

# A snapshot from Asia and the Pacific: SDGs in National Planning and SDG Review

## ESCAP's Support to the Voluntary National Reviews

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**ESCAP**

Economic and Social Commission  
for Asia and the Pacific

# Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific



- **Mainstreamed and embedded SDGs into national development plans** and strategies at medium- and long-term time horizons
  - Multifaceted approaches spanning policy integration, institutional frameworks, data enhancement, and targeted interventions



- **Institutional mechanisms and governance structures** for accountability and holistic development planning
  - For example: Sustainable Development Council in Sri Lanka, SDG Taskforce in Samoa, Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDG Monitoring in Bangladesh, National Committee for Sustainable Development in Thailand
  - Whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches
  - Thematic and SDG budget tagging



- **Expanding data availability on SDG indicators**
  - Selection and prioritization of national indicators
  - Use of SDG data for evidence-based decision making



# Follow-up and Review Architecture



## NATIONAL

Voluntary  
National  
Reviews



## SUB REGIONAL Knowledge Exchange

Sub Regional  
Fora on  
Sustainable  
Development



## REGIONAL Peer Review

Asia Pacific  
Forum on  
Sustainable  
Development



## GLOBAL

High-Level  
Political  
Forum on  
Sustainable  
Development

*Follow-up and review plays a critical role in ensuring effective SDG implementation, much of which needs to happen at the **national level***



**APFSD**  
Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

# VNRs and VLRs in Asia and the Pacific

Nearly all countries in the region prepared VNR and a growing number of voluntary local reviews

## 2024 VNRs

2 <sup>nd</sup> time (5)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Time (4)	4 <sup>th</sup> Time (1)
Micronesia (Federated States of) Palau Samoa Solomon Islands Vanuatu	Armenia Georgia Lao P.D.R. Nepal	Azerbaijan



# How does ESCAP support the VNR process?

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ESCAP offers support in...



## SDG Policy Analysis

This can include assisting in obtaining and interpreting data on SDG progress, measuring inequality, as well as examining social protection, energy planning and sustainable development needs.



## VNR preparation process

This can include developing VNR roadmaps, hosting inception workshops, mapping out stakeholder engagement, and reviewing drafts.

ESCAP offers support in...



