

Inspection of the Capacity- building Function of the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions in Support of the Voluntary National Review Process

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IED-25-019



INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;”* ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services conducted an inspection of the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the capacity-building function of the five United Nations Regional Economic Commissions in support of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process from 2020 to 2026. The inspection focused on support to Least Developed Countries (LDC), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and countries experiencing conflict.

Overall, the VNR-related capacity-building function of the regional commissions was relevant and aligned with their mandates and global, regional and national frameworks, and was responsive to the needs and priorities of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and select countries experiencing conflict. The regional commissions appropriately deployed a wide range of capacity-building approaches, including guidance documents, knowledge platforms and workshops, which contributed to further strengthening the application of the principle of leaving no one behind, thereby ensuring wider stakeholder engagement.

Member States both valued and used in their reporting process the VNR-related tools provided by the regional commissions, and their capacity and confidence to effectively implement the VNR process was enhanced. Also, overall quality of VNR reporting was improving since the regional commissions facilitated the sharing of practices, knowledge and lessons on the VNR process and related substantive areas amongst Member States. However, the mechanisms for systematic monitoring, evaluation and follow-up on VNR capacity-building activities and results were insufficient.

To mitigate financial and human resource constraints that imposed limitations on their VNR-related capacity-building activities, the regional commissions adapted their approaches and implemented innovative and cost-effective measures; introduced efficiency gains by further fostering collaboration and synergy among the United Nations actors; and leveraged external partnerships to strengthen their capacity-building function.

OIOS makes two important recommendations to each of the regional commissions to:

1. Revise existing guidelines or develop new guidelines for VNR-related capacity-building activities to systematize monitoring, evaluation, and subsequent adaptation.
2. Revise an existing partnership strategy and corresponding action plan and/or develop a new strategy and corresponding action plan to leverage external partnerships at national, regional and global levels to mobilize financial resources and support technical assistance.

I. Introduction and objective

1. The objective of the Office of Internal Oversight Services Inspection and Evaluation Division (OIOS-IED) inspection was to determine the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the capacity-building function of the five United Nations Regional Economic Commissions (hereinafter referred to as regional commissions) in support of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process. The five regional commissions comprised: the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA); the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).
2. The inspection assessed the regional commissions' capacity-building function to support Least Developed Countries (LDC), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and three additional countries experiencing conflict with similar context¹, hereinafter referred to as "Member States" in this report (see Annex I).
3. The inspection conforms to the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards. The management responses from the five regional commissions are appended in Annex III.

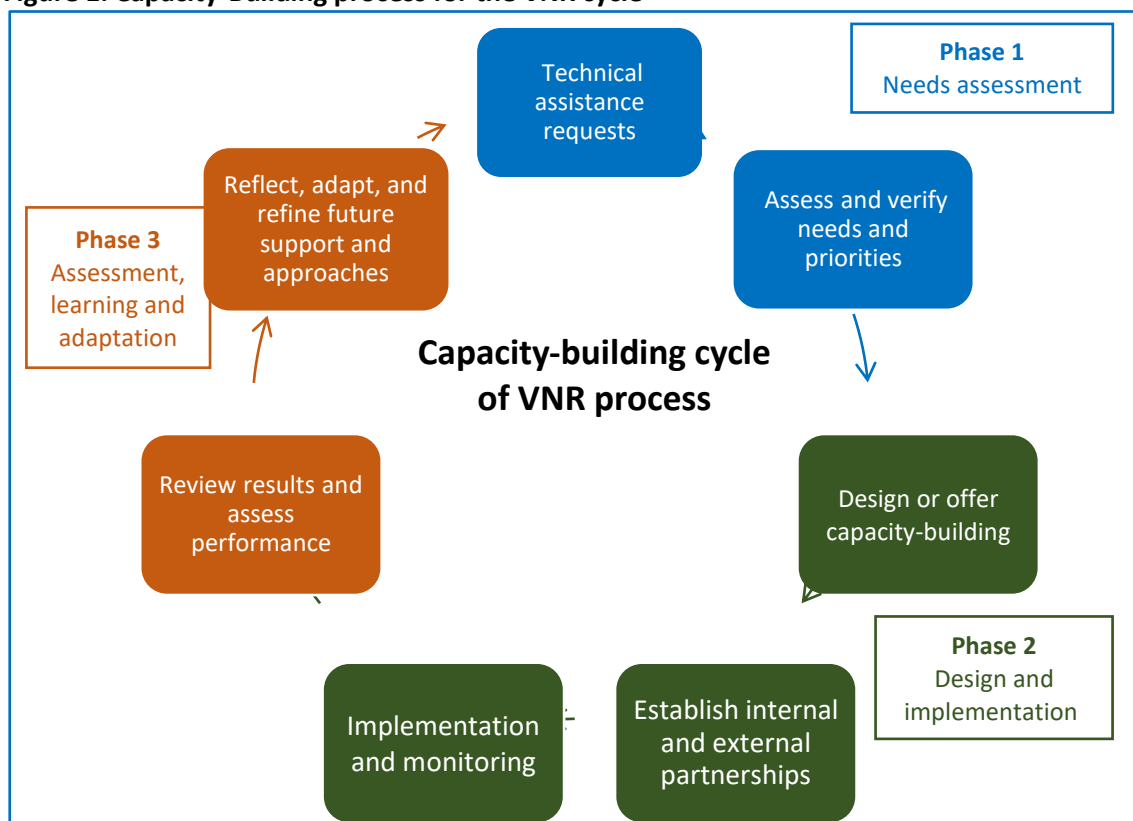
II. Background

4. **Mandate.** The regional commissions promote the economic and social development of their members, fostering intraregional integration and supporting the overarching implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereinafter "the 2030 Agenda"), including through knowledge production, provision of normative and operational capacity-building, technical cooperation, and strengthening the capacity for measuring their progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030.
5. **VNR process.** As part of the 2030 Agenda, Member States have committed to a systematic, voluntary, and country-led follow-up and review process on their progress in achieving the SDGs (the VNR process). This framework operates at three levels: national, supported by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and agencies, funds and programmes; regional, supported by the regional commissions; and global, supported by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The VNR process is designed to promote accountability, inclusive participation, and evidence-based decision-making, while ensuring that no one is left behind. Member States present VNRs annually at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Since 2016, 190 Member States have presented 402 VNRs.
6. **Role.** The regional commissions support the VNR process through enhanced capacity-building support upon requests from Member States, in collaboration with other United Nations system entities, multilateral institutions and other stakeholders. The VNR process at the regional level fosters peer learning, knowledge exchange, and dialogue on region-specific priorities and challenges.
7. The capacity-building process for the VNR includes the following phases, as shown in Figure 1:
 - a. Needs assessment phase in which technical assistance requests from Member States are reviewed and national priorities are verified. This enabled the regional commissions to align activities with shared regional needs, while also tailoring support for country-specific contexts as required to maximize relevance.

¹ Comprising ninety-five Member States.

- b. Design and implementation phase, which focuses on rolling out selected activities, mobilizing partnerships, and monitoring the implementation to ensure efficient and effective delivery of concrete outputs.
- c. Assessment, learning, and adaptation phase, which entails a review of results and performance, as well as the integration of lessons learned and good practices to adapt, refine and strengthen future VNR-related capacity-building support.

Figure 1. Capacity-Building process for the VNR cycle



III. Scope and Methodology

8. The inspection assessed the regional commission’s efforts to strengthen the capacities of Member States (see Annex II for the list of countries that published VNR reports from 2020 onwards) in preparing and submitting the VNRs under the 2030 Agenda. It focused on two immediate outcomes: a) use of guidance, tools, knowledge and skills in the VNR process; and b) enhanced capacity to plan, coordinate, and implement the VNR process. The application of leaving no one behind (LNOB) principle was considered as a crosscutting aspect for the inspection.

9. The inspection covered the period from 2020 to 2025.

10. **Methodology.** The inspection used a mixed-methods approach incorporating the following data sources as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Data collection methods.

Document review	115 United Nations documents, 121 VNR reports and 25 capacity-building technical requests and project documents.
Interviews	49 semi-structured interviews of United Nations staff (33) and Member States (16) comprising 69 interviewees (28 female and 41 male).

Focus group discussions	Six focus group discussions (five regional and one global) comprising 31 key informants (16 female and 15 male).
Stakeholder survey	An online survey was distributed in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian languages to 213 Officials from 43 Member States. A total of 74 responses (26 from Africa, 8 from Europe, 10 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 21 from the Asia-Pacific region, and 9 from the Arab region) from 46 Member States were received, representing a 35 per cent response rate. Women made up 49 per cent of the respondents.
Observation	Direct observation of one global VNR workshop (in person), nine regional/subregional workshops (virtually), and ten HLPF sessions.

