How to conduct Civil Society Reviews on the national progress on SDG16+

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

GPPAC

A Network of People
Building Peace

December 2020
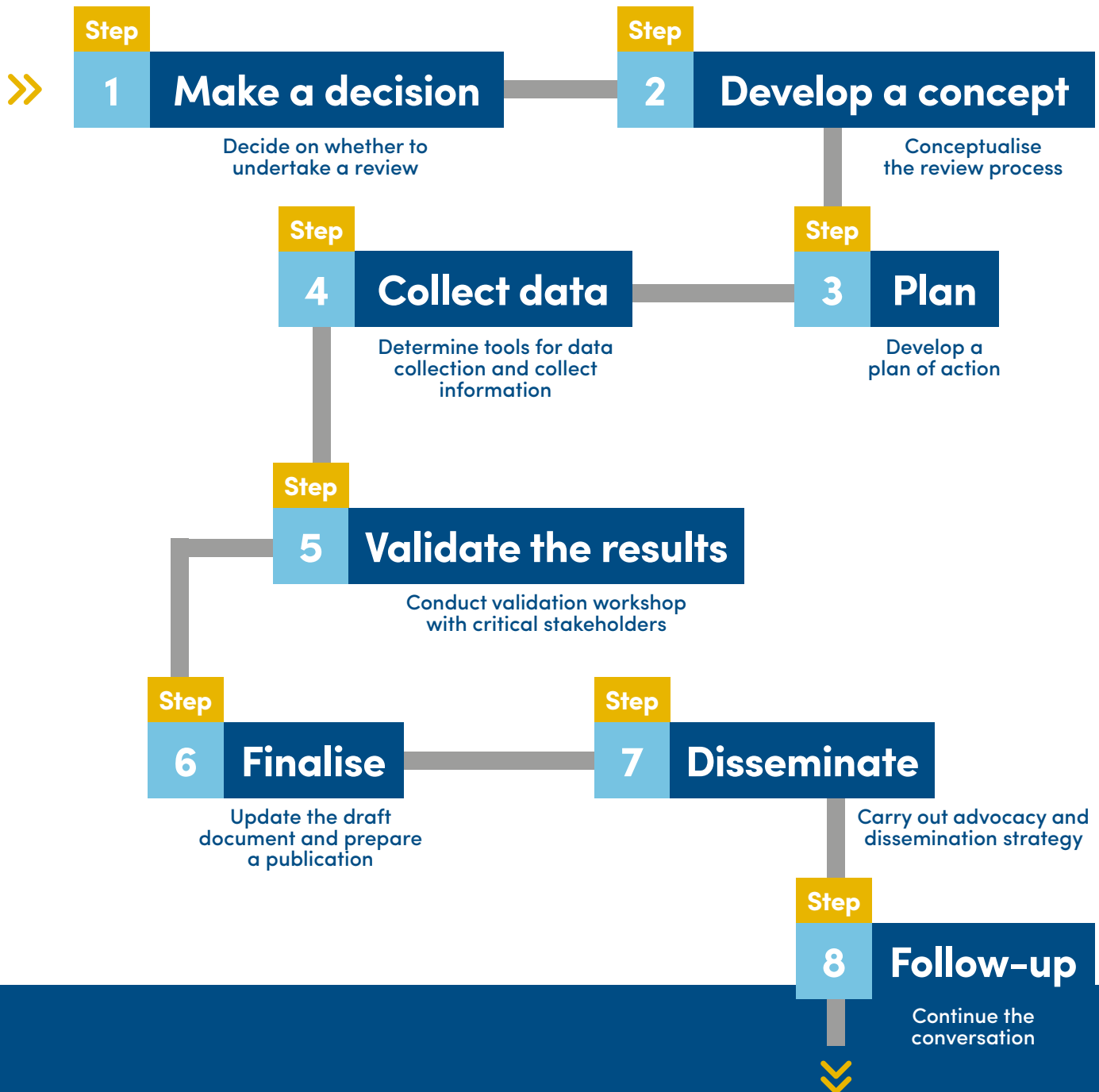
About this guidance note

This guidance note is a step-by-step-guide for local peacebuilders on why and how to conduct civil society reviews on the national progress towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)16+.

The purpose of the document is to serve as a reference for local peacebuilders in the process of creating the civil society review on SDG16+ from beginning to end in designing, drafting, organising, finalising and using the report.

The resource is based on practical experiences of civil society reviews undertaken by local peacebuilders and serves to support local peacebuilders in advancing national action on the bottom-up and people-centered implementation of the SDG16+ through the use of national, regional and global policy spaces.

