

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORMS
PRACTICAL GUIDE

Prepared by the Task Force on Reporting SDG Indicators Using National Reporting Platforms

The task force was established by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Bureau under the CES Steering Group on SDG Statistics in October 2016. Its mandate is based on the first edition of the CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs.

The document presents information about National Reporting Platforms (NRPs) as one possible national mechanism for providing statistics for SDG indicators. It covers some practical hints based on experience from countries who already provide NRPs. The aim of the document is to help countries in deciding whether and how to set up an NRP.

Table of contents

- I. INTRODUCTION 4
 - Approaches towards SDG indicators reporting..... 4
 - Definition of National Reporting Platforms..... 4
 - General objectives of NRPs 5
- II. WHY USE A NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORM?..... 5
- III. FEATURES OF NRPs 6
 - Making information publicly accessible 6
 - Collection of data and metadata 6
 - Improving statistics 7
 - Information on information..... 7
 - Additional technical features..... 7
- IV. NATIONAL EXPERIENCES 8
 - General description of NRPs..... 9
 - Inventory of the key features of the existing platforms 9
 - Summary of country experiences..... 10
- V. STRENGTHS AND WEEKNESSES 11
 - Strengths..... 11
 - Weaknesses 12
- CASE STUDY 1: HOW THE UK SET UP THEIR VERSION OF THE US SDGS TOOL 13
- CASE STUDY 2: GERMAN NRP GENESIS-ONLINE 15

Abbreviations used in the document:

API – Application programming interface

CES – Conference of European Statisticians

EFTA - European Free Trade Association

EU – European Union

FPOS – Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

HLPF – High-level Political Forum

IAEG-SDGs – Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators

NRP – National Reporting Platform

MDG – Millennium Development Goal

NSO – National Statistical Office

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

UN – United Nations

UN DESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNSC – United Nations Statistical Commission

US – United States

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In March 2016, the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) endorsed the global indicator framework proposed by its Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to measure the SDGs and corresponding targets. The global indicators will provide the global framework for monitoring progress towards SDGs. As established in the 2030 Agenda, its implementation, as well as the follow-up and review processes at all levels, will be country-led and based on national official data and statistics. National statistical systems will be responsible for providing statistics that conform with the UN's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS) for the follow-up and review. At the same time, it is recognised that providing these statistics will require cooperation and coordination between a wide range of stakeholders, across countries, with international organizations, and in other partnerships.

Approaches towards SDG indicators reporting

2. For the purpose of this document, reporting refers to the provision of data and statistics to the organisations tasked with collecting the indicators. Reporting may take various forms, like posting on a website or completing a dedicated questionnaire. It is a different concept than data dissemination, understood as data publishing in general. In this case the data are available to the public at large. These two concepts may be combined and applied to the same action e.g. when indicators are posted on an online reporting platform they are both reported and disseminated at the same time.

3. Several approaches towards reporting SDG indicators are possible at the national level. NSOs will choose the model of reporting indicators which suites best their circumstances and capabilities (for more information see *National mechanisms for providing data on global SDG indicators*).

4. One approach is to publish global SDG indicators on a website and allow custodian agencies/international organizations to download statistics whenever needed. These models can range from disseminating the SDG indicators in already existing platforms/databases to establishing a separate database.

5. At the other end of the spectrum is the approach to respond, on an ad hoc basis, to specific reporting needs submitted directly to countries by custodian agencies/international organizations (most probably in the form of questionnaires dedicated to a certain subject).

6. This note is intended to provide practical guidance to countries that are considering a coordinated approach towards SDG indicators reporting by using an online platform and/or for making the statistics available for a wider audience.

Definition of National Reporting Platforms

7. A National Reporting Platform (NRP) is a means to report (and disseminate) national statistics for the global and/or national SDG indicators. For the purpose of this document, a "platform" is understood in the wider sense and refers to an integrated website, databases, and associated IT infrastructure to gather, host, secure, and make available information and related metadata and documentation.