11. Limitations included difficulty in:

- a. Obtaining information on funds utilized for VNR-specific capacity building;
- b. Attributing the support provided to the results observed; particularly as there were complementary streams of capacity-building activities in substantive areas which also may have contributed to strengthening VNR preparation and reporting; and
- c. Accessing Member State VNR focal points.

IV. Results

A. The VNR-related capacity-building function of the regional commissions was aligned with their mandates and responsive to the needs of the Member States

The capacity-building activities targeting VNR report preparation and presentation were aligned with relevant global, regional and national frameworks as well as the needs and priorities of the Member States

12. The regional commissions aligned their VNR-related capacity-building activities with global, regional and country-level normative and operational frameworks. These included relevant General Assembly resolutions,² the United Nations Secretary-General's voluntary common reporting guidelines for VNRs, and the handbook for the preparation of a VNR. Furthermore, the regional commissions positioned their VNR-related capacity-building within the larger context of the 2030 Agenda and regional and national frameworks for sustainable development, including region-specific agendas and programmes of action and national development strategies and plans. Within these broader frameworks, the regional commissions aligned their activities through systematic planning, design, and delivery of support to Member States in preparing and presenting VNR reports to the HLPF.

13. Taking into account the voluntary nature of the VNR process, the demand-driven provision of capacity-building support, and the involvement of other United Nations actors at global, national, and regional levels, the regional commissions used both formal and informal means to identify the needs and priorities of the Member States. These occurred through:

- a. Formal technical assistance requests submitted directly with the regional commissions or processed through the respective RCO or a custodian agency at the national level;
- b. Formal expressions of assistance requests through the intergovernmental bodies of the regional commissions, such as the Regional Forum meetings, ministerial conferences, and thematic commissions;

² A/RES/67/290 (9 July 2013), A/RES/70/1 (25 September 2015), A/RES/70/299 (29 July 2016), A/RES/72/279 (31 May 2018), A/RES/75/290 B (25 June 2021), and A/RES/77/283 (3 May 2023).

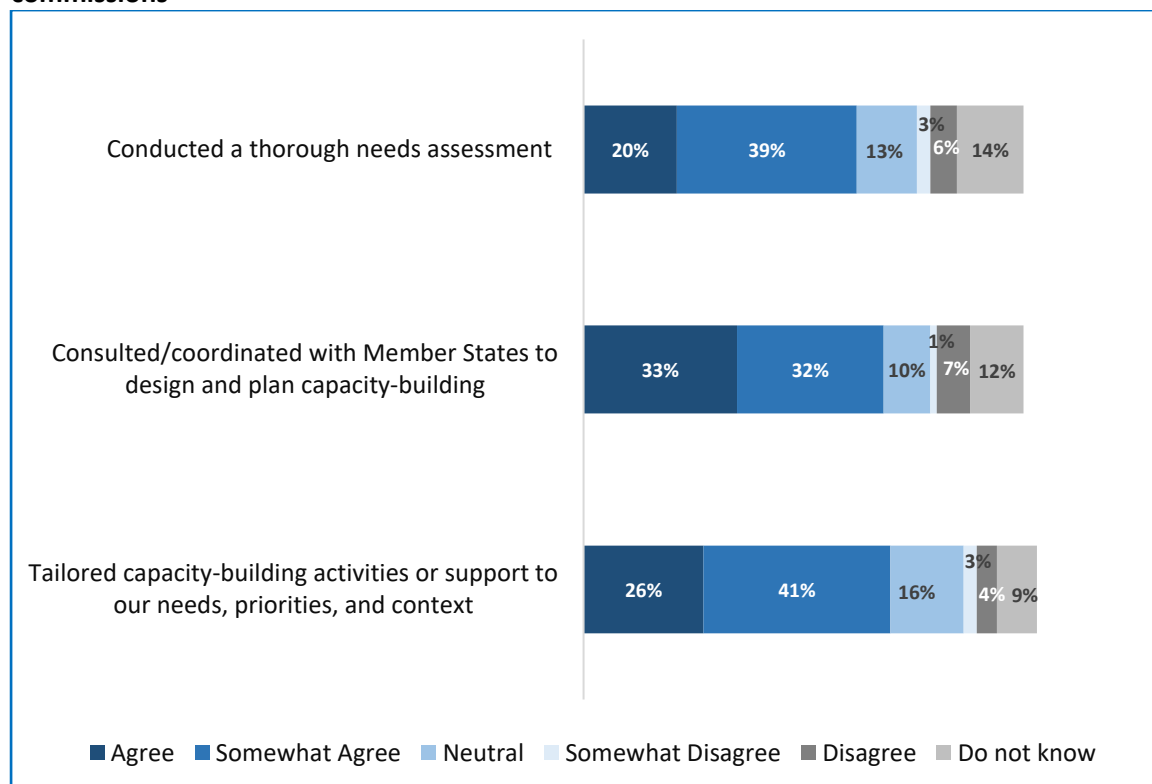
- c. Routine dialogue with national governments and discussions with the Member States presenting the VNR report.

14. Consultative emails to the Community of Practice - CoP (ECLAC and ESCWA) and surveys (ESCAP) as well as consultations during VNR technical workshops enabled them to identify the progress made, gaps identified, and challenges faced, thus identifying areas that required further capacity-building efforts. These were further augmented by:

- a. Feedback from substantive divisions and clusters of the regional commissions;
- b. Assessments of global and regional SDG databases, national and regional SDG monitors, country-specific data and fact sheets, inputs from the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and Common Country Analysis (CCA); and
- c. Reviews of previous VNR reports).

15. Member States survey respondents were largely positive about the conduct of needs assessment, consultations and tailoring of activities by the regional commissions as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Member State perceptions on needs assessments and consultations by regional commissions



Source: OIOS survey

The regional commissions deployed a range of approaches to appropriately respond to the diverse capacity-building needs of the Member States

16. The regional commissions, in collaboration with other United Nations actors and external partners, supported the Member States through three main capacity-building approaches that were well-aligned to their respective contexts as well as the needs and priorities of the Member States, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Capacity-building approaches employed by the regional commissions

Approaches	Purpose	Examples
Guidance and tools		
Guidance documents	Support member States in conducting VNRs and provide step-by-step guidance on the process of preparing and presenting a VNR in the HLPF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Secretary-General’s voluntary common reporting guidelines for VNRs. b. The handbook for preparation of a VNR. c. The practical guide for an evidence-based VNR. d. The SDG reporting guidelines. e. Guidance on integrating migration into VNRs (ESCWA). f. Guidance on Voluntary Local Review – VLR (Global and region-specific).
Knowledge portals and platforms	Help Member States to develop effective strategies, methodologies, tools and institutional mechanisms for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Knowledge hub on statistics for SDGs (ECE). b. SDG Gateway (ECLAC). c. SDG Help Desk (ESCAP). d. SDG Knowledge and learning platform and SDG Arab Monitor (ESCWA). e. Data portals (all regional commissions).
Analysis and reporting tools	Assist Member States in accelerating the 2030 Agenda by guiding policy, strengthening institutional capacity, and facilitating stakeholder engagement for sustainable development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrated planning and reporting toolkit – IPRT (ECA). b. Road Map on Statistics for SDGs (ECE). c. Institutional capabilities assessment tool (ECLAC). d. LNOB analytical tool (ESCAP). e. Compendium of good VNR practices (ESCWA).
Knowledge sharing and exchange of experience		
Global and regional VNR workshops.	Support in the preparation and presentation of VNRs in the HLPF, including peer learning and post-VNR implementation best practices.	Regional workshops to supplement the global workshops organized by DESA.
Peer learning and Twinning arrangements.	Knowledge sharing (guidance, experience, best practices, lessons learned).	Twinning or trilateral arrangements facilitated by ESCAP.
CoP.	Knowledge sharing among Member States, regional organizations and civil society.	Regular VNR CoP organized by ECLAC.
VNR Lab.	Share experiences, challenges, and innovative best practices.	Harnessing SDG interlinkages through the VNR: Best practices from the regions.
Webinars.	Knowledge sharing, training participants and discussion on thematic issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Stakeholder engagement. b. VNR-VLR Integration. c. Cross-regional peer learning webinar hosted by ECA.

Approaches	Purpose	Examples
Technical assistance / training		
Technical assistance.	Technical know-how and skill development.	Deployment of or remote support by regional advisers, staff, experts and consultants.
In-person training.	Knowledge sharing and technical skill development.	a. Training of Trainers on Quality of Statistics for SDGs (ESCAP). b. Thematic technical workshops (All).
Online training.	Thematic knowledge and skill development.	Gender statistics (ESCWA).
E-learning.	Self-paced capacity-building of officials and institutions.	Environmental monitoring and reporting (ECE), Official Statistics (ESCAP), and mainstreaming gender in VNR (ESCAP and ESCWA).