Civil society review roadmap

This is a summary of the steps to be taken to conduct a civil society review. Further in the guide, you will find more details.

Step 1 — **Make a decision**
Decide on whether to undertake a review

Step 2 — **Develop a concept**
Conceptualise the review process

Step 4 — **Collect data**
Determine tools for data collection and collect information

Step 3 — **Plan**
Develop a plan of action

Step 5 — **Validate the results**
Conduct validation workshop with critical stakeholders

Step 6 — **Finalise**
Update the draft document and prepare a publication

Step 7 — **Disseminate**
Carry out advocacy and dissemination strategy

Step 8 — **Follow-up**
Continue the conversation

Onwards / Peace

Definitions

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) is a process by which countries take stock of and assess progress - and shortcomings - in their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - and identify areas where more help is needed. VNRs can be useful to act as a catalyser for national SDG implementation, strengthen coordination, and whole-of-government and whole-of society approaches. VNRs are a powerful communication tool to raise awareness about key peace and development actions needed in the country. A country conducting a Voluntary National Review submits the final document to the UN during the High-Level Political Forum (see below).

Regional SDG Forums are convened in collaboration with the United Nations agencies and bring together stakeholders across the three dimensions of sustainable development to discuss and validate the VNRs. Regional Forums serve to assess programs and exchange knowledge, best practices and solutions to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The High-Level Political Forum is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development as they follow-up and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum, which takes place every year in New York, provides guidance on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Countries who have conducted a VNR, present their findings during the High-Level Political Forum.

Background

1 What are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

In 2015, the international community has come to recognise that there can be no sustainable development without peace and **no peace without sustainable development.** The 16 goals and 169 SDG targets were created to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address crucial issues we face as a global community including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG),** adopted by the United Nations (UN) member states in September 2015, are a particularly relevant framework for the peacebuilding community.

2 How could the peacebuilding community benefit from the SDGs?

Peace is a central topic across all SDGs as well as is a separate goal, SDG16. The SDG16 targets are supported by other targets, such as employment, economic growth, inequality and resilience. See Table 1
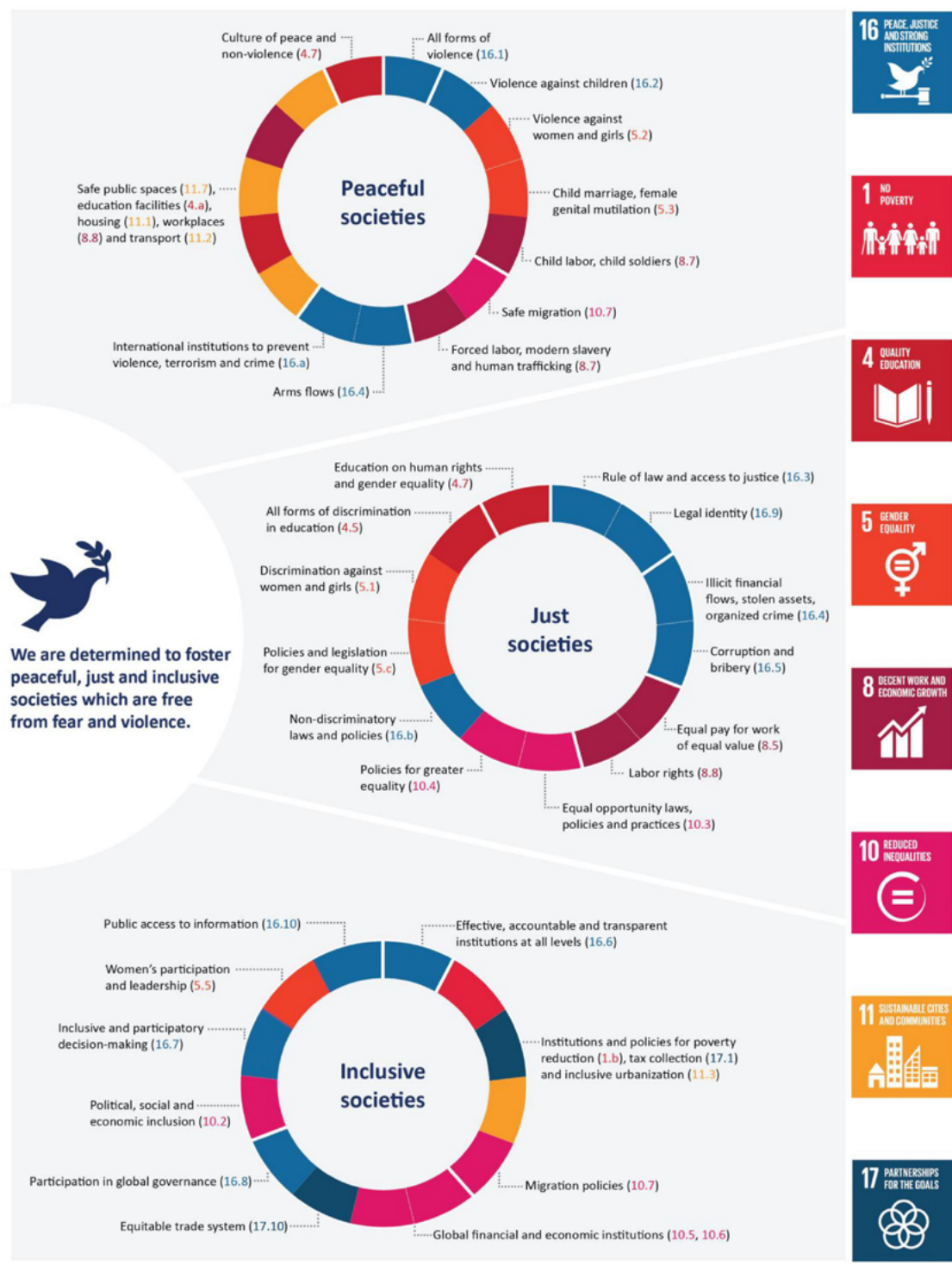
Working towards the implementation of the SDGs provides the opportunity to:
- strengthen conflict prevention at national levels;
- raise critical peacebuilding issues and advance peacebuilding priorities;
- foster inclusivity in society;
- create awareness and awaken actors to participate in SDG implementation;
- provide a platform for dialogue among various actors on fostering peace and prevention of violence;
- demand accountability between people and government for the international commitments on peace, human rights and development.