8. To conform with the FPOS, a NRP would ideally have the following minimal features:

- (a) gather official statistics calculated according to established and reliable methodology;
- (b) provide metadata in a transparent manner;
- (c) be publicly accessible;
- (d) allow for feedback from data users.

General objectives of NRPs

9. Different types of platforms are suited to serve different objectives and visions with regard to NRPs and the national statistical system in general. Objectives of NRPs on SDG indicators might be one or several of the following:

- Gathering, disseminating and tracking national data on the SDG indicators (global or both global and national),
- Monitoring national SDG implementation for the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda,
- Reporting national data for international purposes (i.e. the global SDG indicator database),
- Dissemination of data and metadata on SDG indicators,
- Popularization of the 2030 Agenda,
- Promoting official statistics.

10. Depending on the objectives of a NRP, it can address various target groups of users. Target users can encompass policymakers, the public administration, academia and students, international organisations, media and other information providers, businesses as well as the public at large.

II. WHY USE A NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORM?

11. National Reporting Platforms are one of several possible mechanisms for providing national statistics to monitor the 2030 Agenda. The suitability of NRPs for reporting purposes may depend on several factors - relating among others to: nature of the indicators, context of the national statistical system, current capacity of the national statistical system in developing statistical products, generation of global statistics, and existing information technology infrastructure.

12. The nature of SDGs, their targets and indicators is complex and ambitious. With 17 goals, 169 targets, and over 230 global indicators to be reported disaggregated by several socio-demographic characteristics, the national reporting requirements are significant. Given the volume of statistics involved, SDGs will require modern and efficient methods for countries to be able to report to the fullest extent possible.

13. Further, since SDGs are intended to guide UN planning and programs over the next 15 years, there is considerable public interest in national reporting. Transparency and accessibility regarding SDG statistics are key expectations.

14. NRPs may be a very useful tool for UN custodian agencies. NRPs would allow immediate public access to official national statistics and metadata. National information can be adjusted or corrected by NSOs quickly to address custodian agencies' information needs. NRPs can also facilitate a dialogue between NSOs, custodian agencies, and other interested stakeholders, particularly where discrepancies in data arise.

15. Some countries may already have online platforms that can be modified or expanded to facilitate national reporting of SDG indicators. For example, in Poland the publicly available platform for monitoring sustainable development at national, regional and local level was developed few years ago. A new extension to the existing platform has recently been added exclusively to report global SDG indicators. In such cases, the NRP solution may be even more attractive.

III. FEATURES OF NRPs

16. NRPs are well suited to allow involvement of many stakeholders in contributing to and receiving access to official information. Some key features of NRPs that facilitate the achievement of these goals in conformance with FPOS are described here. Of course, additional and new features may also be devised to achieve the same goals, so this list should be understood as an initial framework for consideration.

Making information publicly accessible

17. NRPs can introduce the public at large to SDGs. The public (various users groups) may not be familiar with SDGs, their purpose, how they will be used, and the role of indicators and associated national statistics. NRPs provide an opportunity to “connect the dots” between the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agreement, and national reporting for monitoring progress. They provide a way to communicate and facilitate global commitment and activity. NRPs may provide links to UN background information, national policy plans related to SDGs, and upcoming national and subnational events.

18. If hosted by the NSO, it may be preferable for the NRP to primarily focus on the reporting of official statistics, rather than articulating either national priorities or progress in achieving SDGs. Dedicated web pages containing statistical information only from web pages featuring national policy priorities and interpretation of progress may be a way to preserve the principle of objectivity in the production of official statistics. Instead, links to “sibling sites” featuring national policy perspectives and planning may be more appropriate.

Collection of data and metadata

19. A NRP can be a means for collecting data and metadata from data providers. In this sense NRPs may be used by NSOs as an additional tool for coordination of the national statistical system, by looking after the compliance of methodological standards and quality assurance from metadata and data providers.

