

# Goal 16

**Target number:** 16.7

**Indicator Number and Name:** 16.7.2 Proportion of the population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

**Agency:** UNDP

## **Has work for the development of this indicator begun?**

Yes. Two candidate survey questions<sup>1</sup> have been identified on the basis of extensive consultations held over the past year and a half with governance measurement experts and national statistical offices (NSOs) in all regions, and 11 NSOs will soon go to field to pilot these two questions. The draft metadata for this indicator, along with accompanying survey implementation guidelines and data reporting form (Excel), will be revised and finalized by October 2018, on the basis of piloting results.

## **Who are the entities, including national and international experts, directly involved and consulted in developing the methodology/and or data collection tools?**

### *a) National statistical offices*

In collaboration with the Praia City Group on Governance Statistics, which has been tasked by the UNSC to develop international methodological guidelines for the production of governance statistics, including for Tier III SDG 16 indicators, the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre hosted two Expert Group Meetings over the past year and a half (respectively held on 9-10 May 2017 and 4-5 December 2017), which brought together 14 NSOs with a well-established practice of measuring inclusiveness and responsiveness in decision-making processes at national and local levels, namely NSOs from **Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Germany, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Palestine, the Philippines, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, Viet Nam**. At these two Expert Group Meetings, NSOs were invited to share experiences and advise on a range of definitional, methodological and practical issues that needed to be considered in developing a harmonized methodology for this indicator.

In preparation for the first Expert Group Meeting, a global survey of current surveying practices by NSOs in relation to SDG indicator 16.7.2 was completed by **33<sup>2</sup> country respondents**. This survey provided a valuable preliminary overview of broad trends with respect to the various types of questions used by NSOs to measure the inclusiveness and responsiveness of formal decision-making processes.

In preparation for the second Expert Group Meeting, a technical research paper offering a “*Review and testing of available indicators for SDG 16.7.2*” was developed by the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre,

---

<sup>1</sup> One question to measure ‘subjective competence’ (or ‘internal political efficacy’): *How confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?* [Not at all confident / A little confident / Quite confident / Very confident / Completely confident] – and a second question to measure ‘system responsiveness’ (or ‘external political efficacy’): *How much would you say the political system in [country] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?* [Not at all/ Very little/Some/A lot/A great deal]. Both questions are drawn from the European Social Survey’s core questionnaire (Round 8, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Country respondents to the survey included 3 countries from the MENA region, 5 from Africa, 19 from Europe, 1 from North America, 3 from Latin America, and 2 from Asia-Pacific. The full list of respondents is as follows: Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Cote d’Ivoire, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Jamaica, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey and Uganda.

building on a global mapping of relevant survey questions currently in use by selected NSOs around the world to monitor the inclusiveness and responsiveness of formal decision-making processes. This mapping examined relevant questions used by the group of **11 African countries**<sup>3</sup> having piloted the SHaSA<sup>4</sup> survey instrument on Governance, Peace and Security statistics, **Australia, Colombia, Cameroon, all European countries** (through Eurostat's EU-SILC *ad hoc* module on 'Active Citizenship'), **Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Norway, Palestine, South Africa and Viet Nam**.

Finally, once a consensus was reached around two candidate survey questions for 16.7.2, a call for expressions of interest in reviewing or piloting the proposed questions was sent out to the NSO membership of the Praia Group and other NSOs that are members of the IAEG-SDGs or that have been involved in consultations around this indicator. As of mid-July 2017, 11 NSOs have expressed their intention to test the two candidate survey items in the coming months/weeks as part of a larger survey or separately on a small sample, including **Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Palestine, Peru, Republic of Korea, Uganda**. Meanwhile, 7 NSOs, namely **Canada, Colombia, Egypt, New Zealand, Philippines, Sweden and Turkey** have committed to reviewing the proposed survey items and to providing feedback on their methodological soundness and feasibility in individual national contexts.