Table
1

Overview of SDG16+

Below is a visualisation of how 8 of the 17 SDGs connect to the objective of building peaceful, just and inclusive societies (SDG16). See more at: Pathfinders, The Roadmap for Peaceful, Justice and Inclusive Societies, July 2019.

We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.

How can local peacebuilders engage with SDG16+?

Understanding Civil Society Reviews

Under the SDG framework, national governments are invited to submit the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the regional SDG forums in their respective regions and annual High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York to critically reflect on achievements and progress made towards peace, but also to see where challenges remain with the national government and other stakeholders.

Why do local peacebuilders engage in the High-Level Political Forum?

In GPPAC's past experiences launching country reports from Ghana, Cameroon and Uganda engaging in the process, the HLPF and the VNR process has proven to be an effective platform for:

- **capacity-building,** including learning about the potential of #SDGs as a policy framework and experience exchange to address inherent limitations in official reviews and monitoring mechanisms;
- **dialogue with national and multilateral actors,** including by sharing voices and expertise at the local level and creating a foundation for strong and operational partnerships with governments and other relevant stakeholders; and
- **movement building,** including by amplifying peacebuilding messaging and building partnerships to advance the change and informing local, national, regional and international priority settings.

Local peacebuilders are indispensable parts for measuring, monitoring and accounting for the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda stipulates that implementation and review processes, including the VNRs, should be participatory and inclusive. All stakeholders, including local peacebuilders, civil society, the private sector, national human rights institutions and all levels and sectors of government including government ministers, should be involved. This means that local peacebuilders must be meaningfully engaged in the process.

Engagement in Cameroon:
Towards inclusive peace process

The need for an inclusive peace process is not one of the official SDG indicators. But the conditions that enable or challenge the peace talks are. In the context of Cameroon, Women in Alternative Action (WAA) Cameroon found that 5 SDGs are relevant to track the progress towards strengthening inclusive peace process in Cameroon. During the inception workshop, a desk review team and a field research team were established. The research teams then undertook the important task of developing context-specific indicators for the five overall targets.

This step is necessary to translate the global targets to local realities and ongoing conflict situations. After the research was conducted and the analysis was produced, the national validation workshop in Yaoundé was attended by the government of Cameroon, the UN, some embassies, and broader peace and development actors. Follow-up policy engagements took place during the SDG16+ global review and HLPF in New York including work featured within the 'Voices for SDG16+' event. This engagement opened the opportunity for more attention and support inclusive peace talks in Cameroon.

Read more about the process and the findings here

Governments should be ready to take on recommendations from the civil society review and absorb the 'not so neat' and sometimes uncomfortable data they produce. National ownership comes with national responsibility. It includes welcoming constructive engagement with local peacebuilders that allows for the integration of their vision, priorities and gaps in the formal VNR process and building partnerships to address the gaps identified during the VNR process. Such an engagement would carve out a more localised action for peace.

