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Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals – Road Map

Statistical capacity building and communication for Sustainable Development Goals

Note by the Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs

Summary

The document presents guidance on statistical capacity building and communication related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is prepared by the Conference of European Statisticians' (CES) Steering Group on statistics for SDGs. The document includes a number of case studies demonstrating how countries are dealing with different aspects of statistics for SDGs.

The document is submitted to the CES plenary session for discussion with the aim to collect input and feedback for updating the text based on experiences of countries and organizations.

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I. Building Statistical Capacity for indicator reporting

A. Summary

1. The Section discusses strategies for capacity building at the national level, leveraging experience gained during the implementation of MDGs and using existing structures and mechanisms for statistical training and capacity building. An important part of creating capacity will be identifying and building partnerships, both at national and international levels.
2. The Section proposes as a first step the assessment of capacity building needs at the country level. An important prerequisite is the assessment of readiness of countries to provide data on SDG indicators. The Section suggests that countries also assess the time required for the production of any missing indicators. This assessment should identify indicators that can be produced in the short, medium and long term. The next step is to identify within the region the countries having similar needs and how they can cooperate on planning, funding requests or partnerships.
3. Once priorities are identified, countries can seek funding and begin investing in people and systems to produce and assess the statistics. The Steering Group considers it important to have a venue where countries could discuss and coordinate their actions on issues related to capacity building for SDGs.

B. Introduction to statistical capacity building for SDGs

4. This section aims to provide CES countries with a common approach to facilitate increased and better coordinated capacity building for statistical data production on SDGs. Coordination of efforts on capacity building must consider CES countries' common capacity building needs and their assessments of the feasibility of indicators. The goal is to enhance coordination, exchange experience and support by providing technical guidance to CES countries while addressing prioritisation of common needs.
5. The UNECE region is heterogeneous and the term "capacity building" can refer to different activities. First, there are activities within a country. These include how the NSO defines the strategies for building capacities in the national statistical system and how the NSO creates partnerships with relevant stakeholders. This aspect is important for all countries, both developed and less developed. Secondly, there are activities of a country or an international organization to support other countries in the production of new statistics, including organizing workshops and training. These activities can be viewed from both the donor perspective and from the point of view of the country that receives capacity building support; they can be called bilateral activities. Third, there are regional activities, include the sharing of experiences in general and the discussion of new approaches (such as use of new data sources; they can be called multilateral activities. The recommendations and suggested actions presented at the end of this section take into account these three aspects of capacity building activities.
6. The development of Agenda 2030 has renewed interest in the quality and availability of statistics for management, program design and monitoring performance. Most of the necessary statistics are produced by national statistical systems. These data are crucial inputs to good governance. Improving statistics requires investment in national statistical capacity, the sharing of experiences and discussion of new approaches.

7. Agenda 2030 calls “for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity-building in Member States, to develop national and global baselines where they do not yet exist”. In addition, member states commit to address “this gap in data collection so as to better inform the measurement of progress, in particular for those targets below which do not have clear numerical targets.”¹ SDG targets 17.18 and 17.19 refer directly to the need for statistical capacity building. The first target expresses the need to enhance capacity building to increase the availability of high quality data by 2020. The second target calls for capacity building in support of development of a system to measure progress that complements the measurement of GDP.

8. All countries will need to improve their statistical capacity to provide data for the follow-up and review of SDGs. The results of initial assessments show that even the most developed countries can produce only about half of the global SDG indicators. The SDGs cover areas that are new for official statistics (such as governance in goal 16) and where new capacities need to be developed. They also require new data in traditional statistical areas, the integration of data from across the economic, social and environmental domains and the development of new kinds of disaggregations. This introduces new training needs, including the training of users to improve statistical literacy.

9. The means of developing the required capacities include:

- (a) the use of internal resources; for example, through efficiencies created by the modernisation of official statistics (see Section C.1);
- (b) the establishment of partnerships to make up for the capacity that is lacking in NSOs (see Section D);
- (c) the use of external resources and donors.

C. Experience from the Millennium Development Goals

10. Developing countries agreed to report progress against eight MDGs over the course of a fifteen year period that ended in 2015. Extensive capacity building efforts were undertaken to support MDG monitoring. In spite of this, at the end of 2015, just 26% of the data reported for the MDGs were provided by countries themselves through various UN agencies. An additional 2% of the data reported by countries required adjustment by UN agencies, while 23% was modelled by UN agencies and 3% was estimated by other entities. The remaining 46% of the data needed for MDGs were not available for reporting at the end of 2015.²

11. In 2013, the Task Team on Lessons Learned from MDG Monitoring published a report reflecting on the MDG experience. The report indicates that the “MDG framework fostered the strengthening of statistical systems and the compilation and use of quality data to improve policy design and monitoring by national governments and international organizations.”³ However, MDGs were often seen by countries as an international agency-driven “top-down” initiative. There were discrepancies between national and international data due to, among others, different methodologies, data sources and time lags between releases. And although there was improvement over the MDG period, the report notes that

¹ See paragraph 57 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1

² See *A World that Counts*, p.12 (<http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/A-World-That-Counts2.pdf>).

³ See *Lessons Learned from MDG Monitoring From a Statistical Perspective* p. 3 ([http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/pdf/Lesson%20Learned%20from%20MDG%20Monitoring_2013-03-22%20\(IAEG\).pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/pdf/Lesson%20Learned%20from%20MDG%20Monitoring_2013-03-22%20(IAEG).pdf)).

the “statistical capacity in many countries is still limited.”⁴ It recommended that national statistical capacity, data quality and data availability be considered explicitly in Agenda 2030 (which, as noted, is the case).

D. Strategy for capacity building at the national level

12. Monitoring SDGs requires many different types of data, in line with the so-called “data revolution” called for by the former UN Secretary-General.⁵ Official statistics will play a critical role but they will have to be complemented by data from other sources, including the private sector, academia and civil society.

13. The Steering Group recognises that a capacity building strategy is crucial for Agenda 2030, given the multitude of indicators called for (some of which require considerable development). The first step for a strategy is an assessment of where countries stand not only with respect to data availability for SDG indicators, but on capacity to produce data across all statistical domains. Secondly, NSOs should assess the level of capacity in different areas. Third, countries should develop, if necessary in consultation with donor countries and international organizations, concrete actions for statistical training and capacity building taking into account existing structures and mechanisms. Such capacity building should take a long term view beyond countries current needs. As forth step, partnerships should be defined.