## SDG Policy Analysis



SDG progress  
assessment



Leaving No One  
Behind



Social protection  
simulator



NEXSTEP



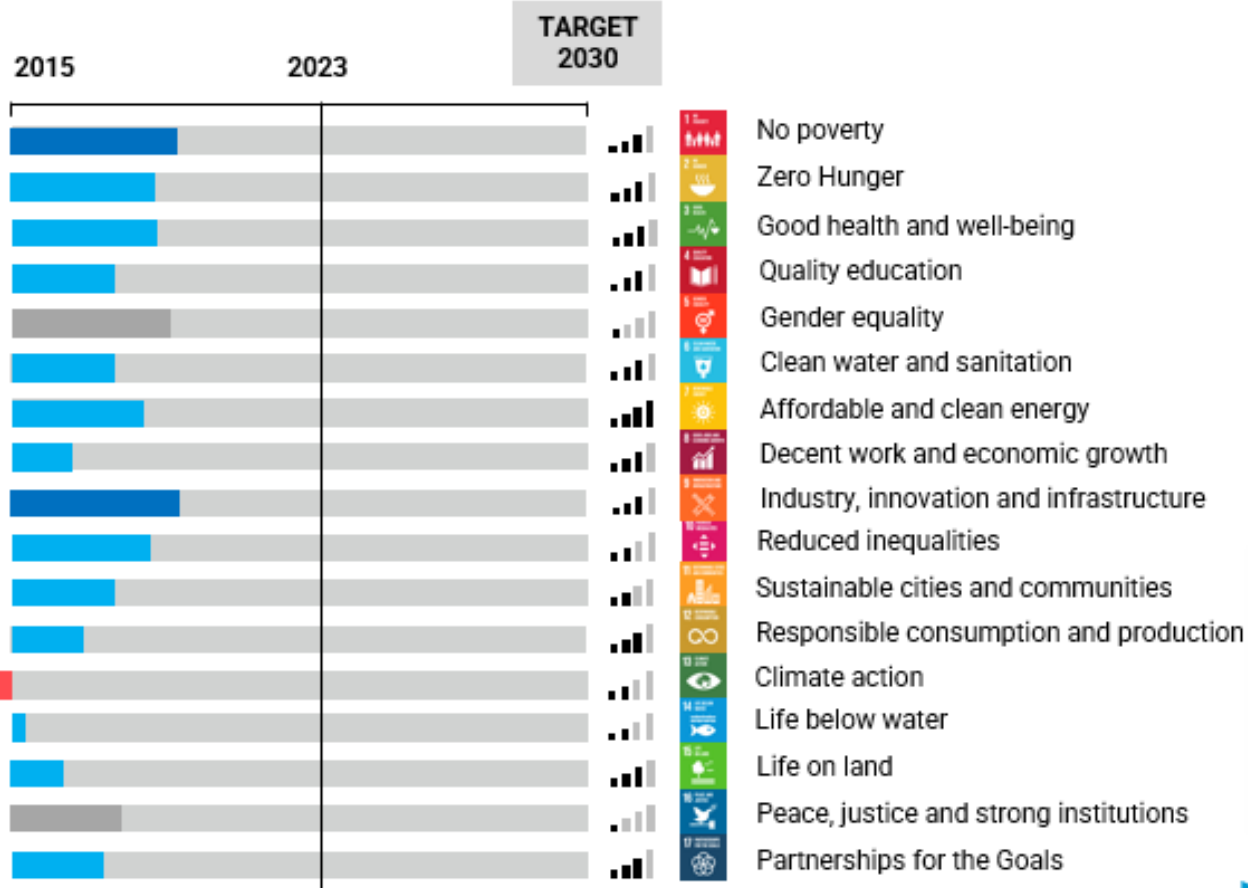
# SDG Policy Analysis

## What does this mean?

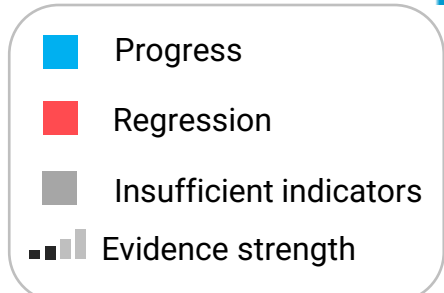
ESCAP provides analytical support to VNR-presenting countries.

ESCAP can aid in the analysis of SDG data, identify groups vulnerable to being left behind, assess levels of inequality, determine SDG impact, and estimate socio-economic and environmental effects of national policies.

This support can inform VNR analysis and ensure evidence-based policy formulation.



SDG Progress in Asia-Pacific 2023



ESCAP’s methodology measures current and expected SDG progress, enriching the VNR process with evidence.

The [National SDG Tracker](#), currently used by 17 countries, analyses whether a country is on track to meet the SDGs and the chance of achieving its Targets by 2030, based entirely on national choice of target values, indicators and data.

The results guide the VNR consultations and enhance the VNR report with internationally-accepted analysis.

