Harnessing data by citizens for public policy and SDG monitoring

Marine Litter: SDG 14.1.1b

Omar Seidu

GHANA
STATISTICAL SERVICE

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis

Motivation – reporting progress on SDGs

1 Data Roadmap for SDGs

- **Fill data gaps - Exploring new sources/types of data**

- Strengthen the Data Ecosystem - citizens direct participation in production

- Encourage Data Use - Ensure data connects to decision-making and meets user needs

2 Mandate

Statistical Service Act, 2019:

- **Leadership** and **direction** to MDAs, MMDAs and other statutory bodies in the production of official statistics in Ghana

- Inclusion of **Non-traditional Data** as a valid input for the production of official statistics

3 Emerging Research

- GSS already piloted two citizen generated data initiatives to build evidence for **non-traditional data use**

- Systematic review Mapping **Citizen Science methodologies to SDGS** (Fraisl et al., 2020);

Reporting on the SDGs

In Ghana's first VNR published in June 2019, **only 1 SDG indicator each** was reported for Goals 13, 14 and 15.

Some other indicators are monitored but with insufficient frequency. To **fill the data gap** alternative methods are required to monitor some SDG targets.

Opportunity to **partner with IIASA and UNEP and others** on the Citizen Science for SDGs (CS4SDGs) pilot
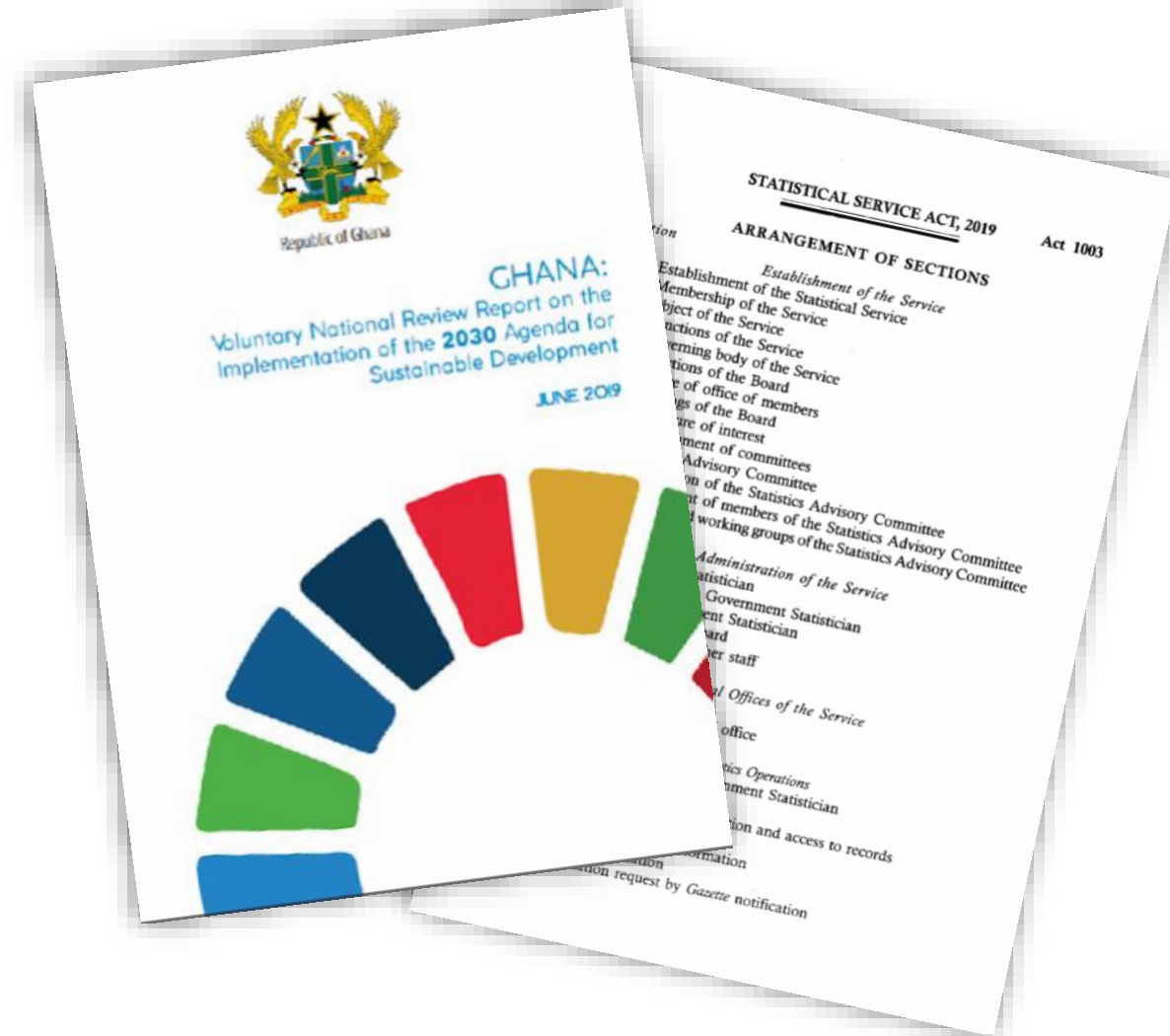
Marine Litter Landscape