14. These four steps could be covered under the statistical programmes or strategies, or in a national strategy for the development of statistics (NSDS). Some countries already have such strategies. In these cases, the four steps could be integrated in the existing strategy. The four steps are described in more detail below.

15. As capacity building is a middle- and long-term process, countries should make their own needs assessments and set their own priorities. Section D above established a readiness assessment framework that can be used for country-led assessments, including of statistical training and capacity building needs. A readiness assessment is also a good opportunity to inform policy makers of the statistics that are already available. It is also a useful means of communicating the areas in which resources are lacking.

16. After assessment of capacity building needs, it is key to establish priorities, as it can be expected that the available resources will not be sufficient to cover all needs.

17. Securing funding and building key partnerships are important components of successful capacity building projects. It is essential that the NSO and the broader statistical community have a dialogue with policy makers to ensure they are aware of current reporting limitations and understand the coordinating role the NSO should have in the process.

18. Capacity building efforts should focus on capacity to produce statistics rather than only on SDG indicators. Generally, countries have more statistics on the economy and demographics than on the environment. The Agenda 2030 constitutes an integrated approach where economy, social and environmental issues are considered together. Therefore countries will require capacity across all these domains.

19. National statistical programmes or strategies for the development of statistics, including capacity building related to SDGs, must consider several points:

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ See <http://www.undatarevolution.org/>.

- (a) The focus of capacity building in the first stage is expected to be on Tier 2 indicators, as the Tier 3 indicators will first require development of internationally agreed methodologies;
- (b) Developing coherent underlying statistics based on standard concepts and methods to enable the production of SDG indicators;
- (c) Participation of a broad range of stakeholders in capacity building: donor countries, recipient countries, international organizations and funds, private funds, etc.;
- (d) Partnerships for capacity building;
- (e) Need to define a clear division of labour and cooperation mechanisms to avoid duplication of effort;
- (f) Need for a national focal point to coordinate capacity building;
- (g) The capacity of recipients to absorb new capacity and capability of donors to manage the funds and projects;
- (h) The sustainability of capacity after the capacity building projects have ended. Advocacy is important to explain to governments that adequate resources for statistics are required to meet the increased data needs for SDGs.

20. It would be useful to have a venue under CES where countries and international organizations could coordinate their actions and share their experiences on issues related to capacity building as well as developing and implementing NSDS. This can build on the existing annual donor surveys of statistical capacity building.

E. Existing structures and mechanisms

21. The Agenda 2030 is a huge opportunity for the statistical community to modernize and improve the capacity of national statistical systems. A lot of work has been done in this area in recent years. All new activities should be based on the existing structures and mechanisms. Competition between international organizations should be avoided. The burden on national statistical systems will be reduced if global, regional and national statistical activities were to use the same mechanisms and terms.

1. Modernization of official statistics and SDGs

22. SDG reporting should consider the lessons and the experience of MDGs. At the global level, many countries will need to rely on data, statistics, and modelling completed on their behalf by other entities. Further, adjustments to statistics and related information reported by countries may be necessary to ensure international comparability. And it is likely that not all required statistics will be available from the official statistical community.

23. However, a number of differences exist between MDGs and SDGs that may affect reporting capacity of countries. Since 2000 when MDGs were instituted, information technology, data collection and statistical production capabilities have expanded substantially. NSOs in both developing and developed countries have modernized their processes to improve the timeliness, accuracy, accessibility and transparency of statistics. The global statistical community has recognised the need to modernise official statistics. SDGs further strengthen the case for this. No country is currently able to produce the statistics required for all of the SDG indicators and, although funding may be available in some cases, the pressure to meet SDG indicator needs through efficiency improvements is growing. All statistical organizations, from the most to the least developed, face the same challenges, so working together as a “Statistical Modernisation Community” and avoiding duplication of effort has clear attractions.

24. The greatest potential for savings from efficiency improvements comes from the standardisation of production processes across different statistical domains. The UNECE High-level Group for Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS)⁶ has developed various standards and models to facilitate this, including the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM). Applying these models greatly increases the potential benefits of using common software, both within and across statistical organizations, so HLG-MOS has also created a blueprint for developing software designed for sharing, known as the Common Statistical Production Architecture.

25. There has also been a call for increased use of data collected initially for non-statistical purposes (such as “big data” and administrative records) as a way to improve the efficiency of statistical production. Calls for increased use of data from private organizations for the calculation of official statistics are also gaining considerable support.

26. Different initiatives and groups are working on the modernisation of official statistics. In addition to HLG-MOS, these include Eurostat (Vision 2020 and the “transformative agenda”) and UNSD. The Busan Action Plan for Statistics calls to strengthening the national statistical systems.⁷ All future steps should be based on the experiences of these initiatives and groups.

2. IAEG-SDGs and HLG-PCCB’s work on establishing priorities

27. Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) and the High-level group on Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building (HLG-PCCB) will collaborate to assess unmet needs in statistical capacity building necessary for reporting the SDG indicators. Different regions will need to cooperate in order to meet this new and varied demand for statistics.

28. IAEG-SDGs will regularly review and communicate methodological developments relevant to SDGs. The aim of HLG-PCCB is to provide strategic leadership for the SDG implementation process concerning statistical monitoring and reporting.

29. An important component of any strategy to support capacity building is prioritization of needs. HLG-PCCB may consider the inter-linkages between proposed indicators as one way of prioritizing. For example, indicators for which there are unmet needs may be clustered together by goal, which may encourage greater support from entities whose mission most closely aligns with that particular goal. Or, some unmet needs may point to infrastructure requirements that, if met, would improve reporting capacity for all countries.

30. HLG-PCCB has prepared a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data for consideration by the UN World Data Forum in early 2017. It covers six strategic areas⁸, including a longer list with objectives and actions. UNSC will have the chance to discuss the draft at the 48th UNSC in March 2017. Based on that, the HLG-PCCB will set priorities for actions in the next years.

⁶ For more information, see <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/hlgbas/High-Level+Group+for+the+Modernisation+of+Official+Statistics>

⁷ See https://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/Busanactionplan_nov2011.pdf.

⁸ 1) Coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development; 2) Innovation and modernization of national statistical systems; 3) Strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes, with particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs of the 2030 Agenda; 4) Dissemination and use of sustainable development data; 5) Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data; and 6) Mobilize resources and coordinate efforts for statistical capacity building.

