



Libraries Engaged in VNRs

Part 4: Present your Materials

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) can be a great way for libraries to engage in discussions around the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to be recognised for their contributions. This series offers ideas for key actions libraries and library associations can take to get involved.

The fourth step towards engagement in a Voluntary National Review (VNR) is to present the information you have gathered – data, stories, background information – in a way that will be most effective in encouraging your government to include libraries. In order to get the team preparing the VNR interested, it will be important to organise your arguments and evidence around the areas of focus of your review.

As set out in Part 2, the government may want to talk most about the focus SDGs for 2022, or want to talk about the concerns of the ministry coordinating the review. An environment ministry may react best to stories or data about how libraries are promoting sustainable consumption or educating people about climate change. An economy ministry will care more about the support you offer to research and employment. A social affairs ministry could be most susceptible to examples focusing on helping marginalised groups and reducing inequality.

You should look out for official meetings or calls for submissions. These may offer instructions, including specific themes or questions which can guide you in providing your response. If there is no official call for submissions, you could contact the agency in charge anyway and ask if one is planned. If nothing is planned, simply ask how you can be most useful in the submission you make.

In your presentation, make sure you keep things positive, or at least constructive. Share good news stories if you can. If you see problems, don't just criticise, but talk rather about how things can be improved in order to achieve the SDGs more effectively. Use your submission and other communication as an opportunity to set out a small number of clear and realistic recommendations about how the government could best use libraries to deliver development. These may even end up become commitments!

Finally, think about how you present things in terms of the 'look' and 'feel' of your submission. Make sure to keep your submission relatively short and direct. Think about how easy it will be for a busy official to read – they may be receiving hundreds of documents like this. Use a mixture of numbers and facts, and include pictures if you can in order to make it more lively – governments often include images in their official reports, and it would be great to see one of a library in there!

Good luck, and let us know how you get on!