Improving the visibility of older persons in global statistics

Review of ageing-related statistics in the global sustainable development goals indicator framework

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Office for National Statistics

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Department:
Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TCG Ageing

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Preface

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In an era marked by unprecedented demographic change, ageing is an incredibly important topic. Increasing life expectancy is one of the world's great success stories, with the global population aged 60 years and older rapidly expanding.

We know that the life course of people ageing vary greatly. Not everyone moves into older age in good health, free from disability or poverty. Living arrangements, caring needs and even where people live geographically are not uniform. There is a need to improve understanding of this group's experiences, so services can better support them.

In order to build policies for better lives for older persons we need research, data and evidence. The significance that improving age-related data might improve lives for older people cannot be overstated. Not only do we need a more granular approach to data collection and analysis, we need more qualitative data as well. We must be ambitious about how data is put together and innovative about what we think of as data and data collection. Evolutions into linked data enable a light to be shone on vulnerable groups, but we must be aware of supporting digital inclusion within this population and maintaining social cohesion in the digital age.

This report examines the current state of age-disaggregated data, highlighting both the achievements and the gaps that must be addressed to ensure that older persons are not left behind when reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Furthermore, the report highlights the importance of standardised definitions and methods to facilitate consistent and comparable data collection across different contexts. The recommendations aim to bridge these gaps, advocating for greater investment in statistical systems, diversifying data sources, and enhancing international collaboration.

By working together and leveraging the insights provided, we can boost the availability and quality of age-disaggregated data, which is crucial for formulating effective policies and strategies that truly reflect the diverse needs and contributions of older populations.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond
National Statistician, UK
Office for National Statistics

Statistics South Africa

As a young boy, I distinctly recall being engrossed in the narratives shared by the elders in my village. In African societal contexts, ageing is embraced as a blessing, and the elderly are historically esteemed as custodians of tradition, culture, and sagacity.

Nonetheless, in numerous developing nations, the elderly frequently grapple with acute poverty instead of reaping the rewards of a well-deserved retirement. Despite contending with challenges such as limited access to education, meagre incomes, and even malnutrition throughout their lifetimes, they often assume the onus of providing critical social care and support for children and, indeed, whole families. The process of modernisation is gradually diminishing their venerated cultural significance, rendering the elderly increasingly vulnerable. Notably, the remarkable advancements in life expectancy witnessed in the past century have generated a substantive surge in the elderly population, underscoring the imperative of establishing conducive environments and opportunities that facilitate healthy ageing.

Africa, the youngest continent in the world, is experiencing growth in its elderly population, presenting challenges such as high poverty levels and a considerable disease burden that requires immediate attention. These issues disproportionately affect the quality of life of elderly women.

Acknowledging the importance of measuring and addressing these challenges, I am pleased to see the report "Improving the visibility of older persons in global statistics" begin assessing the status of age-disaggregated data. The report's findings highlight significant gaps in providing adequate data, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where much of the future growth in older populations is expected. The report acknowledges the challenge of limited financial resources in collecting age-disaggregated data in these areas while proposing practical measures to strengthen statistical systems and provide required data more consistently.

I trust that the report will serve as a powerful tool, empowering policymakers to concentrate on the key priorities related to the inclusion of older persons and the necessity to enhance the standardisation of definitions and data collection methods.

I express my gratitude to the Titchfield City Group on ageing and age-disaggregated data for enriching our comprehension of the imperative to elevate older individuals to their rightful status in society through comprehensive and introspective evidence-based approaches as delineated in this outstanding report. This report, with its insightful findings and practical recommendations, will significantly influence policy decisions, ensuring that they are inclusive and reflective of the actual experiences of older persons, which is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting sustainable and equitable development.

Risenga Malueke
Statistician General, South Africa
Statistics South Africa

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Acronyms

EC	European Council
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
NSIs	National Statistical Institutes
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TCGA	Titchfield City Group on Ageing and Age-disaggregated Data
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UIS	UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) Institute for Statistics
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VIPAA	Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive summary

In an era characterised by significant demographic changes, the proportion of the global population aged 60 years or older is rapidly increasing. This demographic shift underscores the urgency for more granular data disaggregation strategies that can accurately reflect the diverse rights, needs and contributions of older persons. This requires collecting age-disaggregated data starting from the age of 60 and harmonising it across countries to ensure comparability. However, older persons often remain underrepresented in national and international statistics due to the exclusion of older people from data sources (e.g. age caps) or invisible through a lack of age-disaggregated data. This report addresses these issues by examining the availability and gaps in age-disaggregated data for older persons, focusing on priority indicators within the UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework across 13 countries.

The Titchfield City Group conducted a comprehensive assessment of data related to 56 SDG indicators, focusing on five critical policy priorities for ageing and older persons: Health and Care; Financial Security; Violence, Abuse and Safety; Participation; and Enabling Environment. The Group's analytical approach was multi-faceted, beginning with a global review of data gaps across all countries, using the UN Global SDG metadata repository. This was complemented by a targeted survey of 13 national statistical offices (NSOs) from countries chosen to reflect diverse levels of development , regional locations, and demographic characteristics. The survey provided valuable insights into current practices and identified persistent self-reported data gaps. Additionally, the Group conducted three in-depth case studies, which included semi-structured interviews with NSO

colleagues responsible for SDG reporting, offering a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes experienced at the national level. Through this rigorous analysis, the Titchfield City Group aimed to uncover the nature and root causes of data gaps, which is essential for crafting a long-term strategy that ensures the rights, needs and contributions of older persons are fully represented in the global pursuit of sustainable development.

The key findings of this report reveal a varied landscape in the use of age-disaggregated data. Self-reported data availability was reported for almost all the selected indicators for an average of 60% of countries worldwide, and for 69% of indicators in our survey. However, age-disaggregated data for older persons was only available for approximately one third of indicators in both our global review and our survey. Availability of age-disaggregated data was highest for indicators in the Health and Care policy priority and lowest for indicators in the Enabling Environment policy priority. Examination of data underlying survey responses showed that the accessibility of age-disaggregated data to users was often lower than the self-reported availability of this data. With all but one exception, high-income countries showed higher rates compared with lower-income countries. While many countries employed harmonised data that aligned with international standards, this practice varied significantly across countries.

This report highlights critical data policy recommendations to address the identified gaps and ensure that the needs of older persons are fully represented in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. One key recommendation is the expansion and diversification of data sources, particularly through the use of administrative registers and census data, which can offer richer insights and enable finer age-disaggregation. Alongside this, there is a pressing need for the harmonisation of definitions and data collection methods across countries, which will help establish more consistent and reliable datasets.

To improve the representation of older age groups in national statistics, existing sample surveys must undergo revisions and modifications, ensuring they capture a broader and more accurate picture of this demographic. However, these efforts will require substantial investment in national statistical systems. Strengthening these systems will be vital to developing the infrastructure necessary for robust data collection and reporting. Additionally, fostering greater collaboration and mutual learning between countries and international organisations is essential. Such partnerships will not only enhance the comparability and accessibility of data but also ensure that the global commitment to inclusivity and leaving no one behind is realised. By integrating these approaches, we can ensure that the SDG frameworks more accurately reflect the realities of ageing populations, thereby supporting more effective policy-making and sustainable development.

Five key takeaway messages

1. Leverage diverse data sources: Expanding the use of administrative registers and census data can fill critical gaps and provide more detailed insights into older populations.

2. Standardise data collection: Harmonising definitions and methodologies across countries is essential for consistent, reliable, and comparable age-disaggregated data.

3. Revise and enhance surveys: Modifying existing sample surveys will ensure that older age groups are accurately represented, capturing a fuller spectrum of their needs and experiences.

4. Invest in national statistical systems: Increased financial and technical support is crucial for strengthening the infrastructure needed to produce high-quality, disaggregated data.

5. Foster global collaboration: International partnerships and mutual learning will enhance data comparability and accessibility, supporting inclusive SDG implementation.

1 Introduction

Population ageing is now a prominent policy topic globally. Life expectancy around the world is increasing, and the number of people aged 60 years or older is projected to double, reaching 2.1 billion by 2050 (1). As older persons comprise a growing proportion of populations, the economic, cultural, and social dynamics of societies are shifting accordingly. The characteristics of older persons are also evolving, creating both challenges and opportunities that require proactive, evidence-based policy responses. However, despite these demographic changes, age-disaggregated data remains underdeveloped, hindering the ability of policymakers to address the needs of older persons effectively. This gap is partly sustained by persistent ageism—societal biases that undervalue older persons and contribute to the tolerance of data invisibility on their experiences.

Ageism, in many forms, not only fosters discrimination but also leads to the ongoing unavailability of reliable data on older populations. This, in turn, impairs the development of policies that could otherwise better support this demographic. More comprehensive data, disaggregated by age, is urgently needed to keep pace with global demographic trends, particularly in areas like income security, health and care, violence, and employment.

With older age groups representing the fastest-growing population worldwide, addressing population ageing is essential within the global development framework. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 231 indicators, calls for action to ensure inclusive growth and social inclusion for all, especially vulnerable populations like older persons. Endorsed by 193 UN Member States in 2015, this agenda emphasises the importance of data in monitoring progress, shaping policy, and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Nevertheless, age-disaggregated data remains unavailable for many SDG indicators. Many National Statistical Offices (NSOs) recognise the need to improve the availability and comparability of data on older persons, but challenges persist. Some statistical methodologies must be developed before data collection can begin. International bodies like the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD-UN DESA), and national agencies such as NSOs are responsible for the coordination and management of such data.

The Titchfield City Group, formed in March 2018 under the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC), seeks to establish global norms and standards for the collection and dissemination of age-disaggregated data. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDGs) has adopted a minimum disaggregation set that includes age for some indicators, aiming to align data with the needs of vulnerable populations, such as older persons.

This report complements the March 2024 "Making Older Persons Visible" report (2). While that report focused on how older persons are currently represented in SDG indicators, this analysis highlights specific data gaps related to older persons across five key policy priorities. The five policy areas and 56 associated SDG indicators are:

I. Health and care

II. Financial security

III. Violence, abuse and safety

IV. Participation

V. Enabling environment

By building on the previous report, this analysis identifies gaps in age-disaggregated data globally and explores challenges experienced by 13 countries in producing this data. Three case studies (Mexico, Mongolia, and the United Kingdom) illustrate these difficulties. The report concludes with recommendations aimed at improving the availability and quality of data on ageing populations to enable more informed policymaking.

2   Policy priorities and indicators

At the global level, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD – UN DESA) hosts and maintains the Global SDG Indicators database. All UN member states feed their SDG indicator data into this database, and national-level data, regional aggregates, and global aggregates are then made publicly available. The Global SDG Indicators database also hosts a metadata repository which describes the definition, rationale, methodology, and data sources for each indicator. The ability of UN member states to contribute data for the SDG indicators varies widely, largely due to financial and capacity constraints. Identifying opportunities to improve the production of timely and high-quality age-disaggregated data would therefore be valuable.