31. Against this background, a statistical capacity building programme under CES should consider the plans and programmes agreed upon at global level and the specific needs of CES members.

32. Capacity building for the development of statistics is an on-going effort and there are several institutions that can help with establishing plans (e.g. NSDS) and channelling funding to countries in the longer term. It is necessary to analyse budgets included in national statistical development strategies to assess countries' readiness and willingness to improve their national statistical systems in line with requirements of SDGs. Generally, the needs are larger than the available funding and technically competent staff. This constraint needs to be kept in mind.

33. For areas where established statistical practices exist, capacity building is more straightforward. For the many indicators that are at a conceptual stage and where data collection has not been tested, the process is likely to take more time. It is important to identify means by which data production, analysis and communication can be modernized taking into account emerging information technologies. Where international and supra-national organizations have already established definitions and data collections for indicators that are not yet fully developed at global or regional level, this experience should be taken into account to avoid extra burden on countries.

F. Identifying partnerships

34. Agenda 2030 will require annual reporting of high-quality data from all countries. This, in turn, will require greater investments in building independent, impartial national statistical capacities and strengthening data quality and standards. NSOs must be actively involved in the development of global and national indicator frameworks through IAEG-SDGs. For the SDG indicators for which official statistics are not available, input from businesses, scientists, academia and civil society should be sought in the development of the reporting architecture. The UN World Data Forum is a good opportunity to share experiences and new approaches on the global level.

35. The benefit of strategic partnerships was discussed at the 2016 CES plenary session. CES recognized the range of issues around partnerships with the information industry and considered it useful to undertake further work to develop strategic partnerships in official statistics.

36. Different kinds of partnerships regarding capacity building can be established: a) with actors within the official statistical community; b) with data producers outside of the official statistics community; c) with political ministries; and d) with funding organizations (see Table 1 for additional details).

37. Partnerships within official statistical systems are easier to create because there exist common bodies (e.g., UNSC, CES) that can assist in the discussion and formulation of partnerships. Partnerships with actors outside the official statistical system are also necessary (SDG targets 17.16⁹ and 17.17¹⁰ define the need). These can support capacity building pertaining to skills, training, new methodologies and other needs. Partnerships

⁹ Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

¹⁰ Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

with other ministries and funding organizations are also crucial, as without further funding, it will not be possible to create a SDG reporting and monitoring system.

38. The question of funding will be the focus of any discussion about capacity building. Obtaining additional funding will require actively and effectively communicating the value of statistics.¹¹ Statistics are the basis of the democratic process. With measurement of the SDGs and targets, development discussions can be very fruitful and lead to better policies.

39. Financial support for statistical capacity building worldwide amounted to US\$ 325 million in 2013, compared with US\$ 379 million in 2010. However, assistance to the least developed countries tripled during the period, reaching US\$ 265 million. Despite an increasing awareness of the importance of statistics for evidence-based policymaking, the share of official development assistance dedicated to statistics hovered around 0.25% between 2010 and 2013.¹²

40. A strategy for funding capacity building efforts in the countries with less developed statistical systems must be defined. Based on an assessment of statistical capacity building needs, the total cost to international donors of closing all remaining survey gaps is less than US\$ 300 million per annum. If register and administrative data is to be enhanced, additional or re-prioritized funding will be needed.¹³ To inform funding decisions, priority areas must be established and anticipated costs and benefits estimated.

41. A more structured set of partnerships could help identify a common approach to reporting and monitoring for Agenda 2030. Existing bodies and forums should be used to reinforce existing partnerships and, more importantly, establish new partnerships involving data producers and academia.

42. A central question is who directs establishing partnerships. For the official statistical community, it is crucial to be involved in all relevant bodies and conferences (e.g., UN World Data Forum, HLPF, etc.) and show leadership. The official statistical community has to show it is open to working with all stakeholders. Otherwise, the risk is that the funding will not be directed to statistics.

¹¹ The report by the CES Task Force on value of official statistics which will be submitted to the CES 2017 June plenary session for endorsement will be helpful for this purpose.

¹² See *Partner Report on Support for Statistics*, PARIS21 (<https://www.paris21.org/node/2371>) and *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/2016/75 (<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/159/62/PDF/N1615962.pdf?OpenElement>).

¹³ *Data for Development - A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development*, Sustainable Development Solution Network (<http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/a-needs-assessment-for-sdg-monitoring-and-statistical-capacity-development/>).

Table 1
Overview of partnership types

<i>Type</i>	<i>Actors</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Disadvantage</i>
Partnerships with actors within the official statistical community	NSOs together with international organizations (UN bodies, OECD, Eurostat, etc.) and other data producers inside the government	Define next steps, priorities, division of work, common communication strategies	Legal common bodies exist. Sub-bodies like the HLG-PCCB and the CES Steering Group have mandates to be active	Possible competition between NSOs and agencies over, for example, who gets funding
Partnerships with data producers outside of the official statistical community	NSOs together with private companies, polling firms, academia	Find new ways to measure progress; produce data for the monitoring of the SDGs to a guaranteed quality standard	Different forums exist already: UN World Data Forum, World Statistics Congress	Unclear to what extent unofficial data producers can be part of the official SDG reporting and monitoring system
Partnerships with political ministries	NSOs together with development agencies, foreign affairs departments, economic departments.	Emphasize the value of official statistics; guarantee flows of official development assistance	All actors are part of the government	Statistics not always viewed with interest by development agencies; budget cuts make it difficult to start new statistics projects
Partnerships with funding organizations	NSOs together with funding organizations (e.g., philanthropic foundations)	Emphasize the value of official statistics; guarantee funding for projects and strengthen NSOs	Potential funding is limited	The value of official statistics is not well known; funders may not distinguish between official and non-official statistics.

G. Recommendations to NSOs – Capacity building

(a) First set of activities (country view): countries should create, implement and maintain a NSDS, with four steps:

- (i) Assessment of current data availability;
- (ii) Assessment of the level of capacity in different areas;
- (iii) Development, if necessary in consultation with donor countries and international organizations, of concrete actions for statistical training and capacity building taking into account existing structures and mechanisms;
- (iv) Establishment of partnerships.

(b) Second set of activities (bilateral): Donor countries as donors must know the NSDS for recipient countries to be able to ensure a coordinated support.

(c) Third set of activities (multilateral): Based on the first and the second sets of activities, countries could share their experiences and new approaches at the regional level (in training sessions, workshops or conferences; for example, at the CES).

