UNSD-DFID PROJECT ON SDG MONITORING

Newsletter February 2020

WORKSHOPS IN THE LAST 5 MONTHS:

METADATA WORKSHOPS

Jordan, Lao, Palestine, Zambia, Zimbabwe

USER ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Tajikistan

Highlights

- 4th annual project meeting
- More national SDG platforms launched
- Data sharing arrangement template available.
- SDG lab available to countries and agencies who provide data

DATA MODELLING/ SDG PLATFORM WORKSHOPS

Burundi, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Myanmar, Palestine, Tajikistan, Zimbabwe

9 out of 20 project countries present their VNRs in 2020

Six of the project countries in Africa (Burundi, Liberia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and three in Asia (Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan and Nepal) are currently in the process of preparing their Voluntary National Reviews (VNR). A key aim of the VNRs is to review the progress of SDG implementation. Data which can help show the status and development over time is therefore a key element of the VNR process.

The project supports the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in the process through various means. Maybe most visible is the work with development of national SDG reporting platforms. As can be seen on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter, UNSD and the African Development Bank (AfDB) are jointly providing support to the six African countries in the establishment of national SDG platforms. In Kyrgyzstan, UNSD is collaborating with the Office of National Statistics of the United Kingdom (ONS) using OpenSDG.

The platforms will gain more attention if there is a good amount of data and metadata available. UNSD, with partners, does support this work. Key elements are the data modelling workshops where data are assessed more widely, but also work on data sharing arrangements and more in-depth indicator compilation through consultancies has helped increase indicator availability, including disaggregated figures.

Involvement of the NSOs in the VNR preparation process overall seems to vary. UNSD aims to support visibility of the SDG monitoring work where possible. A good example is the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic which took an active role in SDG discussions in the country at an early stage. This has been noticed and the NSC has been given a substantial role in VNR preparations. In addition to the preparation of data and metadata, Kyrgyzstan has been asked to prepare 10 pages for the VNR report.

Wide collaboration with partners

This project is very small if looked at per country compared to many other projects which support SDG implementation.

To achieve the goals of the project countries and the project overall, UNSD is dependent on good and active collaboration with partners. Key partners are the Resident Coordinator Offices in the countries

Participants at user engagement workshop in Cameroon, funded by ECA

along with the wider UN Country Teams. It varies from country to country which agency is most interested in the data work, which made it challenging in the beginning, but we have now established very good contacts in most project countries. UNDP has particularly been a valued partner as they have agreed to act as fund managers for transfer of funds for in-country activities as specified by countries.

At regional level, the collaboration with the regional statistical commission has been very useful. We have, fex, carried out several activities jointly with UNECA. They have added to the work of the project by replicating the user engagement workshops in non-project countries and by developing a manual for user engagement strategies.

At global level, we have been working particularly closely with the different actors which either provide or support the various national SDG platforms. This includes the African Development Bank (AfDB), ESRI, OECD, Italian statistics (Istat), Office of National Statistics of the UK (ONS), Statistics Norway, Statistics Sweden and UNICEF.
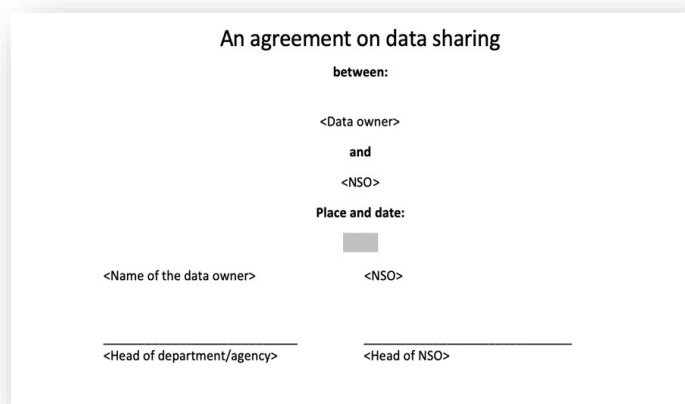
Collaboration requires substantial information sharing and follow up and the team is doing its best. With many partners and a high pressure to deliver, information may therefore not always arrive as often and as early as desired which we apologize for.

Thank you very much to all partners!