The IAEG-SDGs introduced a minimum disaggregation set to guide countries in collecting and reporting SDG indicator data, specifying which demographic characteristics are essential for each indicator, including age for some indicators. However, this minimum disaggregation set specifies age disaggregation for 12% of all SDG indicators (27 out of 234). Moreover, when focusing on the 56 indicators identified as most relevant to ageing and older people, age is not mentioned as a disaggregation factor for 29 of these indicators (52%), and for those where age is mentioned, specific age bands are recommended for 4 indicators (7%). This partial guidance highlights a gap in addressing the rights and needs of older populations within the SDG framework. The minimum disaggregation set was presented to the 50th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2019 (3) and, in addition to listing data disaggregation requirements, it identifies policy priorities for the most vulnerable population groups, including older persons.

2.1 Five policy priorities for ageing and older persons

To assess the availability of ageing-related data and data gaps, The Titchfield City Group used an analytical framework built on the SDG indicators and policy priorities identified by the IAEG-SDGs as being most relevant for ageing and older persons*. However, it should be noted that the SDG framework is not a framework on the rights and wellbeing of older persons as it does not fully address all aspects of their rights.

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* The selection of these policy priorities benefitted from the discussions in the 2nd Technical Meeting of the UN Titchfield City Group on Ageing and Age-disaggregated Data, Daejeon, Republic of Korea, 11-13 June 2019. The meeting was hosted by Statistics Korea and led by the ONS.

The five policy priorities for data gaps analysis in this report are:

I. Health and care

The rapid pace of population ageing is transforming our societies and economies, leading to increased demand on health and care systems. This policy priority includes medical care for both mental and physical health, as well as social care provided at home or in institutions. Providing adequate and accessible health and social care services is essential for implementing the 2030 Agenda, as it will improve both physical and mental health across societies, contributing to sustainable human development. Additionally, the shift in global disease patterns from communicable to non-communicable diseases further emphasises the need for better data availability to inform health and social care policies.

II. Financial security

Understanding the financial situation and employment status of older persons is crucial, especially as most people experience decreasing opportunities to work and diminishing financial resources in older age. This priority covers aspects such as pension entitlements, employment opportunities, and asset ownership. Retirement is a significant life event that impacts the economic situation of older persons. In many low- and middle-income countries, older individuals, particularly women, often continue working beyond retirement age in the informal sector or agriculture, primarily out of necessity due to relatively immature pension systems (4, 5, 6). Addressing these financial challenges is key to ensuring economic security for older populations.

III. Violence, abuse and safety

Violence, abuse, and safety was identified as a key theme driven by policy needs and includes financial and material exploitation, as well as physical, emotional, and psychological abuse and neglect. These issues are exacerbated by societal attitudes and ageism, which contribute to the marginalisation and vulnerability of older persons.

Across the globe, significant numbers of older persons face discrimination, poverty, violence, and abuse that not only violate their human rights but also limit their potential contributions to the economy and society. Ageism plays a central

role in perpetuating these injustices, often framing older persons as a vulnerable and burdensome group, rather than acknowledging their value and rights.

In some regions, reported levels of abuse are similar for older men and women, while in others, older women are disproportionately at risk of violence, abandonment, and property seizures. These disparities are partly due to the lack of age-disaggregated data on violence against older women and other data collection challenges, which obscure the full scope of the problem. Greater attention is needed to address violence against older women in both private and public spheres, whether in homes, communities, or care settings, as well as harmful practices such as witchcraft accusations, which continue to endanger the safety of older women.

Additionally, older persons are disproportionately affected by disasters and conflicts, facing heightened risks of violence, as well as threats to their health, income security, and autonomy. These factors compound the challenges they face, limiting their ability to participate meaningfully in society and threatening their overall safety and well-being.

IV. Participation

Participation involves engaging as a full member of society in both formal and informal sectors, including reducing social isolation through virtual connections. It encompasses opportunities in the formal labour market as well as voluntary informal activities. Lifelong learning and reskilling opportunities are particularly important for enabling older persons' participation in society and maintaining their economic activities. Participation in learning new skills and technologies, such as the internet and mobile devices, can help older persons remain independent as they age. Evidence suggests that low investment in such participation programmes increases inequalities and barriers to participation (7).

The 2030 Agenda encourages governments to invest more in community learning centres, which could address employment-related activities such as reskilling for older workers, alongside issues related to health, elder care, financial and legal planning for retirement and inheritance management, and the benefits of technology to enhance social connectedness and participation.

V. Enabling environment

Enabling environment includes age-friendly cities and communities, as well as other aspects that empower older persons, and was added to the IAEG-SDG's minimum disaggregation set to emphasise the role of supportive and barrier-free living environments for older persons. This encompasses streets, parks, and buildings, transportation systems (physical environment), attitudes and the reduction of ageism and discrimination (social environment), as well as social and political systems and policies (institutional environment). An enabling environment fosters health, financial security, and the participation of older persons in later life.

The 2030 Agenda emphasises the inclusion of all persons of all ages, as it pledges to leave no one behind. Creating an enabling environment by providing affordable housing, accessible public spaces, and transportation for older persons to stay independent and participate in community life is critical in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

2.2 Identification of SDG indicators

Indicators within these five policy priorities were selected by the IAED-SDGs from the UNSC's global framework of 231 SDG indicators. The following selection criteria were used:

a. The chosen indicator must be as specific as possible with respect to at least one of the chosen five policy priorities of older persons;

b. It should be consistent and comparable in different settings (time and space);

c. It should be identified with the common challenges and opportunities of ageing and older persons;

d. It should be appropriate for inter-country comparisons; and

e. Indicators should be readily understandable and the data with age-disaggregation should allow an assessment of progress.

All indicators selected were assessed based on their definitions and methodology and whether the data were regularly produced and reported. In this respect, the indicator classification provided by the IAEG-SDGs provided a first lead where indicators had been categorised into three different tiers according to the conceptual clarity of the indicator, the availability of an internationally established methodology, and standards and the regular production of the data (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Definitions of the three indicator tiers (IAEG-SDG, 2020)

Tier	Definition
1	Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.
2	Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.
3	No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.

Note: After the 2020 Comprehensive review of the SDG Indicator Framework, as of the 51st UNSC, the global indicator framework does not contain any Tier 3 indicators.

A total of 56 unique indicators relevant to the five selected policy priorities for ageing and older persons were chosen by the Titchfield City Group from the official Global SDG indicators database and metadata repository. The distribution of indicators across the five priority areas is presented in Table 2.

Table 2a: The number of indicators selected for ageing and older persons by policy priority

Policy priority	
I	Health and care (15 indicators)
II	Financial security (13 indicators)
III	Violence, abuse and safety (12 indicators)
IV	Participation (11 indicators)
V	Enabling environment (8 indicators)

Table 2b: The number of indicators selected for ageing and older persons by SDG and policy priority

Sustainable development goal (SDG)		Policy priority				
		I	II	III	IV	V
1.	No poverty		5	2		
2.	Zero hunger	1	2			
3.	Good health and well-being	14		1		
4.	Quality education				4	
5.	Gender equality		1	2	2	
6.	Clean water and sanitation					2
7.	Affordable and clean energy					2
8.	Decent work and economic growth		4	1		
10.	Reduced inequalities		1	1	1	
11.	Sustainable cities and communities			1	1	3
16.	Peace, justice and strong institutions			4	2	1
17.	Partnerships for the goals				1	

Three indicators were each included in two different but equally relevant policy priorities. The specific indicators selected for each policy priority are presented in Annex C, along with their relevance for older persons.

The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the intersection between key policy priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) assessed in this report. The diagram categorises areas of focus into five priority policy domains: Health and Care, Financial Security, Violence, Abuse and Safety, Participation, and Enabling Environment.

Figure 1. Overlap of policy priorities and SDG assessment coverage

Violence, abuse and safety Discrimination, crime, safety, secure land	**Included in SDG assessed**		
Health and care Prevalence of health conditions, access to services and treatment	**Enabling environment** Adequate housing, water and sanitation, utilities, public space, services	**Participation** Education, skills, ICT, unpaid domestic and care work, inclusive decision making	**Financial security** Poverty, employment, social protection
Promotion, rehabilitation, palliative, daily care, social services	Clean adaptable housing, mobility, local amenities	Volunteering, community, flexible adaptive jobs, social inclusion, leisure	Pensions, wealth

Excluded from SDGs assessed

The diagram highlights where policy priority areas are well covered by the SDGs and identifies gaps where further attention is required to improve coverage of older persons' issues in global assessments. The list of gaps is not exhaustive.

2.3 Responsible lead agencies

A wide range of international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD-UN DESA) and World Bank (WB) contribute towards the work of sustainability by supporting the SDG data collection or management. At a national level, agencies leading SDG indicator data collection include national statistical offices, ministries of labour, and ministries of health. Figure 2 shows that WHO is the leading agency for the largest number of indicators relevant to ageing and older persons.

Figure 2: Responsible lead agency for the selected policy priority indicators
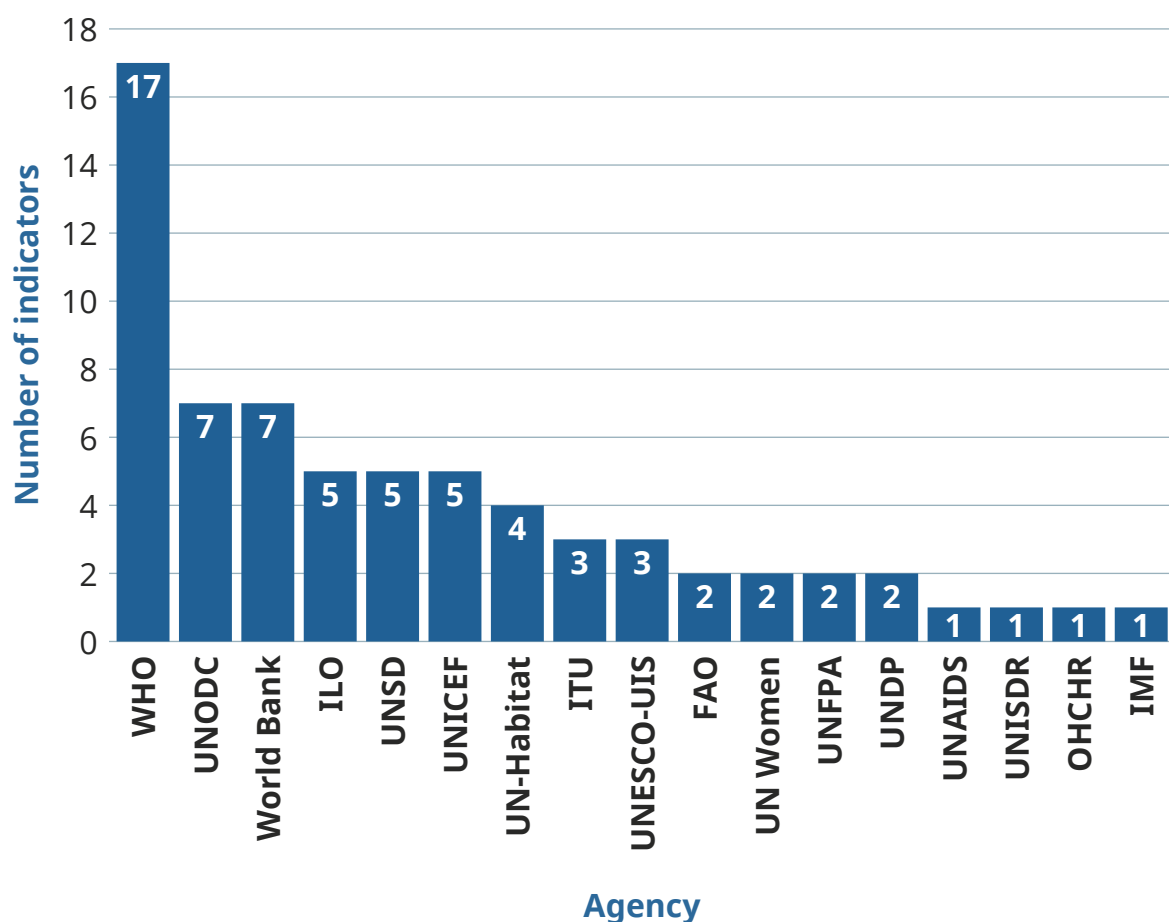
2.4 Analytical approach and methods

The following section outlines the analytical approaches and methods used to examine the 56 indicators discussed earlier in this report.