H. Actions for the Steering Group – Capacity building

1. Short-term (complete before the 2017 CES plenary session)

43. No short-term actions (waiting for outcomes of assessment of readiness of countries to provide data on SDGs and the results of the survey on NSOs strategies and plans related to statistics for SDGs).

2. Medium-term (complete by the 2018 CES plenary session)

44. Use the second physical meeting of the CES Steering Group to further pursue the following actions:

(a) Develop tools to support countries in the creation, implementation and maintenance of a NSDS. Some international organizations (e.g. PARIS21) are already working on this and it may be useful to work closely together with those institutions;

(b) Assess capacity building needs in the CES region that can serve as a reference point for assessing improvement (e.g. by carrying out a survey).

(c) Within the region, assess which countries have similar needs and how they can cooperate on plans and funding requests.

(d) Develop a strategy to organize and support the kinds of partnerships described here as a follow-up as the CES seminar on strategic partnerships held in April 2016

(e) Define which partnerships should be formed and focus effort on strengthening key partnerships.

(f) As part of readiness assessments (see Section D), and in general of NSDS, NSOs are to assess the availability of data and statistics for the SDG indicators and the timeframe by which they could be made available. They are also to take a common approach to determining indicators that can be produced in short, medium, and long term. This exercise would provide a basis for capacity building to:

(g) Develop a common approach to user outreach and to exploration of funding options. Focus on the highest priorities.

3. Long-term (complete after the 2018 CES plenary session)

45. To be determined.

II. Communication of statistics for SDGs

A. Summary

46. The Section discusses principles that may be useful to NSOs when developing a communication strategy for the national reporting of SDGs. It proposes to use new

dissemination means and tools to communicate with stakeholders in a transparent and open manner.

47. The section also highlights the importance of communicating with policy makers and engaging these actors in the process. This should begin with strengthening of the understanding of the NSO as an independent and trusted provider of quality statistics to the public. Additionally, communication related to the limitations in the measurement of indicators is important, particularly the recent proliferation of untested, non-traditional sources of data. The Steering Group recommends that NSOs define key stakeholder groups when preparing communication strategies, including both data providers (NSO, national statistical system, academia, etc.) and data users (policy makers, civil society, private companies, etc.). NSOs should then define the content and form of communications, taking advantage of existing and new dissemination methods. NSOs should also consider establishing customer management systems to deal effectively with user inquiries. NSOs must also develop criteria and principles for communication with policy makers to gain better understandings of their perspectives on the SDG process.

48. The CES Steering Group, together with the UNECE Expert Group on Communication, will develop guidance for NSOs including key messages and recommendations. In the medium and long-term, the Steering Group and the UNECE Expert Group on Communication will collect and analyse best practices on communications and map the available communication tools with communication messages on SDGs.

49. The Road Map on statistics for SDGs is a communication tool explaining the issues which must be considered in relation to statistics for SDGs, and the critical role of official statistics and NSOs. The Steering Group plans to prepare a 'generic' presentation of the Road Map for this purpose.

B. Introduction to communication of statistics for SDGs

50. This section provides principles and guidance for the communication of statistics for SDGs. It highlights the issues that statistical offices should consider when developing communication strategies on SDGs.

51. Communication on statistics for SDGs will take place at different levels (global, regional, national and sub-national) and will target different audiences: data users (policy makers, civil society, general public, media, academia, private companies, international organizations, specialised agencies, etc.) and data providers (within NSOs, within the statistical system, outside the statistical system). Appropriate means of communication for different audiences should be identified. Ideally, efforts at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels should be coordinated. However, this will not be easily achieved with so many actors and stakeholders involved.

52. Communication covers both data themselves and data-related issues such as quality, resource requirements, availability and the value of official statistics. A particular emphasis should be put on communication between statisticians and policy makers (see section C below).

53. The official statistical community needs to communicate the most important elements of its work related to statistics for SDGs. In this context, the Road Map is itself a communication tool which provides a summary of issues to be considered and steps to be taken in developing statistics for SDGs

54. The information required for stakeholders to get an overview of statistical work in the area of SDGs should be defined in advance. Statisticians should identify what information is necessary and appropriate because users may not necessarily know what

information to ask for. Statisticians should anticipate information needs and proactively offer it to explain SDGs and statistics.

55. Communication within the official statistical community is also very important to ensure exchange of experience and transfer of knowledge about statistics for the SDG indicators. All countries are encouraged to implement the SDG indicators and, in order to understand how and why specific indicators were chosen, all can benefit from the knowledge of experts who actively participated in indicator development.

C. Developing a communication strategy

56. The purpose of communication is to coordinate actions towards common objectives, to raise awareness, to exchange information and to promote learning and knowledge.

57. Communication regarding SDGs should be guided by certain principles: (a) openness, objectivity and transparency; (b) coordination to avoid duplication; (c) standardization and consistency; (d) establishment of a culture of information sharing, exchange of experience and best practices; and (e) integrating communications at national level with global communication on SDGs.

58. The basis for a communication strategy is identification of what should be communicated, to whom and how. The strategy should consider communication of both indicators and data and communication of the issues surrounding data, such as the role of official statistics, statistical quality, etc.

59. Communicating data and indicators deals with questions such as the technical platforms and means of communication (see Section F of the Road Map), provision of metadata, indicator-based assessments, etc. There are materials developed through international work on statistical dissemination and communication¹⁴ which can provide helpful guidance in this area.

60. With respect to SDGs, a large flow of new information can be anticipated, including a wide variety of reports from various sources. It will be difficult for stakeholders to filter and determine the relevant and reliable information. The communication strategy should consider how to guide users through all this new information as well as making existing information more transparent. Providing guidance should have a higher priority than developing new information tools.

61. Extensive information about SDGs will be offered at different levels (national, regional, global). To date, this information has not been adequately differentiated. Ideally, the information tools at different reporting levels should be aligned to avoid providing different answers to the same question (or different data for the same issue).

62. Indicators for the monitoring of SDGs should be published by the NSO in a transparent manner. Evidence-based analyses are the responsibility of the NSO whereas political analyses based on this evidence rest with policy-makers. In order to facilitate

¹⁴ See, for example, UNECE workshops, wiki platform and publications (e.g. *Making Data Meaningful* series) on statistical dissemination and communication (<http://www.unece.org/stats/mos/diss.html>); Eurostat publication *Getting Messages Across Using Indicators - A Handbook Based on Experiences from Assessing Sustainable Development Indicators* (2014) (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5936409/KS-GQ-12-001-EN.PDF/c47039bd-c026-4d99-a819-135b5e4c1da4?version=1.0>).

communication and to track the country's trends, the use of indicator based assessment methods¹⁵ is advisable.