20. Coordination across several producers of statistics within a country is also possible via a NRP. For example, in the US, official national statistics are produced by a Federal Statistical System spanning 128 separate federal statistical programs of differing focus and size. In this context, several national experts would be consulted to provide relevant national metadata and produce official statistics. In the US context, for example, over 30 points of contact have been identified for reporting approximately 37% of the global indicators. Coordination balanced with accessibility are key management needs in this context.

Improving statistics

21. When a NRP is a means for data gathering, it could also have quality control and validation mechanisms. Quality assurance mechanism depends on national legislation and authorities to data validation (considerations on responsibility for quality assurance are described in document *National mechanisms for providing data on global SDG indicators*).

22. Another input from NRPs is the identification of potential discrepancies or errors. NRP could provide a communication loop with data users and stakeholders so that questions, concerns, and suggestions can be received, reviewed, and addressed, and, by doing so, improve information quality.

23. NRPs can also provide a mechanism for clearly identifying data gaps and for NSOs to request suggestions to address those gaps. Potential data sources could include lesser known government data collections, or data collections conducted by academia or the private sector. Indicating another institution as a data source, a NSO may not take the responsibility for the data correctness and quality.

Information on information

24. NRPs should provide metadata to the public at large. Comprehensive methodological information is necessary for a wide range of users to understand and analyse published data in a proper way. Additionally, metadata will help custodian agencies in harmonizing and developing global statistics. To meet these users' needs, official statistics and associated metadata also should be provided in a downloadable form and, ideally, in machine-readable format. National metadata should be formatted in a manner most consistent with UN statistical standards, such as SDMX, to facilitate comparability.

25. Because the platform provides easy access to metadata, that is, means to understand measurement of indicators and the associated production of statistics, it also can be a powerful tool in communicating national differences in measurement and, therefore, opportunities to improve the comparability of national statistics and the standardization of metadata formats. Accordingly, NRPs should feature not only national statistics and global metadata, but, importantly, national metadata for statistical indicators. To the extent that questions about comparability and suggestions to standardize metadata can be received (addressed, and stored) through the platform, the NRP mechanism can contribute to improved information quality.

Additional technical features

26. These are only a few features that platforms may use to facilitate the collection and accessibility of national statistics; many others could be explored. For example, newsflash messages could alert stakeholders when additional indicators are introduced or new data values provided. Site usage statistics and listserver (i.e. electronic mailing list software applications) development could also provide ways to gather more information from the public to improve the functioning of the platform. Perhaps most centrally, the development of APIs to pull national statistics and metadata from multiple NRPs could facilitate the harmonization of national statistics and the production of global statistics. To the extent that NRPs could then receive the harmonized global statistics pertinent for their country, this would facilitate NSO reviews and also improve the public transparency of adjustments made. Such enhancements may not require more resources; to the extent that platform information can be formatted in a

manner that is machine readable, these functions could be developed through data science techniques.

27. A standard for automatic data exchange (machine to machine reading) will facilitate efficient dissemination of SDG indicators. SDMX (Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange) is agreed standard successfully used for data exchange in many statistical areas. Works on development global data and metadata structure definition for SDG indicators are being provided¹ to support the transmission of global SDG indicators.

28. Special features will be implemented when a NRP is devoted to data collection. To preserve the integrity of contributed statistical information, NRP should accommodate several features. First, a staging site should be used to initially receive input from data providers. Access to editing this site (though addition, modification, or deletion of information) should be granted through a central coordinator (such as the NSO) through a secure login procedure. Version and author management of updates to the platform are also important tools to ensure the integrity of the information provided. Some platforms are written with programming language that allows for tracking of updates by denoting exact changes by author and requiring a coordinator's approval before enacting the proposed change.

29. In addition to technical means to protect the integrity of information posted on the platform, the platform coordinator should also provide policy controls to data providers. Policy controls include establishing a work flow process whereby government stakeholders can receive and contribute inputs to the functioning of the platform, and appropriate data points of contact are established. It is recommended that the NSO play a central role in identifying work flow objectives and organizing stakeholder discussions.

