

WORKING GROUP ON INTERLINKAGES OF SDG STATISTICS TO ALLOW FOR INTEGRATED ANALYSES IN THE MONITORING

Terms of Reference

I. Background

In September 2015, Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and tasked the United Nations Statistical Commission, as a functional commission of ECOSOC, to develop the global indicator framework. The overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is that no one should be left behind. “Data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts” is called (A/RES/70/1).

In March 2015 at its forty-sixth session, the United Nations Statistical Commission created an Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), which is composed of representatives from a regionally-balanced group of Member States and includes regional and international agencies as well as other key stakeholders as observers. The group also invites as other key stakeholders, such as civil society, academia and the private sector, to attend its meetings and to provide inputs during consultations. The IAEG-SDGs was tasked with providing a proposal for a global indicator framework (and associated global and universal indicators) for the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda to be considered by the Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session in March 2016. At the forty-seventh session of the Commission, the Global indicator framework was agreed upon by Member States.

Monitoring and reporting on the 230 indicators that were agreed upon at the 47th Statistical Commission in March 2016 will be a monumental task and will require significant investment and the creation of new strategies and data collection mechanisms. The agenda should allow for analyses that will bridge the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the framework. While each goal and target represents a different facet of sustainable development, many of these goals and targets are related and progress on one goal can affect progress on another. Therefore, in order to effectively monitor the whole complex web of sustainable development, an understanding of the interlinkages is needed. As a result, it was proposed that a working group be created that reports to the IAEG-SDGs to work on interlinkages between SDG indicators to examine the possibilities for interlinkages for the statistics underlying the global SDG indicator framework.

II. Objectives and Tasks

The primary objective of the Working Group is to identify possible interlinkages in the statistics underlying the global SDG indicators and research and identify ways in which these interlinkages can be harnessed to facilitate global, regional and national SDG monitoring and analysis. Tasks will include:

1. Identify interlinkages between the goals and targets and within the statistics underlying the indicators included in the global SDG indicator framework
2. Identify some integrated analyses that have been tested on national or international level to show examples of such integrated analysis

3. Identify areas and frameworks that can facilitate the monitoring of those goals, targets and indicators identified as being interlinked
4. Identify best practices of integrated data collection and its transfer to other countries to assist in the development of integrated statistical systems
5. Propose strategies for using these interlinkages and starting a discussion on how the statistical system can help with bridging policy fields and support a more integrated analysis of the economic, social and environmental developments as expressed in the SDG monitoring system.

It is envisioned that this work will build upon the work done by the IAEG-SDGs on the work stream on interlinkages during the summer of 2015, and an open consultation among all stakeholders will be conducted to gather the widest scope of information on current efforts to identify interlinkages among the global SDG indicators.

III. Governance

The working group on interlinkages will work under the auspices of the IAEG-SDGs and will report regularly to the group. The IAEG-SDGs will review the work of the working group and may revise these terms of reference based on the work this group has completed and any new items that the IAEG-SDGs would like this group to consider.

IV. Membership

The working group will be chaired by one of the member countries of the IAEG-SDGs and will consist of experts from National Statistical Systems with expertise in this area or with an interest in identifying these interlinkages. Countries that are not members of the IAEG-SDGs might also be invited to join the group.

As a wide range of expertise is needed to be able to identify possible interlinkages within the global SDG indicator framework, additional experts from other Member States, international organizations, as well as civil society will be consulted on the work of the working group.

The United Nations Statistics Division will be the secretariat of the working group.

V. Organization of Work

The Working Group will work through electronic exchanges and periodic meetings. Where feasible, the meetings will be conducted in conjunction with the annual meetings of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Other meetings will be convened on the basis of need and with specific tasks to be accomplished.

The Working Group will benefit from other expert group meetings held by the United Nations Statistics Division in collaboration with partners.

The group will conduct its work in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, and will invite experts, as appropriate, from academic, civil society, and the private sector to contribute their expertise and experiences on interlinkages.

VI. Expected duration

The Working Group will conduct its activities starting April 2016 and until completion of its tasks. An initial duration of 2 years (April 2016 – April 2018) is expected.

VII. Proposed activities

1. Analyse and compare the sustainable development goals, targets and indicators to identify possible interlinkages within the Global indicator framework, building upon the work already completed by the IAEG.
2. Conduct an open consultation with relevant stakeholders to identify possible interlinkages and to identify examples of uses of existing statistical frameworks such as the SEEA and SNA, but also on interlinkages in the social sphere, that can showcase established interlinkages to support integrated analysis in the SDG monitoring.
3. Review best practices and country experiences on related issues (such as MDGs and other relevant national and regional initiatives).
4. Propose strategies that use the identified interlinkages to facilitate Global SDG monitoring and facilitate the use of the produced statistics as a means for policymakers to make informed decisions in the area of sustainable development.