as a tool the public can use to hold government to account
- Empowering individuals (collective responsibility) to take responsibility for SDGs
- Need for aspirational targets and celebrating success across all areas – government and civil society
- Consistency of language – using plain English so others can embed into their strategies
- Meaningful recommendations should come from the VAR:
 - What does it do to improve my life?
 - What's next? What does the review add to the NPF in terms of changes and recommendations
 - Adding value for who?
- Learning from past lessons on meaningful engagement and different views building on each other (e.g. Ireland abortion example)
- Shadow reports contain different views, not always reflective of society.

Group Five:

- Independence of civil society will not be challenged as review will acknowledge shadow reports in future reports.
- SDG Network is in a good position to tap into research already done in universities
- VNR website should really be utilised to its full extent and therefore a communication plan must include provisions to make the connection to the site for strangers / more wide spread.
- UK and Scottish timelines for reporting doesn't align, but reporting can be on-going.
- Projects will clear and complete data can be used as case studies and show the bigger picture
- There has to be a clear and tangible carrot to encourage on time and regular reporting
- Make local and individual contributions visible
- Look at 2030 goals and planning in reverse with a consideration for periodical review, adjustment and contingency plans.

3:15 – 3:40

Breakout session B) Civil Society options

How can civil society organise itself effectively to support the official review and maintain independence

Group One:

- 1,000 church members discussed issues, dialogue around health, education etc. – we are okay!
- Issues where Scotland's poor performance we must look for more data
- Time Higher Education will launch ranking of University SDG performance in 2019 – something for third sector?
- Identify specialists

- Make Scottish Government aware of what's going on outside of government
- Get the message out through key stakeholder groups

Group Two:

- If the process is inclusive and effective then challenge must be part of this
- Cannot decide at the beginning what level of challenge
- Needs to be reciprocal
- Role of SDG Network should be to challenge and input into VNR production, a critical friend, equal partnership, approval and a role with development of National Implementation Plan.
- Shadow report may not be required if the official VNR is collaborative and inclusive with both Government and stakeholder views forming the final Voluntary National Review.
- SDG Network should expand influence and reach by mapping existing members by sectors and gaps.
- Funding needs for civil society to take forward SDG Network in Scotland.

Group Three:

- Looking at who the marginalised groups are and what the pathway is to reach out and find workable solutions.
- Making SDGs visible and relevant to individuals and communities at a practical and realistic level
- SDG Network could reach out to members to collect systems, data and perspectives.
- Scottish Government make Network more visible and share with wider Scottish people and communities
- It's a national report not a Scottish Government report. Include all in the VNR and any complimentary reports.
- Focus on how best to move forward together

Group Four:

- To what extent is the SDG Network representative and implications for resourcing
- SCVO have wide range of networks they could publicise and encourage other groups to get involved
- Timescales are a challenge for civil society
- There is a role of universities to articulate agenda in SDG terms – scope for reaching out to different groups.
- Awareness building of SDGs with young people via curriculum.
- Engagement needs to be fun and rewarding, has the power to inspire, need to keep focus on positive message to ensure continued engagement.
- Need clarity on shadow report – who has the capacity to do this?

3:40 – 3:55

Group discussion: long term SDG implementation

What are the challenges, necessary actions and priorities around implementing the SDGs across Scotland

- Not covered.

3:55 – 4:00

Next steps