30. There are different software solutions used to develop NRPs. NRPs that are built using open source software are the preferred approach, as this feature aligns well with the overall vision of SDGs as a shared commitment. Open source based NRPs can be shared without fees across countries for subsequent customization to address national needs. They are low cost means to promote national statistical capacity building in collecting and reporting statistics. They also facilitate collaboration between NSOs and other stakeholders to address common data gaps and data science needs. Of course, not all platforms need to be open source based to be effective. Nonetheless, to the extent that open source software—through initial development or through cloning or forking of a platform—could make resources available for other statistical capacity building needs, such as data collection or documentation, this feature can be valuable.

IV. NATIONAL EXPERIENCES

31. In January 2017 a questionnaire aimed at gathering the experiences of countries with existing NRPs was prepared and sent to selected NSOs. The questions specified in the questionnaire were divided into 4 sections: general information, form of data presentation, additional facilities and technical parameters. The pilot questionnaire was completed by the following countries: Germany, Mexico, Poland and the United States. The responses received served as a basis for preparing an inventory of the key features of the existing platforms.

¹ The Working Group on SDMX created under IAEG-SDG is tasked to develop global data and metadata structure for SDGs.

General description of NRPs

32. The objective with which the different platforms have been constructed is the integration of SDGs' statistics and indicators into a single repository that serves as a point of reference and source to all users and international organizations producing global and regional reports.

33. Mexico, Poland, and the United States are developing a specific SDG platform while Germany's platform is based on general statistical database and includes additional domains.

34. In **Mexico** the national reporting platform is being developed jointly with the Mexican government, under open data standards, with an open source approach and with further application of geospatial tools. This approach aims to improve accessibility by providing the public with better tools to visualize and manage the data.

35. In the case of **Poland**, its NRP is already publicly accessible for dissemination of national sustainable development indicators. The platform was created by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (CSO) using open source licenses and is being maintained by the CSO as the coordinator of SDG indicators. The main role of Polish NRP is to publish SDG indicators (it does not contain a mechanism for collecting data). The Polish NRP was created before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and was remodeled to include the global SDG indicators. Currently global SDG indicators are available in the NRP and it serves as a reporting tool for global monitoring.

36. The **United States** provides another example of a national reporting platform for SDGs. The US has a highly decentralized statistical system, with 128 federal statistical programs. Given the interest in SDG indicators, the US anticipated many requests from various stakeholders for access. Therefore, the US needed to develop a reporting solution that would allow public access to national statistics (and related information) for the global SDG indicators. Further, this solution needed to allow for the contribution of statistics and metadata to the platform on a continuous basis. Such a solution needed to maximize interoperability with other platforms to ease comparability of statistics for international organizations and the public at large. Lastly, the solution needed to use open source (and therefore free) technology so that other NSOs could maximally benefit. The result is the US NRP, which was developed in consultation with several other NSOs. The US SDGs tool was reused by the **UK** and helped them to develop their own version of NRP (see Case study 1).

37. The **Germany's** NRP platform is not set up exclusively for SDGs. Instead, data for the indicators of the German Sustainable Development Strategy as well as the SDG-Indicators are being integrated in the Federal Statistical Office's (FSO) central statistical information system – Genesis-Online (see Case study 2).

Inventory of the key features of the existing platforms

38. A very important issue for countries considering building a NRP, is the manner of platform development. This process can be outsourced to an external company but the experience shows that NSOs prefer to develop their platforms using their own internal resources.

39. The scope of data available in a NRP depends on several factors: type of platform (broad platform or NRP dedicated only to sustainable development), national circumstances (e.g.

existing set of national SDG indicators) or other choices made by countries (e.g. including MDGs indicators; including non-statistical indicators or the scope limited to official statistics). That is why it is difficult to specify a common starting point of time series which would be suitable for all NRPs. The baseline, or starting point, as well as frequency of data, depends on the individual indicator. The majority of indicators are reported on an annual basis, but some are reported quarterly or monthly.

