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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
Statistical Division

# Practical criteria and recommendations for setting up national SDG indicators

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## Demand for national SDG indicators

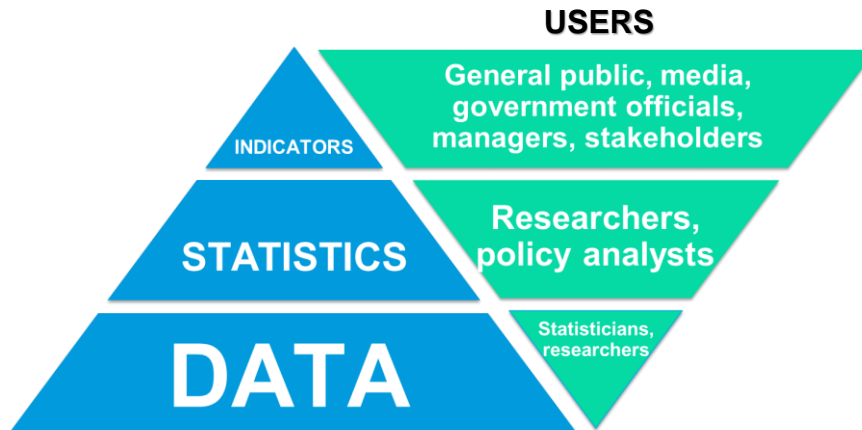


- ❖ 2030 Agenda: “The Goals and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators. These will be **complemented** by indicators at the regional and national levels which will be developed by Member States.”
- ❖ Survey (SEE + EECCA)
  - Out of 14 replies, 8 countries are currently developing and 4 plan to develop national SDG indicators
  - 8/13 countries (62%) indicated «establishing national SDG indicators» as a priority area for recommendations and guidelines

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## Data – statistics - indicators



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## What is different about SDGs?



- ❖ Need for dialogue with policymakers
  - SDGs have statistics and politics close together; statistical data enable policymakers to make **evidence-based** decisions
  - Collaboration ensures objectives are measurable and that selected indicators are usable for policymakers
  - Mutual understanding needs to be strengthened, including on Independence of NSOs (FPOS)
  - Policymakers are not always aware of limitations and costs of producing indicators
  - Statisticians not yet in position to provide all SDG data (manage expectations)
    - An extra indicator set (national SDGs) could increase reporting burden
- ❖ Definition of roles and responsibilities
  - **Policymakers** to set Goals and Targets (usually consistent with National Development Plans), while **Statisticians** to set indicators
  - Statisticians could ensure that national monitoring is consistent with predefined conceptual framework (i.e. CES on SD, NA, etc)

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## Quality criteria for indicator sets

### Relevance and utility for users

- Clearly linked to target and provide a robust measure of progress towards the target
- Relevant to policymaker and sensitive to policy interventions
- Empirical analysis showing that the indicator is valuable has been undertaken

### Methodological soundness

- Should be based to the greatest extent possible on existing agreed definitions, classifications, standards, recommendations and best practices
- The methodology behind the indicator should be well documented and readily available

### Measurability

- Should be measured in a cost-effective and practical manner. A regular data collection mechanism has been or can be developed with reasonable costs
- A meaningful trend analysis is possible

### Criteria for the indicator set

- Clear and easy to understand for policymakers, general public and other stakeholders (understandability)
- Indicators should be consistent with and complementary to each other (coherence)
- Indicators should be limited in number (parsimony)

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Source: adapted from [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/pdf/Lesson%20Learned%20from%20MDG%20Monitoring\\_2013-03-22%20\(IAEG\).pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/pdf/Lesson%20Learned%20from%20MDG%20Monitoring_2013-03-22%20(IAEG).pdf)

## National indicators – some practical recommendations



- ❖ Goals and targets to keep the “**spirit**” of SDGs
  - No reason to neglect global SDG list when it can be used in the country context
  - Ambition – **2030** Agenda
- ❖ Be careful with the use of “unofficial” data sources to produce official statistics
- ❖ Always keep in mind whether **indicators are measurable**
  - Useful to think about “**tiers**” – do we have data? Do we have the methodology?
- ❖ Focus on **outcomes**
- ❖ **Avoid “number of people...”**. Preferable to use **denominators**, and indicators as shares, percentages, number/100,000, “share of employed”, beneficiaries of social benefits **among** those entitled to receive them, etc.

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## National indicators – some practical recommendations



- ❖ **Wording** is very important to know what exactly we are measuring
- ❖ **Disaggregations** in multiple indicators: should we think beforehand what type of disaggregations are relevant for a particular country?
  - Need to find **balance** between "relevance" and "leaving no-one behind"
- ❖ List of indicators should be **limited in number**
- ❖ **Administrative data has limitations** (under-reporting, coverage, etc)
  - Some countries might need **investment in surveys**

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## Communication



- ❖ Think about (i) what will be communicated?, and (ii) how it will be communicated? (channels?)
- ❖ Communication on SDGs will take place at different levels and will have **different audiences**
- ❖ Not only need for reports, but also NSOs should **engage with policymakers on a ongoing basis**
- ❖ Open, honest and **transparent** reporting
- ❖ **Coordination** of reporting to avoid duplication
- ❖ Standardised and **consistent** reporting
- ❖ Integrated communications in line with regional and global communication on SDGs

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## More information



- ❖ CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs:

[www.unece.org/statistics/statstos/ces-steering-group-on-statistics-for-sustainable-development-goals.html](http://www.unece.org/statistics/statstos/ces-steering-group-on-statistics-for-sustainable-development-goals.html)

- ❖ Wiki on Statistics for SDGs:

[www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/SFSDG](http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/SFSDG)

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# Thank you!

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