63. For information purposes, it is desirable for NSOs to post summary information about SDGs on their websites in both their national language(s) and/or English.¹⁶

64. Country data will be available both on national platforms and in the databases of international organizations and specialised agencies. Ideally, these data should be consistent. However, in practice there may be differences due to different methodologies, adjustments by international organizations to make data internationally comparable, different timing of updates, etc. Those differences should be explained in metadata.

65. In addition, the communication strategy should explain the limitations of statistics. Various stakeholders will likely be interested in supporting the monitoring process. Therefore, it will be useful to outline those indicators that have effective monitoring already and those for which monitoring is inadequate.

66. Communicating issues surrounding data deals with questions such as the role and value of official statistics compared to other data sources; FPOS; the importance of statistical quality; resource requirements and capacity building needs. In this context, the materials on FPOS, the European Statistics Code of Practice and various statistical quality frameworks¹⁷ are the basic reference materials. The outcomes of the Conference of European Statisticians' Task Force on the Value of Official Statistics gives guidance on the measurement and communication of the value of official statistics¹⁸ (the report will be submitted to the CES plenary session in June 2017 for adoption).

67. In addition to the issues that are common to the dissemination of official statistics in general, some issues are specific to communicating statistics on the SDGs:

- High interest and expectations from policy makers;
- Areas that are methodologically new and/or that were previously considered to be outside official statistics);
- Non-statistical indicators and data that are not available within the statistical system;
- Competition with data providers from outside the statistical system;
- Wide coverage and integrated nature of the statistics related to SDGs.

68. It would be useful to exchange experience and identify good practices in communicating statistics for SDGs. This should be undertaken in cooperation with the UNECE Expert Group on Statistical Dissemination and Communication.

D. Identifying available and required resources

69. As part of the development of a communication strategy, the human, financial and technical resources for communications should be analysed, considering the resources

¹⁵ Eurostat, *Getting Messages Across Using Indicators - A Handbook Based on Experiences from Assessing Sustainable Development Indicators*, 2014 (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5936409/KS-GQ-12-001-EN.PDF/c47039bd-c026-4d99-a819-135b5e4c1da4?version=1.0>).

¹⁶ See, for example, the approach of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (<https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/Indicators/SDG/SDG.html>).

¹⁷ For example, Eurostat, UNECE, OECD and IMF have statistical quality frameworks

¹⁸ <http://www.unece.org/statistics/statstos/task-force-on-the-value-of-official-statistics.html>

already available, the need for their development and the need for any additional resources. Concerning the dissemination of data, the analysis could begin with an assessment of existing dissemination platforms at the national and international levels. Section F described the development of national reporting platforms for statistics on SDGs. It is anticipated that online platforms will be set up as well at subregional and regional levels. For example, the CIS Statistics Committee has established a list of indicators for the CIS region and a website for data on the SDGs.¹⁹ Inclusion of data on selected SDG indicators in the UNECE Statistical Database is also planned. A key information source for stakeholders could be the SDG monitoring reports produced by regional, sub-regional and supranational bodies. It is essential to provide access to these reports.

70. Following the assessment, the scope of communication activities should be determined and useful communication channels identified.

71. New means of communicating with stakeholders in a transparent and open manner should be used. An appropriate tool to manage inquiries regarding SDGs could be a customer management system. Such a system would offer tailored responses to requests, explain the requested information to users and guide them through the range of information available. A first step could be to launch a dedicated website linked to relevant databases. An information package which includes a database, publications in the form of reports, dedicated web pages and visualization tools could be useful as well. Furthermore, best practices in reporting statistics should be made available.

E. Communication with policy makers

72. Throughout the process of establishing SDGs, there has been unprecedented attention to measurement from policy makers. This has brought statistics and policy closer together and brought more policy attention to statistics. This is, in some countries and for some international organizations, a new situation. Though statistics enable policy makers to make evidence-based decisions, often statisticians and policy makers have not worked together. Accordingly, mutual understanding needs to be strengthened. There are lessons to be learned:

- The independence of NSOs from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating statistics is specified by the UN FPOS and by law. It is an important guiding principle for statistical authorities. As a result, NSOs are generally not directly involved in policy making processes;
- Statisticians are not yet in the position to provide all statistics required for SDGs. It is important to manage expectations and ensure that policy makers are aware of these limitations. At the same time, data producers should be receptive to discussions, questions and views from policy makers.

73. With regard to evidence-based policy decisions, it will be crucial to ensure there is adequate communication about the differences between data from official statistics and data from other sources. Policy makers need to understand that data produced by official statistics have undergone a rigorous quality review and fulfill specified quality standards. In general, data from NSOs are independent and objective and aim to be comparable over time and between countries. These advantages need to be promoted, as other data sources may not necessarily meet the same quality standards. Official statistics need to be portrayed as the gold standard. Although there is a role for other data sources in SDGs, it will be important to be transparent about the provenance of the data and the methodology behind

¹⁹ <http://www.cisstat.com/sdgs/>

them and to ensure the data have undergone adequate quality review. However, it is important to recognize that policy makers are also asking for indicators that are usually not produced by the statistical system.

74. The new policy focus on statistics, as mentioned above, implies challenges to the professional independence of NSOs. Therefore, it is important to raise policy makers' awareness of the unique features of statistics, especially the importance of professional independence. Data used for SDGs should follow the nine basic principles for the "data revolution" for sustainable development: quality and integrity; disaggregation; timelines; transparency and openness; usability and review; protection and privacy; governance and independence; and finally resources and capacity.²⁰ In short, any statistical data being used for evidence-based policy making should be statistically robust, methodologically sound and open.

75. Further, statisticians should try to better understand policy processes, networks and partnerships at national and international levels. Statisticians also need to be more active by contributing their expertise to setting up the mechanisms for follow-up and review of SDGs than has been the case with previous policy frameworks.

76. The implementation of SDGs will involve many different stakeholders both from statistics and policy making. As statisticians may not be accustomed to communicating outside of traditional statistical domains and policy makers may not be aware of the specifics of statistics, both sides need to develop and agree upon communication principles for their collaboration. Possible principles could be an open exchange on priorities, ideas and interests; mutual acknowledgement of interests; and ensuring communication strategies that respect both political interests and the FPOS (see Case Study 6 on selecting national SDG indicators in Switzerland and Case Study 14 for Germany's experience on communication strategies for statistics).

F. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices - Communication

(a) NSOs should develop communication strategies for statistics on SDGs and define the groups that should be targeted by communication, both data providers and data users.

(b) NSOs should define what will be communicated, create information packages for stakeholders and provide guidance to users.

(c) NSOs should define how information will be communicated and assess available resources (financial, human and technical).

(d) NSOs should assess existing dissemination platforms.

(e) NSOs should set up a customer management system approach for inquiries and launch dedicated websites linked to relevant databases.

²⁰ See *A World that Counts* (<http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/A-World-That-Counts2.pdf>).

Annex I.

Case studies

A. Case study 1 – Poland: National sustainable development indicators

1. In Poland, sustainable development is monitored by sets of indicators proposed by the Central Statistical Office (CSO). As Poland does not have a specific strategy dedicated to sustainable development, the indicators were proposed based on priorities related to sustainable development in official national strategies. Due to the needs of policymakers acting at different levels and heterogeneous data availability, three separate modules of sustainable development indicators were elaborated:

- national (about 100 indicators);
- sub-national for regions within the country (more than 70 indicators);
- local (over 50 indicators).

2. In each module, the indicators are grouped into four domains: social, economic, environmental and institutional-political.

3. All sets of indicators are publicly available at the CSO website on the platform for monitoring sustainable development (available at: <http://wskaznikizrp.stat.gov.pl/>).

4. Following the adoption of Agenda 2030, the CSO decided to adjust the national indicators to align them with the SDGs. First, work to augment the platform will be undertaken. The aim is to include global SDG indicators in the platform and to create a separate module dedicated to Agenda 2030. As a next step, the mapping of national and sub-national indicators to the SDGs is planned.

5. The CSO coordinates sustainable development indicators and SDG monitoring. At the policy level, the coordinator of sustainable development is the Ministry of Development. The Ministry has prepared a Strategy for Responsible Development, referring to Agenda 2030, which is currently undergoing consultation and will be adopted soon. Other ministries are also included in this process. They are responsible for implementation of the thematic priorities and provide some of the indicators monitoring sustainable development.

B. Case study 2 - Russian Federation: SDG implementation process

6. In the Russian Federation the issue of sustainable development has been raised since the 1990s. Since that time many national strategies, concepts and state programs have been developed both for the whole country and for the Russian Federation regions as well as for certain sectors of the economy.

7. In 2016, the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation carried out assessments among federal executive bodies on availability of legal framework and statistical data concerning the global SDGs indicators. The assessments revealed that data are available for at least 100 indicators, including proxy indicators. At the same time the first challenge in SDGs monitoring has emerged. As the SDGs indicators are distributed among 25 federal executive bodies SDGs monitoring process should be coordinated at the political level.

SDGs statistics will be compiled in accordance with the Federal Plan of Statistical Works approved by the government. The Federal Plan of Statistical Works lists the topics of official statistical accounting and works performed thereby on compiling official statistics with a periodicity of each work, aggregation level of official statistics on the Russian Federation (as a whole, on the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, on municipalities), grouping this information according to the classification parameters and timetables for dissemination.

8. Furthermore, the issues of SDGs indicators implementations are discussed within the Interagency Working Group on climate change issues and sustainable development (IWG) under the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation. Discussions are organized at the expert level with the participation of representatives from the scientific society. Rosstat is a member of the IWG. Under the auspices of the IWG in 2017 the Road map for the improvement of Russian official statistics aimed to provide guidance on work with statistical data for sustainable development will be prepared.

9. The data on SDGs indicators of the Russian Federation will be transmitted by SDMX system. The pilot SDMX data transmission message to the OECD was successfully tested in 2016. Moreover, the National Reporting Platform for downloading statistical information in order to monitor the implementation of sustainable development will be introduced in 2017. For this purpose there could be used the national Unified Statistical Information System (UniSIS) as the base platform which is currently used for collection statistical information within implementation of the Federal Plan of Statistical Works and contains more than 5230 statistical indicators provided by 63 Russian governmental bodies.

C. Case study 3 – Switzerland: sub-national indicators

10. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) runs two indicator systems that relate to sustainable development at the sub-national level. The first one, Cercle Indicateurs, covers sustainable development in a broad manner. The second one, City Statistics, focuses on a specific aspect of sustainable development; namely, quality of life.

11. The Cercle Indicateurs was built in 2005 by and for Swiss cantons and cities at the instigation of the Federal Office for Spatial Development. The Federal Office for the Environment, the FSO, 17 cantons and 19 cities currently take part in the project and the FSO has been mandated since 2008 to operate and develop the indicator system.

12. The indicators are updated every two years for the cantons and every four years for the cities. The Cercle Indicateurs is structured according to the three “classical” dimensions of sustainable development; namely, environment, economy and society. Each dimension contains between 11 and 12 topics, for a total of 35 topics. Each topic is described and its links with sustainable development are made explicit. The choice of the topics and their definitions reflect how Agenda 21 was interpreted in the early 2000s.

13. A preliminary analysis of the SDGs and the Cercle Indicateurs was carried out in 2016. The conclusion was that it is possible to connect the targets of the SDGs with the topics of the Cercle Indicateurs. A refined analysis will be carried out by a small working group of cantons and cities. This may result in a systematic description of the links between the targets of Agenda 2030 and the topics of the Cercle Indicateurs and in a possible adaptation of some of these topics.

14. City Statistics (former Urban Audit) was initiated by Eurostat to gain information on the living conditions in urban areas. This data collection is used, among other things, to support the newly established urban agenda in Europe to identify and develop actions that achieve continuous improvements in the quality of life for both current and future generations as part of the sustainable development strategy of the EU. In Switzerland, the

project is conducted under the auspices of the FSO, the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and eight cities.

15. In Switzerland, the concept of quality of life is based on the OECD report “How’s Life” and was applied at the urban level to measure the well-being of the population in its varied and mutually interactive dimensions. Key indicators have been selected based on existing data in a participatory process with policy-makers and statisticians.

