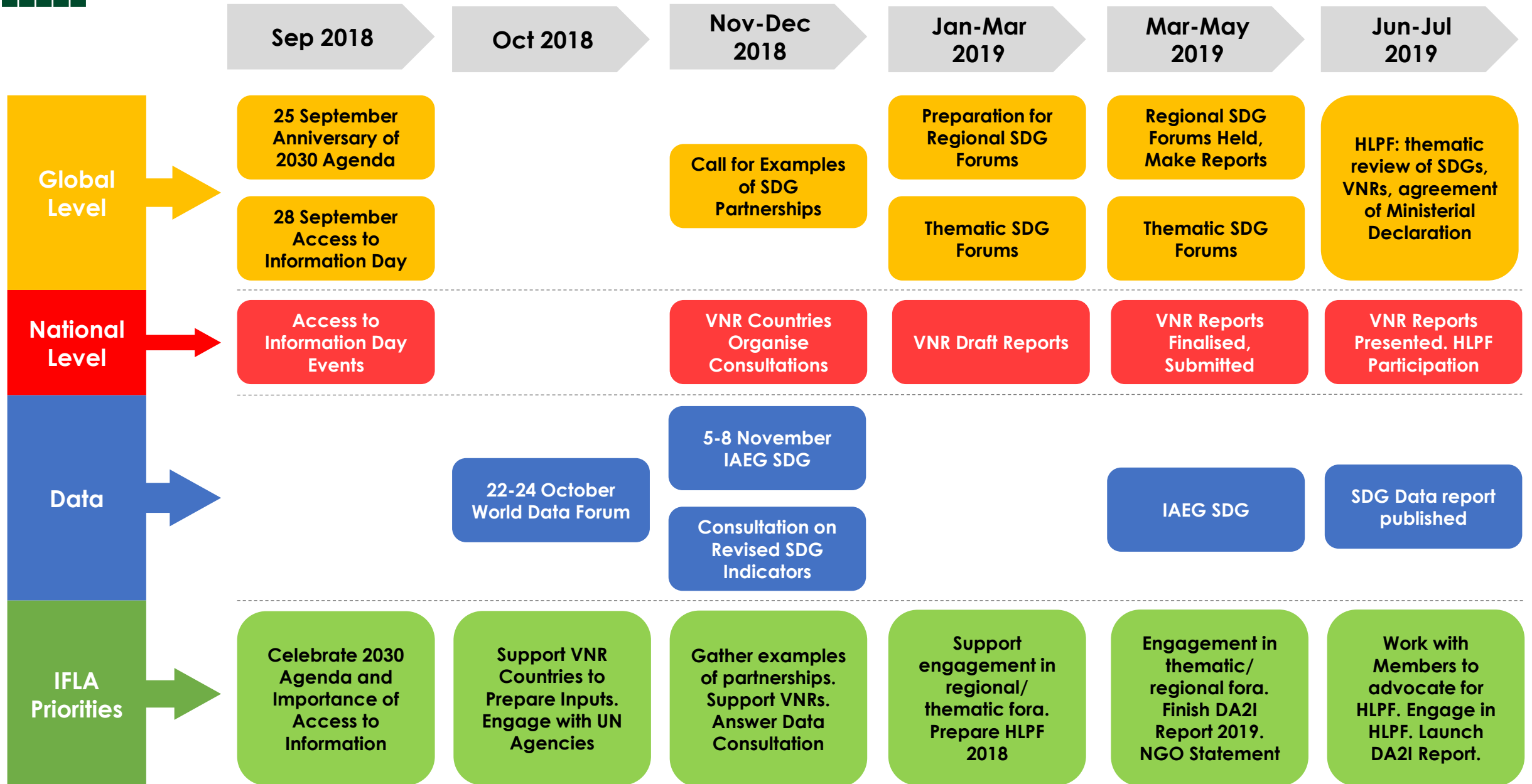




# Libraries and the UN 2030 Agenda in 2018-2019



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2019 will be an important year. First of all, there will be the regular annual processes associated with the UN 2030 Agenda – regional and global SDG forums, voluntary national reviews. But in addition, there will be a particular focus on key SDGs for libraries (education, employment, equality and access to information), and key decisions about the Agenda's overall framework and the statistics used to measure progress. This timeline sets out how these processes will run over the coming year.

## Preparing for the High-Level Political Forum

The UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is held in New York in July, and marks the highlight of the 2030 Agenda Annual Calendar. It includes discussions on thematic SDGs, Voluntary National Reviews (discussed below), and usually leads to a Ministerial Declaration. The meeting itself is an important opportunity to speak directly to senior officials and ministers.

It is also the climax of a long preparatory process. Each world region organises its own sustainable development Forum (usually between March and May), offering an opportunity to focus on locally relevant issues, as well as sending a statement to the global meeting in New York. These events are great opportunities for library

representatives to engage with decision-makers face-to-face, as well as to speak in front of large numbers of influential people from governments and civil society.

Following participation in all regional sustainable development forums in 2018, IFLA will look to engage again in these in 2019. Where possible, we will look to organise side-events in order to maximise our chances of getting our message across.

## Voluntary National Reviews

A key feature of the 2030 Agenda is the notion of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). These see Member States prepare and submit a report on how they are implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (including their engagement with civil society and other actors).

42 countries will present reviews in 2019, including a number where there are IFLA International Advocacy Programme participants. Where governments run this process in an open and inclusive way, they are a great opportunity for libraries to engage in policy discussions and underline the contribution they make.

A list of VNRs for 2019 is available [here](#), and a guide to Voluntary National Reviews on the [IFLA website](#). IFLA will work with relevant countries over the year in order to build capacity to play an active role.

## Focus SDGs in 2019

Each High Level Political Forum focuses on a certain number of specific SDGs, allowing for a deeper discussion of each area. 2019 includes a number of areas where libraries have a very powerful story to tell – education (SDG4), employment (SDG8), equality (SDG10) and access to information (SDG16).

These themes are likely to feature strongly in regional sustainable development fora, as well as in Voluntary National Reviews. Importantly, key UN agencies working in relevant areas are likely to publish high-profile reports. All of these are opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of access to information in achieving all of these, and so the need for library services.

IFLA is specifically encouraging submissions of [SDG Stories](#) on these themes, which will support advocacy in this area. Chapters in the 2019 Development and Access to Information Report will also provide further material for use.

IFLA will also engage with relevant agencies, and look for opportunities to work with their local and regional offices to create stories to celebrate the work of libraries.

## Review of the 2030 Agenda and Data

2019 will see the launch of a review of the whole 2030 Agenda, covering both the SDGs, and the way the process is run. Many in the NGO community are already calling for stronger measures to hold governments accountable for their actions (or lack of action).

For IFLA, it will be important to defend explicit references to Access to Information in SDG 16. This was controversial in the run up to the agreement of the agenda, given that it also covers access to public sector information.

There will be intense activity around the 2019 HLPF to establish terms of reference for this review.

In addition, there is an ongoing review of the data used to measure progress against the targets set out in the SDGs. The current set of indicators are not all yet being fully used – some still lack common definitions and methodologies. The review, led by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) will assess whether any should be removed or added.

Current indicators related to access to information are inadequate, and say little about the role that libraries play in promoting development. IFLA will encourage a focus on more accurate measures. Where it is possible to show that better indicators are possible at national level, this will make a valuable contribution.