A partnership on VNRs between local peacebuilders and the national government may not be possible in particular contexts due to a variety of reasons, including the lack of trust or established relationships, political interest in reporting achievements and undermine challenges, etc. Therefore, undertaking **an independent civil society review on SDG16+ implementation** fills the gap and provides an independent assessment of the situation on the ground. Moreover, it is another way that local peacebuilders can pursue to advance the goals of peace and build positive working relationships with governments.

Table 2

Undertaking parallel civil society reviews allows peacebuilding organisations to:

- **Assess the progress towards the SDG16+** from the perspective of local and critical civil society at national / community levels;

- **Inform local, national, regional and international priority setting** based on the local experiences and expertise of CSOs/members;

- **Build a foundation for strong and operational partnerships** with governments and other relevant stakeholders for the SDG implementation;

- **Drive local action for peace** that supports local community expertise and needs;

- **Address inherent limitations in official reviews and monitoring mechanisms** that often insufficiently measure the progress.

How can local peacebuilders undertake a Civil Society Review?

Step

1 **<u>Make a decision:</u>**
Decide on whether to undertake a civil society review

Writing a civil society review that is inclusive and representative of community perspectives requires the allocation of time, resources and effort; therefore, you need to consider these factors before onboarding this journey:

☑ **Is the SDG framework relevant in your national context?**

If your national government does commit to implementing the SDGs (including through UN cooperation frameworks, national development plans, political party manifestos, presenting a VNR at the High-Level Political Forum, etc.), this signals the availability of political space to advance and engage in the conversation around community priorities.

☑ **Is your country going to participate in the VNR process in the coming cycles?**

- <u>Online:</u> You can find whether your government is planning to present its VNR at the High-Level Political Forum at: <u>High-Level Political Forum 2020 (HLPF 2020).</u>

- <u>Through personal connection:</u> You can reach out to national development experts to discuss their plans of engaging with SDGs at the regional or international levels, while unpacking opportunities for partnership and collaboration on SDG16+.

☑ **Can you relate to the opportunities the civil society review of progress of the SDG16+ implementation in your country has to offer?**

Can relate to any of the opportunities that a civil society review has to offer (see Table 2 above), this signals to the utility of engaging in the process.

☑ **Does your organisation have enough capacities and expertise to engage with national key stakeholders in your country?**

Your organisation needs to have the required capacity to engage around the SDG agenda in a meaningful long-term dedicated way and undertake action-oriented research, host policy related workshops, write action oriented reports and policy briefs and participate in advocacy and policy dialogues.

☑ **Is it possible to work in a coalition with other civil society organisations?**

- We are stronger when we are together. Engaging in SDG advocacy is a time-consuming process; therefore, it is best when the civil society review is conducted by a network of organisations.

- You could consider engaging beyond your networks with national ministries, UN resident coordinators, regional organisations, private sectors, among others.

Step 1 ─ **Step 2**

Are you ready to move to the next step?

» **Proceed to step 2.**

Develop a concept: Conceptualise the civil society review process

The steps needed to conceptualise a civil society review process from beginning to end require a team effort. Networks of civil society, local peacebuilders, coalitions and UN counterparts in the country should all be part to ensure a holistic approach to the localisation of the SDG16 indicators. You need to keep the following steps in mind when you prepare for the civil society review:

First, in an inclusive effort, **develop a concept note:**

– Develop a concept note to outline goals, localise indicators (translating UN general indicators to be context specific and understandable to local citizens), establish research framework, and set up the monitoring processes. See Table 2.

– It is important to be clear about the goals of the civil society review and clarify its scope from the outset, and make sure that it is responsive to the interests of the coalition/partners (if you have any).

› *At the strategic level,* the review could consider the way the national government prioritises SDG16+ goals and how priorities could translate into policies.

› *At the operational level*, the review could look at the translation of SDG16+ into practice and the Cameroon's progress towards a more peaceful, just and inclusive society.

› *At the partnership level*, the review could look at how local peacebuilders and civil society have been involved at the operational level and in the official VNR.

– You should think about the civil society review as a part of the process of advancing your goals and not as the end of a process; therefore, you should consider the opportunity and determine your concept note based on these considerations.

Second, agree on the purpose of the final VNR report:

☑ As an input into the formal national VNR engagement;

☑ As an independent civil society review;

☑ As an advocacy strategy to advance coalition/network goals.

Find out more about how your government engages around SDGs (i.e., national plans, VNR engagement plans, etc.) to make relevant determinations.

Table 2

Concept note outline template

Introduction
This section will present the purpose of the civil society review, identify the target audience(s) and expected outcomes.

