UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE   14 December 2021
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS
Workshop on Statistics for SDGs
29 – 30 March 2022, Geneva, Switzerland
Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs
31 March – 1 April 2022, Geneva, Switzerland

CALL FOR PAPERS

> Inform the Secretariat about submitting a paper by Friday 21 January, 2022
> Register as participant (Expert Meeting, Workshop) by 1 March, 2022

I.   Background

This call for papers complements the **invitation letter** to the 2022 Workshop and Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs. The meetings will be held with simultaneous interpretation in English and Russian. They will take place in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, across four days:

> 29 – 30 March 2022: Workshop on Statistics for SDGs
> 31 March – 1 April 2022: Expert meeting on Statistics for SDGs

All participants should register for the meetings (Expert Meeting, Workshop). An online connection option will be offered for participants who are not able to travel.

The 6th Expert Meeting and workshop are aimed at experts from national statistical offices, international organizations and other stakeholders involved in the production, communication and coordination of the reporting of statistics for SDGs. The meetings will serve as a platform to share experiences, good practices and lessons learned; to showcase innovative solutions to the challenges faced; and to identify priorities for future methodological and capacity-development work in this area. While the Expert Meeting focuses on more strategic issues, the workshop deals with practical and technical aspects of provision of SDG data and indicators. The target audience of the meetings are the SDG focal points in the national statistical offices and international organizations, and other professionals working with statistics for SDGs.

The events are organized by the UNECE Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs, co-chaired by Poland and Sweden, comprising a number of countries, Eurostat, OECD, CIS-Stat and UNECE.

II.   Contributions

Countries and organizations are invited to contribute papers to the Expert Meeting and examples of best practices to the Workshop. The contributions are expected to describe a national/international experience, practice, challenge or solution related to one of the session topics listed below. The papers should aim to be forward-looking with the goal of providing information that is useful for others: e.g. highlighting findings or experiences that could offer valuable lessons learned; and/or showing how these experiences will inform future approaches.

In case you wish to submit a paper covering one of the topics of the sessions, or a best practice example, **please inform the UNECE Secretariat** (martijn.kind@un.org, copy to tiina.luige@un.org) **by**

Friday, 21 January 2022. Please describe in a few sentences what the contribution will be about. The session organizers will follow-up with you and may ask for a short presentation at the meetings. The session organizers may also approach some countries and international organizations directly asking to prepare papers/presentations on specific issues.

The papers should be a maximum of 4 pages long, in Word format. All contributions should be submitted **in English or Russian** (documents will be available in both languages and simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the meetings).

The following deadlines apply:

- Informing the UNECE Secretariat about contributions - **21 January 2022**;
- **Online registration** for the meetings (Expert Meeting, Workshop) – **1 March 2022;**
- Deadline for papers – **1 March 2022;**
- Deadline for presentations – **11 March 2022.**

III. Explanatory notes on the workshop sessions

Session 1: Data transmission including SDMX and automation

Effective data transmission can improve the flows of data and metadata for SDG reporting. Using automation and standard exchange mechanisms can make this transmission more efficient.

Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) is a widely used standard for the automation of data transmission. Its use is supported and promoted by the IAEG-SDGs SDMX Working Group. The SDMX structure supports the transmission of all indicators and their disaggregation, as approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The CES Steering Group Task Team on Data Transmission aims to share best practice, knowledge and experience of using SDMX and automation techniques for transmitting data and metadata to national and international agencies or to the UN datalab.

The session will look at examples of successful data exchange, identify common challenges and pinpoint solutions. Papers are encouraged to analyze data transmission with these objectives in mind.

Session 2: Discrepancies between national and regional/global data

The regional/global Statistical Databases collect the SDG indicator data from the international organizations responsible for specific indicators (Custodian Agencies) who in turn collect the data from member States. However, sometimes the data in these databases differ from that in the national databases. Sometimes the data discrepancies can be large. There can be various reasons for data discrepancies, such as different sources, adjustments to national data by the Custodian Agencies to meet international standards, difficulty in measuring the indicators at national level, different definitions used, timeliness, etc.