16. A first analysis in 2016 has shown that the project can provide indicators to measure SDG 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

17. The decision-making processes within the Cercle Indicateurs and City Statistics are collaborative and the selection of indicators, as well as the development of the systems, is discussed by the participants to achieve consensus. As in the case of the national SDI system, MONET, experience shows that close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers is crucial to good results. Collaboration is based on a culture of dialogue between these two communities and allows the project to benefit from the knowledge and skills of each actor. However, it needs predefined rules to clarify the roles and competences of each stakeholder and ensure the independence of official statistics.

18. In addition to the two projects described above that are coordinated at the national level, several cantons and cities have developed their own sustainable development indicator systems.

D. Case study 4 - Turkey: plans on SDG indicators monitoring

19. SDGs monitoring and review has two distinct pillars in Turkey: national coordination of SDGs indicators framework under TurkStat and establishing a sustainable development policy framework under Ministry of Development, which will guide TurkStat especially on national SDGs indicators set.

20. Policy framework is likely to be established by the prospective 11th National Development Plan. The Ministry of Development has started this process by 2017 with a special project on sustainable development policy consolidation among all institutions. Following this process, all stakeholders will contribute to the development plan. This work which will clarify nationally owned indicators will be concluded in mid-2018.

21. Considering an accordance with this calendar, TurkStat started developing its own work plan; including intra and inter institutional in depth reviews, workshops and other communications with main stakeholders. As a legal background document for all these steps, TurkStat has integrated SDGs with the responsible institution per each relevant global indicator in its own legal programme that came into effect this year: Official Statistics Programme 2017-2021. Moreover, all preparations for monitoring SDGs, including national indicator selection at all levels, are going to be subject to the European Code of Practice and other criteria related to policy relevant indicator sets.

22. TurkStat is planning to launch a web portal dedicated both to global, national and regional levels of SDGs indicators and expects that this platform will leverage other multi-thematic and spatial NRP implementations. This structure will be flexible enough for accordance of further developments mandated by national policy framework. Mainly through the web portal, SDGs indicator framework will:

- Transfer Turkey’s data for global indicators to the United Nations;
- Establish a public information platform on SDGs indicators at all levels;
- Coordinate the statistical capacity building efforts both on national indicators list and on new data sources and disaggregations.

E. Case study 5 – Switzerland: selecting national indicators

23. In Switzerland, sustainable development has been monitored for more than 15 years by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) with the cooperation of the Federal Office for Spatial Development, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Federal Office for the Environment. The indicators system, called MONET, includes 73 regularly updated indicators. It is based on a conceptual framework compatible with the CES framework on measuring sustainable development. It shows Switzerland's progress on the path of sustainable development across three dimensions: "here and now," "later" and "elsewhere."

24. During a 2016-2017 transition phase, Switzerland is translating the SDGs and related targets into the national context and expanding the sustainable development monitoring system MONET to ensure adequate monitoring and reporting at national and international levels.

25. This work will be done through close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers. It will be based on the culture of dialogue between these two communities that has existed for more than 15 years in the monitoring of sustainable development in Switzerland. The experience gained shows that such collaboration is crucial to ensuring the quality of results and to benefiting from the knowledge and skills of each set of actors. However, predefined rules clarifying the roles and competencies of each stakeholder and ensuring the independence of official statistics are required for success.

26. The FSO has been involved from the very beginning of work on Agenda 2030, with the responsibility to systemize, document and bring its statistical expertise to the translation of the targets into the Swiss context. In addition, the FSO will be responsible, with assistance from other administrative units, for the selection of the indicators. The use of predefined selection criteria will ensure the quality and transparency of the result. The indicators will be selected from existing global (SDGs, CES framework), national (MONET) and sub-national (indicators for sustainable development of cities and cantons in Switzerland) sets.

27. The results of this collaborative process will be a transparent, well-documented and objective statement of the Swiss contribution to the SDGs and an analysis of gaps existing in policy and statistical systems. The indicator system will be used for national and international reporting on SDGs:

- age (broad age groups: children, young people, working age, elderly etc.);
- sex;
- urban/rural (possibly with further breakdowns);
- education level;
- employment status;
- marital status;
- foreign/migrant origin;
- household or family type, and
- income quintile.

28. For Tier I indicators the focus should be on the improvement of data quality, comparability and disaggregation (particularly for EECCA countries). Investment in better coverage and more regular production of Tier II and the development of certain new Tier III indicators, where relevant and in line with policy priorities, should also be undertaken.

E. Case study 6 - United Kingdom: Roles of the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

29. In the UK, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) will assume responsibility for reporting on the UK's progress towards the SDGs. This includes:

- Submitting UK data for SDG indicators to the UN to inform the global reporting framework (as defined by the UNSC) and making these data publically available;
- Working with government and non-government stakeholders to identify nationally relevant SDG targets and proposing a set of supplementary indicators that are relevant to the UK;
- Exploring and developing new data sources and methods to enable ONS to report data at various levels of disaggregation (sex, race, religion, geography, disability, ethnicity, migrant status, age and income), and
- Developing an on-line platform to report these data.

30. To identify which of the global targets are relevant in the UK, two research exercises were undertaken. The first of these asked government departments to identify the global targets that relate to their existing departmental plans. The second exercise was open to all non-governmental organizations (private and voluntary); again, these organizations were asked to identify which global targets were relevant to their work. In both exercises, where a global target was identified as being relevant, respondents were asked whether the global indicator was the most suitable indicator to measure progress towards the target in the UK. If not, respondents were asked to suggest alternatives.

31. The exercise targeting non-governmental organizations was undertaken collaboratively with a UK-wide group called UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD), which provided access to a wide range of organizations from across all sectors. ONS used an online platform and contacted stakeholders, including UKSSD's members, via e-mail through existing networks and through social media.²¹

32. It is anticipated that ONS will report on UK progress towards the SDGs annually. These reports will include plans for filling data gaps and acknowledge adjustments to UK circumstances which impact the UK reporting framework.

F. Case study 7 – Mexico: from a national reporting platform for MDGs to SDGs

33. Mexico developed a national reporting platform for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its purpose was to avoid duplication and inconsistencies in data by centralizing all relevant official data within INEGI (Mexico's national statistics office - Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía).

34. For each MDG, there were three types of indicators: official MDG indicators, proxy indicators and Mexico's own national indicators. Altogether, the project produced 80 indicators. For each indicator, metadata was published along with all of the underlying data in such a way that any user could replicate any indicator. Common reporting formats were agreed to with all statistical units within the different ministries and, at agreed dates, the

²¹ The results of the consultation are available at:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/aboutus/whatwedo/programmesandprojects/sustainabledevelopmentgoals/howshouldtheukreportprogress towardsthesustainabledevelopmentgoals.pdf>.

data and metadata were sent to INEGI, where they went through quality checks before being published.