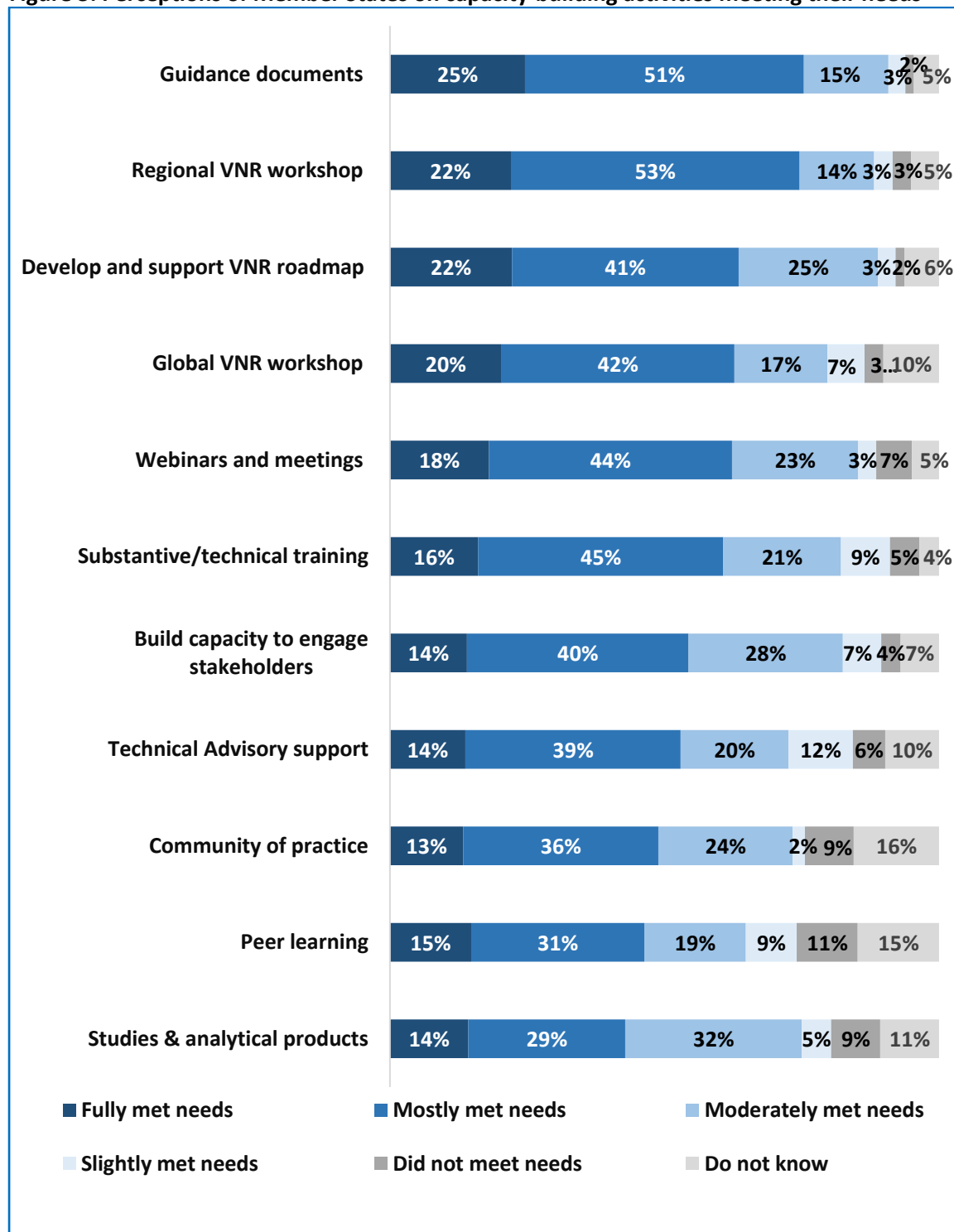
17. Most staff from DESA and the regional commissions interviewed reported that the commissions were agile and responsive in delivering capacity-building activities. This was achieved through the following measures:

- a. Keeping track of current needs, emerging priorities and evolving capacity gaps of the Member States;
- b. Designing and delivering activities based on common regional and subregional needs and priorities (regional and subregional workshops) as well as tailored support to some of the Member States, on specific aspects (e.g., development of roadmaps), keeping in view limited resource availability;
- c. Creating a capacity-building support menu on their respective websites with the types of support provided to Member States (ECE, ECLAC and ESCAP), which allowed flexibility for tailoring the support to the national context; and
- d. Fostering collaboration and facilitation of support among the United Nations entities, such as DESA and the United Nations country teams (UNCT), and external partners, such as regional and subregional organizations, to deliver capacity-building activities.

18. The regional commissions undertook much of their capacity-building activities within a regional context. In addition, direct country-specific support was provided at times or in collaboration with UNCTs and RCOs, when requested. When country-specific requests were received, ESCAP provided support using lessons learned from across the region, or from countries in similar situations, or through peer learning and twinning arrangements. Some regional commission staff interviewed noted that, given the diversity and number of countries served, it was not always possible to specifically tailor activities to the needs of every individual country. Therefore, their primary focus was to address common capacity-building gaps identified across their respective regions, with more country-specific support generally provided by the respective UNCTs and/ or custodian agencies of the relevant SDG being reviewed.

19. Within this regional focus, the regional commissions prioritized the needs of the Member States by delivering capacity-building activities tailored to their specific constraints and institutional contexts. OIOS observed this dynamic during the ECLAC-led subregional capacity-building workshop on the Antigua Barbuda Agenda for SIDS and its monitoring and evaluation framework: SIDS statistical and policy experts engaged in peer exchanges, validated the framework, and explored regionally relevant and country-specific solutions, thus strengthening their mutual VNR capacities. As shown in Figure 3, Member State perceptions regarding various capacity-building activities were positive.

Figure 3: Perceptions of Member States on capacity-building activities meeting their needs



Source: OIOS survey.

The regional commissions further strengthened the relevance of their capacity-building activities through mainstreaming the LNOB principle and wide stakeholder engagement

20. The regional commissions incorporated the LNOB principle into their capacity-building curricula and emphasized its application in various capacity-building activities. The regional commissions provided specific guidance and tools (such as the LNOB Analytical Tool by ESCAP, and the guidance on integrating migration in VNRs by ESCWA), mainstreamed the LNOB principle in capacity-building activities (as per 60 per cent of regional commission staff interviewed), and

increased the application of the LNOB principle in VNR reporting (found in 81 per cent of reports during 2020-2025). The capacity-building activities observed included specific sessions focusing on the best practices and lessons learned in the application of the LNOB principle. The VNR reports from 2020 to 2025 increasingly reflected efforts to focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups such as youth, women, persons with disabilities, rural communities and internally displaced persons, while also addressing various forms of inequality, including geographic and social disparities.

21. Moreover, the VNR reports indicated greater levels of inclusive, participatory and multi-stakeholder engagement in both the VNR preparation process as well as broader SDG implementation, demonstrating active collaboration with civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, local authorities, youth groups and other development partners. Member State officials interviewed and surveyed noted that the capacity-building activities of the regional commissions in strengthening stakeholder engagement resulted in increased consultations and participation in the VNR process (68 per cent) and found such efforts useful (84 per cent). Member State interviewees confirmed that inputs from ECLAC, ESCWA, and ESCAP strengthened the design and facilitation of whole-of-society consultations in their respective national contexts, resulting in wider and more credible participation of civil society, academia, the private sector and vulnerable groups.

22. The LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS slated to present VNR reports in 2026 reported increased stakeholder engagement and consultations, including through the capacity-building workshops provided by DESA and the regional commissions, which helped the participants to collect and analyze disaggregated data and familiarize themselves with the policies and initiatives that could be deployed to strengthen LNOB at the country level.