40. A considerable advantage of NRPs is the opportunity to present detailed metadata. The kinds of information used to describe indicators are very similar in all platforms and include: indicator definitions, methodological explanations, available dimensions and data sources. If possible, the same scope should be applied to non-statistical indicators, when they are included in NRP. The scope of metadata should be adjusted to the country's circumstances and can be changed over time.

41. Reporting platforms facilitate the presentation of data in different forms, such as in tables, charts and maps. The main form of data presentation is tables (predefined or self-constructed, according to the user's needs). Self-constructed tables are not as common as predefined, but offer features which could be useful for data analysis (e.g. time and column filters, unlimited numbers of indicators presented in the table or comparison between territorial units). Charts are also frequently used in NRPs. The most popular forms of charts, used by all countries surveyed, are line and bar charts. Visualization of SDG indicators on maps is also possible and makes a NRP more attractive (however access to base maps could be problematic). Usually countries use their own base maps, but collaboration with other agencies is also possible.

42. Besides the solution related to data presentation, NRPs could have also additional facilities which simplify their usage. English versions and adjustments for the visually impaired are highly welcome. A very beneficial, commonly used function is search engine, which helps to find data by the theme, goal, target, or indicator name, using keywords or searching alphabetically.

Summary of country experiences

43. NSOs have different experiences with NRPs. A general summary of surveyed countries is described below.

Sources of data

All four countries gather official statistics in the NRPs; three of them (Germany, Mexico and Poland) also collect statistics from other country institutions.

Baseline and frequency of the data

Countries indicate various starting points of data and report that the reference baseline depends on the available information. All four countries report an annual data; Mexico also has quarterly and monthly data.

Metadata and additional features

All four countries provide metadata. Two countries (Germany and Mexico) have a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section and the United States is developing this section. Three of the countries mentioned that they have developed a 'Help' functional, and the United States reported that it is developing one.

Forms of data presentation

All four countries have predefined tables; Germany and Poland also have self-constructed tables. The United States does not report any functionalities within the tables, the other three countries report some (e.g. filtering, transposition).

All four countries NRPs allow the users to export data in xls format. Other formats for exporting data available in NRPs are e.g. csv, hml, pdf or xlsx.

All four countries display statistics in various types of graphs. Three of them use maps to present data at regional level. Germany and Poland use maps also for international comparisons.

Additional facilities

All four countries have their NRPs available in English. Germany and Mexico report availability on a mobile platform. Germany and Poland report an adjusted platform for the visually impaired.

Registration Functions

Germany and the United States report user registration functions, while Mexico and Poland do not. Three of the countries produce statistics on the use of their platform and search engines; the United States did not report on these functionalities. Finally, three of the countries (Germany, Mexico and the United States) offer an API to access the data.

V. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

44. Many factors should be taken into consideration when deciding on developing a NRP. As every manner of reporting, this one also has strengths and weaknesses. When considering development of a NRP, countries should verify which of them prevail, keeping in mind the efforts needed for achieving the intended outcome.

Strengths

45. NRPs provide many benefits for both NSOs and various data users. Some general benefits of NRPs from these both perspectives are summarized below.

46. A NRP is an effective tool for communicating SDG indicators with stakeholders in a transparent and open manner. Also it helps to strengthen the transparency of established relationships between national policy makers and international organisations.

47. Transparency is strengthened by the coherent provision of compiled indicators, relevant metadata and other background documentation. Metadata for indicators could include, among other things, indicator definitions, methodological explanations, data sources and frequency of data. There is also possibility to indicate, and explain, any data revisions.

48. NRPs can provide a compact and standardized structure on the national level and consequently, the user can access comprehensive information on the indicator and all methodological changes. However, it should be remembered that the wide range of public data requires increased control of their correctness and regular updates concerning both data and metadata.