2.4.1 Global SDG data review

A comprehensive global review was conducted to identify data gaps and sources for each of the 56 SDG indicators across all UN member states contributing to the UN Global SDG database*. This review began with an examination of the Global SDG Indicators Data Availability tool, followed by an assessment of age-disaggregated data for each indicator using the Global SDG Indicators metadata repository. The metadata files provided information on the number of countries reporting any data as well as those reporting age-disaggregated data.

* Source: Home — SDG Indicators (un.org)

Annex A contains the most up-to-date metadata for each indicator, reflecting the variable nature of age disaggregation across different indicators. The findings from this global data review are presented in Section 3.

2.4.2 Survey methodology and participation

In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a questionnaire was developed to collect information on data availability, infrastructure, and harmonisation efforts for the 56 selected SDG indicators. The self-administered questionnaire, distributed in English to National Statistical Offices (NSOs), contained questions on data collection practices, age-related definitions, harmonisation, disaggregation, and barriers to data reporting. Both the primary questionnaire and supplementary questions are provided in Annex B.

The Titchfield City Group identified 42 countries to participate in the survey, selecting them based on criteria such as development level, regional location, and demographic characteristics. Countries were classified according to their development status (developed economies, economies in transition, and developing economies) and further categorised by per capita gross national income (GNI), grouping them into high-income, upper-middle-income, lower-middle-income, and low-income categories (8).

Thirteen countries responded to the survey, representing a balanced distribution of higher and lower-income countries. The analysis of these responses offered valuable insights into data availability, especially concerning age-disaggregated data, data sources, and data suppliers, as well as the harmonisation of data practices. In addition to the survey, the group examined the harmonisation of age groups used for SDG reporting, both within and across countries, by accessing national and centralised SDG reporting websites and the data sources cited by the NSOs.

The table below presents the characteristics of the 13 participating countries, which provided diverse perspectives on data availability and highlighted disparities in infrastructure and harmonisation efforts.

Table 3 - Characteristics of participating countries

Country	World Region	Economies by per-capita GNI as of July 2021	Life expectancy at birth	2020 population (Millions)
Armenia	Europe	Upper-middle income	76.2	2.8
Brazil	Latin America	Upper-middle income	76.2	213.2
Chile	Latin America	High-income	81.2	19.3
Hungary	Europe	High-income	77.1	9.8
Lithuania	Europe	High-income	76.9	2.8
Mauritius	Africa	Upper-middle income	75.7	1.3
Mexico	Latin America	Upper-middle income	75	126
Mongolia	Asia	Lower-middle income	72.9	3.3
Republic of Korea	Asia	High-income	84.1	51.8
Sri Lanka	Asia	Lower-middle income	76.8	21.7
Türkiye	Asia	Upper-middle income	78.7	84.1
Uganda	Africa	Low-income	63.8	44.4
United Kingdom	Europe	High-income	82.3	67.1

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2022.

2.4.3 Case studies

Qualitative case studies were conducted with three countries—Mexico, Mongolia, and the United Kingdom—through video interviews. These case studies provided in-depth insights into national SDG data infrastructure and the challenges associated with age-disaggregated data reporting. The semi-structured interviews involved key individuals from the NSOs responsible for SDG reporting. The findings, while reflective of the participants' views and experiences, are specific to those individuals and may not represent the broader perspectives within their respective NSOs or other countries. Detailed accounts of these case studies are presented for each country.

This section sets the foundation for the detailed research results that follow in Section 3, where we explore the availability, harmonisation, and challenges of age-disaggregated data within the global SDG framework.

3   Research results

The following section presents the research findings, offering a comprehensive analysis of data availability, disaggregation, and reporting practices concerning SDG indicators. This section examines the global landscape of SDG data reporting, the participation and contributions of various NSOs, and the disparities in data availability across different policy priorities and countries. The analysis sheds light on the critical gaps and strengths in the current data infrastructure, particularly concerning age-disaggregated data for older persons, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for enhancing global monitoring efforts.

3.1 Global SDG data review

The comprehensive review of SDG indicator data across all UN member states and WHO member states (where appropriate) reveals that 55 out of the 56 indicators selected for this gap analysis have reported data, with 60% of countries reporting on each indicator*. However, there are notable discrepancies between the data available in the global SDG database and data reported on national SDG platforms. This inconsistency reflects challenges in data harmonisation across countries and platforms. The review of metadata also highlights significant variability in the reporting of age-disaggregated data, with such data available for only 16 of the 56 indicators and no country reporting age-disaggregated data for the remaining 40 of 56 indicators. These disparities underscore the need for more coordinated efforts in data collection and reporting to ensure consistent and comparable monitoring of older populations across countries.

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* These 56 indicators become 59, when accounting for 3 duplicate indicators across different policy priorities.

Figure 3: Global availability of age-disaggregated data for older persons for each SDG indicator, based on the most recently updated metadata from the SDG repository

Number of countries

Indicator	Number of countries
1.2.2 Multidimensional poverty	12
3.3.1 New HIV infections	172
3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population	194
3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population	194
3.3.5 Neglected tropical diseases	194
3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to non-infectious diseases	70
3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate	70
3.5.2 Harmful use of alcohol	190
3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries	70
4.3.1 Youths/adults in education and training	154
4.6.1 Proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills	45
5.2.1 Ever-partnered women subjected to abuse by...	161
5.2.2 Women subjected to abuse, not by partner	100
5.4.1 Unpaid domestic and care work	92
8.10.2 Adults with a bank account	162
8.5.2 Unemployment rate	128

Indicators

Notably, Figure 3 illustrates the number of countries providing age-disaggregated data for each relevant indicator. Indicators pertinent to older persons that are not represented in this chart currently lack age-disaggregated data in their metadata.

Building on the global overview of SDG data availability, the gaps in age-disaggregated data across the 59 SDG indicators for older persons become increasingly evident when analysed by specific policy priorities. The disparities highlighted in the global data review are mirrored across the policy priorities, where age-disaggregated data is often lacking. Figure 4 illustrates the number of indicators within each policy priority that include or lack such data. Health and Care emerges as the area with the highest proportion of indicators featuring age-disaggregated data (47%, 7 out of the 15 indicators in Health and Care). Conversely, none of the eight indicators within the Enabling Environment priority have any age-disaggregated data. This analysis emphasises the pressing need for greater coordination and investment in collecting and reporting age-disaggregated data to close these gaps and ensure that older persons are adequately represented in SDG monitoring.

Figure 4: Global data gaps review of age-disaggregated data for 59 SDG indicators by policy priority, based on the most recently updated metadata from the SDG repository.
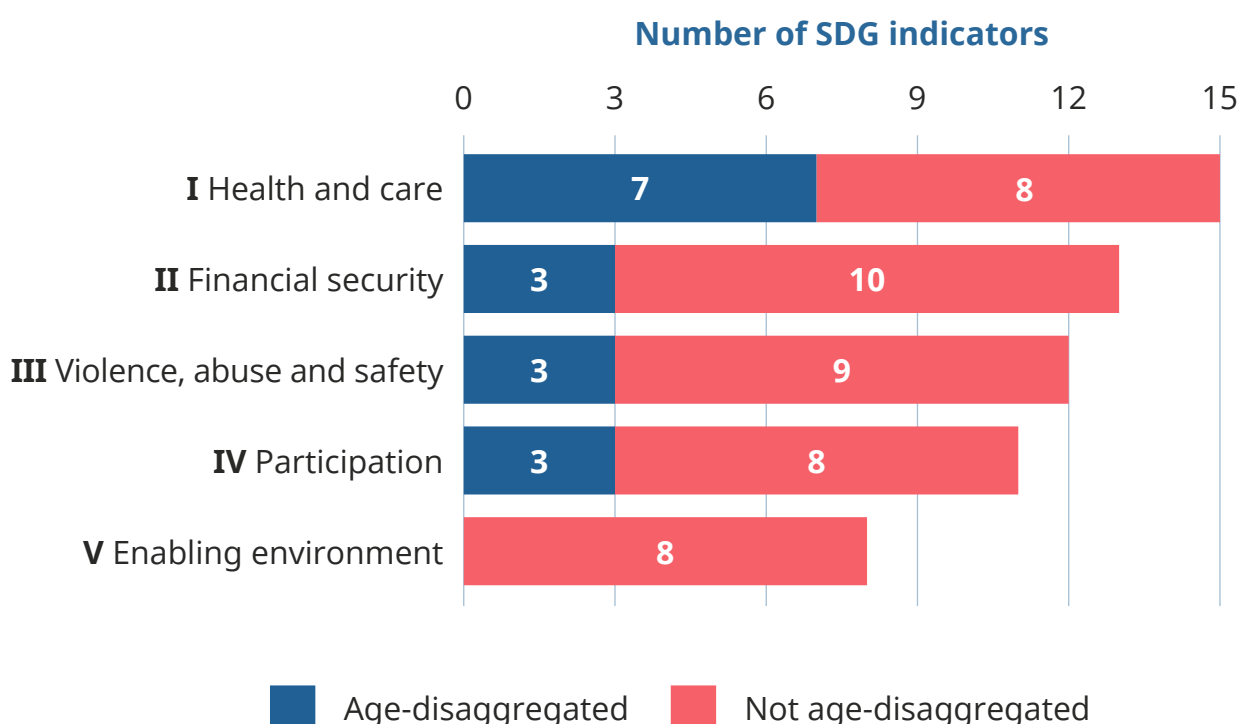
3.2 Survey results

3.2.1 Availability of data by policy priorities

Survey responses revealed that data is accessible for most of the policy priority indicators, with 93% of the 56 selected indicators reported by the 13 participating NSOs as capable of being age-disaggregated. This high level of engagement from the NSOs highlights the availability of data, yet points to ongoing efforts needed to close the remaining gaps in age-disaggregated data reporting. Addressing these gaps is essential for strengthening global SDG monitoring and ensuring policy decisions are driven by inclusive and accurate data.

The availability of data across the various policy priorities is largely consistent, though some differences can be observed. As shown in Figure 5, Financial Security emerges as the policy priority with the highest proportion of indicators for which data is available (70%), while Participation ranks the lowest, with 67% data availability.

