3rd Expert meeting on Statistics for the SDGs
Session 2: Coordination of Data Flows

FAO comments on Data Flow Case Studies & Proposal for a Global Data Validation Process

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PART 1:
UNECE 2018 PILOT STUDY OF DATA FLOWS

- Three SDG indicators under FAO custodianship examined: **6.4.1**/**6.4.2** (water use efficiency and water stress) and **15.4.2** (mountain green cover)

- The critique on the current data flow arrangements for 6.4.1/6.4.2 centred on the claim that FAO had not done enough to harmonize its data collection with other international agencies that also collect data on water

- The critique on the current data flow arrangements for 15.4.2 focused on the apparent imposition of a data source for this indicator (FAO's Collect Earth tool) and the subsequent difficulties in validating the estimates with countries

HARMONIZATION OF DATA COLLECTION FOR 6.4.1/6.4.2

- Historically OECD, Eurostat and UNSD, independently collect data on water resource and use every 2 or 5 years. These data are not sufficient to compile SDG indicators 6.4.1 and 6.4.2

- In line with the role of custodian agency and the Guidelines on global SDG data flows, FAO sent for the 1st time a questionnaire on water data for SDG indicators in early 2018.

- This has created an apparent situation of double-reporting, highlighting the need for greater coordination and harmonization across International Organizations

HARMONIZATION OF DATA COLLECTION FOR 6.4.1/6.4.2

- FAO has organized regular meetings with UNSD/OECD/Eurostat to coordinate data collection, lately on a monthly basis
- FAO has conducted a thorough examination of overlaps and discrepancies across different questionnaires
- Three key problems overall:
  - Coverage/scope of the questionnaires (irrigation)
  - Consistency between definitions/terminology (water withdrawal; wastewater; metadata missing)
  - Frequency of data collection (FAO annual; OECD/UNSD every 2 years; EUROSTAT every 5 years, now annual)
- A joint questionnaire not feasible in the short-term (Eurostat not committed to SDG reporting; data sharing is also an issue)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

USE OF GEOSPATIAL DATA AND DATA VALIDATION FOR 15.4.2

Data Source

- FAO has used a new data source for a new indicator (few countries with data; not comparable): Collect Earth was used to calculate <u>comparable</u> country estimates for the <u>whole world</u> in a <u>cost-effective</u> way.

- Not *imposed*. During the validation process, FAO systematically asked <u>each country</u> whether they had alternative national data for this indicator, but no country provided such data (except Turkey, last week)

- Two pronged strategy: FAO is organizing workshops to train countries in using Collect Earth for enabling them to calculate the indicator at national level (attended so far by 40 countries)

- FAO is also in discussion with Eurostat to use the **LUCAS Programme** (Land Use and Coverage Area frame Survey), which adopts a comparable methodology, to calculate 15.4.2 for the 28 EU Members

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

USE OF GEOSPATIAL DATA AND DATA VALIDATION FOR 15.4.2

Data validation

The UNECE study highlighted difficulties in countries' data validation for 15.4.2; Common problems to many SDG indicators:

- ✓ Request sent to NSO SDG focal point: generally not the subject-matter expert; difficulty in contacting/coordination with the national expert

- ✓ Some countries had not appointed an NSO SDG focal point

- ✓ Whole process done through email exchange, leading to a huge proliferation of correspondence and imposing a heavy burden on FAO and countries

- ✓ No coordinated mechanism or calendar meant that custodian agencies sent multiple validation requests at different times (1 for each indicator)

- ✓ Treatment of non-responding countries unclear at the time (*Guidelines on data flows s*till being drafted in 2017)