Organisation chart
This section will identify who is who in the organisation and their responsibilities.

Goals
This section will outline preliminary goals for the review/subject for further consensus with partners.

Research framework
This section will explain how you will gather information and analyse it.

Localisation of indicators
This section will serve as a space to create a framework that translates the UN general indicators into the indicators that are context specific and relevant in local contexts.

Set up the monitoring processes
This section will focus on outreach and localized indicators. For example:
Target 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- **Indicator 16.1.1:** Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age
- **Indicator 16.1.2:** Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and caus
- **Indicator 16.1.4:** Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live.

Third, map and select actors to engage with, and reach out to them:

Think about how you want to use the review and who your target audience is: who are you planning to target in your recommendations?

Key actors could include:
- Local peacebuilders;
- Civil society organisations;
- Existing coalitions and networks;
- Regional organisations;
- National governments;
- Relevant ministries, departments and agencies;
- Local municipalities;
- Embassies of other countries, especially those supporting SDGs implementation;
- Communities;
- Private sector organisations;

- Special interest groups – women, youth, ethnic minorities, etc;
- United Nations field presence.

Reach out to the key stakeholders you've mapped out to get more information about their role and interest in engaging with the official VNR process or the SDG16+ more broadly, including deadlines and other ongoing consultations. Share details with the key stakeholders on your initiative and (after the meeting) regularly update them with important information.

Fifth, refer to Table 1 above to identify priority SDG16+ targets and indicators you want to review in your context and scope of the research.

- The indicators can be found here: SDG Indicators. The report is the chance to outline the critical priorities by choosing the selected SDGs and connecting them to local realities.
- Be sure to explain how the indicators can be adapted to your local context and situation in a way that builds on and strengthens existing, context specific capacities for peace and existing inclusive national developmental frameworks.
- One of the best ways to make a civil society review effective with limited time, capacities and resources available is to decide on a limited number of key priority areas and determine the key questions for data gathering and the narrative of the report.
- Priority targets and indicators can be identified based on existing data (i.e., national development plans, UN reports, academic research, etc.) and experiences as well as your own strengths and capacities.

While some reports include a full evaluation of the implementation of all 17 SDGs, others may be more limited – for instance, spotlighting progress on just one SDG, like WAA Cameroon did with SDG16 and Ghana with SDGs 4 (education), 5 (gender equality), and 16, or even a single indicator.

Sixth, develop an outreach plan, separate from the concept note.

- Think about how you want to use the civil society review and who your target audience is (who do you want to know and act upon your recommendations?).
- Take the outreach plan into account when conceptualising further the plan for reaching them (printed document, video, radio spots etc), lay-out and distribution of findings, including making them as accessible as possible considering language(s) and technological platforms. See Table 3.

An example template could look like this: *see next page*

Table 3

Outreach Work Plan Template

- **Work Plan Period:** This document is meant to present a cohesive plan to coordinate with your team and other stakeholders, as well as their responsibilities.

- **Goal(s):** This section will articulate the goal, objectives, tasks and team members who are responsible for each area.

- **Strategy:** This section will serve to ensure that the key change you want to achieve is possible and reflect on possible methods to the way of doing so.

Activities	Timeline	Expected outcomes	Staff responsible	Measure of effectiveness	Status/ comments

Are you ready to get to work?

» **Proceed to step 3.**

Step 2

Step 3

Plan: Develop a plan for your engagement

Creating an engagement plan can help keep you on track to accomplish your goals. This involves time and coordination with your team and other stakeholders to create a clear work plan that works for everyone involved.

Key steps to consider when undertaking such a review include:

First, form a **Core Coordination Team** to represent diverse voices of the coalition/network members interested in engaging in the civil society review.

- A collective effort to develop a civil society review will require one or a few organisations to form a Core Team. This team should take the lead in planning. This includes identifying potential partners with the necessary expertise.

Second, agree on the **scope and structure** of the civil society review.

- The scope and structure of the civil society review must be decided jointly by the core coordination team. The civil society review can uncover areas of attention that were not included in the government's own VNR messages to the UN. As a result of the review, the research and workshops can highlight areas of current and future programmatic work among local peacebuilders and government actors.

Third, develop a **Work Plan**, under the lead of the inclusive team, with clear stages of preparation of the report, actions, timelines and people responsible.