Figure 5: Percentage of indicators across all 13 surveyed countries for which data was available by policy priority.
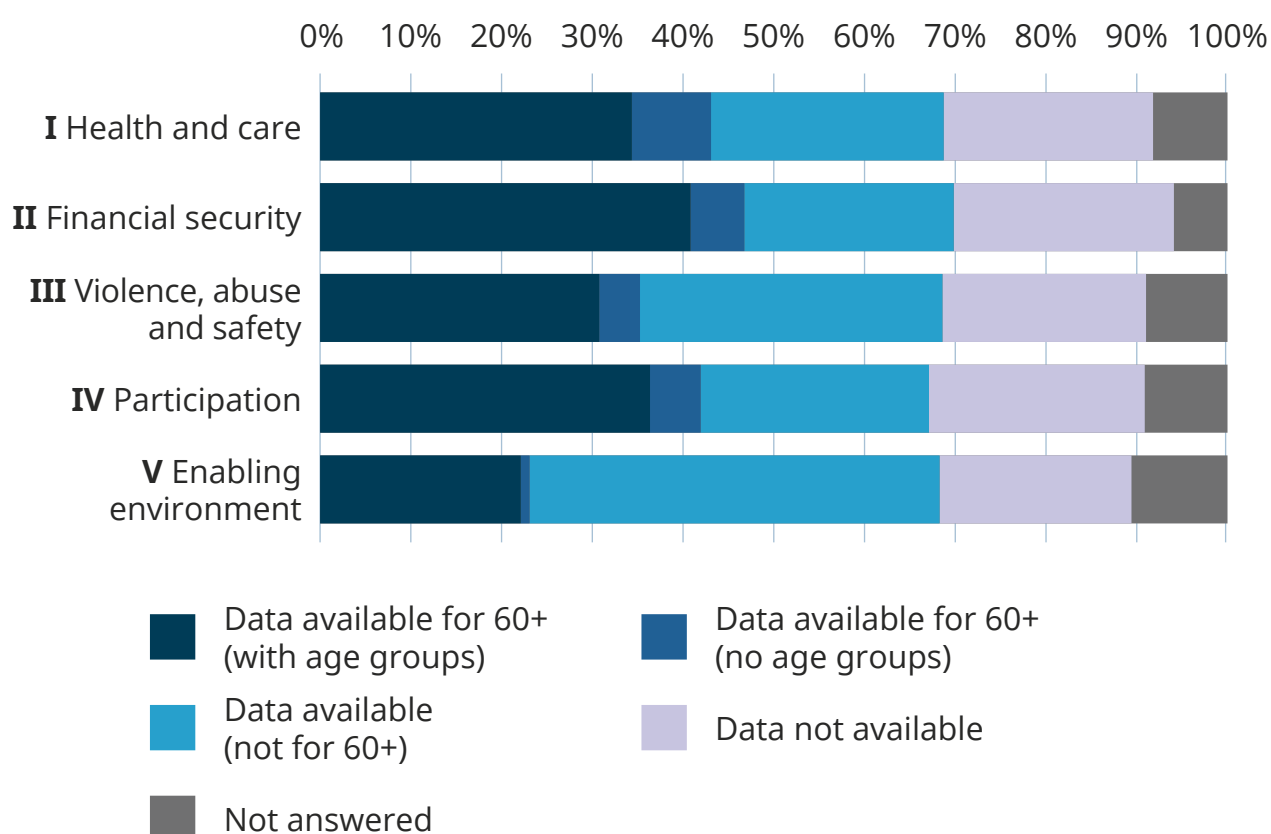
NSOs were also asked about the availability of data specifically for older persons (aged 60 and above), referred to as "data available for 60+." In addition, they were queried on whether this data could be further disaggregated into specific older age groups, termed "data available for 60+ (with age groups)."

Overall, 42% of indicators had data available for older persons (60+), while 34% of indicators had this data further disaggregated into older age groups (60-64, 65-69, etc.). The remaining 8% had data for older persons without further age group breakdown.

Health and care

In the Health and Care policy priority, Figure 6 shows that 12 countries reported having data for key health indicators, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease (indicator 3.4.1), suicide mortality rate (3.4.2), and infectious diseases including tuberculosis (3.3.2), malaria (3.3.3), and hepatitis (3.3.4). The highest levels of data availability and age-disaggregation for older persons were observed for these indicators, as well as for tobacco use (3.a.1) and HIV incidence (3.3.1).

Conversely, the lowest levels of data availability were noted for indicators related to coverage of treatment interventions (3.5.1) and access to essential medicines (3.b.3). Only two countries (Hungary and the UK) reported any data for indicator 3.5.1, and only Uganda and Mauritius reported data for indicator 3.b.3. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of responses indicated that data for Health and Care indicators was also disaggregated by sex.

Figure 6: Number of countries that had access to data for specific indicators in policy priority I: Health and care

Legend:
- Data available for 60+ (with age groups)
- Data available for 60+ (no age groups)
- Data available (not for 60+)
- Data not available
- Not answered
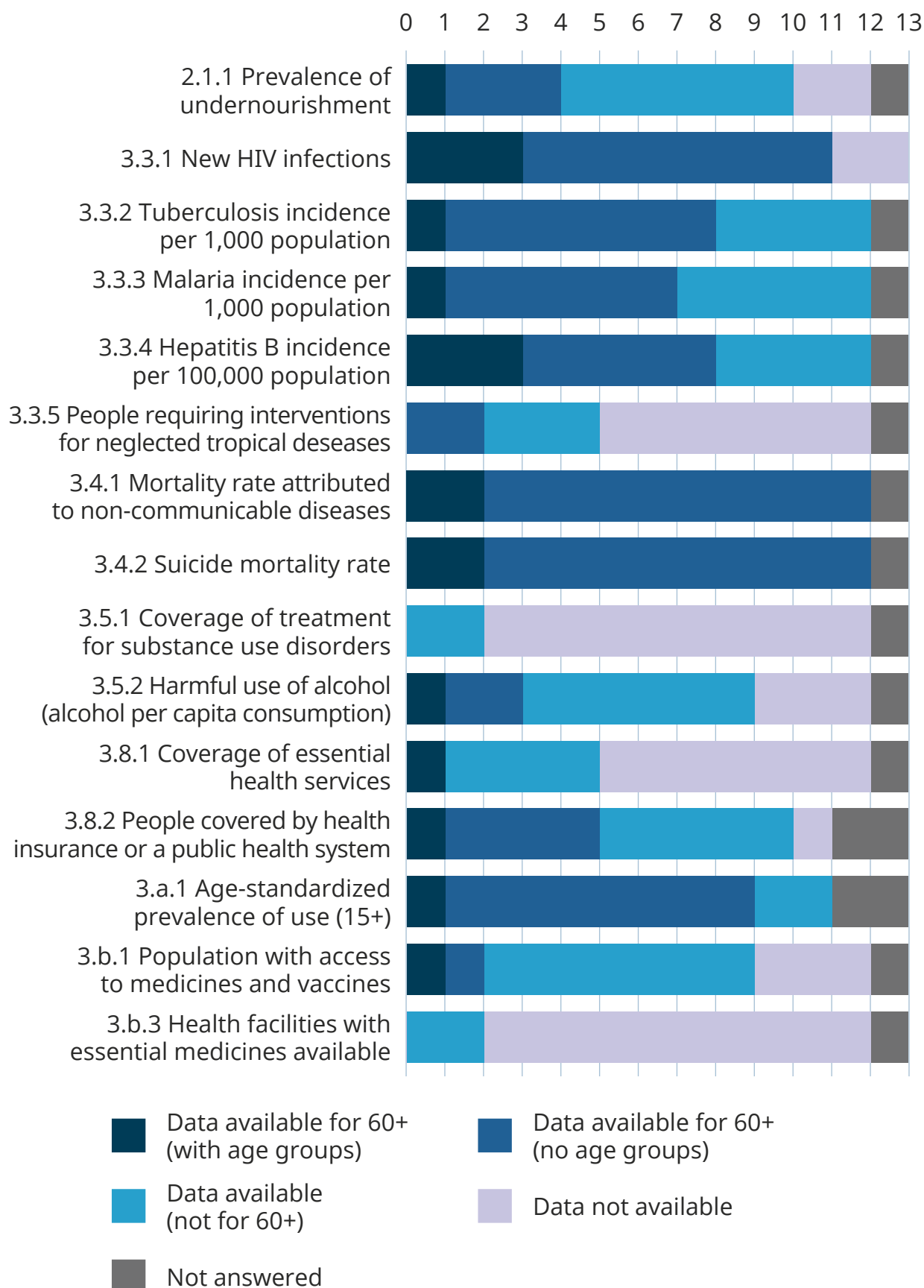
Financial security

Figure 7 highlights that all participating NSOs had data available for indicators related to financial security, such as the proportion of people below the national poverty line (1.2.1) and the unemployment rate (8.5.2). These indicators also had the highest number of countries providing age-disaggregated data for older persons. Conversely, the lowest levels of data availability were reported for indicators related to land ownership (5.a.1) and income of small-scale food producers (2.3.2). Across all NSOs, 76% of responses indicated that the data was disaggregated by sex.

Figure 7: Number of countries that had access to data for specific indicators in policy priority II: Financial security

Legend:
- Data available for 60+ (with age groups)
- Data available for 60+ (no age groups)
- Data available (not for 60+)
- Data not available
- Not answered
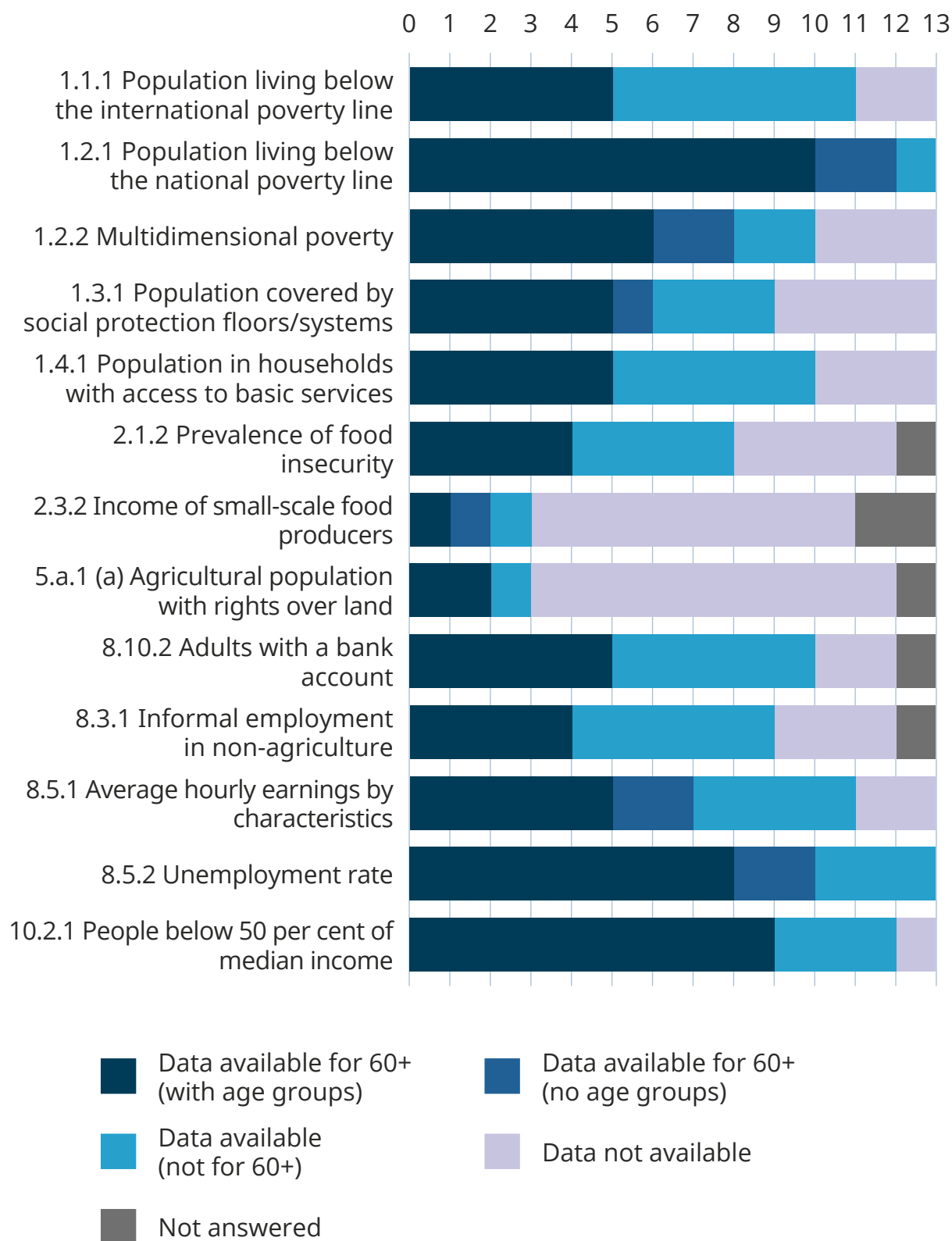
Violence, abuse and safety

