RESULTS OF THE UNECE 2018 DATA FLOW PILOT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.   The scope and ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for national statistical offices and international organizations to strengthen their coordination in producing harmonized, global statistics to monitor progress in the Sustainable Development Goals. The 49th session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) requested the IAEG-SDG and CCSA to prepare implementation guidance for SDG data flows.

2.   Recalling the request of the UNSC, the interest expressed at the UNECE CES Expert Meeting on SDG Statistics, and in consultation with the IAEG-SDG and UN Statistical Division, the Task Team on Data Flows[1] launched a study to examine country and agency practical experiences with SDG data flows, with a particular focus on the difficulty of validating data not produced by the NSO/NSS.

3.   The study was designed to explore methods to facilitate understanding and agreement between NSOs and custodian agencies regarding harmonized, global statistics produced by custodian agencies through modeling, geospatial information, or other data sources generally outside of the purview of NSOs. It also examined plans for automating data flows from reporting platforms.

4.   Thirty-eight countries responded during summer 2018. Custodian agencies for selected indicators were also invited to participate. The main findings of the pilot and possible solutions are summarized in the tables below and in the concluding chapter.

5.   Overall, we found broad consensus in the issues identified and the solutions proposed. Many appear to require a low level of effort. However, it is clear that all actors in SDG data flows have a role to play in strengthening the transparency and efficiency of data flows, and solutions require close collaboration.

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[1] Organized under the UNECE CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs.

Table ii. Possible Solutions Suggested by Pilot Participants by Proposed Lead

Proposed Lead	Possible Solutions
NSOs (with UNSD)	1. National country focal point information should be added to the UNSD global database as a resource for agency focal points (at the country's discretion) and regularly updated.
	2. National contacts provided by NSOs should be coordinated at the national levels and consistent with the mandate received by the custodian agencies from country governments.[2] Such coordination is also essential for reporting non-statistical indicators.
	3. National country focal points should include any other national contacts for extant data flows related to SDG indicators in the UNSD global database.
	4. NSOs should inform agencies how they want to receive data requests from agencies (i.e., to the focal point, or with the focal point in copy)
IAEG-SDGs (with UNSD)	1. The IAEG-SDGs does not have the governance mechanism or mandate to review metadata for Tier I and II indicators. Countries felt this is a clear need.[4]
	2. Some indicators have more than one metadata file. This can be confusing. The files should be integrated by custodian agencies.[3]
	3. Major changes in metadata files should be reviewed by IAEG-SDGs. IAEG-SDGs should receive feedback from countries on metadata and follow up with custodian agencies as needed.
	4. It would be helpful to denote in the UNSD global database and/or official indicator list which global indicators are non-statistical in nature, and those that apply to a subset of countries only (for example, LDCs, SIDS, LLCs, DAC members) and those which rely on a common model.
	5. In cases where country validation is difficult, a note is added indicating that the data are modeled by the custodian agency and the status of validation by the country (validated by country/country can't validate/not validated by country/pending review) is included. Thus, all globally harmonized national data and statistics are published in the UNSD database. This could be recommended as update to the 2018 UNSC data flow guidance. (Near unanimous opinion.)
Custodian Agencies (with UNSD)	1. The data sources used to calculate harmonized statistics should be referenced in the UNSD global database, including data taken from other databases. (Unanimous opinion of respondents.)
	2. The UNSD calendar should indicate agencies' data collection and validation time frames. When exact dates are unknown, tentative dates should be used so NSO work programs can plan ahead.
	3. Agency contact information should be updated/completed for indicators.
	4. The following indicators seem to have missing metadata or require clarification, based on the data flow pilot include: 9.1.2, 17.1.2, and 17.3.1.[4]
	5. Work plans for some Tier III indicators are outdated and need to be updated.
UNSD (with countries and agencies)	1. A dashboard is needed to support communication between countries and agencies. This dashboard should integrate contact information for country and agency focal points and data collection schedules. The dashboard should be agreed upon by both countries and agencies, should be up to date, and easily accessible/shared.
	2. Any updates made in the metadata files should allow notification and tracking of these updates by national focal points. This will help NSOs respond to agency requests in an efficient manner.
	3. The validation status should be displayed in the UNSD global database, and updates (such as new postings by custodian agencies or revisions) should be communicated to national and agency focal points. For example, such changes could generate an automatic email to focal points. (Unanimous opinion)

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[2] This coordination is especially necessary for mandatory data flows, such as DAC flows, where the established national contact is nominated by the government's foreign ministry or UN national permanent mission).

[3] Countries observed, through the course of their other activities, that multiple metadata files were posted for the following indicators (not the focus of the data flow pilot): 1.1.1, 1.3.1, 2.2.2, 5.5.1, 6.6.1.

[4] Countries also observed that metadata were missing/needed clarification for the following SDG indicators (not the focus of the data flow pilot): 1.2.2, 1.a.2, 3.3.4, 4.4.1, 3.5.2, 8.9.1, 10.c.2, and 11.1.1.