*b) Global and regional survey producers*

Several well-established global and regional producers of survey data on the inclusiveness and responsiveness of decision-making have contributed to the development of this indicator through Expert Group Meetings and bilateral consultations.

At the regional level, expert contributions were obtained from the **Afrobarometer** (Bob Mattes, Senior Advisor to the Afrobarometer), which has been producing pan-African series of national public attitude surveys on a wide range of governance issues, including on political participation, electoral processes and the inclusiveness of politics, for nearly 20 years. A thorough review of relevant survey questions for 16.7.2 used by other regional barometers (the **Asian, Arab and Latino Barometers**) was also conducted. At the European level, careful consideration of relevant questions used by the **European Social Survey** – a biennial cross-national survey of attitudes and behavior established in 2001, and implemented by leading academics and social research professionals across Europe – led to the identification of the two candidate survey questions proposed for this indicator. Experts from the European Social Survey furnished critical contributions in support of these two proposed survey questions, including the theoretical rationale, expected relationship with other concepts and empirical evidence establishing the validity and reliability of these two questions (in the European context).

The methodological development process also benefitted from the strong engagement of experts in the **OECD's Statistics and Governance Directorates** working on governance statistics of relevance to 16.7.2, such as statistics on voting and other forms of political participation, on people's own assessment of the quality of democracy in their country, on stakeholder engagement in regulations, political efficacy, and trust in institutions (See Chapter on Governance and Well-Being in OECD's *How's Life? Measuring Well-Being*, 2017). Long-established European survey programmes, such as the EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey and its *ad hoc* module on 'Active Citizenship' carried out in

---

<sup>3</sup> From 2013 to 2017, a survey instrument on Governance, Peace and Security was developed and piloted by 11 African NSOs (namely, the NSOs of Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Tunisia and Uganda), as part of the AU's Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA). Since then, this instrument has been integrated in the regular survey programme of several of these countries, such as Mali where the GPS-SHaSA survey so far has been run five times.

<sup>4</sup> See [Voices from the Field – African Experiences in Producing Governance, Peace and Security Statistics](#) (UNDP, 2017)

2015, as well as the OECD's Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC) which measures the concept of 'political efficacy', were also leveraged in the process.

At the global level, relevant survey questions in several global survey initiatives capturing aspects of inclusiveness and/or responsiveness of decision-making processes were considered, including questions from the **World Values Survey Association**, the **Gallup World Poll**, the **World Justice Project's** Rule of Law Index, and the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index, developed by **UNDP-ACT and the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD)**. Importantly, a critical collaboration was established with the **World Values Survey Association** for the piloting of the first survey question selected by the Expert Group as a strong candidate for the monitoring of SDG indicator 16.7.2, as part of the ongoing 7<sup>th</sup> wave of the global WVS survey.

*c) International governance measurement experts*

Several independent researchers with expertise in designing and conducting citizen surveys on governance contributed to the selection of these two proposed survey questions, including experts from the French Institute of Research for Development (IRD), International IDEA, the University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), the Open Society Foundation, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network and Transparency International.

**What is the involvement of or how do you plan to involve National Statistical Systems in the development of the methodology?**

See preceding question. So far, more than 40 NSOs have played a central role in reviewing methodological options for 16.7.2 and in piloting the two proposed survey questions, on the basis of prior surveying experience in this area, or through their membership of the Praia City Group on Governance Statistics, or of the IAEG-SDGs.

**Please briefly describe the process of developing the methodology for the indicator**

The process for developing the methodology for this indicator has been guided by the Praia City Group on Governance Statistics, which has a dedicated Working Group on SDG indicator 16.7.2, and a mandate to support the development of methodologies for Tier III indicators under SDG 16. It drew extensively from NSOs' experiences in this area, and from the expertise of other cross-national survey research initiatives, as listed above.