B. The VNR-related guidance and tools provided by the regional commissions were valued and used by the Member States in their reporting process

23. Member States recognized and valued the global guidance and tools for developing VNRs (including the Secretary-General's voluntary common reporting guidelines, the handbook for preparation of a VNR, the practical guide for an evidence-based VNR, and the SDG reporting guidelines as their primary technical reference) as well as region-specific guidance and tools provided by the regional commissions for their usability. Member State participants in the global, regional, and sub-regional workshops observed by OIOS expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the relevance, utility, and the quality of the guidance provided. These guidelines reportedly contributed to improved coherence, enhanced analytical rigor, and increased standardization of VNR processes. A review of VNR reports determined that approximately half (51 per cent) had integrated these guidance materials into their national review processes. Furthermore, the majority of Member State survey respondents (88 per cent) found the guidance useful, a view echoed by most Member State representatives interviewed who cited the following concrete uses and applications:

- a. The clarity and practicality of the regional VNR guidance (e.g., reporting outlines) as an operational tool for structuring VNR reports and shaping HLPF messages during the drafting and revision process;
- b. Regional templates, methodological notes, and virtual support provided were indispensable to Member States reporting for the first time;
- c. Tools such as the integrated planning and reporting toolkit of ECA enabling the mapping of national plans to the SDGs strengthened both the VNR process and national planning frameworks;
- d. Adapting global guidance to regional and national contexts (such as the data tools provided by ESCWA which supported the standardization of administrative records)

- helped Member States overcome internal coordination challenges amongst their ministries and statistical offices, and address data limitations;
- e. Direct, in-country technical support that complemented written guidance, including draft reviews, data validation, and the application of context-specific checklists (such as the contextualized templates and a region-specific validation tool provided by ESCAP) helped refine VNR sections and reconcile national data with the United Nations datasets; and
 - f. Monthly CoP (as in the case of ECLAC) was leveraged to enable lower-capacity countries to apply peer-generated guidance. Interviewees emphasized the value of annotated templates and examples shared by other countries, including one SIDS that adopted a peer nation’s consultation model to shape its own VNR process.

24. Regional commissions contextualized global VNR guidance and developed region-specific tools that were used by Member States to improve their VNR and SDG reporting. Regional commission staff interviewed noted that their entities had adapted global guidance to regional and national contexts and developed specific tools to facilitate their adoption, with examples of these guidance and tools as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Examples of guidance and tools developed by the regional commissions and their usefulness

Regional Commission	Guidance and Tools	Usefulness
ECA	Integrated planning and reporting toolkit.	Supported greater alignment between national planning frameworks, SDG indicators, and Agenda 2063, contributing to more integrated planning and reporting structures.
ECE	Roadmap on statistics for SDGs and guidance on communication of SDG indicators for VNR.	Provided guidance to national statistical systems on measuring and reporting on the achievement of SDGs.
ECLAC	SDG Gateway.	Enabled deeper mainstreaming of the SDGs into national development and resilience planning.
ESCAP	Data Governance Framework, SDG Gateway, and LNOB Analytical Tool.	Strengthened statistical systems, facilitated uptake of enhanced SDG tracking tools, and supported institutional development within national statistical offices (NSO).
ESCWA	Data Portal for the Arab Region, the Monitoring Application for Reporting on SDGs, and publication of meaningful VNRs of countries in conflict.	Facilitated the coordination between national data providers, promoted harmonized national methodologies, strengthened administrative data systems, and expanded the availability of SDG indicators, supported by high engagement in regional data and metadata workshops.

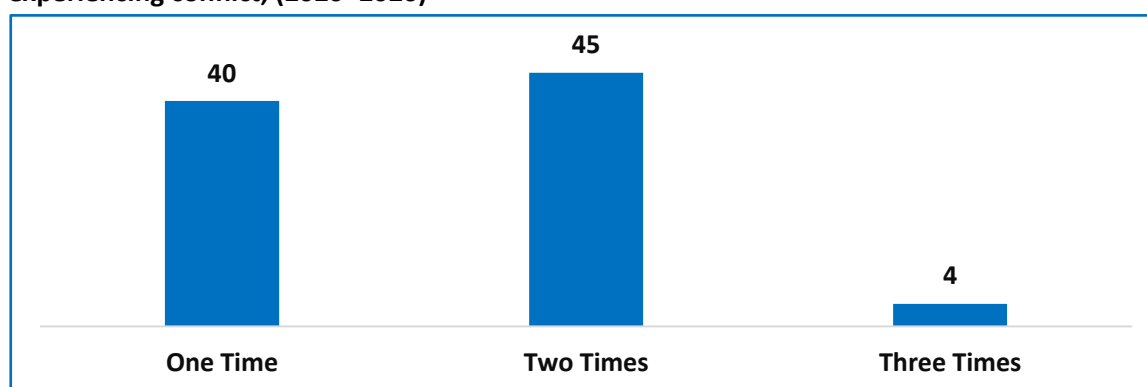
C. Regional commission capacity-building activities contributed to enhancing the capacity of the Member States, to effectively implement the VNR process

Member States demonstrated improved capacity and growing confidence in the VNR process

25. Member States demonstrated clear gains in capacity and confidence to conduct VNRs over the past six years. Detailed reviews of 15 recent VNRs and three synthesis reports showed increased expansion of SDG coverage, improved disaggregation, and clearer self-assessments compared to earlier reports. Furthermore, VNR submission trends revealed that between 2020 and 2025, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS produced 50 per cent of all global VNRs (121 reports from 87 of 95 countries) with an additional 20 VNR reports from these country groups slated for presentation in the 2026 HLPF; these submissions are shown in Annex I.

26. Demonstrating increased confidence, more countries presented their VNRs multiple times. Close to half (44 per cent) had presented or were slated to present the VNRs for the first time, while another 53 per cent had presented or were slated to present at least for the second time, as shown in Figure 4. Of the three countries experiencing conflict, two had produced a total of three reports during 2020 to 2025 (Syria in 2020 and 2024, and Ukraine in 2020).

Figure 4: Frequency of VNR submissions by LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, as well as countries experiencing conflict, (2020–2026)



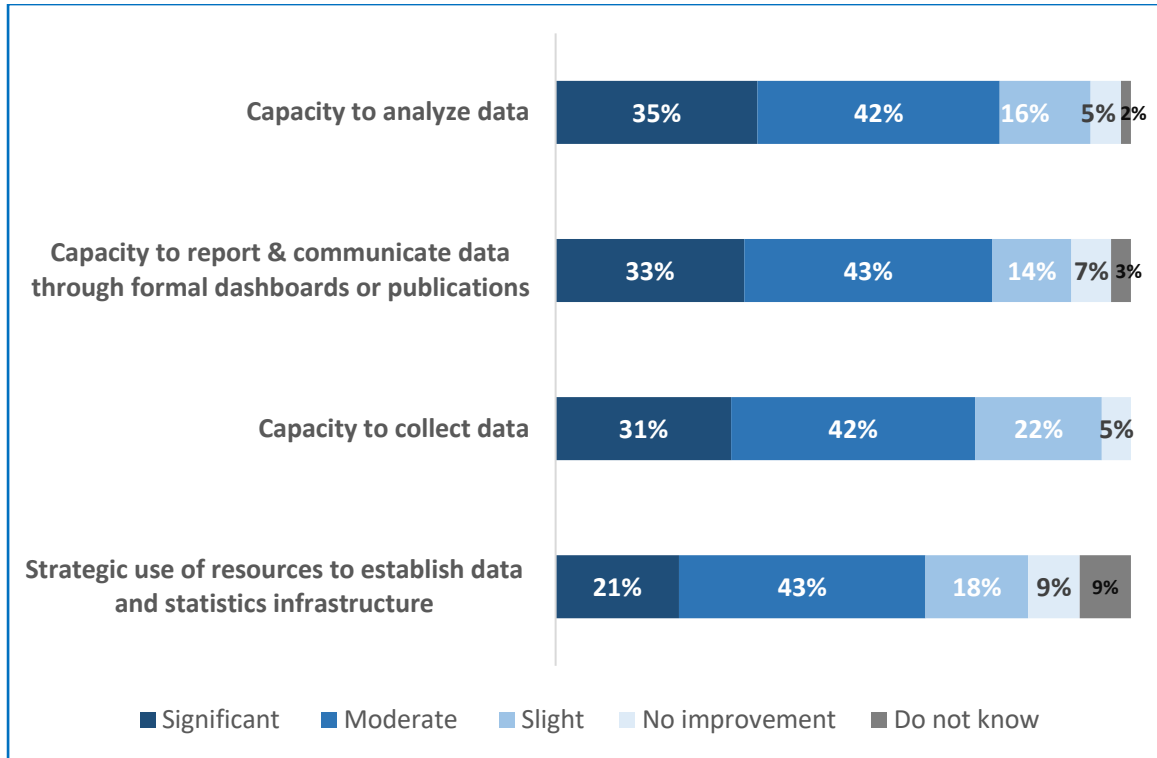
Source: VNR reports (2020-2025) and HLPF database.