Data Sharing Arrangement guidance document available

In order to support the primary aim of our project – making SDG indicators available to the broadest possible audience, we need to ensure working mechanisms within national statistical systems for effective and efficient data sharing to facilitate data interoperability and collaboration. To this end, UNSD, with input from UNFPA Cambodia, has put together a guidance document which provides some suggestions on how to develop and implement data sharing arrangements within the NSS. Sample components are provided as modules that can be included in a data sharing arrangement document in accordance with a country's specific needs. Since each country context is different, this guidance document is meant to serve as a starting point and will be enhanced as we receive feedback and experiences from countries.

Excerpt of the data sharing agreement template.

Data Sharing Arrangements in Zimbabwe

As part of a workshop conducted jointly with AfDB in Harare in October 2019, UNSD presented the data sharing template and guidance materials. This led to an interesting discussion and experience exchange. Key elements in the discussion were:

- To what extent the statistical act already covers the needs
- Whether agreements on data sharing should be wider than only SDGs
- If no, whether SDG data sharing agreements would be necessary given that SDG indicators are aggregated figures and privacy therefore is not a challenge
- Data quality concerns

- How detailed the agreement should be on deliverables, mode of transfer etc.
- Formality and process of signing the agreements

In the end it was agreed that the most feasible approach for SDG data and metadata sharing in Zimbabwe is to create one agreement of data and metadata sharing which all agencies responsible for SDG indicators reporting sign jointly. A committee already exists where the agencies meet and discuss, and this mechanism could be used as a reference point.

Workshop participants in Harare

Workshops on the AfDB Open Data Platform for SDG monitoring

UNSD is collaborating with the African Development Bank (AfDB) supporting the establishment of national reporting and data visualization platforms for the SDGs in project countries. These platforms can significantly enhance SDG monitoring and coordination through improving accessibility, visibility and usability for all producers and users of SDG indicators.

Several project countries have chosen the AfDBs Open Data Platform (ODP) for national reporting. These countries include Burundi, Liberia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These countries will also be presenting their Voluntary National Review at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). This provides a golden window of opportunity to launch and showcase the SDG monitoring work of these countries and the national reporting platforms are a visible means of doing so.

The ODP system incorporates a data submission tool that facilitates direct reporting and updating of country data to AfDB and any other interested partners in the Statistical Data and Metadata exchange (SDMX) format. Overall, the ODP presents a unique opportunity for African countries to take the lead in SDG indicator monitoring across countries in the region and in enhancing the quality of the data and metadata disseminated by African countries.

To support the project countries, UNSD and AfDB conducted joint workshops in Zimbabwe (October 2019), Burundi (February 2020), Liberia (February 2020) and Zambia (February 2020). Participants from the National Statistics Office carried out exercises on uploading data and metadata to ODP. They also created visualizations,
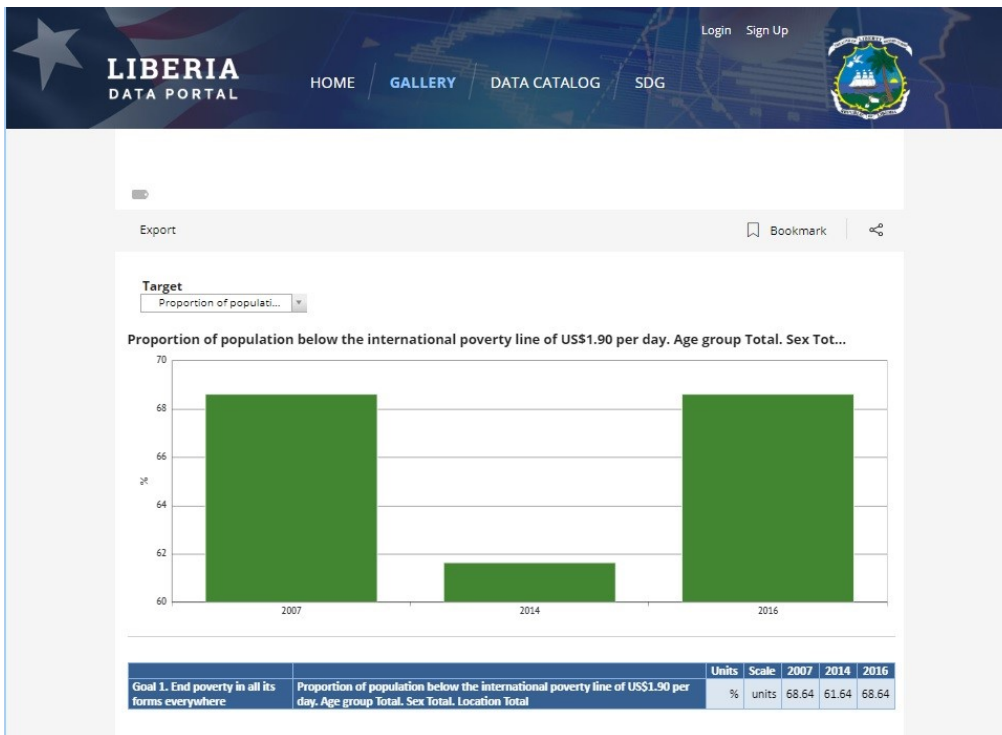