Chronologically, the following steps were taken:

- 1) *Preliminary research paper to frame discussions at the first Expert Group Meeting (April 2017):* A first attempt at "Validating and prioritizing available indicators for SDG 16.7.2" was prepared by Dr. Mark Orkin (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Director General of Statistics South Africa from 1995-2000) for the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre and presented at the first Expert Group Meeting. This first research paper explored existing survey questions on the inclusiveness and/or responsiveness of decision-making, from long-established comparative cross-country surveys such as Afrobarometer and the World Values Survey, that could be used to constitute potent baskets of indicators to monitor 16.7.2. In particular, four<sup>5</sup> relevant survey items were identified as having strong 'construct validity', showing strong empirical correlation with an overall Goal 16 outcome.

---

<sup>5</sup> Together, the following 4 survey items were identified as strong candidates for 16.7.2, based on statistical analysis of the Afrobarometer dataset: 1) trust in the local authority; 2) trust in the electoral authority; 3) feeling free to vote without feeling pressured; and 4) members of parliament listen to what people like you have to say.

- 2) *Global survey of NSO experiences with measuring the inclusiveness and responsiveness of decision-making (April 2017)*: Also in preparation for the first Expert Group Meeting, the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre conducted an online survey to help identify broad trends in current surveying practice by NSOs. This survey was completed by 33 NSOs around the world and gave a preliminary overview of the type of questions used which could be considered for 16.7.2 (e.g. questions asking people about the fairness of elections, about the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the Executive and local authorities, or about civic participation in public life and membership in non-governmental organizations.)
- 3) *First Expert Group Meeting (Oslo, 16-17 May 2017)*: This first Expert Group Meeting generated consensus around three key aspects of the methodology to be developed for 16.7.2, namely (1) that the focus should be placed on the mechanisms through which *formal* institutions make decisions and derive their legitimacy, rather than the broader range of informal decision-making processes at community level, within civic organizations, etc.; (2) that survey measures for 16.7.2 should be designed with a view to being policy ‘actionable’ i.e. to inform decision-making and course correction by policymakers; (3) that an empirical approach should be adopted to identify candidate survey items that most strongly correlate with a high-level outcome of relevance to target 16.7, as proposed by Orkin (and this empirical approach should draw from various regional datasets to ensure that the validity of the proposed items remains high across regions.)
- 4) *Development of a second research paper to frame discussions at the Second Expert Group Meeting: “Review and testing of available indicators for SDG 16.7.2 (June – November 2017)*: Following on a recommendation made at the first Expert Group Meeting to document more systematically how NSOs measure responsiveness and inclusiveness at different levels of decision-making, the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre conducted an in-depth review of relevant survey questions used by 10 NSOs<sup>6</sup> around the world, as well as by 11 African countries<sup>7</sup> having piloted the SHaSA survey instrument on Governance, Peace and Security statistics, and all European countries (through Eurostat’s EU-SILC *ad hoc* module on Active Citizenship). On the basis of this global mapping of relevant survey questions, a conceptual framework<sup>8</sup> was elaborated to guide the selection of candidate survey questions for SDG indicator 16.7.2. In keeping with the recommendation made at the first Expert Group Meeting to ground the selection of questions for 16.7.2 in statistical analysis rather than making a purely ‘debate-based’ choice among various wording options, this study statistically identified those survey questions that are the best ‘predictors’ of a regression outcome measure of relevance to target 16.7, namely “overall satisfaction with the way democracy works in this country”. This analysis was performed across the datasets of multi-country comparative surveys from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Arab region (using the regional barometer surveys), and pairwise regression analyses of short-listed survey items with “satisfaction with democracy” led to the

---

<sup>6</sup> Namely: Australia, Colombia, Cameroon, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Norway, Palestine, South Africa and Viet Nam.

<sup>7</sup> From 2013 to 2017, a survey instrument on Governance, Peace and Security was developed and piloted by 11 African NSOs (namely, the NSOs of Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Tunisia and Uganda), as part of the AU’s Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA). Since then, this instrument has been integrated in the regular survey programme of several of these countries, such as Mali where the GPS-SHaSA survey so far has been run five times.