27. Furthermore, the regional commissions contributed to the establishment of early institutional arrangements and clear VNR roadmaps, which improved coherence across the VNR preparation process and strengthened national ownership by the Member States in leading their own reviews. Most Member State survey respondents (87 per cent) reported that the VNR roadmap was helpful. Also, 70 per cent of countries had assigned SDG coordination and VNR responsibilities to high-level executive offices or lead ministries, signaling stronger ownership and integration of the VNR process into their national systems. Specific examples of how the regional commissions built capacity to strengthen government arrangements included:

- a. ECA's focus on readiness for the VNR process, which improved early coordination;
- b. ESCAP's inception workshops and workplans, which clarified roles amongst national actors; and
- c. ECLAC and ESCWA's regional workshops, which encouraged more reflective, policy-focused approaches.

28. Member State representatives further reported that the capacity-building activities of the regional commissions contributed to improvements in their data collection and analysis when preparing more evidence-based VNRs. Member State survey respondents specifically reported strengthened capacity to produce reliable, policy-relevant data, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: VNR-related improvements attributed to regional commission capacity-building support to Member States



Source: OIOS survey.

29. Through the provision of hands-on support throughout the drafting and validation stages, the regional commissions further strengthened national ownership of the process. Their guidance—through draft reviews, validation workshops, and targeted feedback—helped transfer of the skills and responsibility for preparing VNRs from consultants to national teams. In that regard, ESCAP and ESCWA staff interviewed specifically noted that country missions and on-the-job coaching enhanced Member States’ confidence and control over the drafting process, and ECLAC staff reported that early external reviews improved the structure and analytical quality of VNRs, thus resulting in more credible and nationally led reports.

30. Furthermore, in cooperation with DESA, the regional commissions contributed to credible and evidence-based preparation of VNRs for presenting at the HLPF. Member State, DESA and regional commission interviewees reported that such support reduced procedural uncertainty for first-time presenters and enabled returning countries to refine their narrative clarity. Following the conclusion of the HLPF each year, the regional commissions sustained capacity-building through CoPs, peer exchanges, and ongoing technical assistance, supporting Member States’ progress toward more evidence-based and analytically robust VNRs.

Regional commissions also enhanced the capacity of the Member States, by facilitating the sharing of practices, knowledge and lessons on the VNR process and related substantive areas

31. The regional commissions further strengthened the capacity of the Member States, through the exchange of experience and knowledge. This was confirmed by OIOS observation and stakeholder feedback and occurred through regional and subregional VNR workshops, peer learning (including CoPs and twinning), and the provision of knowledge products, which facilitated the exchange of experiences on VNR processes as shown in Table 4. Most Member States surveyed (64 per cent) also reported that peer learning was particularly useful.

Table 4: Examples of OIOS observations of the knowledge sharing forums by the regional commissions and their usefulness

Capacity-building activity	OIOS Observation	Feedback from Stakeholders
ESCAP: Ninth South and South-West Asia Subregional Forum on Sustainable Development (November 2025).	A rich and constructive dialogue took place among government, civil society, and youth representatives, who openly shared their experiences using VNRs to accelerate progress on the SDGs. The cross-country learning environment highlighted how inclusive stakeholder engagement, stronger monitoring systems, and innovative VNR practices can help advance more effective SDG implementation across the region.	Participants highlighted the value of shared knowledge and learning. Interviews with Member States confirmed that the regional workshops offered a sequenced, coherent framework for exchanging VNR approaches. Eighty-five per cent of survey respondents substantiated that such regional workshops were useful.
ESCWA: Webinar on the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2): Implications for VNR of the 2030 Agenda (November 2025).	Structured and forward-looking platform that highlighted the importance of integrated reporting—particularly the alignment of SDG reporting with related global agendas such as WSSD2 contributing to policy coherence and evidence-based reporting practices	Participants indicated that the shared experience was useful and would inform them of their work on subsequent VNRs. Eighty per cent of the survey respondents indicated that such webinars were useful.
ECLAC: CoP on VNR for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (November 2025).	A structured and inclusive platform for ongoing knowledge exchange among government officials, United Nations entities, and experts. The event provided an inclusive space for sharing good practices and lessons learned on multi-stakeholder engagement in the VNR process, fostering cross-sector learning, and demonstrating the value of collaborative dialogue.	Participants highlighted the meaningful experience sharing that took place during this CoP. Sixty-three per cent of the survey responses found such CoPs useful.

32. To complement the peer exchange activities described above, the regional commissions deployed “twinning” as a structured peer-learning partnership between two or more countries. This learning mechanism facilitated mutual experience-sharing, improved VNR quality, and reinforced cross-country learning. Regional commission staff interviewed noted that SIDS in particular benefited from twinning, citing enhanced VNR quality and strengthened integration of the SDGs as key outcomes of direct peer engagement. The use of twinning in ESCAP enabled the NSOs of the three participating countries to learn from each other’s institutional approaches, SDG reforms, and VNR practices. Twinning also strengthened peer-to-peer exchange among government teams and stakeholders, improved understanding of good practices in SDG monitoring, and generated practical lessons from previous reviews within the region.

33. Furthermore, VNR-related knowledge products developed by the regional commissions were effective in enabling knowledge sharing, as they consolidated, synthesized, and made country

experiences accessible in ways that supported peer learning. Most Member States surveyed (72 per cent) reported that these products were useful. Examples of the knowledge products included:

- a. ECLAC's Good Practices and Trends in VNRs, which demonstrated effectiveness by distilling lessons from more than 50 VNRs and feeding them into ongoing regional dialogue through the CoP;
- b. ESCAP's Practical Guidance Tool for Second VNRs, which translated accumulated country experience into actionable guidance, facilitating learning and continuity between successive VNR cycles; and
- c. ESCWA's VNR Compendium of Good Practices, which proved effective as a structured repository of countries submitted practices across all stages of the VNR process.

Mechanisms for systematic monitoring, evaluation and follow-up on VNR capacity-building activities were insufficient

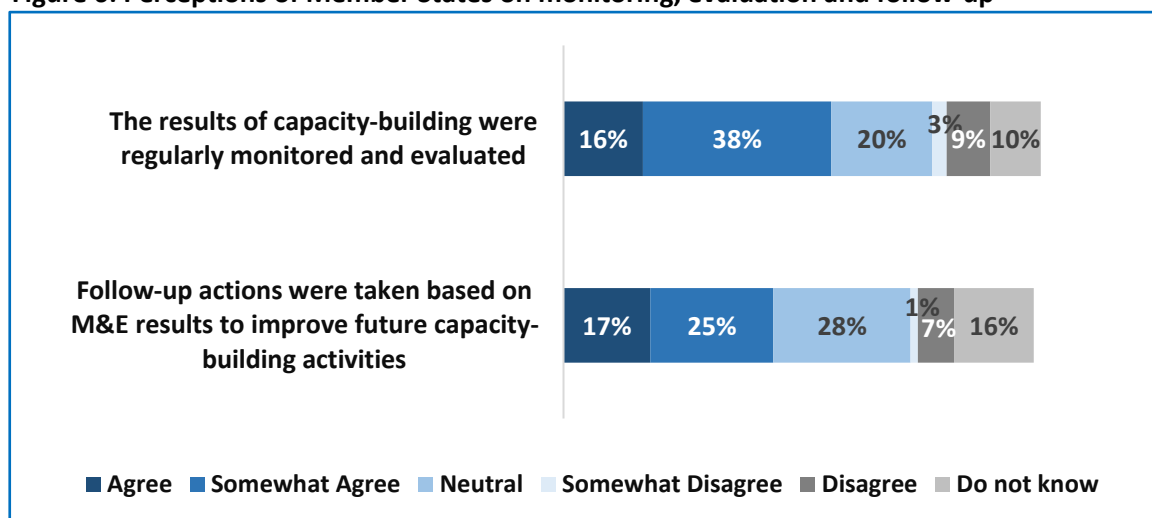
34. The regional commissions did not maintain systematic mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up on VNR capacity-building activities. The lack of institutionalized or standardized performance indicators, benchmarks, or attribution frameworks constrained the systematic capture of lessons learned and the evidence-based design and delivery of subsequent capacity-building support. The continuous tracking of improvements in SDG data availability sometimes served as a proxy for this gap and helped guide the design of subsequent capacity-building activities. Although some frameworks to assess capacity-building activities existed, they remained fragmented, event-driven, and insufficient to provide comprehensive or cumulative assessments. Some regional commissions supplemented post-event assessments with debriefings or informal assessments with Member States; however, these practices were neither standardized nor institutionalized. Regional commissions primarily relied on post-event feedback forms to understand the participants' immediate reactions. For example:

- a. ECA conducted a feedback survey following the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) in May 2025 which provided insights on the round-table panel on VNRs and VLRs, highlighting their role in fostering evidence-based and data-driven solutions.
- b. ESCWA conducted a post-event assessment at the end of the four-day in-person training on strengthening data systems through Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) and automated reporting tools in December 2025.
- c. ECLAC shared the recording of the CoP (November 2025) and invited participants to complete a brief survey on their SDG and VNR needs, and to confirm continued participation or nominate additional representatives.