- A work plan is a written document designed to streamline a project. The goal is to create a visual reference for the goal, objectives, tasks and team member who is responsible for each area. Every member of your team should be included in the plan and update based on progress and current status.
- Drafting a Work Plan includes:
  - *setting goals and objectives;*
  - *establishing team responsibilities;*
  - *decide on project timelines.*
- Civil society reviews can take between 3-6 months to create. It is safer to plan a 6-month period for the overall production of the civil society review.
  - If you want to engage with the government, you need to identify their timeline and plan accordingly.
  - When planning to engage with your government, the review should be shared with other stakeholders two months before the regional SDG forum in January-February and/or HLPF in July.
  - It is important to have the report ready 1 month before your government submits the official report to the UN, to have a chance to influence the key messages and issues addressed by the government.

Fourth, set up **working groups to implement the work plan**.

- Set up a team based on individuals' strengths and priorities. Then, divide the team into groups that focus on research, report-writing, editing, outreach, advocacy (All depending on the work plan and the desired outcomes.)
- be mindful of **team capacities and responsibilitie**s. The scope of a civil society review depends largely on the financial, technical, personnel capacities and goals of local peacebuilders carrying out the assessment.

Fifth, be mindful of **team capacities and responsibilities**.

- The scope of a civil society review depends largely on the financial, technical, personnel capacities and goals of local peacebuilders carrying out the assessment.
- It may be necessary to hire an external consultant to coordinate and carry out certain parts of the project.

Do you have a plan?

>> **Proceed to step 4.**

Collect data: Collect information and determine tools used for data collection

Having reliable data is critical and necessary for a civil society review. There are some steps you can undertake to ensure quality and representativeness of the data:

Civil Society Review in Ghana
Data Collection in Ghana

WANEP undertook data collection in nine out of 16 regions in Ghana. This included consulting both women and men from all range of experiences and diverse ages. Prior to the start of the research, WANEP Ghana conducted an inception workshop developing both desk reviews and field research teams, focusing on localized indicators relevant to SDG4, SDG5, and SDG16.

The inception workshop was a significant element in developing the research project, where the teams were set-up and technical training for researchers were conducted. When the data was analysed and collected through SPSS software, the initial analysis of the findings led to the development of the draft report which was shared with key stakeholders from the government, CSOs, academia, and the international community during validation workshops.

First, organise **an inception workshop** to establish the framework and methodology for research;

- An inception workshop is an activity that brings together everyone involved in drafting the civil society review to agree on the vision and the goals of the Review, assign responsibilities, ensure capacities and agree on the next steps.

Second, agree on **main tools for data collection;**

- Grounded information is key for the review. The review must contain

factual and up-to-date data and information.

- Focus on qualitative (interviews with individuals who have expert knowledge in specific areas; focus groups; thematic discussions with relevant stakeholders; media reports; structured surveys; responses to written questions) as well as quantitative data (storytelling, etc.).
- Some options that can be used for collecting data can include, but not limited to:
  - interviews with experts
  - focus-groups
  - structured surveys
  - obtaining information from official

sources via desk research, such as reviewing national and local government databases
  – credible media reports.
- With your team, create questions that you agree to collect data. You will make claims in the report that will need data to substantiate them.
- Where possible, **pre-test the tools**;
  – Pre-testing your survey means you pilot a study among members of your community to catch any problems with it. If there are questions that don't make sense, technical glitches or potential sources of bias, you can weed them out early for them not to affect your final data.

Third, prepare field researchers to use the methodology;

- Ensure that those facilitating the activity are aware of the process involved in conducting these activities and confirm that there is consent from all participants in the activity to participate in the activity.

Fourth, collect data;

- Data can come from surveys, semi-structured and structured questionnaires, focus groups, workshops, and desk-research;
- Once data is collected it needs to be stored safely and, in a place, where it cannot be altered with.

Fifth, analyse data;

- Begin to see patterns of main findings. Based on this, you can draw your main takeaways and conclusions.

Sixth and finally, write the draft report.

- You can divide a report into five main sections and a conclusion.
  – The initial sections can include an overview of the project, key findings, and recommendations.
  – The following sections can discuss the findings from the field work. You can categorize them under broad themes.
  – Your conclusion can focus on operational and practical recommendations to relevant stakeholders, including the national governments, donors and peacebuilding experts.

Step

4

Step

5

Do you have all the data?

» **Proceed to step 5.**

Validate the results:
Conduct a validation workshop

Once the data collection is completed, we recommend to organise a workshop / roundtable to:
– validate results with the key target audience and stakeholders;
– develop joint recommendations;
– strengthen the legitimacy and support for the findings and recommendations.

To conduct a **validation workshop**, you can consider the following steps:

First, define the objectives of the workshop/roundtable.
Some possible objectives include:
- Increase capacities and awareness on the SDG16+ goals and processes at the regional, national and/or local levels;

- Assess what progress of the peace goals (16+) has been achieved at national /community levels from a the perspective of civil society and local peacebuilders;
- Highlight the most relevant recommendations;
- Develop the action plans on how the recommendations could be further implemented beyond the civil society review and how their impact will be followed-up/monitored.