In the domain of Violence, Abuse, and Safety, Figure 8 shows that data availability was highest for indicators on road traffic deaths (3.6.1) and domestic abuse against women and girls (5.2.1). These indicators, along with homicide rates (16.1.1) and occupational injuries (8.8.1), also had the highest levels of age-disaggregated data for older persons. Only four countries—Mauritius, South Korea, Uganda, and the UK—had data available for the indicator on victims of violence or harassment (11.7.2), with varying degrees of age-disaggregation. In total, 67% of responses within this policy priority indicated the availability of sex-disaggregated data.

Figure 8: Number of countries that had access to data for specific indicators in policy priority III: Violence, abuse and safety

Legend:
- Data available for 60+ (with age groups)
- Data available for 60+ (no age groups)
- Data available (not for 60+)
- Data not available
- Not answered
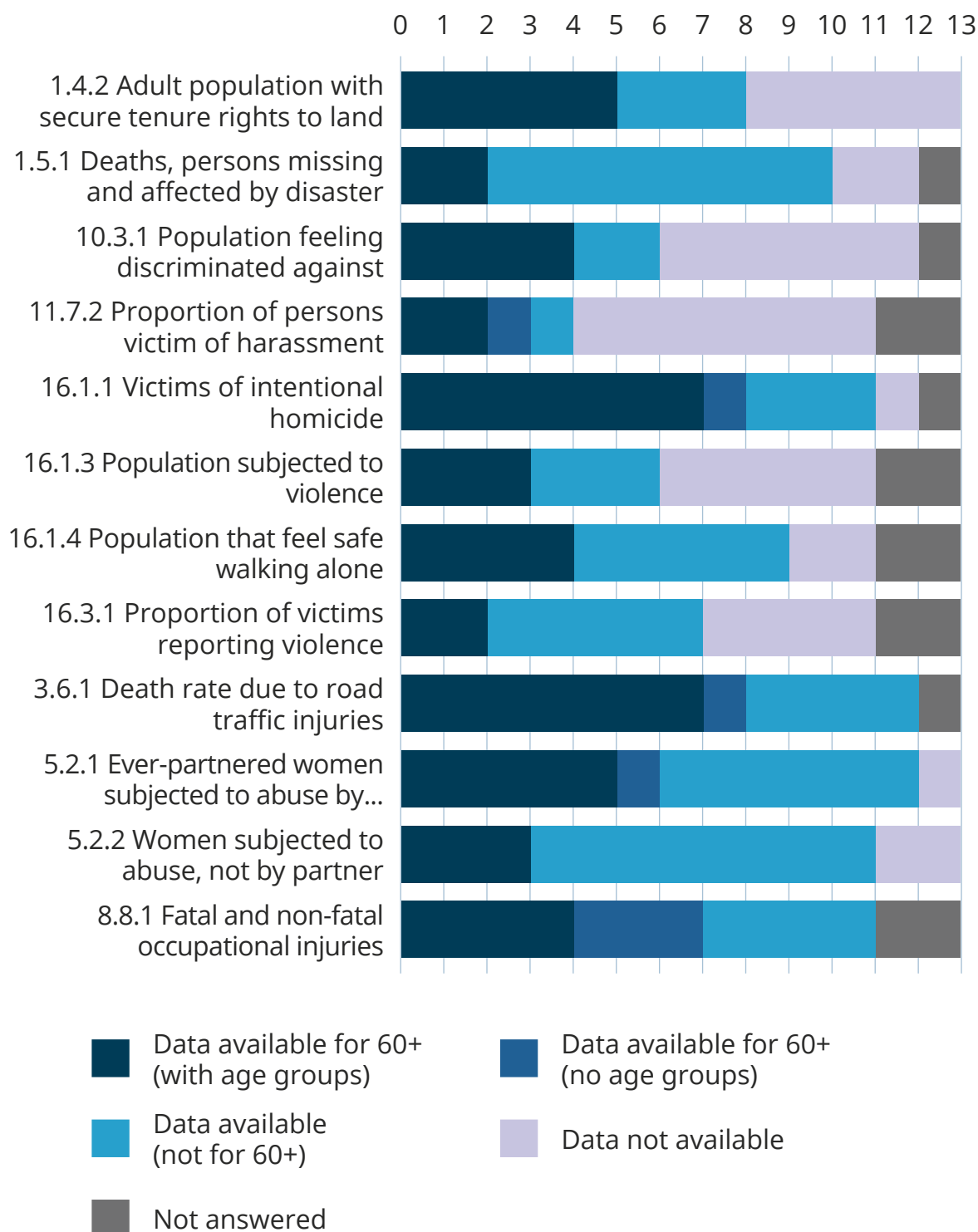
Participation

Figure 9 indicates that data availability was notably high for the Participation policy priority, with all countries reporting data for the indicator on internet usage (17.8.1), although three countries lacked data for people aged 60 or older. High levels of data availability were also seen for indicators related to mobile phone ownership (5.b.1) and unpaid domestic and care work (5.4.1), with data often disaggregated for those aged 60 and over. Conversely, data availability was lowest for indicators on inclusive decision-making (16.7.2) and public space in built-up areas (11.7.1), with only a few countries having relevant data. Participation had the highest levels of sex-disaggregated data, with 84% of responses confirming its availability.

Figure 9: Number of countries that had access to data for specific indicators in policy priority IV: Participation
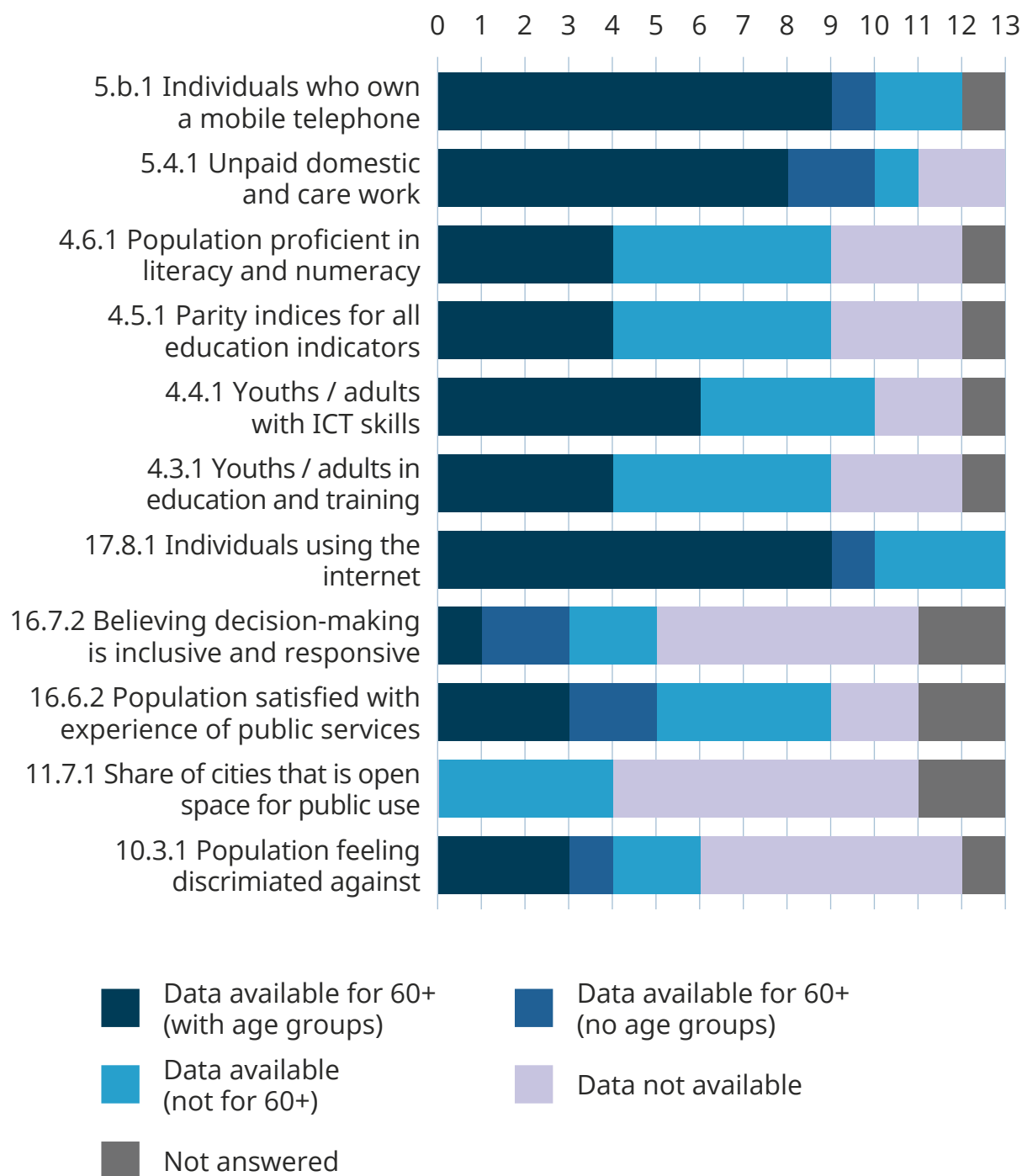
Enabling environment

Finally, the Enabling Environment policy priority, as shown in Figure 10, had data available across all participating countries for indicators on access to sanitation (6.2.1) and electricity (7.1.1). The highest levels of data availability and disaggregation for older persons were found in the indicator on satisfaction with public services (16.6.2). However, the lowest levels of data availability were seen for indicators related to access to public transport (11.2.1) and reliance on clean fuels (7.1.2), with Chile being the only country reporting data for older persons regarding public transport. The Enabling Environment had the lowest levels of sex-disaggregated data, with only 37% of responses indicating its availability.

