

IAEG-SDGs Working Group on Measurement of Development Support
Background note for the 11th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs on 3 November 2020
(27 October 2020)

1. According to its Terms of Reference (see Annex 1, para. 12) the Working Group will establish clear and regular (at least quarterly) communication with the IAEG-SDGs and submit progress reports. The following note summarizes the Working Group's activities since its inception and previews its upcoming activities.

2. On 27 May 2020, the newly established Working Group conducted its first meeting via WebEx. Out of 21 member countries 19 took part with a total of 42 delegates (only Ghana and Kenya were absent). The meeting elected Colombia and Norway as Co-Chairs. The member countries and organizations participating in the Working Group introduced themselves and the meeting agreed on the proposed timetable of work, and on work arrangements. Following the meeting, each member received an invitation to the wiki platform established by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to facilitate the discussions of the Working Group.

3. On 26 June 2020, the Working Group conducted its second meeting via WebEx. In addition to 17 out of the 21 member countries, Brazil participated as observer. The meeting was attended by more than 50 participants. The main aim of the meeting was to further discuss and define its work within its existing mandate. The Secretariat presented a background paper prepared by the Statistics Division as the Secretariat of the Working Group. This paper outlined the history of UN efforts to measure development support, showed how this history had influenced the selection of other indicators in the SDG framework, and suggested 8 questions that the Working Group might consider in its work. The background paper was very much welcomed. It was widely agreed that the 8 questions identified in the background paper reflected key issues for discussion. Many participants, including OECD and UNCTAD provided further detailed comments in their written responses to the 8 questions on the wiki platform. These reflected a diverse set of views. The Co-Chairs concluded that there was a need to determine how to structure further discussions and work arrangements based on the results of the discussions at the meeting and the written feedback from participants on the 8 questions. The next meeting was planned for the end of July or the beginning of August.

4. On 11 August 2020, the Working Group conducted its third meeting via WebEx. In addition to 19 out of the 21 member countries, Brazil participated as an observer. The meeting was attended by 47 participants. The Statistics Division as the Secretariat of the Working Group

provided an updated summary of the results of the survey on the 8 questions that the group wanted to address. Based on the survey results the Co-Chairs suggested, and the meeting agreed on a workplan for the next two meetings and on the launch of a research agenda on the wiki platform. Subsequently, the meeting discussed questions 4 and 5 in the background paper in detail. These questions concerned the countries for which the indicator would be reported and two issues concerning the types of flows that might be included. A large majority of countries favoured having indicators for both inflows to recipient countries and outflows from provider countries. There was less agreement on the issue of gross versus net flows and on the measurement of South-South flows. The next meeting was scheduled for 15 September 2020, and with discussion of questions 1, 2 and 8 of the Background Paper related to the purpose of the indicator, its possible components and measurement.

5. On 15 September 2020, the Working Group conducted its fourth meeting via WebEx. In addition to 20 out of the 21 member countries, Brazil participated as an observer. The meeting was attended by 53 participants. The Statistics Division as the Secretariat of the Working Group provided an introduction to the follow-up survey on questions 1, 2 and 8 of the Background Paper and an initial summary of the 16 responses received so far. The deadline for final response was set for 21 September. Overall, while countries expressed divergent views on many aspects, a consensus started to emerge that not all components of development support under discussion will be ready and finding sufficient support for inclusion in the Working Group's indicator proposal to the IAEG-SDGs in Fall 2021 and that the work should be structured accordingly. The next meeting was scheduled for 15 October 2020 and with discussion of the remaining questions of the Background Paper, among them questions 3 of what concept of development support should apply and how to apply it.

6. On 15 October 2020, the Working Group conducted its fifth meeting via WebEx. In addition to 18 out of the 21 member countries, Brazil participated as an observer and Costa Rica as guest expert. The meeting was attended by 59 participants. The Statistics Division as the Secretariat of the Working Group provided an updated introduction to the follow-up survey on questions 1, 2 and 8 of the Background Paper. Members of the TOSSD Task Force and the OECD as Secretariat of the Task Force gave a presentation on TOSSD methodology and practice guided by specific questions provided ahead of the meeting. UNCTAD made an introductory presentation about South-South cooperation, covering its evolution, broad definition, guiding principles and debate around its measurement. Building on the research agenda, it was proposed that a sub-group on South-South Cooperation partners could be established to advance the discussion. The main conclusion of the meeting was that there are different levels of agreement and different needs for further discussion regarding the different components of development support, and that further work need to be structured accordingly. The next

meeting has been tentatively scheduled for the week of 16 November 2020 and will continue the technical discussions.

Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators
WORKING GROUP ON MEASUREMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Terms of Reference

April 2020

I. Background and Mandate

1. 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 and Member States requested that monitoring and evaluation at levels be based on 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 (A/RES/70/1).
2. 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 of Member States and includes regional and international agencies as observers. The group also invites 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. The global indicator framework was agreed upon at the 48th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission held in March 2017. The global indicator framework was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017 and is contained in the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/71/313).
3. In March 2020, the Statistical Commission agreed on the major changes and minor refinements of the 2020 comprehensive review. It further agreed to establish a working group to further develop and refine the measurement of development support in line with the 2030 Agenda, and welcomed the inclusion of member States representing all geographic regions, both donor and recipient countries, in the working group. It also asked the group to build on relevant, previous work in this area.¹ As outlined in the IAEG-SDGs report, agreed upon by the Commission, work on this measure, including the analysis of data sources, is to be completed in time for the proposal to be submitted to the Statistical Commission in 2022.²

¹ Report on the fifty-first session of the Statistical Commission, Decision 1: Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/2020/24-E/CN.3/2020/37), available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/2020-37-FinalReport-E.pdf>.

² E/CN.3/2020/2.

II. Objectives and Tasks

4. The working group will:

- (a) Further develop and refine the measurement of development support in line with the 2030 Agenda under target 17.3 “Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources”;
- (b) Consider different components of development support, understanding development support in a broad sense of the term and including components other than ODA, such as other official flows, private finance, international public goods for sustainable development, and South-South and triangular cooperation; the working group will consider, but not be limited by, work already conducted to develop measures of these components;
- (c) Provide some guidance for case studies and pilots to be conducted and assessed in an effort to test the validity and feasibility of the proposed methodology;
- (d) Develop a final proposal including the various components considered in the methodological work, for which the group was able to define and test validity and feasibility based on the IAEG-SDG criteria for indicators, including for data reporting³, (see Annex 2), for consideration by the UN Statistical Commission at its 53rd Session in 2022;
- (e) Develop recommendations for the implementation of the measurement in line with the needs for global, regional and national monitoring;
- (f) Make recommendations or suggestions on further work required at the end of its current two-year term.

III. Membership

5. The Working Group will be co-chaired by one representative of a donor country and one representative of a recipient country as the process is country-led and county-owned, with one of the two chairs to be chosen among members of the IAEG-SDGs. The membership is limited to 21 countries for practical purposes, keeping a number reasonably low, while ensuring balanced regional representation. A geographical distribution of Members is presented in Annex 1.

6. Additional 10 countries may join as observers upon request. Requests need to be directed to the Secretariat, which will review the request and forward it to the Co-chairs for decision. The Co-chairs will decide on this matter taking into account a balanced regional representation. Observer countries will be allowed to participate in the discussions and to contribute to the work with the same modalities of work adopted by the IAEG-SDGs. The Co-chairs of the working group may invite additional countries with specific expertise on a particular issue if the need arises.

³ Guidelines and principles for global reporting and data flows on SDG indicators are contained in from countries to custodian agencies are contained in E/CN.3/2019/2, Report of the IAEG-SDGs to the UN Statistical Commission, Annex I and in “Guidelines on Data Flows and Global Data Reporting for Sustainable Development Goals”, Background Document to the UN Statistical Commission at its 49th session in March 2018.

7. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) is the Secretariat of the Working Group and will provide support to the Co-chairs in ensuring the progress of work. Furthermore, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNDESA will provide substantive support to the working group. Other international agencies and entities will be consulted on an ad hoc basis and on specific technical aspects based on their respective mandates and area of expertise, as agreed and requested by the Working Group.

8. Members of the working group will be nominated and invited by the IAEG-SDGs on the basis of their technical expertise, practical experience, and their willingness and ability to contribute to the substantive work. Each participating country will be requested to nominate two representatives, respectively from the National Statistical Office and from the agency dealing with development assistance measurement. Experts are expected to consult widely in their country and to draw on their networks of experts as required. Members that do not participate actively in the substantive work and meetings may be replaced upon proposal by the Secretariat and decision by the Co-chairs with a country from the same region, in order to ensure continuous progress of work while maintaining balanced regional representation.

9. Each observer country will also be requested to nominate a focal point that will participate in the consultations and be responsible for communicating with other technical experts in their national government.

