

Workshop & Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs

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SDG indicator availability, Georgia

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Abstract

In 2015, Georgia has undertaken active measures to adjust the SDG agenda and its targets to the national circumstances. The Administration of Government of Georgia was assigned to lead nationalization and coordination process of the SDGs at the highest political level. The nationalization process incorporated all relevant government agencies and civil society as well as the UN agencies in Georgia. The coordination of the process is overseen by the high-ranking Interagency Council for Sustainable Development Goals, led by the Head of Government Administration.

The National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) alongside the Administration of Government plays the key role in coordinating the production of the SDG indicators and serves as the primary data source for SDG indicators. Geostat determines the directions for strengthening national statistical capabilities for SDG.

To ensure the availability of reliable data, Georgia enforces the “Law on Official Statistics” in 2023. In this direction, the government adopted the “National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Georgia” (NSDS) along with corresponding Action Plans.

In order to fill the existing data gap for the SDGs framework, in 2018-2019 Georgian Government, by support of the UNICEF Georgia launched implemented Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). MICS provided baseline values for many indicators of the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals.

Regarding the population census, Georgia will conduct its population and agricultural census in November-December 2024. The results of the census will be published in June 2026. (SDG 17.9.2).

I. GEORGIA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. In 2015, Georgia has undertaken active measures to adjust the SDG agenda and its targets to the national circumstances. The Administration of Government of Georgia was assigned to lead nationalization and coordination process of the SDGs at the highest political level. The nationalization process incorporated all relevant government agencies and civil society as well as the UN agencies in Georgia.

2. The coordination of the process is overseen by the high-ranking Interagency Council for Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”), led by the Head of Government Administration. The council comprises deputy ministers, representatives from international and local nongovernmental organizations, academia, the private sector, members of parliament, and

representatives from municipalities. The analytical and technical support for the Council is provided by the Secretariat of the Sustainable Development Goals Council (hereinafter referred to as the “Secretariat”), represented by the Policy Planning and Coordination Division of the Government of Georgia.

3. At the operational level, coordination of the implementation of goals and related processes is conducted through four thematic working groups:

- Economic development;
- Social inclusion;
- Sustainable energy and environment protection;
- Democratic governance.

4. The country ensures the measurement of progress in implementing the SDGs through indicators defined in the national SDG document. This document outlines 17 goals (identified as national priorities) and 201 indicators. These indicators correspond to the long-term goals of the country and are adapted to the local context. Progress is also measured through comprehensive monitoring of various sectoral policy documents approved by the government in accordance with prescribed regulations.

5. Responsibility for the implementation of the goals is distributed among public agencies according to their respective fields. At the same time, the Government of Georgia recognizes that for the successful achievement of these goals, it is crucial to have comprehensive dialogue and active involvement of stakeholders and society. This ensures that the progress achieved reflects the well-being of each citizen and that no one is left behind in the process.

II. THE ROLE AND STATUS OF GEOSTAT

6. National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) alongside the Administration of Government plays the key role in coordinating the production of the SDG indicators and serves as the primary data source for SDG indicators;

7. The data source of 61 out of 201 nationalized unique indicators is Geostat. In the Current situation Geostat:

- Produces data on 57 indicators (93.5%);
- Partially on 1 indicator (1.6%);
- Doesn't produce on 3 indicators (4.9%).

8. Geostat is a member of high-level council established by the Government of Georgia to facilitate the implementation and monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and plays an important role in the progress tracking of nationalized SDGs. Geostat determines the directions for strengthening national statistical capabilities for SDG.

III. SDG INDICATOR AVAILABILITY

9. To ensure the availability of reliable data, Georgia enforces the “Law on Official Statistics,” which aligns with international standards (SDG 17.18.2). This law provides a legal foundation for the consistent

publication of impartial and reliable statistics in the country. It fully adheres to the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice.

10. In this direction, the government adopted the “National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Georgia 2020-2023” (NSDS 2020-2023) along with corresponding Action Plans. The primary goal of this strategy was to establish a comprehensive vision for the development of the national system of official statistics in Georgia, addressing both domestic and international needs. In 2024, the government approved the 2024-2027 strategy for the continued development of official statistics.

11. Implementation of the NSDS 2020-2023 enabled Geostat to produce 93.4% of required indicators, while measures to ensure production of remaining ones are covered by the NSDS 2024-2027.

12. In order to fill the existing data gap for the SDGs framework, in 2018-2019 Georgian Government, by support of the UNICEF Georgia launched implemented Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). The results of the survey were made available in late 2019. The MICS included over 180 indicators and involved over 14,000 households, providing regionally representative data which can be disaggregated by age, sex, urban/rural, IDP status, ethnicity, disability and wealth. This information can be used to target and design critical interventions. MICS provided baseline values for many indicators of the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals.

13. Regarding the population census, Georgia will conduct its population and agricultural census in November-December 2024. The results of the census will be published in June 2026. (SDG 17.9.2).

14. Many indicators of Geostat are produced with Donor Assistance:

- UNICEF – indicator 2.2.1, indicator 2.2.2, indicator 3.7.1, etc.;
- FAO – indicator 2.3.1, indicator 2.3.2, indicator 2.4.1;
- UN Women – indicator 5.2.1, indicator 5.4.1, indicator 16.1.1.3, etc.;
- ADB – indicator 5.a.1;
- ILO – indicator 8.7.1;
- UNDP, The Government of Sweden – indicator 17.18.3;
- TA under the STEP programme – indicator 17.18.2;
- SIDA, World Bank – indicator 17.19.2.

IV. CHALLENGES

15. Low awareness of data value. Due to limited statistical literacy and low awareness general public have limited understanding of the potential benefits that can be derived from data. While a lot of efforts are being placed for building informed decision making in public sector, less attention is paid to building data culture within other user groups. This is especially true for some SDG indicators. There is limited understanding even within the public sector of the potential benefits of data value and its role in policy planning. In addition to that, limited awareness of data value also includes misinterpretation of available data or irresponsible use of it.

16. The main challenge in the process of SDG localization also is the shortage of human and financial resources for both local government and the business sector, as well as civil society organizations. The absence of accurate statistical data at the municipality level poses another challenge. This factor complicates the development of suitable and effective interventions for SDG implementation, as well as

the evaluation of the impact of implemented measures. These challenges are particularly pronounced in sparsely populated and mountainous municipalities.

17. Intensified conflicts have undermined the SDGs and threaten reversal of the progress achieved to date. This represents a clear challenge for Georgia, and an area where additional support is required. While the Georgian recognizes its positive obligation to ensure progressive implementation of rights of the divided communities and has put forward specific policy solutions to that end, significant part of the responsibility lies with the party exercising effective control over the said territories.

V. FUTURE PLANS

18. In pursuit of further EU integration and alignment with global objectives, we aspire to harmonize our methodologies with international standards, ensuring the production of high-quality data that aligns with EU standards and contributes to the achievement of the SDGs. We envision active participation and collaboration in European statistical initiatives, fostering partnerships that strengthen the capacity of the National Statistics Office.

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