Picture above: Open Data Platform working session in Zambia

Picture to the left: Workshop participants in Burundi jointly with the Director General, Mr. Ndayishimiye (front, right)

OPD SDG platform

As mentioned in the text on the previous page, a dashboard is created for every SDG indicator where the NSO administration team can choose a lay out which fits the data; either a table, graph or text, or a combination of the three.

To the left: Screen shot of the Liberian SDG portal showing national poverty data.

Workshop on advanced SDMX tools

Picture below: Working session on SDMX in Bangkok, Thailand

On 11-15 Nov 2019, UNSD held a workshop on Advanced SDMX Tools and Platforms in Bangkok, Thailand. The event was organized jointly with OECD and UNICEF. Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tanzania, as well as Thailand, participate in the workshop. The workshop focused on complex issues of data exchange, including customizing the global SDG Data Structure Definition (DSD), as well as the use of advanced SDMX dissemination and exchange tools including the .Stat platform. The participants ran a series on exercises where they customized the global SDG DSD for national use, converted their SDG indicators, including subnational data, to the SDMX format, and uploaded and published the data at test instances of the .Stat platform. Both countries and international agencies also shared their experiences and presented their perspectives on data and metadata exchange.

ISI conference and project side-meeting

Project meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 24 August 2019

As part of the UNSD-DFID project on SDG Monitoring, the Statistics Division organized in Kuala-Lumpur two lunch-time sessions on 22-23 August 2019, during the 62nd ISI World Statistics Congress, and a workshop on 24 August 2019 for national project focal points. These events provided opportunities to discuss project progress, exchange national experiences, and learn about methodological recommendations and best practices for the development of SDG data platforms and the dissemination of disaggregated SDG data.

During the lunch-time sessions, participants highlighted the need to provide support to statistical focal points in line ministries in order to ensure they have the necessary skills and technical knowledge to ensure that SDG data from different sources is aligned with international standards, definitions and quality standards, particularly given the fact that in most cases more than 50% of the data necessary to compile SDG indicators originates outside the National Statistical Office. Another aspect that was emphasized was the importance of building

capacity and ensuring the sustainability of long-term capabilities within National Statistical Offices to continue maintaining and developing SDG data platforms over time. Various participants also noted the need for tools to facilitate the exchange of SDG data among members of the national statistical system, and to agree on common data and metadata templates using interoperability standards and, when appropriate, open data policies and best practices.

Project focal points from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao, Myanmar, Nepal, the State of Palestine, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia also had the opportunity to obtain a better overview of global best practices in areas such as the use of big data and as they are presented at the ISI conference. The Saturday workshop was also attended by representatives of Malaysia's National Statistical Office, as well as Unicef, who contributed to the discussion with their expertise and experiences from the international and national perspectives.

A nice idea

ISTEEBU, the NSO of Burundi, has taken a very nice approach to transparency, information sharing and user engagement: The fence around the building is built in such a way that at all the 10 Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics are clearly written for everyone to read and discuss.

User engagement innovation in Central Asia

Innovative ideas for user engagement were at the center of the discussions during two back-to-back workshops held in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in December 2019.

In both countries, the four-day user engagement workshops were attended by NSO staff and various line ministries involved in SDG data production and dissemination, as well as representatives of various user groups that make use of the data.

User data needs and concerns were voiced during focus group discussions and roundtables, providing valuable insight to the national statistical system on how to better engage with users.

The resulting road map for user engagement jointly developed during the workshop in Kyrgyzstan included such innovative activities as: holding interactive seminars on "Reaching Sustainable Development Goals Together" in districts, focusing on local civil society and community leadership; creating a short promotional video on the SDGs and the role of the NSO in monitoring progress to be broadcast on television; holding "office hours" at universities to discuss SDGs with the student population and launching a student contest for the best press release about SDG indicators; holding press clubs and press lunches to build statistical literacy among journalists and to engage with media in raising awareness of SDG data.

Similarly, the user engagement workshop in Tajikistan generated a number of ideas that were included in a roadmap for the national statistical system, including organizing statistical literacy curricula for schools and universities and incorporating SDG content into radio programming.

