

The SDG Data Lab

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Outline of the session

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- Objectives of the Data Lab
- Requirements of using the Data Lab
- Advantages and challenges of using the Data Lab
- How to upload data/metadata
- UK Case Study
- Invitation to collaborate

What is the Data Lab

The SDGs data lab is an online platform established by UNSD:

- To exchange of SDGs indicator data and metadata by countries and custodian agencies with UNSD
- To allow comparison of national data provided by countries against data provided by international organisations
- To gradually replace all other forms of data submission from Custodian agencies and countries to the UNSD Global SDG indicator data base
- A request of the 2017 UN Statistical Commission to present international and national data side by side in order to facilitate dialogue between countries and custodian agencies, explain discrepancies and improve coordination

Objectives of the Data Lab

- Increasing transparency of data, improving internationally comparability and data availability
- Reconciling the two complementary roles of custodian agencies and countries
- Custodian agencies focusing on cross-country comparability and compliance with international standards
- NSOs, being the main source informing policy analysis and decision making at national level, focusing on the comparability and consistency of country-specific data published in the Global SDGs database with their own data in their national SDGs database
- But METADATA must accompany the data to explain differences that might exist. Without metadata, discrepancies will remain unexplained and misleading as there are many valid reasons why country-level data reported by international agencies and reported by countries are different.

Requirements of the Data Lab

To upload to the Data Lab you will need:

- An account registered at <https://unstats.un.org/sdglab>
- SDMX compatible data (e.g. in SDMX-ML)
- SDMX compatible metadata (e.g. in SDMX-ML)

Advantages of the Data Lab

- The SDGs Data Lab facilitates data exchanges and greatly simplifies the process since global and national datasets both follow the Data Structure Definition (DSD)
- Comparing with custodian agencies is critical for understanding our data and explaining trends in the data, this tool makes it possible
- The interface is user-friendly and uploading is quick and easy
- Ensures greater collaboration with custodian agencies producing data
- Visualisations are clear and provide a simple way to display the differences

Difficulties of the Data Lab

- The SDGs Data Lab requires data and metadata to be in an SDMX compatible format, this underpins the work and is essential so if your data/metadata is not SDMX compatible, use of the lab might not be possible
- When completing metadata is it imperative that you specify the reporting is **National** as opposed to **Global**. Failure to do so can cause data to be overwritten
- Access is currently restricted to a small number of users for each country, this is to prevent conflicts of having too many users from one country

How to Upload Data & Metadata

The process for uploading to the SDGs Data Lab is straightforward:

1. Ensure data and metadata is in a compatible format (.docm files can be converted to .xml using the [metadata authoring tool](#))
2. Sign into the platform and press Import Data/Metadata in the top right of the screen
3. Drag and drop your files (this can be performed in bulk)
4. Wait for the data to process and check it is available for comparison against the custodian agency data

A full demonstration tutorial video is available on the TTDT Wiki

UK Case Study

- In February 2023 the UK ONS uploaded our data and metadata to the SDG Data Labs
- We report our data in .csv (data) and .md (metadata) and hence had to use the Global Data Structure and mappings to make our data and metadata SDMX compatible
- Currently, the UK has made 35 indicators SDMX compatible with the intention to increase this further
- Metadata forms were completed by the UK SDG Data team
- Uploading our data and metadata was completed in February 2023 and took a couple of hours

UK Case Study Continued

- The plan is to now scrutinise the data and metadata we have uploaded to understand where the differences have emerged and work with the custodian agencies to understand the differences
- We would like to upload more SDMX data however since we have had to retrospectively make data SDMX compatible it has been a little more difficult
- We would also like to support with helping other countries upload their data to the SDGs Data Lab

Invitation to Collaborate

- After this Expert Meeting we plan to launch a pilot for interested countries on uploading data and metadata to the SDGs Data Labs
- We will hold sessions demonstrating the capability of the SDGs Data Lab and provide support where applicable
- We have already had some interest however anyone is welcome to participate

Thank you for listening