49. Data published on reporting platforms are publicly available and can be used by target users, including policymakers, public administrations, academia, students, business and individuals. Moreover, perhaps most importantly, international organizations would be able to

pull in the data directly from the platforms which could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of data flows. As a result, the number of individual data requests from custodian agencies for global reporting could be minimized, which should reduce burden on both countries and custodian agencies.

50. Reporting platforms serve as a means of improving analysis of SDGs progress. A combination of data presentation forms offered by NRPs (e.g. tables, graphs, maps) fulfils various user groups' needs.

51. Time series of reliable and accurate data is another benefit of NRPs. The baseline, or starting point, of data presented is set individually by countries but usually covers several years (as indicated in the *CES Road Map* it is recommended that the time series is presented at least from 2015 onwards). This allows users to observe how the values of indicators change over time and find the trend of these changes, showing clearly if there is progress towards SDGs.

Weaknesses

52. Developing the platform requires resources and takes time, especially when it is built from scratch. Financial and human investments, technology and expert knowledge are needed. The whole process may turn out to be challenging and time-consuming when a NSO has little experience in this regard. The amount of resources will depend on the approach taken - setting up a NRP could be quite easy and low-cost project in case of using existing practices (as it is shown by the UK - see Case study 2). That is why it is very important to take advantage of other countries' experience and look for best practices.

53. It is not enough to set up a NRP. Once a NRP is built it has to be maintained systematically. Human resources as well as IT investments are needed to manage the data and metadata.

54. Some global SDG indicators originate in sector ministries and other statistical agencies than the NSO. Where these ministries and agencies also publish the data, a NRP will be a duplicate source of information, creating a need to co-ordinate data and metadata publication.

55. There may be some overlap or duplication between NRPs and NSOs' general data websites, however, NRPs ensure that all global SDG information is found in a single location.

56. Additional difficulties arise when data from non-statistical sources are included. Providing up-to-date full scope of data and metadata requires efficient co-ordination and co-operation. Validation of external data and quality assurance may be problematic as well.

CASE STUDY 1: HOW THE UK SET UP THEIR VERSION OF THE US SDGS TOOL

Background

In 2016, the US Office of the Chief Statistician developed a national reporting platform as a way to meet the national statistical reporting requirements of the 2030 Agenda. The US NRP was built using open source software to allow multiple national data providers to contribute input that then can be made publicly accessible. The US NRP can be found at <https://sdg.data.gov>.

The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) conducted a feasibility study in late 2016 to look at options for collecting and disseminating UK data for SDG global indicators. The study recommended reusing the US SDGs tool in the short to medium-term and using services within the ONS architecture in the long-term, once it has matured enough to meet SDGs needs.

The ONS SDGs team have been running a project with the ONS Data Science Campus to set up and further develop a UK version of the tool. Work so far has involved streamlining code, reviewing data formats, improving chart visualizations and starting enhancement to navigation. The UK version of the NRP can be found at <https://datasciencecampus.github.io/sdg-indicators/>.

Setting up the UK version

We estimate it took less than a week for the UK to get a version of the US tool up and running, ready for adding data.

Outlined below are some of the steps we took and things we considered:

1. *GitHub organisation and usernames*

We set up a new ONS Data Science Campus ‘organisation’ on Github. If an establishment already uses github, it may be possible to set something up within it. Our team members then set up their required GitHub accounts (see US training guide for more information) with higher-level administrator permissions given to one of the team. Within a GitHub organisation it is possible to define ‘teams’. This can be useful to indicate all of the users who are part of the project, improve communication between team members, and set finer grained permissions.

2. *Forking the repository*

We then took a ‘fork’ of the US repository.

Other countries could similarly take their own version of the website by creating a ‘fork’ of either the UK or the US version. To do this, sign in to GitHub and go to <https://github.com/datasciencecampus/sdg-indicators> (UK) or <https://github.com/gsa/sdg-indicators> (US) and click the ‘Fork’ button at the top right. This creates a complete copy of the code, but not the issues. The new website address will then be <https://<YOUR-ORG>.github.io/sdg-indicators/>, however, a few settings need to be changed for it to function properly.

