

CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE RESIDUAL BALANCE (2014-2017)

i. Title

Enhancing national statistical capacity to measure, monitor, assess and report on progress on achieving post-2015 goals and targets for sustainable development

ii. Implementing entity and UN Secretariat partners

Lead implementing entity: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)/ Statistics Division in collaboration with

- Division of Sustainable Development (DESA/DSD)
- Regional Commissions (ECA, ESCAP)

iii. Background

Development challenge

The adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework brought global attention to some of the most pressing development challenges of our time, helped to galvanize development efforts and to implement successful targeted interventions, improved statistical methodologies and information systems, and drawn increased attention to the need for strengthening statistical capacity at both national and international levels. As a consequence, national reporting improved significantly.¹ However, large data gaps at the national level remain, with global monitoring of the MDGs often relying on efforts of international agencies to generate the required data.²

The SDGs/post-2015 development agenda that is expected to be adopted in September 2015 will significantly increase the monitoring and data requirements. The new development agenda is expected to address not only the unfinished business of the MDGs but also sustainable development with its economic, social and environmental dimensions in a comprehensive way. This means that the scope of the monitoring requirements will be significantly extended, i.e. targets in additional areas will have to be measured. Furthermore, the post-2015 development agenda is expected to require addressing the issue of inequality and universality, meaning no person or group should be left behind. This will require breaking down data by gender, age, geography, disability etc. which is a significant challenge for any statistical system. Given the existing data availability, the lack of timeliness of MDG data and the expected new requirements, the *Secretary General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda* called for a data revolution highlighting the challenges ahead. This continues to be part of the ongoing discussions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in relation to the global reporting of sustainable development.

This project aims to strengthen the capacity of countries (in particular but not limited to its six target countries) and their national statistical offices to address the above indicated challenges by following a systematic approach informed in particular by the lessons learned from the MDG monitoring. Based on prior experiences, it is clear that national ownership of targets will greatly facilitate national policymaking and monitoring efforts. Furthermore, isolated efforts of data collection in specific domains, such as those, for example, funded by donors, can be brought in line to building up the required national statistical

¹ The number of countries with trend data for 16-22 series increased from 0 in 2003, to 84 in 2006, and 115 in 2013.

² In many developing countries, basic data are missing on births and deaths; on the number and quality of jobs; and on agricultural productivity. Less than 10 per cent of sub-Saharan African countries had a complete civil registration system in 2012. Only 11 per cent of developing countries produce data for Goal No. 5, on maternal mortality.

capacities. There is broad consensus that new statistical requirements should be mainstreamed, meaning integrated into the existing statistical system, in order to ensure coherence and their cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

Approach for building capacity to address the development challenge

The project will be pursued in three stages. In the first stage, the project aims to increase the awareness among the six target countries (and possibly additional countries of the respective regions) about the expected monitoring and reporting requirements of the SDG/post-2015 development agenda. With a focus on the six target countries, the project will help facilitate the identification of national monitoring priorities by establishing a dialogue between statisticians and policy makers both of whom might not yet be aware that the post-2015 development agenda, which would allow a differentiation of development targets by regions, and national target setting according to circumstances, capacities and priorities. As part of the first stage, the project aims to assess the existing statistical infrastructure of the six target countries (i.e. the existing data collection instruments such as surveys, collections of administrative data etc. at statistical offices and other data producers inside or outside of government) versus the expected requirements which also depend on the national priorities. This will require reaching out to and obtaining information from data providers that are currently not providing their information to the national statistical office. This exercise will allow identifying gaps in the statistical infrastructure and priorities for its improvement, but will also include the analysis of the institutional arrangements for coordination.

In its second stage, the project aims to support the six target countries and to strengthen their capacity to develop a national implementation plan for post-2015 monitoring in line with the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). This implementation plan could specify the plans for the establishment of a national monitoring and reporting system, the identification of priorities for the development of statistics, the required institutional arrangements and partnerships, the identification of the required capacity development strategy, including on the use of new technologies and data sources, the required resources (staffing), and the funding requirements from domestic and external sources. Further elements of the establishment of a national monitoring and reporting framework and infrastructure will be the promotion of open access and use of data, the promotion of the use of data in decision-making and the modernization of the national statistical system, seeking effectiveness and efficiency gains from the integration of statistical processes and the use of technology.

During the third stage the strategic plans of countries will be finalized and the results of the project and the experiences made by the six target countries will be shared on a regional level.

The support and the capacity building for post-2015 monitoring should start during 2014/2015 as countries prepare to transition from the MDGs to the post-2015 agenda and undertake national stakeholder consultations including, in particular, dialogues between policy makers and the various data producers to form a national strategy to address the challenges of post-2015 monitoring and to plan for a transition from MDG to SDG/post-2015 monitoring. Once the new monitoring requirements have been established and international and regional cooperation partners start launching their respective support activities for post-2015 monitoring, it will be more difficult for countries to establish a systematic and coherent approach to monitoring according to their own priorities.

