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Session 3: Shrinking resources and partnerships with policy makers

Resources and partnerships in the Netherlands

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1. Introduction

1. The 2030 Agenda is a global strategy that covers a wide range of topics. Monitoring the agenda requires high-quality indicators. Statistics Netherlands is responsible for sourcing, reporting and monitoring the SDG indicators for the Netherlands. Over time, more and more capacity is needed to develop and update the indicators. In addition, there is also an increasingly large role for coordination within Statistics Netherlands, between Statistics Netherlands and other governmental and custodian agencies, and internationally. Monitoring SDGs is not part of the regular statistical working program. To be able to perform all these tasks, the statistical office depends on separate funding. Within the central government of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the SDGs. This ministry is therefore a very important partner for monitoring the SDGs. The SDGs are allocated to this ministry because most parts of the national government perceive the SDGs as a form of development aid. This has an effect on the amount of funding available for monitoring the SDGs.

2. The monitoring process over time in relation to resources and partnerships

2. The development and publication of SDG indicators first took place in 2016. This was an initiative from Statistics Netherlands and there was no funding involved. The input for the indicators came from statistics that were already available. Due to the overlap with other statistical domains, this data could be used for SDG monitoring. The relationships within Statistics Netherlands played a very important role in creating the first step of SDG monitoring.

3. The feedback from society was positive. Due to this positive response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded the second SDG report which was published in 2018. In addition to maintaining the indicators used in the first report, part of the funding was meant for the development of additional indicators.

4. In 2019, the government decided that the SDGs should be integrated in the Monitor of Wellbeing. The Monitor of Wellbeing was an assignment of the ministry of Economic Affairs. Both ministries recognized the overlap between wellbeing and the SDGs and decided it would be better to integrate both the data collection and the publications. The new publication became the Monitor of Wellbeing and SDGs.

5. The financial and human resources for monitoring the SDGs expanded, but the focus shifted from the indicators developed by the IAEG to indicators developed by the Netherlands. Developing these Dutch indicators created important relationships with different ministries regarding the SDGs.

6. The new monitoring assignment did not include developing global indicators and coordination with custodian agencies. These tasks of Statistics Netherlands were performed

outside of the assignment. Due to the lack of resources for these tasks, they did not receive the attention needed.

7. In 2022, the assignment for the Monitor of Wellbeing and SDGs had to be renewed for a period of four years. This provided an opportunity to incorporate additional work regarding the global SDG indicators. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was open to the idea but wanted specific information to assess which work was needed.

8. The amount of global indicators that Statistics Netherlands reported on were compared with the number of indicators other countries reported. In addition, the UN resolution A/RES/71/313 was used to clarify the role of the NSOs regarding SDG reporting. By specifying the data gaps and the activities that were needed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to incorporate the global SDG indicators in the four-year assignment.

9. The renewed agreement on the Monitor of Wellbeing and SDGs includes monitoring of the global 2030 agenda. Capacity is earmarked for the maintenance and development of global indicators. Part of the indicator development is to identify all relevant existing data. This applies mostly to data within Statistics Netherlands but also to data from ministries. Coordination of SDG data from the ministries is therefore also part of the assignment. By coordinating with the SDG focal points of the ministries it is possible to work together efficiently.

3. Lessons learned

10. Analyzing how the monitoring process regarding the SDGs developed over time has provided a couple of important insights. The key one being that relationships and resources are interconnected.

11. The relationships with different ministries are important, not only the ministry responsible for the SDGs. These relationships do not necessarily provide funding but it does provide better communication and coordination. This is especially evident in regards to the country consultations from the custodian agencies. The relationships also provide the opportunity to communicate about the ministry's needs and the challenges of the NSO.

12. To gain value from the relationships it is important to specify monitoring challenges, the resources needed to address them and the expected outcomes. A clear picture of all the responsibilities of the NSO with the resources needed to achieve it should be compared to the current monitoring situation. Based on the comparison, choices can be made regarding additional efforts.

13. The relationships outside the government are also important. The positive response of the first SDG report has remained over the years. Due to this enthusiasm, Statistics Netherlands receives invitations to SDG events. By participating, NSOs can actively promote the SDGs and the monitoring activities. These events result in new relationships and on the long-term they can even contribute to obtaining resources.