3. *Technical and hardware considerations*

The tool has been developed using GitHub Pages and uses Jekyll server and prose.io. UK current thinking is that we will not need any separate Jekyll or prose.io server hosting to meet bandwidth requirements.

The only hardware requirement to get a version of the tool up and running is the use of a personal computer for working in GitHub.

For developers the only software requirement is to have git installed on your personal computer. It is recommended to also have ruby installed so that the website may be tested locally. Data managers and data providers do not require software beyond a web browser. More advanced users will want to install git locally as well.

4. Customizing setup

The UK will aim to provide more information on this in due course but key activities include:

Editing configuration files

Granting prose.io access to the repository

Removing the original country's data from the repository – the UK ran a script in Python to create blank data files (scripts could be written/run in R or Python).

To note: the code and data are currently in the same repository so any reforking will copy back over the original country's data and style sheets.

5. Skills required

setting up the tool and repository - proficiency in github and git, basic web development skills e.g. html, css.

developing the tool – as well as above, additionally need skills in javascript and ruby

- data providers and data managers – need education on using the system (see US training manual).

Next steps

The US and UK are collaborating on key developments with a view to sharing code and experience from the enhancements each country has produced e.g. the UK are developing visualizations for disaggregations and the US are developing a dashboard of progress.

Over the coming months, newer enhanced versions of the tools will be available for other countries to freely reuse.

For more information

To contact the US SDGs team email SDGs@omb.eop.gov

To contact the ONS SDGs team email sustainabledevelopment@ons.gov.uk

CASE STUDY 2: GERMAN NRP GENESIS-ONLINE

Genesis Online was developed within the FSO and launched in March 2002. It is the central database for dissemination of statistical data. It provides official statistics and covers a broad variety of topics. Data for many SDG indicators are thus already available in Genesis-Online: <https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online/logon?language=en> . The platform also includes several national and international indicator systems.

The results of official statistics are presented at national and sub-national levels and cover time series starting from 1950 with forecast until 2060.

When the FSO was asked in 2016 to provide a statistical annex for the German Report to the High Level Political Forum, this first compilation of national data for the global SDGs was published as a PDF-document online to make it publicly available as soon as possible. These time series, corresponding to around 110 SDG-indicators, will be integrated into Genesis-Online this year.

Germany has a national sustainable development strategy since 2002. The pertaining 38 indicators are monitored and published by the FSO. Hence, the corresponding time series have been available in Genesis-Online. The German government reviewed its strategy by January 2017. The resultant indicator set now covers 63 indicators. In January 2017 the FSO published a first indicator report and data compendium on the new indicator set. The corresponding time series are now being integrated into Genesis-Online as well. With the integration of the indicators of the German Sustainable Development Strategy and later on of the SDG-Indicators, Genesis-Online will also contain data sources outside of official statistics.

Using an already established statistical platform for SDG-reporting purposes has several advantages: Firstly, the platform provides a “one-stop service” for official statistics. Genesis-user might stumble upon SDG-related data without having explicitly searched for it and thus generating more exposure for the SDGs. The platform furthermore offers numerous features, such as customizable tables, customizable graphs and maps, downloads in different formats, help and FAQ-features among many others. Hence, there are no additional financial or human resources necessary for setting up a new NRP or enhancing an already established platform to include new features. In addition to that, platform-users do not have to acquaint themselves with a new set-up. In general it is also quicker to integrate time series into an existing platform than setting up a new one.

However, as our experience shows, it is still easier to upload an Excel-Sheet or a PDF-document, than integrating data into an existing platform. Sorting out small issues, such as the tradeoff between a limited number of characters possible per data cell in the database and long indicator names, does take its time. Moreover, an NRP dedicated exclusively to the SDGs generates high exposure for SDGs, whereas integrated in a universal data platform the SDG-dataset is one out of many. Nevertheless using an already established data platform and if necessary adapting it for SDG needs will be, in most cases, more efficient than developing a new database.