<sup>8</sup> With respect to the inclusiveness of decision-making, the conceptual framework distinguished survey questions measuring *experiences* of participation (e.g. voted in elections, used formal participation channels, joined activities of civic groups or personally contacted decision-makers) from questions measuring *subjective perceptions* of the inclusiveness of decision-making. Meanwhile, questions on the responsiveness of decision-making were categorized based on the ‘degree’ of responsiveness, with some questions simply asking about the extent to which decision-makers *listen*, and others asking about the extent to which decision-makers *act* on people’s preferences.

identification of two ‘high-performing’ questions (on people’s perception of the fairness of elections, and people’s feeling of having an influence on politics), which were then tabled for discussion at the second Expert Group Meeting.

- 5) *Second Expert Group Meeting (Oslo, 4-5 December 2017)*: At the second Expert Group Meeting, NSOs and governance measurement experts were invited to review findings and recommendations made in the aforementioned Study, and to advise on methodological options for the proposed two survey items for 16.7.2. At that Meeting, it was noted that indicator 16.7.2 is analogous to measuring levels of ‘political efficacy’ (i.e. people’s feeling that their political views can impact on political processes), a well-established concept in political science since the 1950s. The Meeting adopted the proposal to use two survey questions to measure 16.7.2, namely one question focused on *people’s ability to participate* in decision-making (‘inclusive decision-making’) and one survey question focused on *decision-makers’ response* to people’s expressed preferences (‘responsive decision-making’). A number of methodological and broader contextual considerations were raised by national statisticians and international experts to help refine the selection of these two questions<sup>9</sup>.
- 6) *Final round of consultations with the European Social Survey, the UNDP’s Human Development Office and the OECD’s Statistics Directorate on revised candidate survey items (January – June 2018)*: Further to the second Expert Group Meeting, additional consultations were held with the European Social Survey (ESS). Since its first round in 2002, but more systematically since 2012, the ESS has been testing various survey questions to measure the concept of ‘political efficacy’, including those considered by the Expert Group at its second Meeting. The two-pronged framework developed by the ESS to measure ‘political efficacy’, with a focus on both ‘subjective competence’<sup>10</sup> (or *internal efficacy*) and ‘system responsiveness’<sup>11</sup> (or *external efficacy*), was found to align well with the Expert Group’s recommendation to identify two survey questions that would measure, respectively, *people’s ability to participate* in decision-making (‘inclusive decision-making’) and *decision-makers’ response* to people’s expressed preferences (‘responsive decision-making’). Statisticians in UNDP’s Human Development Office contributed additional statistical analysis to help guide the selection of two questions out of the 4 ESS options for political efficacy<sup>12</sup>. Finally, a strategic approach linking the two survey questions on political efficacy under target 16.7 with a

---

<sup>9</sup> For ‘inclusive decision-making’, participants noted that a survey item on people’s perception of the fairness of elections could be problematic given the comparatively stronger ‘sponsor effect’ recorded for this question in the *Review* paper (i.e. Survey respondents in less democratic settings who believe the government, via an NSO, sponsors the survey have been found to inflate their answer on a politically sensitive question, like trust in the president/prime minister. Using the Afrobarometer dataset, the *Review* demonstrated that people’s perception of ‘free & fair elections’ was more likely to be more positively assessed than other candidate items for 16.7.2, in less democratic settings.) Another concern with an item on elections related to the risk (documented in several studies) that respondents whose preferred candidate did not win the elections tend to respond more negatively when asked about the fairness of elections. And for ‘responsive decision-making’, statisticians cautioned against a formulation asking people about the ‘influence’ they have on politics, first because in several contexts, it would be unrealistic to expect people to ‘have influence’ over decision-making, and second, because such a question unrealistically presumes that people are able to find out, *ex post*, the impact of their contributions on decision-making processes, which is rarely the case. As such, the alternative formulation ‘having a say in what the government does’ was found to be more universally applicable.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Subjective competence’ is defined by the ESS as “The confidence or belief that an individual has in his or her own abilities to understand politics and to participate in the political process.”