Figure 10: Number of countries that had access to data for specific indicators in policy priority V: Enabling environment
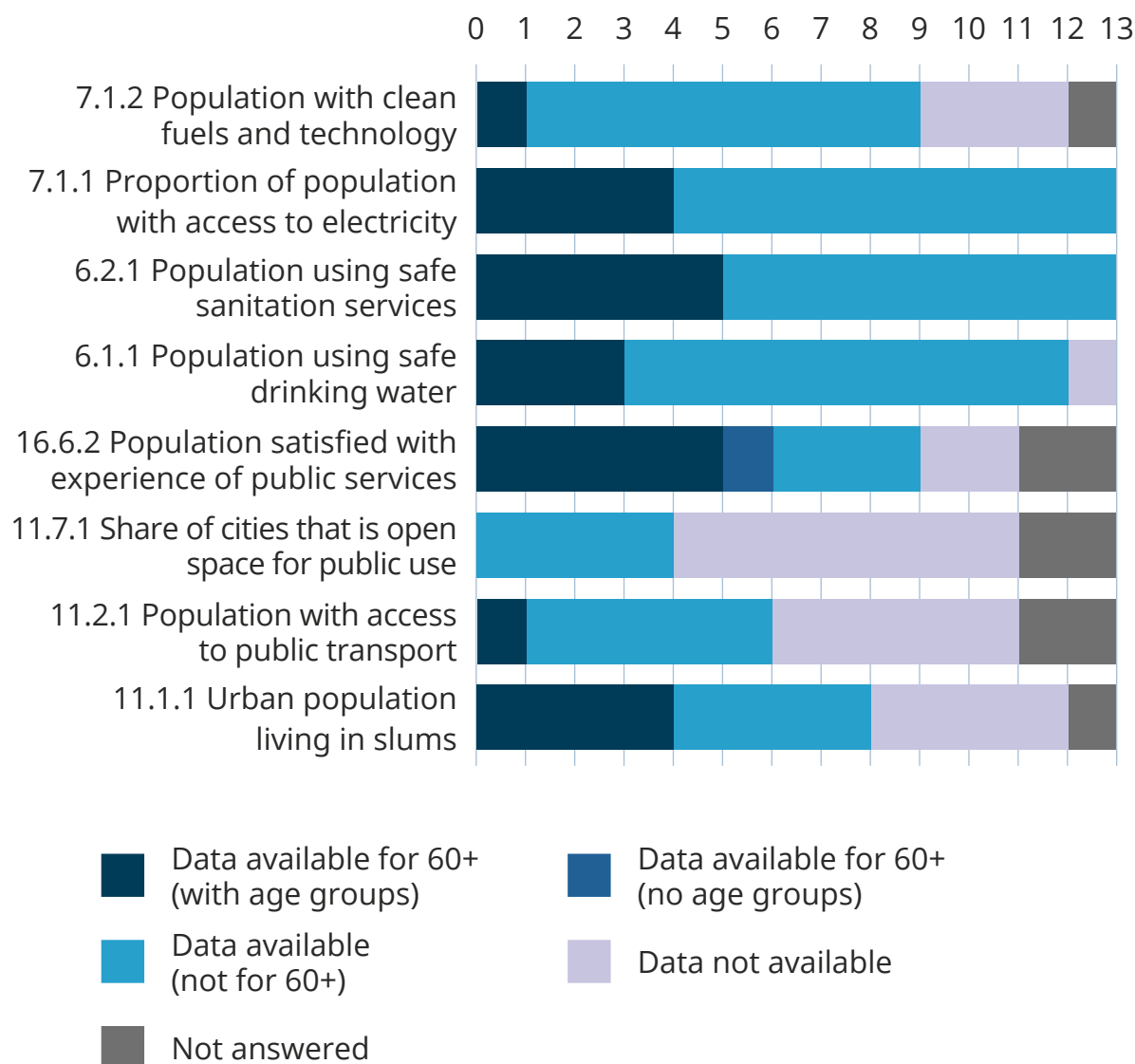
Overall, while data availability is relatively consistent across policy priorities, significant gaps remain, particularly in the disaggregation of data for older persons and by sex. These gaps accentuate the need for enhanced data collection and reporting practices to ensure that the needs of older populations are adequately captured and addressed in global monitoring efforts.

3.2.2 Data producers by policy priorities

When asked which entities are responsible for producing data for each indicator, NSOs emerged as the primary producers, generating 55% of the data available (Figure 11). However, other organisations, including ministries and international bodies , were found to play a crucial role in collecting and disseminating data for the SDGs.

NSOs were particularly influential in the Financial Security policy priority, producing data for 49% of the indicators within this domain. In contrast, their role was notably smaller in the Health and Care priority, where they accounted for only 19% of the data production. In this area, relevant ministries were more prominent, contributing to 35% of the data. International organisations produced data for 4% of all indicators across all policy priorities, while 7% of data came from other sources, highlighting the diverse range of data producers involved in global monitoring efforts.

Figure 11: Percentage of indicators for which data is collected by producer and policy priority.
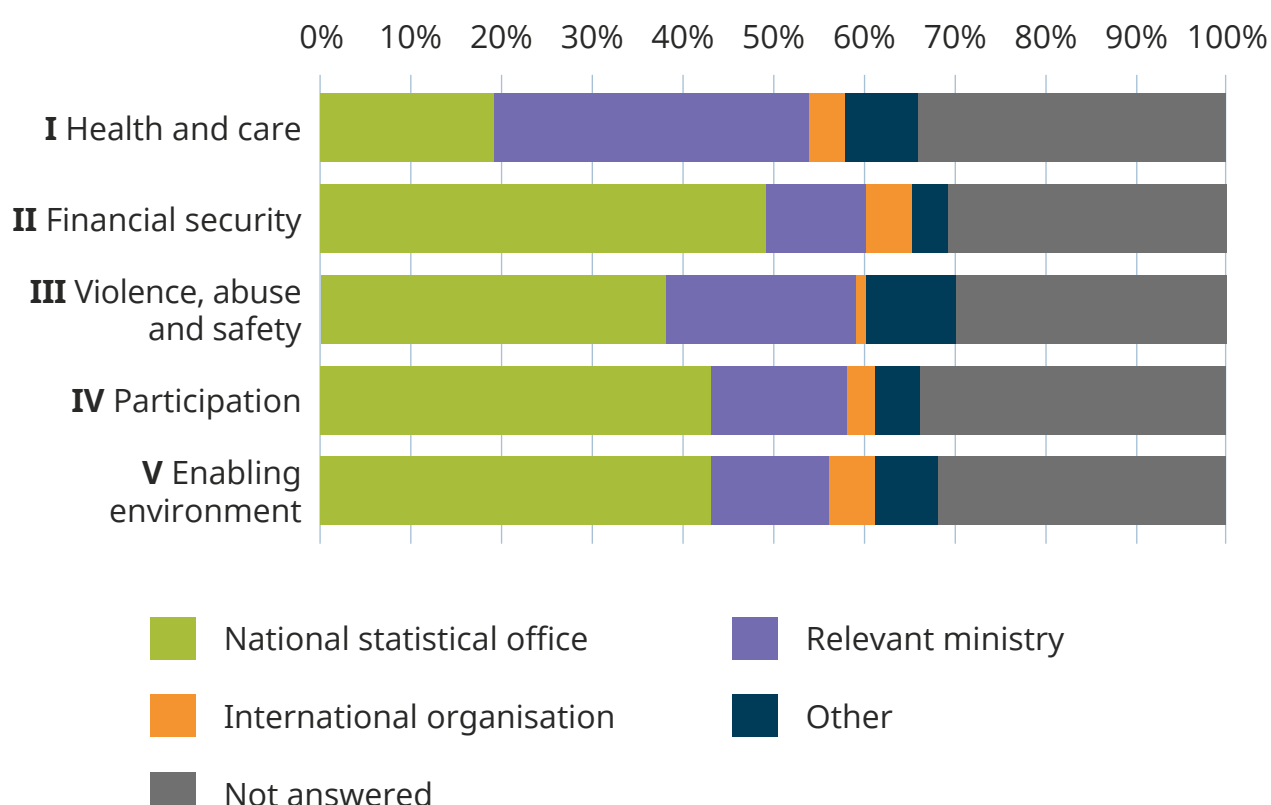
3.2.3 Data producers by country

National Statistical Offices (NSOs) were the primary producers of data for most countries, contributing to more than half of the available indicators. However, in Chile, Mexico, and South Korea, relevant ministries were the predominant data producers. Notably, only five of the 13 participating countries used any data produced by international organisations (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Number of SDG indicators for which countries had data by main data producer

Legend:
- National statistical office
- Relevant ministry
- International organisation
- Other
- Question not answered / no data
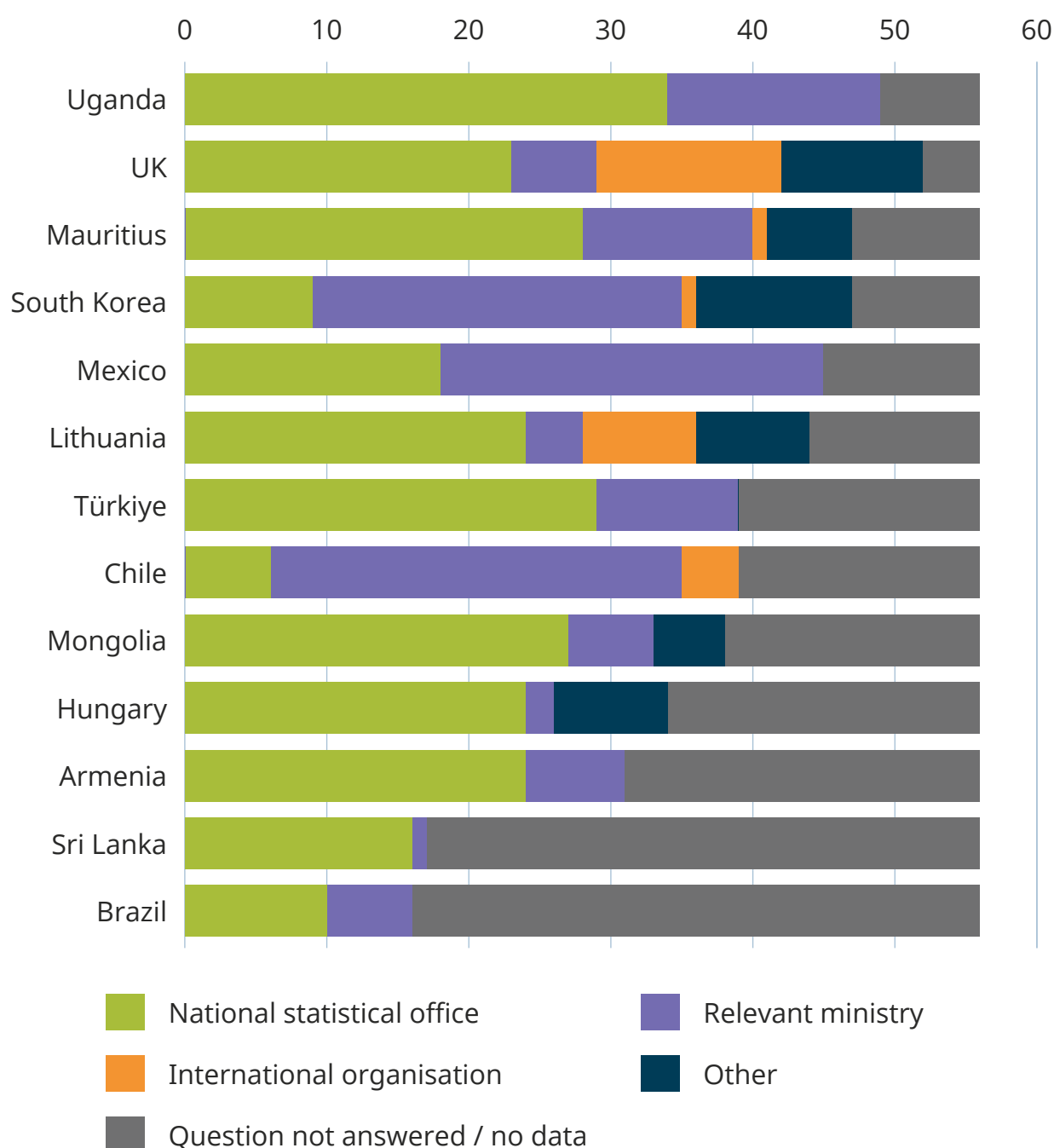
3.2.4 Data sources by policy priorities