PART 2:
GLOBAL DATA VALIDATION PROCESS

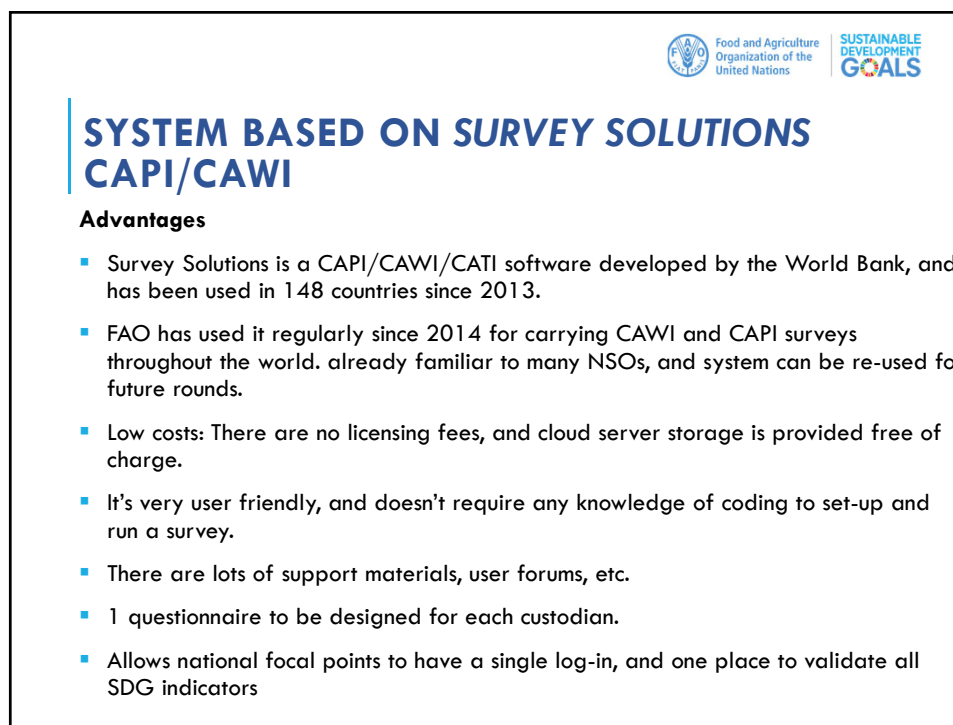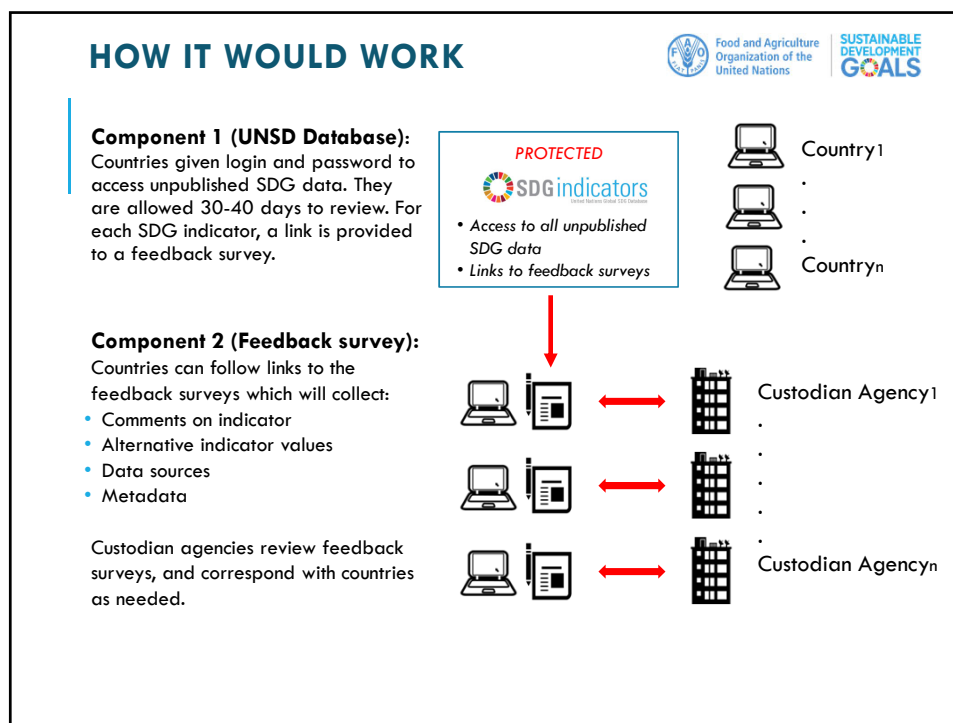Data validation discussed at the latest IAEG-SDG in Beirut.

Main issues: No standard, coordinated and agreed approach among custodian agencies. No explicit recommendation contained in the "Guidelines on data flows"

- UNICEF presented its experience with data validation, which was based on an online survey tailored for each country: The SDG focal point of NSOs in each country received an email containing different indicator survey links, which they could either complete themselves or forward to other experts.

- Overall approach welcomed by countries, but some issues remained: Countries did not have an easy way to provide alternative data; still was carried out independently, not solving the issue of coordination among agencies

FAO PROPOSAL FOR
A GLOBAL DATA VALIDATION PROCESS

Two components

1. Privileged access to the Global SDG Database (psw protected) that acts as a repository of national estimates awaiting country validation

2. A web survey for each custodian including all SDG indicators allowing countries to provide: a) feedback; b) alternative national estimates; c) information on alternative national data source

➢ 1 single location to review & validate all SDG indicators. Approach in line with the HLG Report on Modernization of the UN Statistical System submitted to UNSC 2019 ("***UNSD Director the main and first focal point within the UN for all questions and tasks related to data and statistics***")

➢ 1 single message from UNSD to all countries informing that data have been uploaded. Timing to be synchronized with the February update of the Global SDG Database (national estimates to be uploaded by the early December)

➢ Track recording of exchange/negotiations between countries & Int. Organizations

HOW IT WOULD WORK

Component 1 (UNSD Database):
Countries given login and password to access unpublished SDG data. They are allowed 30-40 days to review. For each SDG indicator, a link is provided to a feedback survey.