Above: Workshop in Kyrgyzstan. Nazira Kerimalieva, the SDG focal point provides guidance to the rest of the group
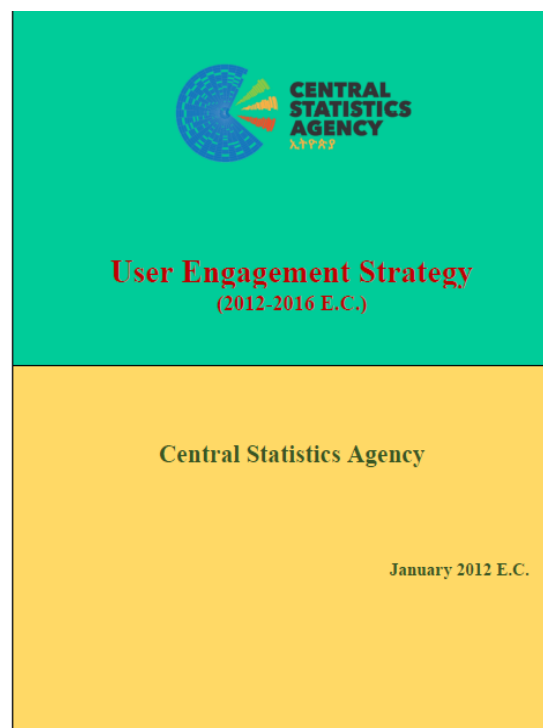
Below: Workshop in Tajikistan, discussing the activity plan

User engagement activities in Ethiopia – wider consultations

Ethiopia has started implementing the MoU activities signed in the fall using project funds. Following the national user engagement workshop conducted by UNSD which developed the draft user engagement strategy, CSA has already conducted a follow up national stakeholders consultation meeting with a wider set of actors on the user engagement strategy to produce the final draft of the strategy document. In January 2020, CSA produced a five year User Engagement Strategy document in close consultation with the national stakeholders and the project staff that included a clear roadmap in the user engagement strategy for 5 years.

Above: Ethiopian user engagement strategy.

Below: Working session in Sweden

PxWeb workshop in Sweden

As part of the UNSD-DFID Project on SDG Monitoring, UNSD organised in collaboration with Statistics Sweden a 4-day technical workshop on the use of the PxWeb data dissemination platform at the Central Bureau of Statistics in Örebro, Sweden, from 26 to 29 November 2019. Three of the UNSD-DFID Project countries (Jordan, State of Palestine and Vietnam) have been using the PxWeb dissemination platform at their NSO to publish several statistical indicators and are planning to use the same environment to do the same for disseminating their SDG.

During the week various demonstrations, discussions, and hands-on exercises took place. Participants covered topics such as the mapping of the SDMX and PxWeb information models, how to leverage PxWeb Application Programming Interface, how to customize PxWeb user interface to national needs, and how to better integrate PxWeb with web GIS dissemination tools. The workshop also counted on the contributions of technical experts from UNSD, Statistics Sweden, Istat, Statistics Norway, and Esri. It also paved the way for the peer-to-peer

Launch of platform in Palestine

Picture above: Front page of PCBS SDG database

(http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/mainsdgs.aspx)

Following the initial training on the latest version of PxWeb in Statistics Sweden countries have been working on preparing their SDG indicators to be published in the latest version of PxWeb dissemination platform. The State of Palestine launched their integrated dissemination platform for SDGs that uses PxWeb, (SDG processing application) and ArcGIS Online (to process, disseminate and visualize SDG data) in February 2020. The project, in collaboration with Istat, has worked with PCBS after the November workshop in Sweden for the successful launch of the integrated dissemination platform for SDGs.

Picture to the right: Director General of PCBS, Dr. Ola Awad, launches the SDG database.

Platform published on Jordan's website

The project staff also worked closely with Jordan and partners (Statistics Sweden and Istat) to support the upgrade of their PxWeb dissemination platform that supported the publication of Jordans national SDGs database. The SDG Database of Jordan was officially launched in February 2020 and presented to the Ministry of Planning.

Picture above: Meeting with Director General of the Department of Statistics, Dr. Qasem Al-Zoubi. Visit their platform at: http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/

4th Annual project meeting

Picture of representatives from 13 project countries, DFID and UNSD at 4th annual project meeting

The 4th annual project meeting took place on February 29th 2020. The meeting was opened by Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD and Mr. Neil Jackson, Chief Statistician of DFID. Thirteen project countries, mostly represented by their director generals or project focal points, participated.