NSOs should work closely with Custodian Agencies, government ministries, international organizations, and other stakeholders to reduce data discrepancies. Partnerships between NSOs and other organizations can improve reducing data discrepancies in terms of data harmonization and technical support. It is important for NSOs to try to highlight data discrepancies to address them.

The call for papers would welcome examples of data discrepancies including the following:

- How NSOs identified data discrepancies
- Types of data discrepancies

- How data discrepancies occurred
- Challenges faced by NSOs dealing with data discrepancies
- Solutions to address data discrepancies

Session 3: Identifying needs and priorities for capacity development in countries

A Task Team on capacity development under the CES Steering Group on statistics for SDGs has developed a matrix for identifying countries' needs and priorities for capacity development[1]. The Task Team will pilot the matrix in a number of countries to gather experience on its use in practice. A pilot in Armenia was carried out in 2021. In 2022 other pilots are planned in the partner countries. The session will consider whether the matrix could be improved based on the feedback from testing and to integrate in the matrix new or changing needs due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The session would also offer the opportunity to exchange views on possible synergies with the latest international capacity development initiatives. Contributions that highlight country experiences or other initiatives are invited.

IV.   Explanatory notes on the Expert Meeting sessions

Session 1: Communication - progress measurement

Tracking progress against the goals and targets under the SDGs is a critical component of the monitoring and reporting on the 2030 Agenda. Efforts on this aspect can support communication of the SDGs to the public and – maybe more importantly – to policymakers. It is the latter who must understand the urgency of the Agenda and incorporate it in their policy plans and development programmes – both nationally and internationally – if the SDGs are to be successfully implemented. Additionally, progress measurement should be a balancing act between facilitating communication and being mindful of the risk of losing any relevant information when trying to communicate complexity with single index results.

This session aims to provide the best practices and examples of this balancing act and lay out the possibilities for better communication of complex indicator sets to policymakers. The best practices will come from national statistical offices and international organizations focusing on SDG indicators. They can be based both on official and non-official data and, beyond that, other sustainability-related areas that may provide valuable insight.

Session 2: Data from non-traditional sources

This session will focus on how data from non-traditional sources can be used to improve statistical follow-up on the SDGs. In doing so, the session will have a three-fold purpose:

(1) To present possible calculation methods for the SDGs using non-traditional data sources.
(2) To present processes in place for assessing non-official statistics for use to follow-up the SDGs.
(3) To present considerations on future possibilities for improving statistical follow-up on the SDGs using non-traditional data sources.

The session will be built up as three 'sub sessions', each one addressing one of the topics above. While the experiences of National Statistical Offices will be the focus, other data producing organizations are invited to provide their contributions to the session. This mix of participants will allow for an exchange of experiences and views regarding the use of non-traditional data in production of the SDG indicators. Presentations on the topics will play an important role during the session, but it should be emphasized

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[1] See https://statswiki.unece.org/display/SFSDG/Task+Team+on+Capacity+Development

that discussion will be equally important. Depending on the papers received, the session will aim at 'active' participation from both the presenters and the audience, in a form of a dialogue.

Session 3: National coordination

SDG statistics covers almost all areas of official statistics and beyond. Collecting the data requires inputs from a wide range of data producers within the national statistical system. Therefore, successful national coordination is crucial for ensuring a country's coverage of all available up-to-date data and for ensuring a country's ability to publish and transmit the data efficiently.

This session will explore different aspects of national coordination and will present best practices and challenges based on country experiences. Through these experiences we will examine the characteristics of national coordination in a centralized statistical system vs. a decentralized statistical system, the mechanisms of communication with custodian agencies, the role of the national statistical system, tools and processes to improve coordination and more.

The aim of this session is to provide insights, mainly to national coordinators, on how they can maximize national coordination in their country considering the specific environment they are working in. Contributions in line with this aim are highly encouraged.

V. Contact information

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