35. Around 40% of the indicators were disaggregated to the sub-national and a few indicators (17) to the municipal level.

36. For the SDGs, a similar procedure is planned; this new platform will be developed jointly with the Mexican government, under open data standards, with an open code approach and with further application of geospatial tools. This approach aims to improve accessibility, providing the public with better tools to visualize and manipulate the data.

37. An additional set of national indicators will be included to complement the global indicator framework placing more emphasis on those for states and municipalities.

G. Case study 8 – United States: National reporting platform for SDGs

38. The United States provides another example of a national reporting platform for SDGs. The US did not participate in the MDGs reporting process. Further, the US routinely collects its own national statistics; it does not rely on statistics produced by international organizations. Additionally, the US has a highly decentralized statistical system, with over 125 federal statistical programs. Given the interest in SDG indicator, the US anticipated many requests from various stakeholders for access. Therefore, the US needed to develop a reporting solution that would allow public access to national statistics (and related information) for the global SDG indicators. Further, this solution needed to allow contribution of statistics and metadata to the platform on a continuous basis. Such a solution needed to maximize interoperability with other platforms to ease comparability of statistics for international organizations and the public at large. Last, the solution needed to use open source (and therefore free) technology so that other NSOs could maximally benefit. The result is the US National Reporting Platform (NRP), which was developed in consultation with several other NSOs.

39. The US NRP site was built to accommodate information from multiple Federal data providers on a flow basis. The official site, <https://sdg.data.gov/>, was launched in September 2016. As of January 2017, 36% of the indicators have been populated with official national statistics. The site features secure access for data providers and automated tracking of revisions to ensure quality. The platform is also accessible to the general public and uses open source technology that can be shared freely and easily with interested countries by forking through GitHub. A 'Training and Reference Guide' for data providers is also available. The guide provides SDGs background, instructions for data and metadata entry and certification, as well as information for platform managers. A recorded training webinar for data providers is also available. Planned future enhancements include a reporting dashboard feature, improved data visualization, and inclusion of links to microdata files related to sustainable development. For more information on the US NRP site, please contact sdgs@omb.eop.gov.

H. Case study 9 - Poland: From SDIS to SDGS – National reporting platform

40. Poland has a publicly accessible NRP for dissemination of sustainable development indicators. The platform was created by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (CSO) using open source licenses and is maintained by the CSO as the coordinator of SDG indicators. The platform was created before the adoption of Agenda 2030 and is being remodelled to include the global SDG indicators.

41. Following the Polish concept of sustainable development monitoring, there are three modules in the NRP: national, sub-national and municipal. The global SDG indicators will create a fourth module.

42. The NRP allows for tabular presentation of data as well as its visualization in the form of graphs and maps. Together with a database, it contains a comprehensive set of metadata and information on sustainable development.

I. Case study 10 - United Kingdom: plans for data collection

43. The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) is in the process of putting in place a data collection and reporting platform for the SDGs. To inform this process, the ONS has been working very closely with the CES Steering Group on statistics for SDGs, private companies and ONS data collection transformation work-streams including teams looking at big data and administrative data, as well as the newly formed data science campus.

44. An eight-week project is currently underway, the result of which will be recommendations on the best approach. This project has been informed by UN guidance. For example, the ONS is committed to utilising the principles of open data and the SDMX international standard of transmission.

45. Any recommendations will comply with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice and Principles. Data collection will be informed by user engagement with proportionate burden. Data will be disseminated when they are judged ready and will be accessible via the national publication hub.

J. Case study 11 – Germany: Experience with national communication strategies for statistics

46. A formal strategy can enable NSOs to define communication priorities and objectives and systematically steer communication activities. In Germany, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) has developed the Communication Strategy 2020, which was launched in 2016 and was selected as a best practice in the ESS-Vision project DIGICOM for simplicity, broad coverage and clarity of presentation. It addresses important challenges of official statistics in the information society. In a future-oriented and knowledge-based society, facts are an important basis for decisions and for evaluating the success of decisions. The objective of the German strategy is to increase the profile and visibility of the FSO as the leading provider of high-quality statistical information. In general, official statistics in Germany are prepared in compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice and the UN FPOS.

47. The strategy consists of five key points and can be applied to official statistics in general but also to specific topics like the UN SDGs.

48. The first key goal of the strategy is to strengthen the brand of official statistics. Reference to “Statistisches Bundesamt” serves both as a brand name and as a seal of quality. The intention is to further raise the profile of official statistics and to reinforce people’s trust in them. To this end, data quality and quality management in general are important factors in communication. As part of the strategy, it is emphasized that data are obtained independently.

49. Second, the FSO continuously improves the accessibility of statistical information. The central statistical information system (GENESIS-Online) is user-friendly and presents the results of official statistics at national and sub-national levels. Data are made available through readily accessible interfaces (open data). Digital information is presented in a

media-friendly format to support a variety of devices and can be easily accessed by popular search engines. The strategy ensures that information is offered on platforms used by target user groups. The guiding principle for a future-oriented communication policy is to develop the strategy “from pull to push” meaning that statistical offices should communicate proactively. Internally, new digital sales structures will be developed accordingly.

50. Regarding the communication about SDGs, a dedicated website on Agenda 2030 including national data on the global indicators was published by the FSO in July 2016.

51. The third key goal is meeting the needs of target groups. High-quality data on social, economic and ecological issues are provided. The diverse information needs of targeted users (general public, policy-makers, administration, the media, businesses, associations, the scientific and research communities, students and respondents) are analysed by modern market observation and monitoring instruments. The FSO then promotes targeted users’ understanding of statistics. In order to reach targeted users, a range of different communication channels is used. Further, information and services are adjusted to targeted users’ changing requirements.

52. The fourth key goal of the strategy is to broaden dialogue on statistics using forums and social media (e.g., Twitter) to communicate with targeted users. The users' needs and ideas are considered in refining the range of information and services offered. These channels are also used to communicate about SDGs. The FSO took part in UN DESA’s Twitter chat on the occasion of the World Statistics Day in October 2015 and communicated with target users about SDGs and statistics.

53. The final goal is to provide information in a clear and comprehensible matter by, for example, using innovative forms of visualization. In addition, comprehensive information about statistical methods is offered.