NSOs were also asked to identify the types of data sources used for each indicator. Figure 13 illustrates the distribution of data sources used to produce SDG indicator data. Surveys were the most commonly used data source, accounting for 39% of indicators, followed by administrative data at 21.5%.

Survey data was particularly prevalent for Financial Security indicators, with countries frequently relying on labor force surveys, income and expenditure surveys, and living conditions surveys to inform this priority. In contrast, Health and Care indicators were often supported by Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and various Health and Nutrition surveys. Participation indicators were commonly informed by Time Use Surveys (TUS) and Adult Education Surveys.

Administrative or registration data were the primary sources for most Health and Care indicators, although their use was relatively limited for Financial Security indicators. Census data was most frequently used for indicators related to the Enabling Environment policy priority.

Figure 13: Percentage of indicators for which data is collected by data source and policy priority
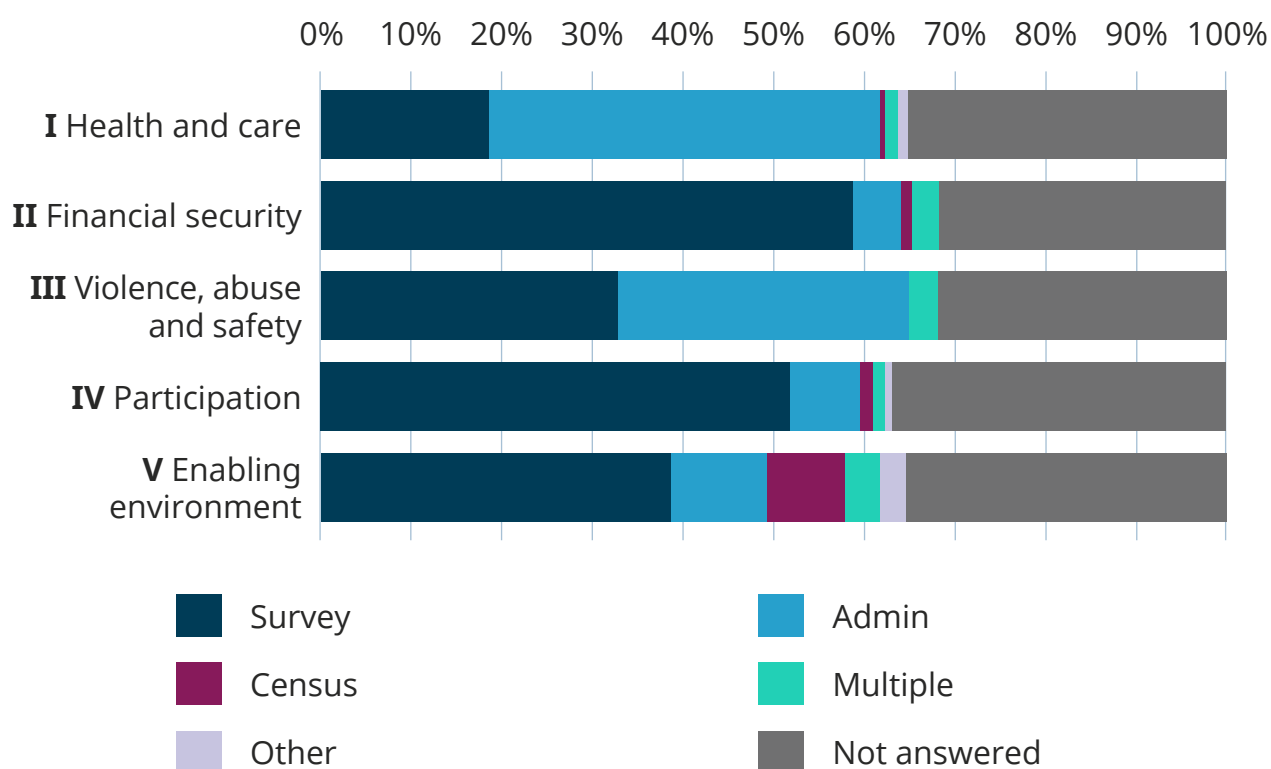
This analysis indicates the central role of NSOs in data production, particularly for Financial Security, while also highlighting the significant contributions of ministries and international organisations in areas like Health and Care. The diverse range of data sources, from surveys to administrative records, reflects the complexity and multifaceted nature of SDG data collection.

3.2.5 Data sources by country

Survey data accounted for over half of the available data in most countries, with administrative data being the second-largest contributor. Mauritius was an exception, relying more on administrative data than survey data. Sri Lanka, in contrast, did not use any administrative data (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Number of SDG indicators for which countries had data by main type of data and country
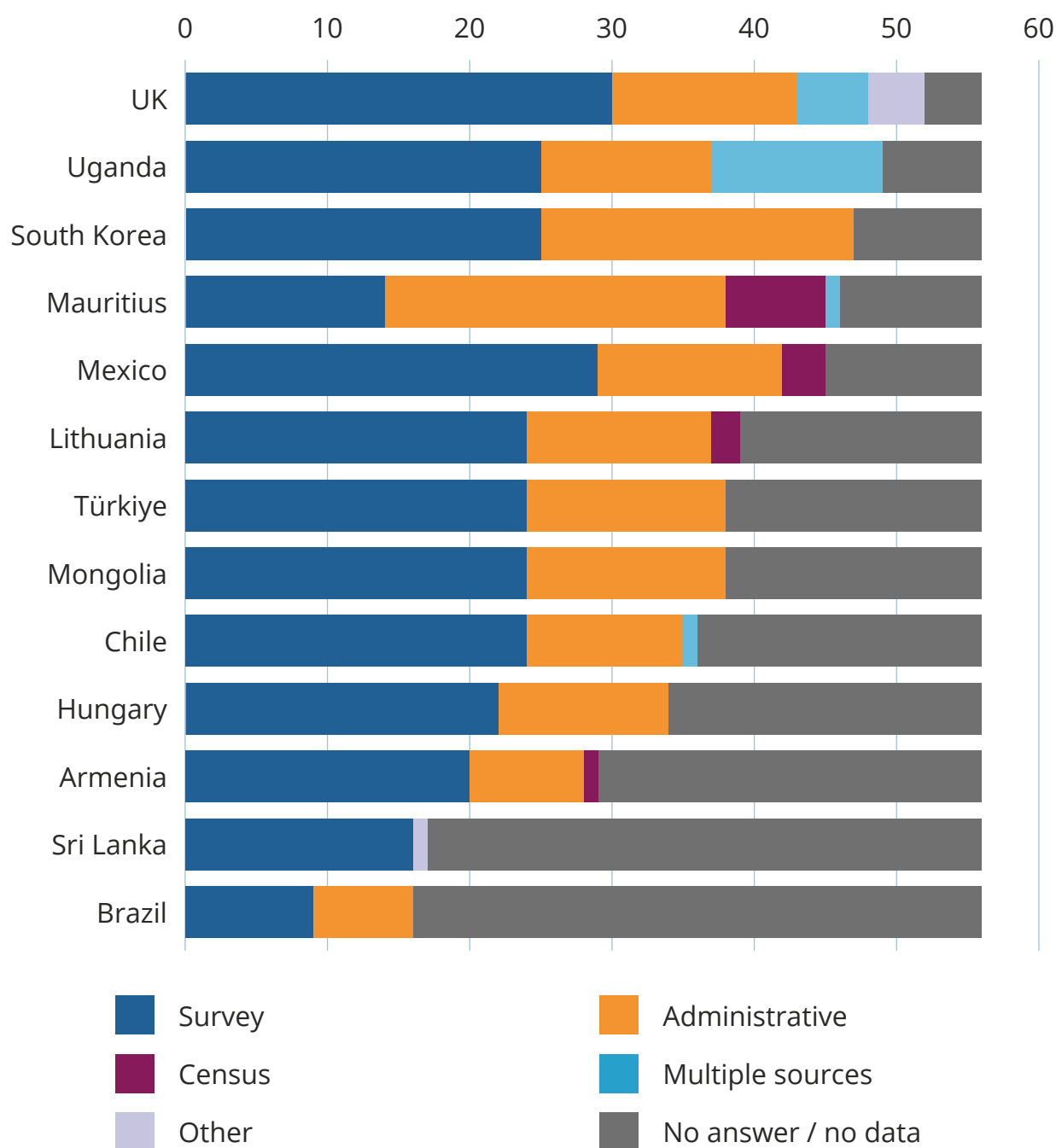
3.2.6 Availability and inclusion of data by country

The availability of indicators for older persons generally correlates with the income level of the participating countries, as shown in Figure 15. Typically, higher-income countries have access to more data. However, an exception to this trend is observed in low-income countries, particularly Uganda, which has higher data availability than the middle-income groups. This indicates that the availability of data is not solely determined by income level, as seen with Uganda and Mauritius, both of which exhibit substantial data despite their differing economic statuses.

This observation suggests that while income level is a significant factor, other elements also play crucial roles in data availability. The key takeaway is that data visibility and the ability to report on older persons may hinge on factors beyond just economic resources. The case studies explored later in this report delve into these nuances, highlighting the specific challenges and supports required to enhance data visibility in different contexts. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve data collection and reporting, particularly in lower and middle-income countries, to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the ageing population across different regions.