<sup>11</sup> ‘System responsiveness’ is defined by the ESS as “The individual’s belief in the responsiveness of the political system, that is the extent to which people think that politicians and/or political institutions will listen to and act on the opinions of ordinary citizens.”

<sup>12</sup> Fairly strong correlations were found between the two survey questions used under each dimension, but correlations were weaker when mixing questions under each dimension, thus confirming the wisdom of selecting only one question to measure each dimension, if only two questions can be used to measure 16.7.2.

possible additional SDG indicator on ‘trust in institutions’ under target 16.6 (a possibility currently being considered by the IAEG-SDGs) was discussed with the OECD (which recently developed Guidelines on Measuring Trust; see OECD, 2017), to optimize the analytical and policy value of the SDG 16 measurement framework. In the event that an additional indicator on trust is adopted under target 16.6, the two survey questions used under target 16.7 to report on ‘inclusive and responsive decision-making’ can shed valuable light (analytically- and policy-wise) on some of the underlying drivers<sup>13</sup> of trust measures.

- 7) *Collaboration with researchers with expertise in measuring ‘social desirability bias’ (or the ‘survey sponsorship effect’)*: Given the risk for the proposed survey items for 16.7.2 (asking respondents to express their views about decision-makers) to be affected by ‘social desirability bias’, which arises whenever survey respondents do not reveal their true beliefs but rather provide a response that they believe to be more socially acceptable, or the response that they believe the enumerators wish to hear, there is a need to assess the validity and reliability of these survey questions for the measurement of SDG indicator 16.7.2, across various national contexts. To this end, a collaboration was established with two academics<sup>14</sup> with expertise in the measurement of social desirability bias, to elaborate a survey research protocol that could be easily administered by NSOs during the piloting phase, and that would help assess the extent of self-censorship by respondents across various national contexts. Through the estimation of public opinion on the proposed SDG 16.7.2 questions with both direct and indirect (list experiment) techniques, we can establish the extent/non-existence of social desirability bias that otherwise is inherently unknown.
- 8) *Piloting by NSOs (July - October 2018)*: In July 2018, the NSO membership of the Praia Group and other NSOs that are members of the IAEG-SDGs or that have been involved in consultations around SDG indicator 16.7.2 were invited to contribute to the final validation of the methodological proposal for this indicator in three possible ways, namely a) through piloting on a large-scale (implementing the pilot-testing protocol elaborated for the two proposed survey questions as part of an upcoming nationally representative household survey); b) through piloting on a small-scale (implementing the pilot-testing protocol on smaller samples of 500 or above if no large-scale survey was planned in the near future); c) through a review of the two proposed survey questions (if piloting was not possible). As of mid-July 2018, 11 NSOs have expressed their intention to pilot the survey instrument as part of a larger survey or separately on a small sample, and 7 NSOs have committed to providing feedback on the two proposed survey questions, as well as on their feasibility in individual national contexts.
- 9) *Piloting by WVSA (January 2018 – Dec. 2019)*: In parallel to the NSO pilot exercise, the World Values Survey Association (WVSA) offered to pilot-test the first question<sup>15</sup> (on ‘system responsiveness’) selected by the Expert Group, as part of its ongoing 7<sup>th</sup> survey wave (the second question had not yet been selected at the time, and the WVSA urgently needed to finalize its questionnaire as country teams were starting to go to field, so only the first question was included). With more than 30 countries around the world testing this question in 2018, and more to come in 2019, this pilot exercise represents the first effort to test this particular question on ‘system

---

<sup>13</sup> Empirical analysis codified by the ESS to describe the expected relationships of its political efficacy items with other concepts shows a strong correlation between ‘system responsiveness’ and political trust, and a strong correlation between ‘subjective competence’ and political interest and participation, which in turn influence levels of trust.