The overall aim of the meeting was to mutually provide an update on progress made, share good examples and practices, providing input on what could be done better and discuss the way forward. All project countries provided useful input on their ongoing work and expectations for the way forward.

Overall, the project countries expressed gratitude for the support provided over the last year. They further asked for more information sharing both from UNSD and across countries. Concrete requests on specific areas of work were also highlighted.

The country representatives very much welcomed UNSDs

initiative to create country pages on the UNSD-DFID project website which provides more information on country practices and organizational structure linked to SDG implementation. The extended page is expected to be published in the next months.

The developments of the SDG lab (also see page 11) was also much welcomed and helped highlight the need to compile and share national metadata for the indicators.

NSS coordination and data exchange at national level was a topic which also created much discussion. While some countries have a smooth process, others have challenges in receiving data timely and in a proper format. The project will aim at supporting this area of work more moving forward.

To follow up on individual country work and next steps, UNSD will have individual meetings with all countries who are participating at this year´s Statistical Commission, in total 15 countries.

SDG lab for comparison of reported data

The SDGLab is an online platform established by UNSD to:
- allow the exchange of SDG indicator data and metadata by countries and international organizations with UNSD. Data can be uploaded to the platform in SDMX format either from a RESTful API or by uploading a file.
- allow the comparison of national data provided by countries against global data provided by international organizations. This is aimed at increasing transparency of data, improving international comparability and data availability. In order to achieve this objective metadata must accompany the data to explain difference that might exist.
- gradually replace other forms of data submission from international agencies and countries to the UNSD Global SDG Indicator database.

In the last 12 months, the key features of the Lab have been gradually rolled out and are at present utilized by the data providers and other stakeholders. Countries and agencies are now able to upload their data, view data visualizations and comparisons, and export the data to Excel of CSV formats for offline review.
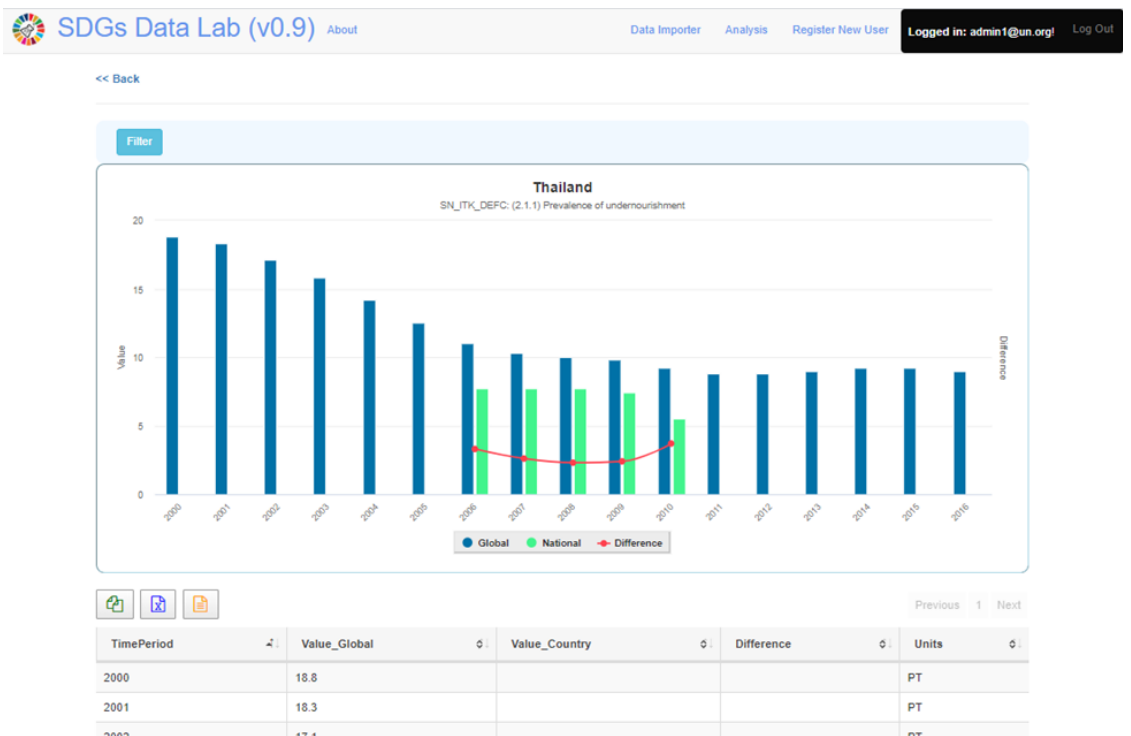As of today, data for 20 countries has been uploaded to the Lab; 12 of these being project countries. Data submission has mainly been through uploading an SDMX

file to the platform since most of the countries are still in the process of setting up SDMX Restful APIs and/or dissemination platforms. We have had 4 agencies provide data through restful APIS: World Bank, UNEP and IMF.