Ghana's ocean faces excessive pollution of the beaches and dumping of waste.

In line with UNCLOS 1982, Ghana passed **six main Laws** and Acts to regulate marine activities.

Ghana was first African nation to join **Global Plastic Action Partnership** in Oct 2019, with the President pledging to achieve zero leakage of plastic waste into oceans and waterways.

A **growing beach-clean up community** is active along Ghana's coast.

Between 2015 - 2018, there were 25 clean-ups with 7461 volunteers [TIDES].

Partnerships – Harnessing existing networks and incorporating them into the data ecosystem, data collection can become efficient and locally-owned

Partnerships

In exploring the national priorities for measuring 14.1.1b, a **Policy Roundtable** brought together Ministries, Academia and CSOs who agreed to explore Citizen Science methodologies and incorporate results into their **Oceans Plan**

Mobilising Networks

For over a decade beach clean ups have been happening on a large scale across Ghana's coast by leading NGO Smart Nature Freaks (SNFYVF). Since 2016, they have used the ICC Ocean Conservancy methodology to collect volume and type of waste collected on beach cleanups.

Plastic Punch, another NGO, customized their own data collection tool to nationalize the taxonomy of items collected.

International Coastal Cleanup

- In Ghana, ICC uses data cards and apps (Clean Swell) to track marine litter, with an emphasis on plastics, single use plastic debris items.
- The data recorded includes the location, the number of participants, the weight or an estimate of weight of the debris collected and the distance covered.
- When the SNFYVF do cleanups, they make sure that they identify each item found, record and count them.
- Results reported on an online global database, TIDES

Ocean Conservancy®

Overview of the Process

1 Mapping of Priorities and Instruments

Indicators of interest identified by GSS. IIASA connected to relevant initiatives and off-the-shelf tools.

2 Coordination around data collection

Approaches (via the Wilson Centre) to existing environmental networks in Ghana led to finding the ICC's TIDES dataset. Began conversations with Ocean Conservancy on harmonisation

3 Workshops to harmonise

Government, academic and CSO stakeholders invited to WS in Ghana to consider nationalisation. Simultaneously UNEP held WS reviewing accepted methodologies for 14.1.1b.

4 Validation by relevant line ministry

The Environmental Protection Agency validated the dataset, supported by UNEP guidelines. The data was submitted to UNEP for the global database

GHANA
STATISTICAL SERVICE

epa

International Institute for
Applied Systems Analysis
IIASA

Outcomes

Reporting to the global database

This was the first time in Ghana that Citizen Science data have contributed to reporting a national statistic and also the first time Ghana has reported on 14.1.1b

Reuse of existing data

The information collected had been previously disseminated by the CSO who collected it, but there wasn't previously an awareness of how it could be reported officially. This has generated interest from other CSOs in the reuse of their data.

Embedding data in wider strategies

The results will also provide inputs into the formulation of an Integrated Coastal & Marine Management Policy which is currently being developed by the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation

Lessons

Utilisation of existing tools

Rather than the time- and resource-intensive process of designing a digital mobile instrument from scratch, using an off-the-shelf solutions such as CleanSwell requires fewer resources to implement.

Utilisation of existing networks

By tapping into Smart Nature Freaks Youth Volunteers, an already established and sustainable networks, data could be efficiently collected as a by-product of existing activities.

Multi-stakeholder Data Partnerships

Importance of creating time and spaces for the government, international organisation and CSOs to engage, and build trust, common goals and ownership of the result.

GHANA
STATISTICAL SERVICE

epa

International Institute for
Applied Systems Analysis
IIASA

Omar Seidu

Ghana Statistical Service
omar.seidu@statsghana.gov.gh

Kwame Fredua Boakye

Environmental Protection Agency
Kwame.fredua@epa.gov.gh