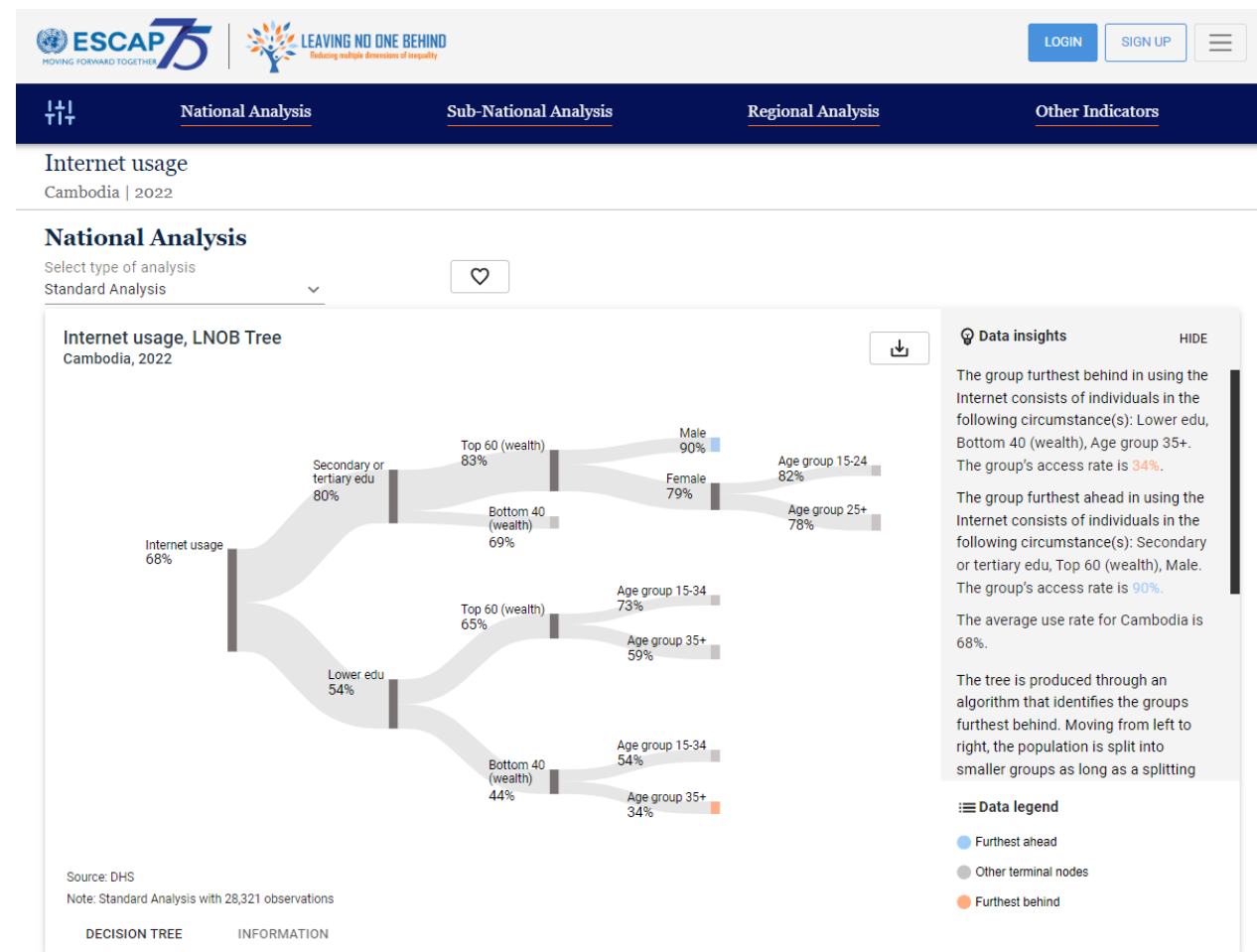




## Measuring inequality of opportunity and identifying those left behind

Using Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), ESCAP's [Leaving No One Behind \(LNOB\) Platform](#) helps identify and visually present the furthest behind in access to key services and opportunities at national and sub-national levels covering 16 SDG indicators in 30 countries across Asia and the Pacific.

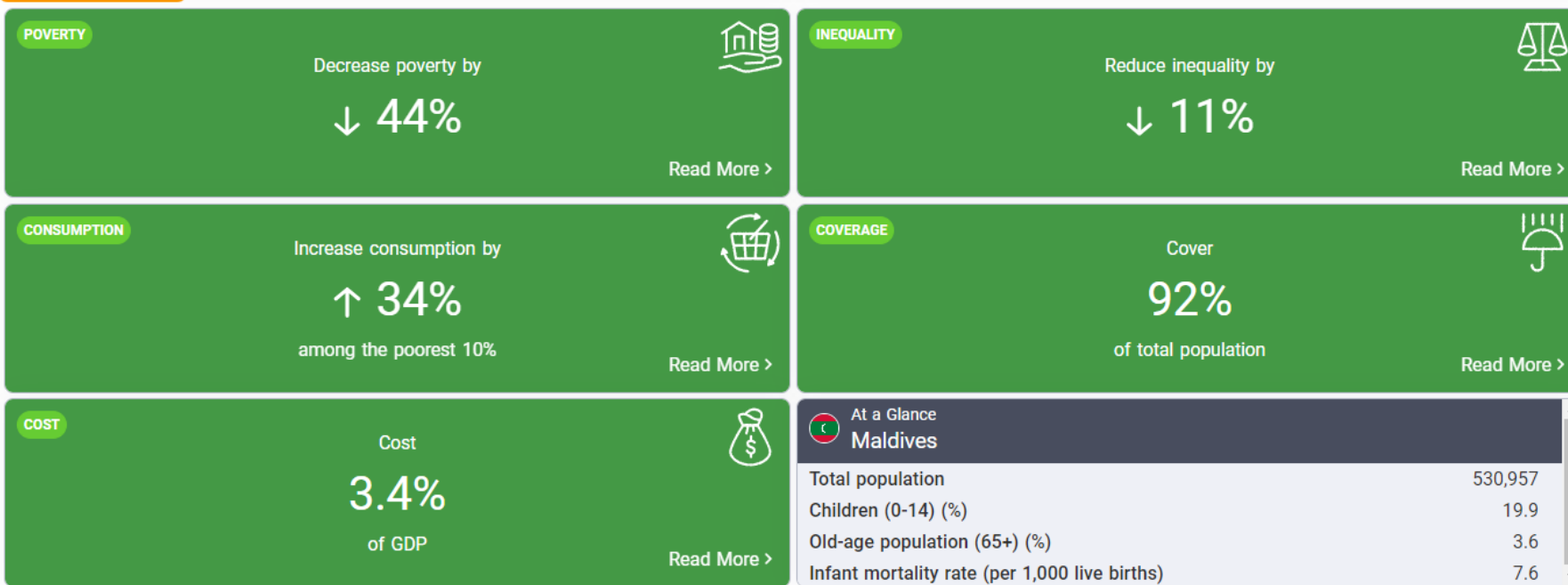
ESCAP can tailor its innovative LNOB [methodology](#) to other nationally representative surveys and monitor gaps and inequality in SDG achievements.