35. The assessment of capacity-building outcomes was also inadequate. Evidence of results was sporadically documented and often relied on indirect indicators, such as repeated technical assistance requests, instead of sustained capacity gains. The regional commissions also struggled to directly attribute improvements in VNR quality to their capacity-building efforts, given the involvement of multiple actors in supporting the VNR process and the 2030 Agenda. Available analyses were largely descriptive without linking outcomes to specific capacity-building activities. Interviews with staff indicated that, in the absence of formal assessments of VNR quality or the results of capacity-building support, the regional commissions relied on ongoing engagement with Member State officials as a proxy for monitoring effectiveness. While such continued interaction signaled sustained interest in receiving support and provided glimpses of improvements at the national level, it generated primarily narrative and anecdotal information rather than measurable evidence obtained by systematically monitoring performance indicators.

36. Limited monitoring and assessment weakened feedback loops for lessons learned, with the regional commissions adjusting their support mainly in response to emerging needs, rather than through systematic reflection of previous efforts. Financial and human resource constraints further limited regular follow-up. Support was typically ad hoc, and frequent turnover of Member State VNR teams following submission complicated the ongoing assessment and resulted in limited institutional memory at the national level. Member States surveyed expressed lower satisfaction levels regarding the monitoring, evaluation and follow-up actions, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Perceptions of Member States on monitoring, evaluation and follow-up



Source: OIOS survey.

D. The use of VNR-related guidance and tools, and the skills gained from capacity-building activities, contributed to improved quality of VNR reporting

37. An analysis of the 121 VNR reports published from 2020 to 2025 revealed a marked improvement in the quality of submissions by LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. These VNRs included the following improvements: greater evidence-based reporting; more identification of good practices in governance; better data collection and analysis; more inclusive stakeholder engagement; and more consistent application of the principle of LNOB. Member State representatives as well as regional commission and DESA staff interviewed confirmed this assessment of stronger VNRs.

38. The analysis of VNR and synthesis reports identified the following specific improvements:
- Greater adherence to the Secretary General’s guidelines, VNR handbook and associated region-specific guidance;
 - More mainstreaming of SDGs in the National Development Plans and strategies, and the development of SDG roadmaps in their country;
 - Increased coverage of progress made on all 17 SDGs;
 - Establishment of SDG monitoring platforms to track implementation progress during the period 2020-2025;
 - Enhanced use of data and statistics for evidence-based reporting;
 - Strengthening of data systems to support the monitoring of SDGs, which enhanced the capacity to track progress and inform the development of evidence-based policies;
 - More consistent and comprehensive coverage of the application of the LNOB principle and the measures taken to reach the furthest behind;
 - Stronger VNR-VLR linkages and SDG ownership at the local level.

- i. Strengthened stakeholder engagement, highlighting broad and inclusive consultations, involving NSOs, sectoral ministries, parliaments, and subnational authorities, alongside civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, and development partners; and
- j. Increased reporting on measures adopted to evaluate and use feedback mechanisms and incorporate lessons learned into domestic policy formulation and action.

39. The capacity-building efforts of the regional commissions facilitated the strengthening of national structures and mechanisms to support the VNR process, through raising its profile amongst the constituent ministries and statistical offices. The evidence of such deepened institutionalization of SDGs at national and subnational levels could be inferred, with over 70 per cent of the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS placing the responsible mechanism for leading and coordinating SDG monitoring and reporting at the highest level (President or Prime Minister’s Office and Ministries). Additionally, over 17 per cent of Member States created specialized SDG councils, committees, task forces, or secretariats to lead the coordination of monitoring and reporting on the progress achieved. Fifty-eight per cent of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS presented the VNRs reported setting up integrated interdepartmental coordination frameworks for the implementation of the SDGs, which improved coordination between and across the national and local levels.

40. Despite these observed improvements in the VNR process and analyzed positive trends in VNR reports, certain areas requiring further improvement in the quality of reporting persisted, specifically the following, which could be addressed through future capacity-building endeavors:

- a. In the absence of enforcement mechanisms in the resolutions governing the VNR and the HLPF, the report content was restricted to largely descriptive narratives of progress achieved in the implementation of the SDGs with limited inclusion of evidence-based analysis of progress, lessons learned, discussions of policy successes and failures, and identification of key challenges;
- b. While accounting for strategic choices of Member States to deliberately focus on priority goals and targets, there was nevertheless a lack of comprehensive coverage of all the targets and indicators of specific SDGs; this is exacerbated by the global constraint where trend data and additional input were available only for 137 targets out of 169 from the custodian agencies; and
- c. A lack of quality data and disaggregation at sub-national levels.

E. To mitigate persistent financial and human resource constraints, the regional commissions implemented innovative and cost-effective measures, fostered collaboration and synergy with United Nations actors, and leveraged external partnerships

Financial and human resource constraints within the regional commissions have limited their VNR-related capacity-building activities

41. During 2020-2025, the regional commissions faced financial and human resource constraints due to persistent liquidity crises and hiring freezes, which impacted their delivery of VNR-related capacity-building activities. For ECA, the timing of the availability of funds from the Regular Budget and the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) did not coincide with the needs of the VNR process, further exacerbating their financial constraints. Only one-third of the Member States surveyed reported that the financial support provided by the regional commissions either fully or mostly met their capacity-building needs. Moreover, the regional commissions had only a few staff working in an ad hoc capacity to support the VNR process, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Staff in the regional commissions to support the VNR process

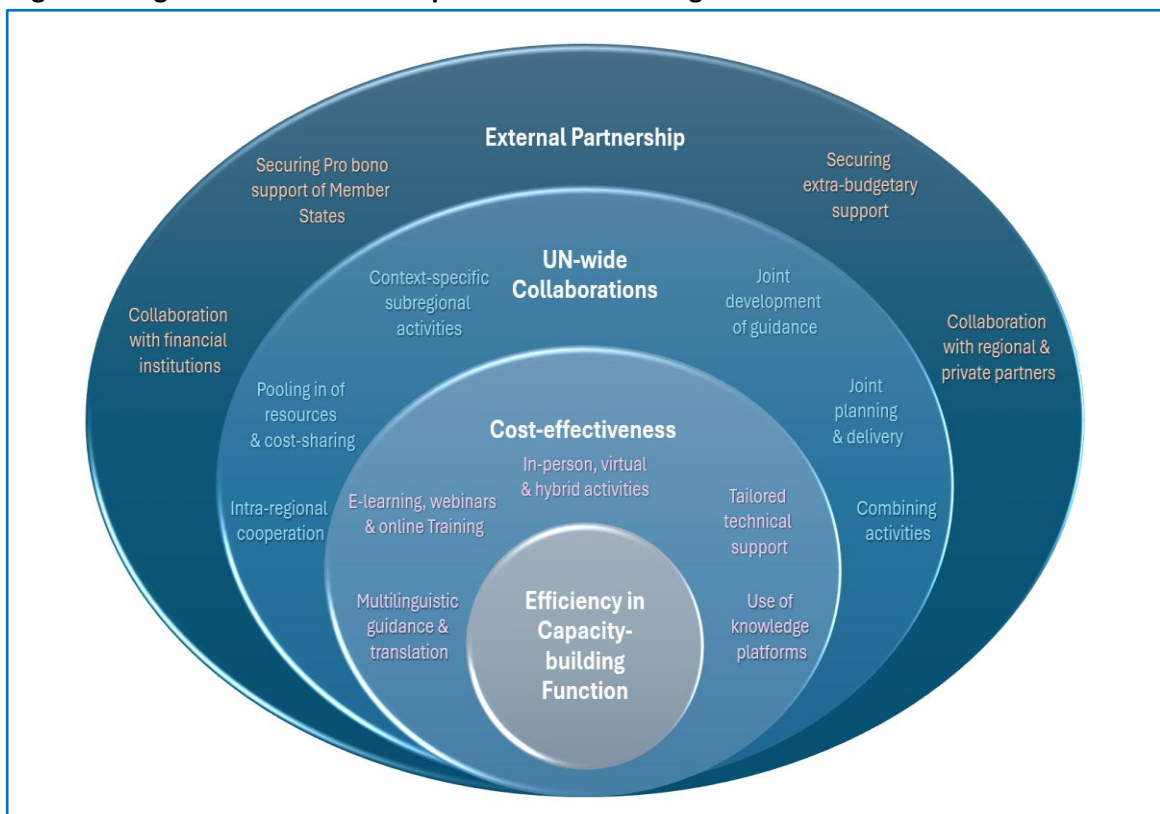
Entity	ECA	ECE	ECLAC	ESCAP	ESCWA
Staff	1	0	3	2	5

Source: Regional Commissions data.