Component 2 (Feedback survey):
Countries can follow links to the feedback surveys which will collect:
• Comments on indicator
• Alternative indicator values
• Data sources
• Metadata

Custodian agencies review feedback surveys, and correspond with countries as needed.

PROTECTED
SDGindicators
• *Access to all unpublished SDG data*
• *Links to feedback surveys*

Country₁
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Countryₙ

Custodian Agency₁
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Custodian Agencyₙ

SYSTEM BASED ON *SURVEY SOLUTIONS* CAPI/CAWI

Advantages

- Survey Solutions is a CAPI/CAWI/CATI software developed by the World Bank, and has been used in 148 countries since 2013.

- FAO has used it regularly since 2014 for carrying CAWI and CAPI surveys throughout the world. already familiar to many NSOs, and system can be re-used for future rounds.

- Low costs: There are no licensing fees, and cloud server storage is provided free of charge.

- It's very user friendly, and doesn't require any knowledge of coding to set-up and run a survey.

- There are lots of support materials, user forums, etc.

- 1 questionnaire to be designed for each custodian.

- Allows national focal points to have a single log-in, and one place to validate all SDG indicators

Thank you

IT ADMINISTRATION

A cloud server would be set-up which is accessible to all IGOs through a URL (e.g. https://sdgs.mysurvey.solutions).

- Each IGO would be provided a name and password.

- Each IGO would have "Headquarters" privileges in the server which means they can review responses, see overall progress, communicate with the respondents through the system, export data, etc.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT & DISPATCH

- A **standard electronic questionnaire template** would be designed which would be used by each IGO to collect feedback on SDG indicators under their custodianship. The questionnaires would be pre-filled with the SDG indicator values for each indicator include:
  - Do you confirm the validity of the [insert indicator]? Yes/No
  - If NO ->
    - Kindly provide an explanation
    - Is there an alternative value?
    - If yes, what is the data source/year?
    - Do you have further comments on [insert indicator]?

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT & DISPATCH

- The UNSD database is needed to pre-populate the questionnaires with SDG indicators for the focal points to validate.
- Country focal points are provided with the URL of the server (e.g. https://sdgs.mysurvey.solutions), and given a unique login and password.
- When the country focal points log on to the server, they have 1 questionnaire for each IGO.

QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETION

- **The questionnaire is completed ONLINE** in the respondents browsers. So, they must be **ONLINE** while completing the questionnaire.
- They can log on and off as many times as they want. When they complete a questionnaire, there is a "submit" button at the end. Until it is submitted, they are free to make changes to their responses.

DATA TRANSFER AND STORAGE

- As country focal points enter data into the questionnaire, it is sent in real time to the cloud server.
- The data can be viewed online in the questionnaire format in real time, queried via an API, and/or exported in SPSS, STATA, and .TXT formats by the IGOs.

MONITORING AND QUALITY CONTROL

- Summary reports are automatically available in the Survey Solution UX to allow all IGOs to know and summarize the status of their questionnaires.
- When a questionnaire is completed, the IGOs can choose to accept or reject it.
- When rejecting, a IGO can make comments at questionnaire level which are then visible to the respondent. The respondents can also make comments at question level, and reply.
- Questionnaires can be rejected, and submitted unlimited times.

Data Export

- Results can be exported by IGOs in STATA, SPSS, or TXT. The database is also accessible using an API.

SWOT

Strengths	**Weakness**
1. Very user friendly, no coding skills required. 2. No licensing, or usage fee. 3. Allows country focal points to have a single log-in, and one place to validate all SDG indicators.	1. It requires all IGOs to use a single server. 2. It requires that IGOs are careful to approve/reject only their own questionnaires. 3. It requires 1 questionnaire to be designed for each IGO.
Opportunities	**Threats**
1. System can be re-used for future rounds. 2. Uses a technology already familiar to many NSOs. 3. Exposure of IGOs to platform that could be useful for other activities.	1. Reliability of internet connectivity in developing countries 2. IGOs must be careful to only review their own questionnaires 3. Low response rate by country focal points