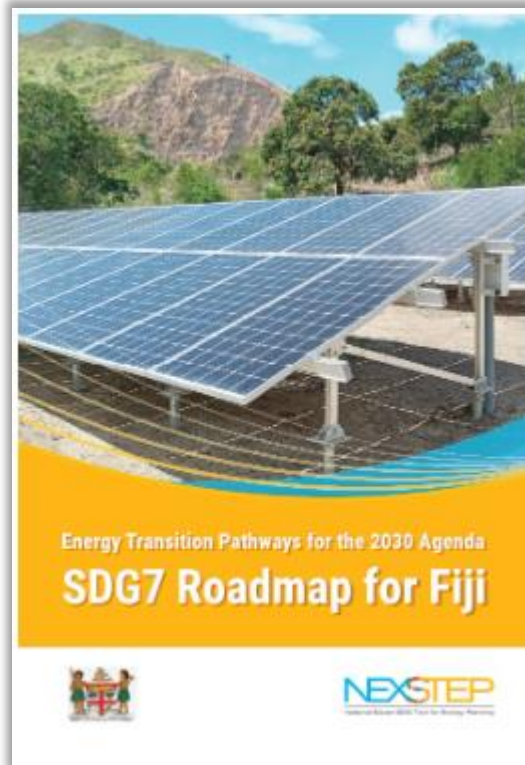
## Social Protection Simulator (SPOT)

[Show Data Explorer](#)

 In **Maldives**, introducing universal **Child, Disability and Old Age** schemes at a **Global Average** benefit level would:


*Social Protection Simulation – Universal Child, Disability and Old-Age benefits in Maldives*

Using latest data from household income and expenditure surveys, the ESCAP Social Protection Simulator estimates the impact of introducing social protection scheme on poverty, inequality and consumption. It computes the cost of simulated programmes, providing different illustrative options to expand fiscal space for social protection. The Tool helps users with the designing of social protection schemes and can be used as direct inputs into the VNR analysis.



SDG 7 Roadmap for Fiji, 2021

## National Expert SDG Tool for Energy Planning (NEXSTEP)

Methodology to assist energy Ministries to develop SDG 7 national roadmaps aligning national energy plans with SDG 7 and NDCs and to develop national energy transition pathways. The methodology includes three steps:

- energy modelling with estimated share of energy resources
- economic analysis to identify feasible options and
- scenario analysis of national policies and implementation

ESCAP offers support in...



## VNR preparation process



Strategic planning &  
technical support



Twinning  
Programme



VNR training &  
resources



Voluntary Local  
Reviews



## VNR strategic planning and technical support in preparation process

ESCAP offers technical and advisory support in the following areas:

- Development of a VNR roadmap, SDG prioritization and VNR planning process
- Designing of a VNR kick-off/inception workshop
- Stakeholder engagement, feedback process and validation workshops
- Conceptualizing the VNR storyline/narrative and process for developing key messages
- Integrating and utilizing data analysis in the VNR report
- Preparing for the HLPF presentation



VNR Inception Workshop,  
Timor-Leste 2022



## Twinning Programme



*Twinning participants from Mongolia visiting a national statistics institution during a study tour in Uzbekistan, 2023*

ESCAP connects two or more VNR-presenting countries from the Asia-Pacific region through the Twinning Programme. This is done in coordination with RC offices and national counterparts. It involves connecting VNR coordinating bodies and stakeholders and the creation of an online platform.