It's important to note that the Lab has acted as a quality control tool for the data providers since it only accepts data formatted according to the Global Data Structure Definition and in SDMX-ML 2.1 Structure specific format (as agreed by the SDG-SDMX Working Group). Thus, often the initial data exchange from the countries/agencies was subjected to refining to make it compliant with the agreed format. Likewise, this data has further been used to test the functionality of the features in the Lab.

The Lab generates comparisons between the data submitted countries versus that from the global agencies; these are in form of differences in the data points for any given time series. Currently, brief explanations can be generated from footnotes provided along the data point. The lab is further being development to allow provision of detailed metadata for every concept. This will be linked to the data provided and will offer a deeper understanding of the data provided and the source of any difference. Only after detailed metadata are available, will the lab be made available to the public, in order not to create confusions.

Visualization of the SDG data lab with an example from Thailand on indicator 2.1.1. The global data are the blue lines, while the green ones are national data. The red dots showcase the differences. Ones the metadata are available, they will help explain potential differences in figures.
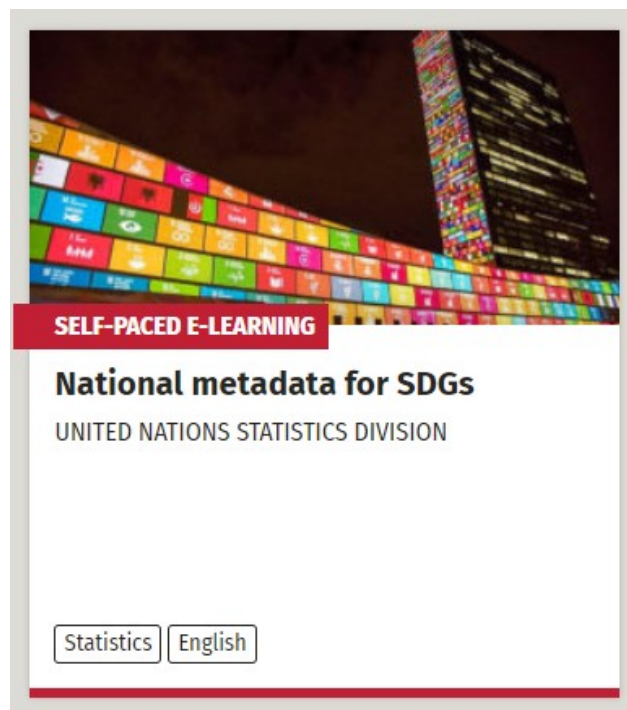
The metadata e-learning course can now be found at UN SDG:Learn

In the previous newsletter, it was highlighted that an e-learning course on national metadata for the SDGs had been developed based on the workshop materials used in this project.

Since then, the Global Network of Institutes for Statistical Training (GIST), has launched a an online gateway for statistics courses. This course is now available on the new gateway along with other courses that may be useful for project countries and partners.

Please visit https://www.unsdglearn.org/statistics/ for more information.

SELF-PACED E-LEARNING

National metadata for SDGs

UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION

Statistics   English

Did you know?

Most materials from national and international workshops can be found on our project´s website. Go and have a look: https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/UNSD-DFID/meetings/

There you will also find an overview of where the workshops have been conducted.

Capacity Development
National User Engagement Workshops on SDGs

Mozambique National User Engagement Workshop
Maputo, Mozambique   21 - 25 October 2019
Jointly organized by NSO and UNSD

Overview   List of Documents

📁 Presentation Materials

▸ 📄 User engagement strategy key elements
▸ 📄 Identifying and prioritizing users
▸ 📄 Tools and methods to engage users
▸ 📄 Tools and methods to produce and disseminate materials
▸ 📄 UNSD focus group interview guide

Project website

For general project information, please visit

https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/unsd-dfid

Project coordinator

Ms. Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen
Inter-Regional Adviser, vibeke.nielsen@un.org

General project email

unsd-dfid@un.org

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UN Statistics Division

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