IV. Governance and Organization of Work

10. The Working Group reports to the IAEG-SDGs, which provides overall guidance and reviews and approves the proposals of the working group based on established criteria (see Annex 2). Minor adjustments of these Terms of Reference can be requested by either the IAEG-SDGs or the Working Group and are subject to approval by the IAEG-SDGs.

11. The Working Group will take its decisions in the spirit of consensus and cooperation and guided by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities. Where a consensus cannot be achieved, the group might take decisions by majority as a last resort, or submit different proposals to the IAEG-SDGs for their consideration and final decision.

12. The Working Group will establish clear and regular (at least quarterly) communication with the IAEG-SDGs and submit progress reports. It will further establish communication and coordination with other technical groups to avoid duplications of work and benefit from the work already done. The Working Group may request the TOSSD International Task Force or directly one or more of its members, or its secretariat to provide technical inputs.

13. The Working Group will decide on its detailed work plan and the detailed time-line and dates of meetings and consultations.

14. The working group is expected to conduct most of its work through an electronic collaboration platform and by holding regular virtual meetings. Face-to-face meetings will be held as the need and opportunity arises and depending on available funding; at this time two face-to-face meetings are tentatively scheduled for 2021.

V. Time frame

15. The Working Group will work following this general timeline. The more detailed calendar of activities and consultations will be developed by the Working Group (see section IV above).

December 2019–March 2020	Preparatory work for the set-up of the working group by the Secretariat, the Co-Chairs of the IAEG-SDGs and key agencies, focusing on the technical review of the work already done in this area, including review of literature and other materials that can help guide the work of the working group once it has been established.
March 2020	Discussion by the Statistical Commission and decision by the Commission on the way forward for the development of a measure of support to developing countries.
March–April 2020	Approval of the ToRs by the IAEG-SDGs and invitations and nominations of members of the Working Group.
April–May 2020	Setup of Working Group and scoping of tasks and agreement on detailed workplan by the Working Group.
May–September 2020	First phase of the substantive work, focusing on a review of each section and each component to be considered for the measurement.
October–December 2020	Review of the set of issues identified and preparation of a brief update to the Commission on the work done, after review and approval by the IAEG-SDGs.
January–March 2021	Second phase of substantive work.
March 2021	First in-person meeting of the working group (on the margins of the session of the Commission) to review status and agree on final steps.
April–June 2021	Work on preliminary conclusions to be at the basis of proposal to be submitted to the commission.
June 2021	Second in-person meeting of the working group, to be held in New York.
July 2021	Completion of a draft proposal, to be reviewed and agreed by the IAEG-SDGs for open consultation.
August–September 2021	Open consultation.
October 2021	Review of results of the open consultation and completion of work
October–November 2021	Submission of final proposal to the IAEG-SDGs and final decision on proposal to be submitted to the Commission.
December 2021	Submission of the Commission report containing final proposal.

Annex 1: Membership

Eastern Africa:

- Kenya
- United Republic of Tanzania*

Middle and Southern Africa:

- South Africa^
- Cameroon*

Western Africa:

- Ghana*^

Northern Africa:

- Egypt*^

Western Asia:

- Jordan

Central, Eastern, Southern, and South-Eastern Asia:

- China^
- India
- Japan*^

Oceania:

- Samoa*

The Caribbean:

- Cuba
- Grenada*

Central and South America:

- Colombia*^
- Mexico

Eastern Europe:

- Russian Federation*

North America and Northern, Southern and Western Europe:

- France*^
- Norway^
- Sweden*^
- Switzerland
- USA^

* Members of the IAEG-SDGs as of March 2020.

^ TOSSD International Task Force Members or Observers as of 23 April 2020.

Annex 2: IAEG-SDGs' criteria for the evaluation of indicator proposals

- a. An indicator may be considered when a crucial aspect of a target is not being monitored by the current indicator(s) or to address a critical or emerging new issue that is not monitored by the existing indicators;
- b. The proposed indicator must have an agreed methodology and available data, and also be suitable for global monitoring;
- c. The development of the methodology of the proposed indicator should involve the national statistical system, in particular, national statistical offices.
- d. The methodology should be tested in a few representative pilot countries and the results emanating from the pilot studies should be presented to the IAEG-SDGs.
- e. The IAEG-SDGs will review the final stages of methodological development of the indicator. In advance of the meetings of the IAEG-SDGs, the working group is invited to provide supporting documents two weeks before the meeting, including a summary, a full methodology development narrative (including results from the pilot studies), and any other relevant materials.

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