ESCAP supports the VNR twinning countries through:



Online workshops, joint training, & connecting stakeholders



Study tour to visit key institutions and exchange good practices



Peer review of VNR drafts and plans



Joint side events at APFSD & HLPF & side-by-side presentations at HLPF



## VNR Training & Resources

ESCAP has developed several **resources** and **e-learning tutorials** on VNRs

**VNR policy briefs** provide policy makers with practical tools and ideas to address common challenges in the VNR process.

[Stakeholder engagement](#)

[Putting the VNR into action](#)

**[2<sup>nd</sup> VNR Guidance tool](#)**: The purpose of this tool is to provide practical advice and concrete tips to countries to develop a 2<sup>nd</sup> (or 3<sup>rd</sup>) generation VNR.

**[E-tutorial on 2<sup>nd</sup> VNRs](#)**: This tutorial provides guidance to governments that are about to start the planning process for their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> VNR. It is the second course in the series.





# Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) Reports

To accelerate SDG localisation and capacities at city and subnational level, ESCAP developed [guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews](#) (VLRs). The guidelines build on existing resources and provide practical tools, checklists, and templates that local governments and other stakeholders can use when conducting a VLR

## VLR reports produced based on ESCAP Guidelines as of 2024 in:

**Australia:** City of Melbourne

**Bangladesh:** Singra municipality

**Fiji:** Suva City Council

**Indonesia:** Nusantara new capital city, Surabaya municipality and West Java province

**Malaysia:** Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory and Subang Jaya municipality

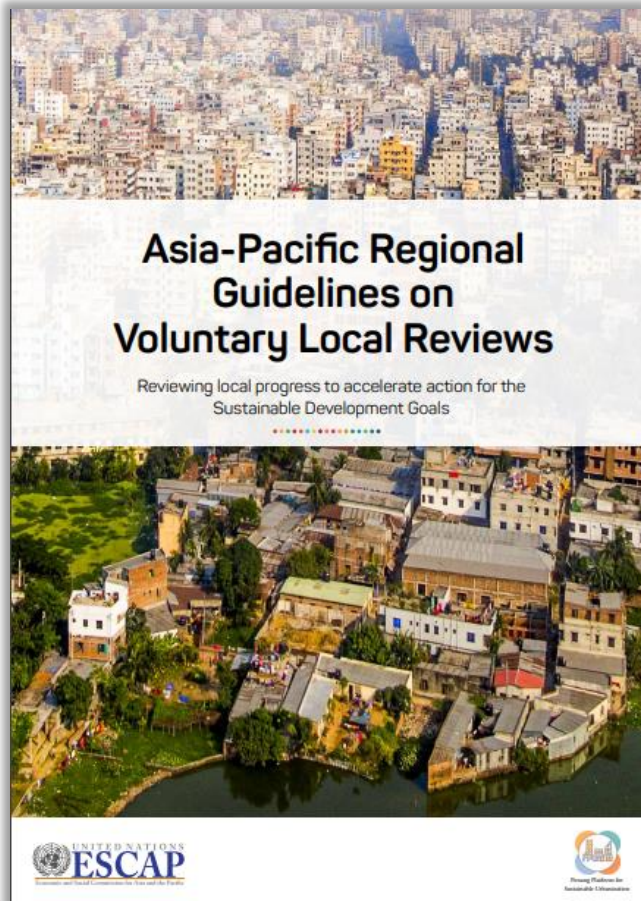
**Nepal:** Dhulikhel municipality

**Thailand:** Nakhon Si Thammarat municipality and Udon Thani

**Philippines:** Santa Rosa

Discussion paper on [Localising the SDGs to Address Interlinked Crises in the Post-Pandemic Era](#)

Organization of regular **peer learning opportunities**: Expert Group Meetings *Towards a New Generation of VLRs*; World Urban Forum VLR-VSR Days; VLR sessions at APFSD and the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum





# Thank you!



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### Looking for support?

Fill out the [VNR Support Request form](#) and send it to [escap-vnr@un.org](mailto:escap-vnr@un.org)



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