42. As indicated by Member State as well as regional commission and DESA interviewees, these persistent resource constraints limited the ability of the regional commissions to deliver VNR-related capacity-building activities with the scale, frequency and continuity required to address the needs of the Member States in accelerating the SDG implementation. Fifty-five per cent of DESA and regional commission staff interviewed and all focus group participants revealed that limited financial and human resources restricted their ability to provide capacity-building support. Moreover, 60 per cent of the Member State interviewees, 70 per cent of the VNR reports reviewed (2020-2025), and 80 per cent of these categories of Member States presenting the VNR in the HLPF in 2026 indicated that inadequate resources for capacity-building restricted SDG acceleration and expressed the need for continued capacity-building support of the regional commissions.

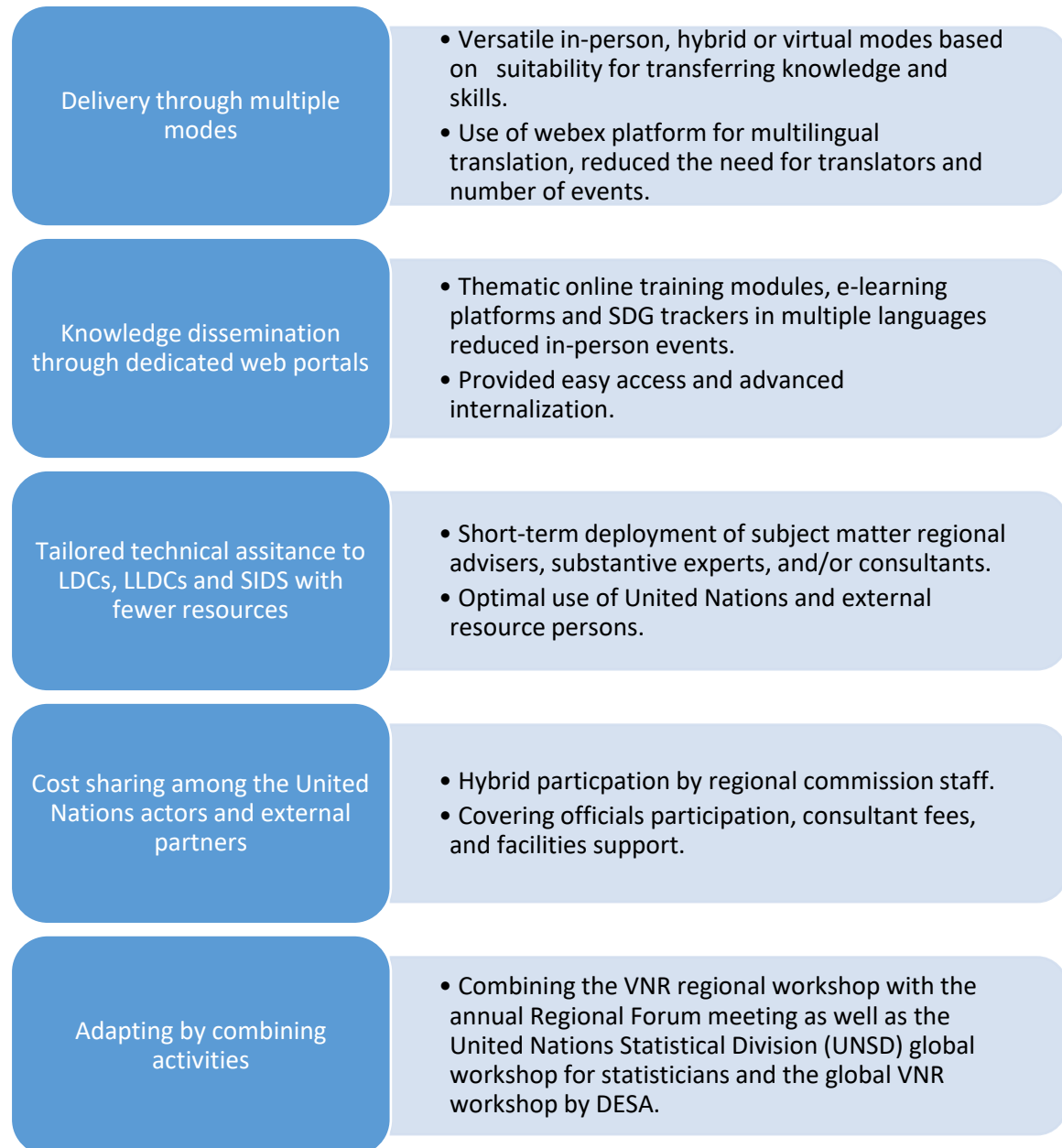
43. Drawing on the comparative advantages of relevant partners, the regional commissions collaborated with other United Nations system entities at the national, regional, and global levels, and fostered partnerships with external actors, such as Member States, as well as regional organizations, such as the African Union, Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, among others, to deliver their capacity-building function, especially in support of the VNR process. Nevertheless, despite persistent resource constraints since 2020, the regional commissions adapted to decreasing resources to plan and deliver cost-effective and efficient VNR-related capacity-building activities by introducing innovative and cost-effective measures, further fostering collaboration and synergy with United Nations system entities, and additionally leveraging external partnerships, as depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Regional commission adaptations to decreasing resources



The regional commissions adapted their capacity-building approaches to achieve cost-effectiveness

44. To mitigate the resource constraints discussed above, the regional commissions instituted multiple cost-effective and innovative measures, including:



The regional commissions also introduced efficiency gains by leveraging collaborations and synergy with United Nations entities

45. The regional commissions optimized collaborations with the United Nations actors at the global, regional and national levels by promoting joint work, combining activities, strengthening regional cooperation, resource pooling, and providing contextualized support to enhance the efficient use of available resources and to achieve economy of effort and cost-effective delivery. Specific examples of this collaboration included:

- a. Joint development of guidance materials, tools and policy briefs as well as collaboration in planning, designing and delivering VNR-related capacity-building activities;

- b. Facilitating the inclusion and participation of VNR-submitting Member States from their respective region in the Global VNR workshops;
- c. Promoting intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation and collaboration (including for respective overlap countries) with clear division of responsibilities for sharing region-specific experiences, best practices and lessons learned;
- d. Pooling financial and human resources, such as sharing of event costs, consultant hiring, participation of officials, provision of logistics and administrative support; and
- e. Providing context- and category-specific subregional workshops to strengthen the VNR process in collaboration with subregional organizations.

The regional commissions leveraged external partnerships and funding sources to further offset financial and human resource constraints

46. To further offset resource constraints, the regional commissions instituted steps to secure extrabudgetary funds, pro bono assistance, and specialized technical support from Member States and private partners to strengthen their capacity-building support of the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. Leveraging external partnerships facilitated more efficient use of and augmented the delivery of their capacity-building activities. More specifically, the regional commissions mitigated resource constraints by partnering with:

- a. Donor countries to secure extra-budgetary funds to facilitate or provide capacity-building assistance as per its member needs, which helped in the provision of country-specific and region-specific technical support, and capacity-building activities, facilitation of in-person participation of Member States officials in capacity-building activities, and building national capacities of Member States;
- b. Member States in organizing capacity-building activities, which included pro-bono use of venue and facilities, securing administrative, logistics and technical assistance, and use of substantive experts and resource persons from Member States;
- c. Regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the African Union, League of Arab States, Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, through mutual integration of regional agendas and Agenda 2030 and collaboration in delivering capacity-building activities; and
- d. The World Bank in the development of e-learning materials, tools and techniques, as well as with Asian and African Development Banks in developing online training materials.

V. Conclusion

47. Over the next four years, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda will require particular focus on transforming the lives of those who have been left furthest behind, many of whom live in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, as well as countries experiencing conflict. Limited resources within these countries warrant the enhancement of global and region-specific initiatives, partnerships and synergies to build their capacity to advance progress towards achieving the SDGs. As such, the VNRs will remain a critical vehicle to accelerate Member States efforts towards achieving the SDGs, and the capacities developed in this regard will remain useful in the context of any post-2030 Agenda that could emerge. The VNRs must transform from retrospective assessments into forward-looking roadmaps, articulating clear national priorities, identifying SDG accelerators and outlining concrete commitments for delivering on the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, the regional commissions should continue to adapt, innovate and strengthen their critical capacity-building support to Member States in enhancing data quality and adequacy and national and sub-national levels to support evidence-based reporting ensuring comprehensive coverage of all indicators and targets.