Second, involve key stakeholders in advance (see STEP 2).

Third, determine a date for the validation workshop to meaningfully inform the formal VNR processes and otherwise engage with the government by sharing data and recommendations.
   a. It is important to consider specific political opportunities (the timeline to informa the VNR, etc.), religious holidays, Fridays and weekends, when deciding on a date to host the validation workshop.

Fourth, during the validation, make sure that the **recommendations are clear, specific and measurabl**e. A summary note from the validation workshop which includes the main findings as well as outcomes, challenges and recommendations should be presented to key stakeholders for validation.

Examples of Facilitated Engagement:

In January 2019, GPPAC facilitated interactions between WAA Cameroon and relevant UNDP experts in the country. In Cameroon, this led to further engagements with the UNDP lead for the VNR and after that to introducing WAA Cameroon to the SDG coordinator inside government. In April 2019, this resulted in closer interaction between the Cameroonian Government and WAA Cameroon on the Voluntary National Review of SDG implementation (particularly SDG16).

Did you get general consensus on your findings?

⟫ **Proceed to step 6.**

Your final report must be inclusive of various perspectives collected throughout the development of the civil society review. It should be action oriented to provide concrete next steps.

Best Practice

Uganda's Key Recommendations on Target 16.7

The national government should:
- **Revitalising and adequately capacitating the National Platform on Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution** under the Office of the Prime Minister;
- **Increase the human and resource capacity of existing institutions working on conflict prevention**, capacity building could include enhancing skills of key officers involved in SDG 16+ implementation with expertise in peacebuilding, human security, and participatory programming;
- **Prioritise the fight against corruption** and ensure anti-corruption laws are effectively enforced;
- **Scale up the community policing** programmes as a way of promoting preventive responses to violence at the community level;
- **Engage youth as partners** to identify youth-specific needs and respond to key issues that affect youth, such as unemployment and low and/or tokenistic participation in decision-making processes;
- **Enhance SDG data collection** by identifying a government office at the district level and assigning it a role to coordinate data collection and act as a one-stop centre for information on SDGs.

Below are some general steps to follow to finalise the report:

- **Review the report** draft against the findings from the validation workshop;
  - Re-read and analyse the report from the perspective of the discussion during the validation workshop and amend as necessary;

- **Structure the final document:** See Table 4
  - It is critical to remember that your target audience may not have had time to read the entire report; therefore, you need to make sure that the format of the report is reflective

of the needs of both actors – those interested in the details and those who are interested in key takeaways and recommendations.
  - Be sure to include an executive summary which includes specific, realistic, action and target-oriented recommendations. The executive summary should not be longer than 2 pages. The time-bound recommendations you include must link your key local issues to how progress on national implementation of Agenda 2030, can be achieved and by whom (what institution/body).

- **Proofread and copy-edit.**

Table 4

Proposed Outline for SDG Civil Society Report

Executive summary
This is a short explanation of the SDG process in your country. Identify your most important findings and recommendations (many readers will only read this part).

Introduction
This section will serve as a space to include a background, context to the report, and a brief outline of the methodology.
- Provide country context to explain why the SDG peace goals make sense for your country;
- Introduce (and review) of current government commitments to peace goals (SDG16 +) and the broader SDG agenda;
- Explain why this report is necessary, why your organisation, scope of the reviewing and how it will contribute to national processes;

Review of Legal and Legislative Framework and Policies
This section will provide a brief introduction, assessment of frameworks and policies for meeting the SDG peace goals that have been established, as well as, challenges

and recommendations. Identifying what is needed to progress on the key peace issues, this part is the"gap analysis" for further potential advocacy work.

Review of Implementation
This section will introduce key findings, assess overall and specific progress; and provide information about the implementation of laws, policies and politics. Also, outlining what is needed to progress on the implementation of key peace issues identified in the report (gaps between targets and policies, between policies and implementation, between implementation and change)