Coordination with DSD and selection of target countries

This project will support a total of six selected countries, three in Africa and three in Asia, which will be selected in consultation with the DSD/DESA. DSD/DESA will be conducting at the same time a project to mainstream sustainable development into national development strategies. Both projects will endeavor to work in a complementary manner, by selecting, at least partly, the same countries, exchanging

information on activities and by actively linking those activities to the best possible extent. DSD will be invited to participate in the project activities. The goal of forging partnerships and coalitions for sustainable development reporting are fully shared by both projects. While the DSD/DESA project will work on mainstreaming sustainable development into the national development strategies, this project will work on strengthening national statistical capacities to support the effective mainstreaming of the monitoring and reporting on sustainable development strategies. Hence, both projects complement each other. Both projects aim to increase the understanding of sustainable development, to improve national coordination and to build capacity for national implementation.

For this project, countries that will be selected to participate should have a certain level of statistical capacity, as indicated in their reporting of MDG indicators, which will allow them to actively participate in all activities and which will allow them to build on the existing MDG monitoring. However, other considerations, including the need and desire of countries to participate, will be considered as well.

Implementation Arrangements

The activities will take place from 2014 through 2017. In each region three inter-country/regional workshops (one per stage) will be conducted, one in each of the three target countries of that region. The workshop location in each region will be rotated among the three countries of the region to allow increased local participation once for each country. Country missions by a consultant will follow-up on the actions agreed upon during the workshops. The target countries will act as pilot countries for their respective region. During its last stage, the project aims to share the experiences with a larger sub-regional/regional group of countries by inviting them to the last workshop.

UNSD/DESA will draw on its expertise gained through its capacity building work for MDGs and specifically through the DFID funded project on data dissemination. Furthermore, UNSD/DESA will draw on its expertise regarding post-2015 monitoring.

The involvement of the UN Regional Commissions is important and in particular their participation in the first and in the final workshops in each region will be crucial.

Major regional and international stakeholders that supported countries particularly in the measurement, monitoring, and reporting on the MDGs and that are expected to contribute to the implementation of a post-2015 monitoring framework such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, UNDP and PARIS21 will be informed about this project and will be given an opportunity to provide their input to, and participate in, selected parts of the work programme. The development banks are expected to support national statistical development for post-2015 monitoring and reporting. UNDP has been providing assistance to national monitoring and reporting of the MDGs and is expected to play an important role in supporting post-2015 monitoring and reporting activities. PARIS21 is an important partnership for statistical development and has been instrumental in the adoption of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). Should any of these international development organizations be willing to support the target countries of the project or participation by other countries in the selected regions, UNSD and DSD will welcome suitable arrangements for collaboration.

iv. **Relationship to the Strategic Framework for the period 2014- 2015 and the Millennium Development Goals**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs subprogramme 4 (Statistics);

v. **Objective**

To strengthen the capacity of selected developing countries in Asia and Africa to measure, monitor and report progress towards achieving the SDGs/ post-2015 development agenda goals and targets.

vi. **Expected accomplishments**

EA1: Increased understanding among policymakers, data producers and users in select countries in Africa and Asia regarding the monitoring and reporting requirements of the SDGs and post-2015 development goals and targets

EA2: Increased capacity in the six target countries on establishing a national implementation plan for monitoring and reporting progress towards achieving the SDGs and post-2015 development goals and targets

vii. **Indicators of achievement**

IA1.1 Participating countries have conducted follow-up national dialogues and meetings among and between policy makers, data producers/statisticians and other data users on SDGs/post-2015 monitoring.

IA1.2 Increased number of countries that have concluded an assessment of their statistical capacities for SDGs/post-2015 monitoring and reporting

IA2.1 Target countries' key stakeholders have identified their priority areas of statistics to be further developed, and conducted an assessment of capacity gaps and needs.

IA2.2 Target countries have developed an implementation plan (or roadmap) for the development of their statistical capacity required for SDGs/post-2015 monitoring and reporting, detailing priorities, possible actions, resource and funding requirements.

IA2.3 Target countries have established national working and coordination mechanisms to implement the plan for measuring and reporting indicators of SDGs and post-2015 goals and targets.

viii. **Main activities**

This project will be divided into three stages. In the first stage, the project will raise awareness and start the assessment of the current statistical capacity regarding the monitoring requirements of the SDGs and post-2015 development goals and support the identification of national statistical priorities. In the second stage, the project will complete the capacity assessment and begin developing strategic plans to implement a measurement and data collection framework for the SDGs and post-2015 development goals and targets. In the third and final stage, the development of the strategic and implementation plan will be completed and results of these plans designed in the six target countries will be shared with other countries in the region in order to raise awareness about the monitoring and reporting requirements of the SDGs and post 2015 development goals and targets, to share best practices regarding the development of strategic and implementation plan for the measurement and data collection framework, and to discuss

capacity development challenges and opportunities in order to successfully implement these plans. Below, a sequential list of activities for each of the three project stages is outlined:

Stage 1

- A.1.1 Complete a desk study of each of the six participating target countries, executed by a regional consultant, that examines the current statistical capacity of each country to implement the necessary monitoring requirements of the proposed SDGs and post-2015 development goals and targets and identifies areas of strength and areas where capacity will need to be built.
- A.1.2 Hold the first in a series of three workshops in both Asia and Africa. The first workshop will include several representatives from each of the three target countries of the respective region. The possibility will also exist for other interested countries in the regions to participate if they are able to find funding that enables them to attend, hereby elevating the inter-country workshop to a regional one. The goal of the first workshop will be to raise awareness about the requirements for the monitoring of SDGs and post-2015 development goals and targets and to begin to assess the current statistical capacity of the three target countries in each region regarding statistical frameworks, data collection mechanisms, and data availability.

Stage 2

- A.2.1 Conduct a country mission to each of the six participating countries in order to assist these countries in completing a more thorough assessment of their current statistical capacity as it relates to the monitoring, measurement, and data collection requirements surrounding the SDGs and post-2015 development goals and targets. Countries will be supported in identifying their national statistical priorities, as it relates to SDG/post-2015 monitoring.
- A.2.2 Hold the second of three workshops in both Asia and Africa. Only participants from the target countries of the project will attend (inter-country workshop). During this workshop, participants will share and discuss the results of the assessment from stage 1 towards finalizing the country assessments. Based on the results, the workshop will focus on beginning the work on the development of a strategic plan for the implementation of a measurement and data collection framework. This framework should include institutional arrangements, including national coordination mechanism that calls for the national statistical offices to work closely with other relevant stakeholders at the national, regional and international level.
- A.2.3 Conduct the second country mission in each of the six participating countries in order to assist each country in the development of their strategic and implementation plan. These missions should include meetings with all of the relevant stakeholders in order to develop a comprehensive plan that will allow for effective and efficient measurement and data collection on the SDGs and post-2015 development goals and targets.
- A.2.4 Conduct the third country mission to each of the six participating countries in order to assist each country in further developing and finalizing their strategic and implementation plans. These missions should include meetings with the relevant stakeholders.

Stage 3

- A.1.3 Hold the final of the three workshops in each of the two regions. This will be a regional workshop as other countries of the region will be invited and their participation funded. The focus of the workshop will be to raise awareness of the requirements for monitoring and measurement of SDGs and post-2015 goals and targets among the countries of the region, and to share the results of the work in the 6 target countries with other countries in the regions, in particular the best practices regarding raising awareness and the development of strategic and implementation plans for the

measurement and data collection framework, and to discuss capacity development challenges and opportunities in order to successfully implement these strategic plans.

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Budget narrative

Consultants (\$128,000)

(a) International consultants

International consultants for the task(s) of resource person at workshops, in support of activities A1.2, A.1.3 and A.2.2 (6 WS x \$5,000) = \$ 30,0000

An external consultant for the evaluation of the overall project (\$ 8,000) plus participation in one of the final workshops under A 1.3 (\$10,000)

(b) National / Regional consultants

National/Regional consultants for task(s) of resource person at workshop and country missions, in support of activities A1.1, 1.2, A1.3, A.2.1, A.2.2, A.2.3 and A.2.4 (6 work months for country missions) x (\$ 5,000 per month) + (6 x 0.5 work months for workshop preparation and attendance) x (\$ 5,000 per month) + (\$ 35,000 for consultant(s) travel) = \$ 80,000

Travel of staff (\$150,000)

(a) UN Staff from the implementing entity

12 missions by UN staff for the purpose of attending assessment missions and workshops, in support of activities A1.2, A.1.3, A.2.1, A.2.3 and A.2.4 (\$10,000 average mission cost) x (12 missions) = \$120,000

(b) Staff from other UN entities

6 missions by other UN staff for the purpose of attending assessment missions and workshops, in support of activities A1.2, A.1.3, A.2.1, A.2.2 and A.2.4 (\$5,000 average mission cost) x (6 missions) = \$30,000.

Seminars, Workshops and Study Tours (\$264,000)

(a) Workshops & seminars

4 workshops, in support of A.1.2 and A.2.2 (\$3,000 per participant) x (10 participants) x (4 workshops) and 2 workshops in support of A1.3. (\$3,000 per participant) x (24 participants) x (2 workshops) = \$264,000.

Operating expenses (\$14,000)

(a) communications

In support of A1.1, A1.2, A.1.3, A2.1, A.2.2, A.2.3 and A.2.4 = \$ 4,000.

(b) other general operating expenses

In support of A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A.2.1, A.2.2, A.2.3 and A.2.4 = \$10,000.

Total (\$556,000)