<sup>14</sup> Marcus Tannenberg, V-Dem Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, and Darrel Robinson, Department of Government, Uppsala University.

<sup>15</sup> *How much would you say the political system in [country] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?* [Not at all/ Very little/Some/A lot/A great deal] (from ESS Round 8, 2016)

responsiveness' beyond Europe. In countries where both the NSO and an WVS country team will have tested this question, comparing results obtained by NSOs to results obtained by independent WVS researchers will also help assess the extent to which this question is affected by social desirability bias.

10) *Final revisions based on piloting results and feedback received (September – October 2018):* The survey questions, accompanying survey implementation guidelines, data reporting form (Excel) and metadata will be revised based on the survey results generated by both the NSO and WVSA pilot exercises.

**Please indicate new international standards that will need to be proposed and approved by an intergovernmental process (such as UNSC) for this methodology.**

Survey questions to measure the concept of 'political efficacy' have been used for decades, first tested in the United States in the 1950s. The applicable standards are derived from well-established European surveys using such questions, including the European Social Survey which has now made the concept of 'political efficacy' a core item of its annual questionnaire (since ESS Round 8, 2016), and from which the two proposed questions for 16.7.2 are drawn. The OECD Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC) uses a very similar formulation<sup>16</sup> to measure external political efficacy, and was first used in the first National Election Studies in the United States (Lane, 1959). It is also noteworthy that 'political efficacy' has become a 'headline indicator' of civic engagement and governance, alongside voter turnout, in the OECD's indicator set on well-being (OECD's *How's Life – Measuring Well-Being*). As such, no additional approval procedures by the UNSC are foreseen for this indicator.

**When do you expect the methodological work on this indicator to be completed?**

End of 2018.

**Are data and metadata already being collected from the National Statistical System for one or more components of this indicator?**

Yes

**If yes, please describe:**

An increasing number of NSOs measure various aspects of 'inclusive and responsive decision-making', *albeit* using a variety of methods, as captured by UNDP's mapping of relevant surveying practices in this area by selected NSOs (referenced above). More details can be obtained from the *Review and testing of available indicators for SDG 16.7.2* carried out by UNDP.

**How do you plan to collect the data?**

The survey questions, along with survey implementation guidelines and the metadata for the indicator, will be sent to NSOs, and survey results will be compiled in a data reporting form (in Excel), also provided to NSOs by UNDP.

---

<sup>16</sup> The question used is from the OECD Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC): *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? People like me don't have any say in what the government does.* The response scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ("strongly agree") to 5 ("strongly disagree").

**With what frequency is data expected to be collected?**

Annually

**Is there a process of data validation by countries in place or planned for this indicator?**

Yes

**If yes, explain:**

The data for this indicator is to be provided directly by NSOs and as such NSOs will apply their own data validation procedures prior to submitting data at the international level for SDG reporting.

**If the indicator involves multiple components from different data sources, please describe how each individual component of the indicator will be collected here.**

Not applicable.

**If you have any additional comments that you believe would be helpful to IAEG-SDG members in analysing the work plan and methodological development of the indicator, please provide them here:**

Piloting of the survey questions is scheduled to continue beyond early October 2018, at which date the methodological proposal for this indicator must be submitted to the IAEG-SDGs if it is to be considered at the fall meeting. As such, further refinements of the survey implementation guidelines, data reporting form and metadata for this indicator are likely to be made until the completion of all piloting exercises, in early 2019.

**Detailed timeline:**

- **Methodological work will be completed:** By October 2018
- **Methodology will be approved as an international standard:** Already approved (as explained above, the proposed survey questions are drawn from standardized questionnaires measuring the concept of 'political efficacy' developed by the European Social Survey and the OECD's Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC))
- **Indicator will be submitted to the IAEG-SDG for possible reclassification:** Meeting of the IAEG-SDGs in fall 2018 (November 2018)

*(as of July/August 2018)*