Space for and partnership with Civil Society in SDG peace goals (SDG16+) Implementation
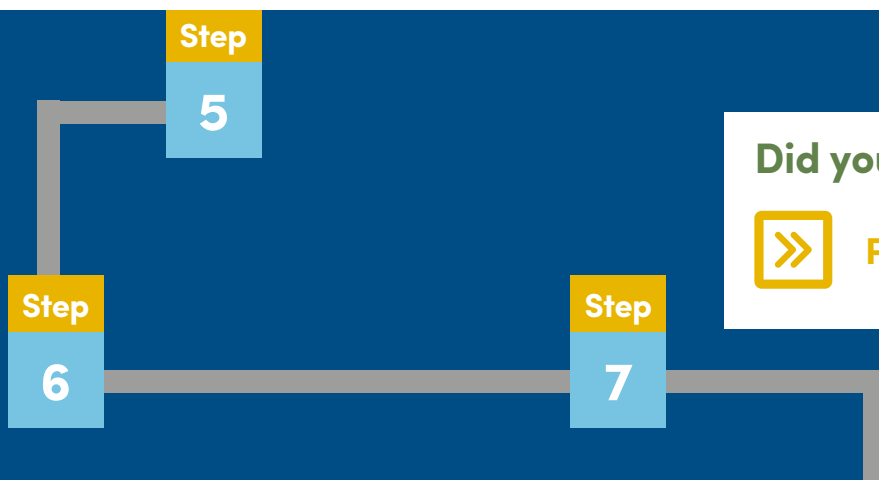This section will assess civil society space around the SDGs and partnership with government; this includes challenges, and recommendations on what is needed to open spaces for civil society and civic engagement.

Conclusion

Step 5

Step 6

Step 7

Did you finalise the report?

>> **Proceed to step 7.**

<u>Disseminate</u>: Carry out national, regional and international advocacy and dissemination strategy for the review

The civil society review is only worth how much it is put to use and followed-up upon. This is why an advocacy and dissemination strategy is central. You can reach out to networks of local peacebuilders that have larger networks for guidance on developing an informal and impactful dissemination strategy.

The critical steps for the development of a dissemination strategy include:

- **Determine key messages** that would guide your engagement both via outreach, advocacy, policy and programmatic level.
  - Develop a one-to-two-page summary of the recommendations for policymakers next to the report and other products;
- **Outline a strategy:** Ensure that the key change you want to achieve and the way of doing so is clear.
  - If needed, your goal and strategy could be updated based on political opportunities that open up during the process.
- **Identify types of engagements** you can pursue your key audience as outlined in your outreach strategy:
  - Advocacy;
  - Outreach;
  - Policy Engagement;
  - Programmatic work;
  - Other.
- **Bring together all possible opportunities for engagement,** follow-up from previous steps and key stakeholders to create space for future steps;
  - This can include key national, regional and international moments such as the HLPF, national government review workshops (often co-hosted with UNDP) but also using videos or radio to popularise your message locally, at regional SDG Forums, and internationally (i.e., the Voices for SDG16+ campaign and the HLPF in New York).
- **Consider follow-up from existing conversations (including during the validation):**
  - Determine what actor can act on which information/ recommendation and consult with partners how to best approach each actor or actors.
  - Define concrete action points and follow-ups with targeted actors during the validation workshop.
- **Execute a dissemination strategy**
  - This dissemination strategy should target a national, regional and international audience for visibility.

<u>Follow up</u>: Continue the conversations on partnerships established during the course of the research, validation and dissemination.

Relationship building for local peacebuilders is important because it can help expand the reach and impact of your work. Following up creates opportunities for you to share lessons learned, and hold countries accountable from different sectors.

Here are some of the steps you could undertake:

- **Use the findings of the report as much as possible in your other work** (i.e., integrate them in your work, write media articles, share lessons learned, organise panels, etc.).
  - Next to advocacy the reports can serve to inform your prevention and peacebuilding programs and see how they address peace gaps/needs that would have emerged in the report.
- **Continue the conversations** that started and pursue the opportunities uncovered and follow-up with people you met in all phases of creating the report;
  - NATIONAL GOVERNMENT: Use the report to **maintain a fruitful and open relationship** with your government around some of the recommendations.
  - REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: When and where possible **use regional and international fora to make your voices heard**, identifying key actors and opportunities ahead of time to tailor your messages to that specific engagement.

- **Monitor the actions and the impact of your work around the civil society review** by following up on recommendations and holding relevant actors and their SDG commitments accountable.
  - Consider developing a monitoring framework to guide your consistent engagement and action around the key findings of the civil society review.

Examples of follow-up in Ghana, Uganda and Cameroon:

By participating and co-hosting advocacy events and bilateral meetings as the follow-up of presenting the civil society reviews during the HLPF, local peacebuilders were able to showcase local approaches to advancing peace in Cameroon, Uganda and Ghana. It also provided an opportunity for cross-fertilisation and to exchange on how CSOs in other countries engage key stakeholders in localisation of SDG16+.

Step

8

**Did you appropriately follow-up?
Are you done?**

Onwards / Peace

Technical team

Guidance note:
**How to conduct Civil Society Reviews
on the national progress on SDG16+**

December 2020

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