VI. Recommendations

48. OIOS makes two important recommendations to the regional commissions.

Recommendation 1 (Result C).

49. Each regional commission should **revise existing guidelines or develop new guidelines to systematize the monitoring, evaluation, and subsequent adaptation of their VNR-related capacity-building activities.**

These guidelines could include:

- a. Support regular, systematic and comprehensive measurement against pre-defined performance indicators; and
- b. Enable timely and customized adjustments of future VNR-related capacity-building support based on demand

Indicator of implementation: Development of guidelines for monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of VNR-related capacity-building activities.

Expected change(s): Improved effectiveness of VNR-related capacity-building activities.

Recommendation 2 (Result E).

50. Each regional commission should **revise an existing partnership strategy and corresponding action plan and/or develop a new strategy and corresponding action plan to leverage external partnerships at national, regional and global levels** to mobilize financial resources and support technical assistance to further strengthen the VNR-related capacity-building support to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Indicator of implementation: Approved strategy and action plan.

Expected change(s): Internal resource constraints are mitigated through external partnerships to support VNR-related capacity building of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

Annex I: List of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and Countries Experiencing Conflict

Regional Commission	LDC	LDC-LLDC	LDC-SIDS	LLDC	SIDS	Conflict Countries/State	Total
ECA	Angola, Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania (n=18)	Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia (n=13)	Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe (n=2)	Botswana, Eswatini, Zimbabwe (n=3)	Cabo Verde, Mauritius, Seychelles (n=3)	-	39
ECE	-	-	-	North Macedonia, Moldova (n=2)	-	Ukraine	3
ECLAC	-	-	-	Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Paraguay (n=2)	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago (n=16)	-	18
ESCAP	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar (n=3)	Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal (n=3)	Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu (n=4)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan (n=8)	Cook Islands, Fiji, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Tonga, Vanuatu, Bahrain (n=14)	-	32
ESCWA	Yemen (n=1)	-	-	-	-	Palestine, Syria (n=2)	3
Total	22	16	6	15	33	3	95

Annex II: List of VNR Reports Published by LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and Countries Experiencing Conflict Since 2020

Entity/ Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Planned)	Total
ECA	12 (Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Gambia, Liberia, Mozambique, Burundi, Malawi, Niger, Uganda, Zambia, Comoros)	7 (Angola, Madagascar, Sierra, Leone, Zimbabwe, Chad, Niger, Cabo Verde)	14 (Botswana, Djibouti@, Eritrea, Liberia, Senegal, Somalia@, Togo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Eswatini, Lesotho, Sao Tome and Principe)	7 (DRC, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Zambia, Comoros)	9 (Eritrea, Guinea, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Chad, South Sudan, Uganda, Mauritius)	6 (Angola, Gambia, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Seychelles)	14 (DRC, Guinea, Liberia, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia, Togo, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Malawi, Rwanda, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde)	69
ECE	3 (Ukraine, North Macedonia, Moldova)						1 (Moldova)	4
ECLAC	2 (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago)	6 (Bolivia, Paraguay, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic)	4 (Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Suriname)	3 (Barbados, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis)	1 (Belize)	3 (Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Suriname)	2 (Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis)	21
ESCAP	9 (Bangladesh, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Armenia*, Kyrgyzstan*, Uzbekistan*, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa)	5 (Afghanistan, Laos, Azerbaijan*, Bhutan, Marshall Islands)	2 (Kazakhstan*, Tuvalu)	9 (Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Mongolia, Tajikistan*, Turkmenistan*, Uzbekistan*, Fiji, Maldives, Singapore)	8 (Armenia*, Azerbaijan*, Laos, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Palau, Samoa)	6 (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kazakhstan*, Kyrgyzstan*, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea)	3 (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Tonga)	42
ESCWA	1 (Syria)		1 (Sudan)@		2 (Syria, Yemen)	1 (Sudan)@		5
Total	27	18	21	19	20	16	20	141

Legend	■ LDC	■ LDC-LLDC	■ LDC-SIDS	■ LLDC	■ SIDS	■ Conflict countries
*	ESCAP-ECE Overlap Countries			@	ECA – ESCWA Overlap Countries	

Annex III: Management Responses

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p.1/1




INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Demetra Arapakos
A: Director, Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

Date: 08 April 2026
Ref: SPORD/ADM01-01-30-11-5

Through: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General, Office of Internal Oversight
S/C De: Services

From: Claver Gatete, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA
De: 

Subject: **ECA Management response to the OIOS draft report on the Inspection of the Capacity-building Function of the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions in support of the Voluntary National Review Process IED-25-019**

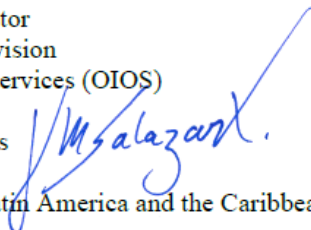
1. With reference to your interoffice memorandum OIOS-2026-00420, dated 25 March 2026, I am pleased to submit ECA's management response to the draft review report mentioned in subject.
2. ECA welcomes the draft report and its findings. ECA has no further comment on the draft report.
3. ECA accepts both recommendations and will share with your team the action plan for implementing the recommendations. In case of any questions and for further follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations, please reach out to the Director for Strategic Planning, Oversight and Results Division, Mr. Said Adejumobi (adejumobi@un.org) and copy to Mr. Yesuf Awel (yesuf.awel@un.org).
4. I wish to take the opportunity to thank your Mr. Siva Methil and Ms. Arwa Elboraei for their professionalism and the consultative approach to the evaluation process.
5. My team remains at your disposal for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

cc: Ms. Srilata Rao,
Chief of Section, Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Demetra Arapakos, Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

From: José Manuel Salazar Xirinachs 
Executive Secretary
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Subject: ECLAC Management response - Inspection of the Capacity-building Function of the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions in Support of the Voluntary National Review Process

Date: 10 April 2026
Ref: SE260213

ECLAC welcomes this comprehensive report, which provides evidence demonstrating the positive role Regional Commissions play in supporting Member States effectively implement the VNR process.

We accept the recommendations of the report and will utilize the findings of the report to continue to provide responsive capacity-building to measure progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for this report and to thank OIOS for the collaborative approach in this evaluation.

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Management Response**

Dear Demetra,

ESCAP welcomes the OIOS inspection report and appreciates the constructive assessment of the contribution of the regional commissions to strengthening national capacities for the voluntary national review (VNR) process. ESCAP notes with appreciation the report's recognition that the regional commissions' VNR-related capacity-building support has been relevant and responsive to the needs of member States and has contributed to strengthening capacities for planning, coordination, stakeholder engagement and reporting in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ESCAP also notes the report's acknowledgement of the Commission's efforts to tailor support through needs-based approaches, contextualized tools and guidance, peer learning and knowledge exchange, and targeted technical assistance.

ESCAP agrees that there are opportunities to further strengthen the institutionalization of monitoring, evaluation and learning for VNR-related capacity-building support, as well as to further systematize partnership development and resource mobilization in this area of work. ESCAP also notes that implementation of the recommendations will need to build on existing monitoring and evaluation system and partnership arrangements at ESCAP to avoid unnecessary duplication and administrative burden. This is particularly important in the context of the resource constraints noted in the report. Please find attached the recommendation action plan indicating our acceptance of the recommendations, as well as the plan of action and associated timetable for implementing each accepted recommendation

Sincerely,

Srinivas

Srinivas TATA (Dr.)

Director

Strategy and Programme Management Division

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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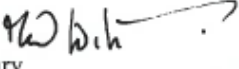


Connect with us





TO: Demetra Arapakos, Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

FROM: Mourad Wahba 
Executive Secretary
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

SUBJECT: Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Inspection of the Capacity-building Function of the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions in Support of the Voluntary National Review Process

DATE: 08 April 2026

1. I am pleased to share with you ESCWA's management response in connection with the above-mentioned inspection report.
2. ESCWA welcomes this comprehensive report; in particular the evidence and feedback on the relevance, effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of the Commission's Capacity-building function in support of Voluntary National Review Process.
3. ESCWA accepts the recommendations of the report and commits to take actions defined in the attached management response. As requested, please find attached the completed recommendation template.
4. In case of any questions and for further follow up on the implementation of the recommendations, please reach out to ESCWA Programme Management Officer, Ms Riwa Nasreddine (nasreddine@un.org)
5. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and the inspection team especially Mr Siva Methil and Ms Arwa Elboraei for the collaborative engagement throughout the evaluation process.