Figure 15: Participating countries that reported availability of data for the 56 indicators by income level
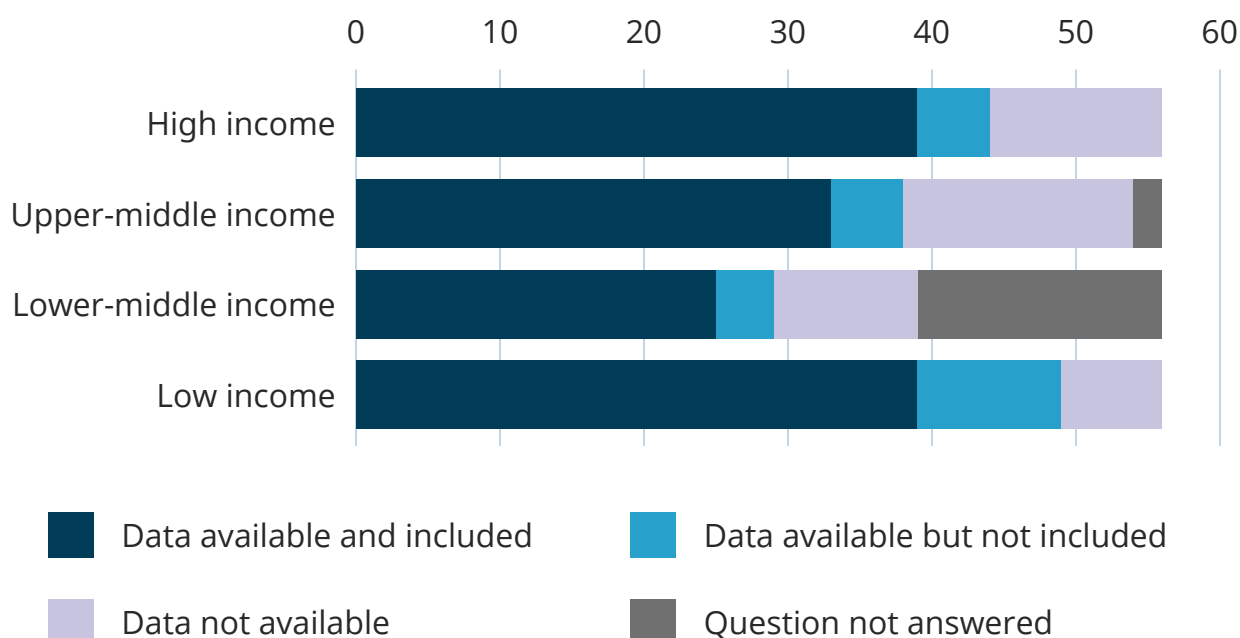
Data availability varied significantly among the participating countries. The United Kingdom (UK) led with data available for 52 out of the 56 indicators, all of which were included in reporting (Figure 16). South Korea followed with data available for 49 indicators, of which 47 were used. In contrast, Hungary exhibited

the largest discrepancy between the total amount of data available and the number of indicators used for reporting, with more than half of its available data (21 out of 35 indicators) not being included.

Figure 16: Number of indicators with reported availability of data for each country

Figure 17 (below) shows that Chile, United Kingdom, Uganda and Hungary had the highest levels of age-disaggregated data, with over 50% of their data applicable to people aged 60 years or older.

Figure 17: Availability of data on SDG indicators for older persons (aged 60 years or older) and whether disaggregated by age categories
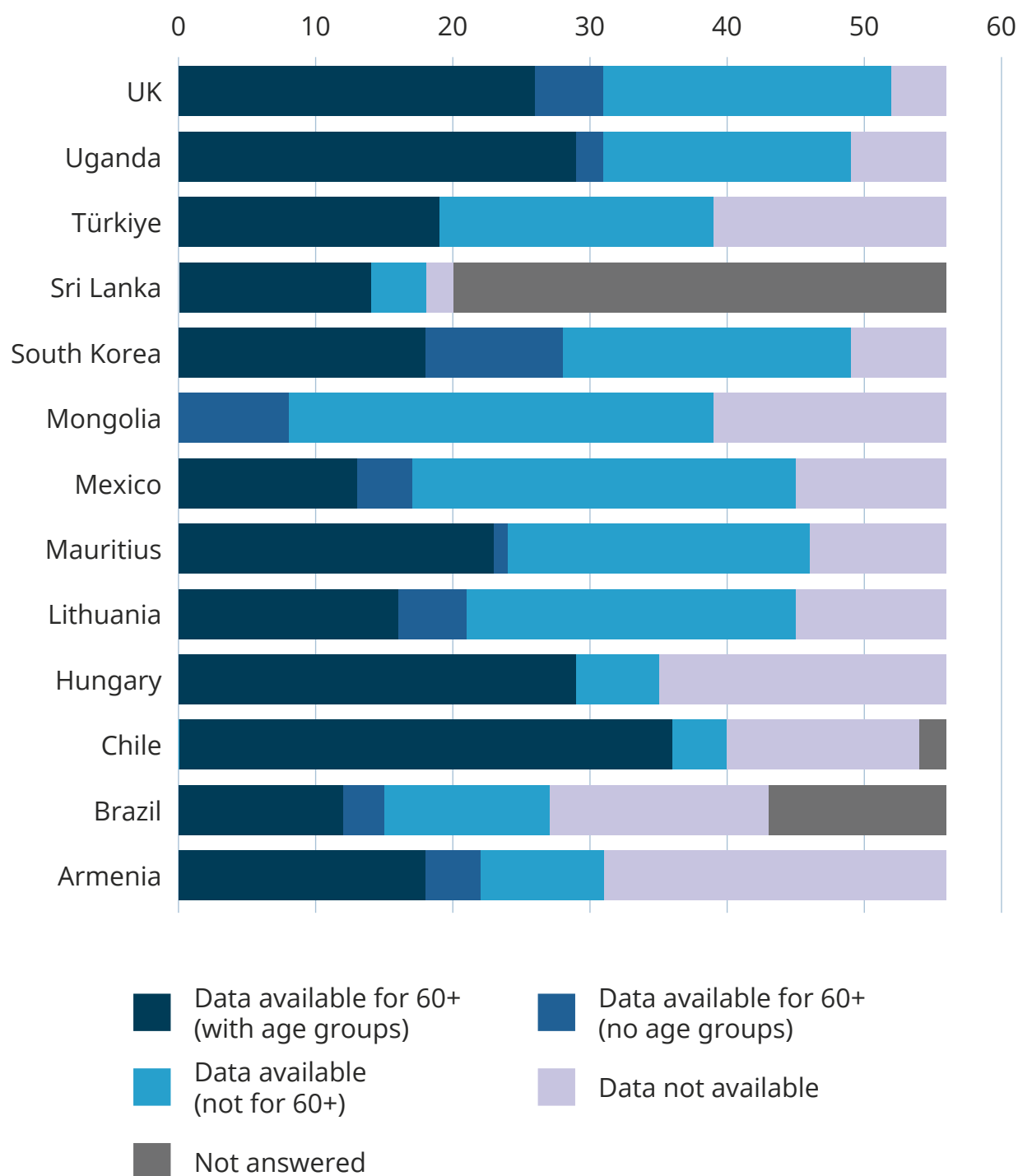
Uganda and Chile led in the availability of sex-disaggregated data, each with 64% of indicators available by sex (Figure 18). The average across all participating countries was 44%.

Figure 18: Availability of data on SDG indicators for individual countries by sex.

Percentage of all indicators
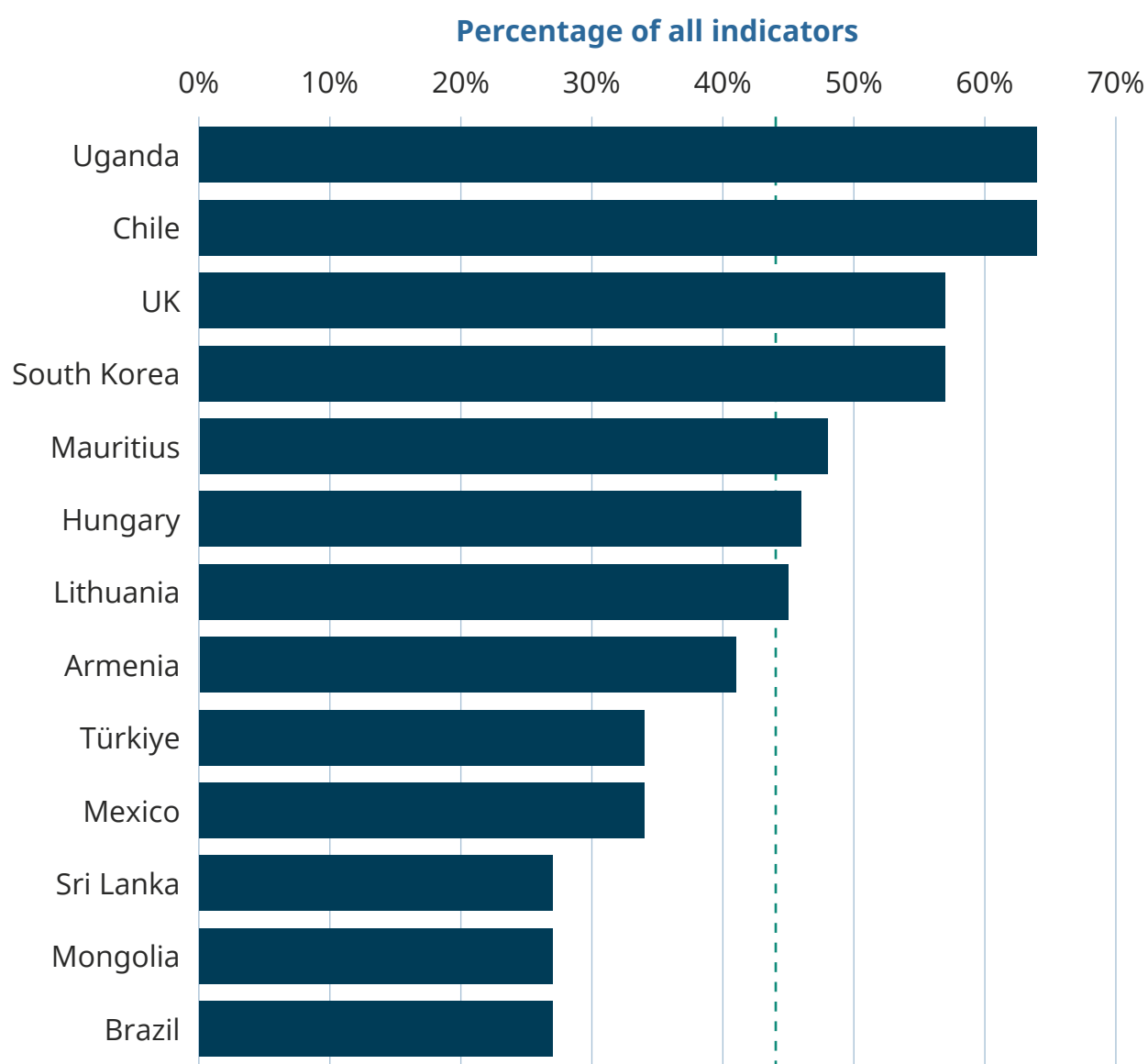
3.2.7 Availability of SDG indicators by country and policy priority

All participating NSOs had data available for at least some indicators across all five policy priorities (Figure 19). The UK had the most comprehensive coverage, with data available for 52 out of 59 indicators.

Figure 19: Availability of data by policy priority and country

Legend:
- **I** Health and care
- **II** Financial security
- **III** Violence, abuse and safety
- **IV** Participation
- **V** Enabing environment
- Total data not available
- Question not answered
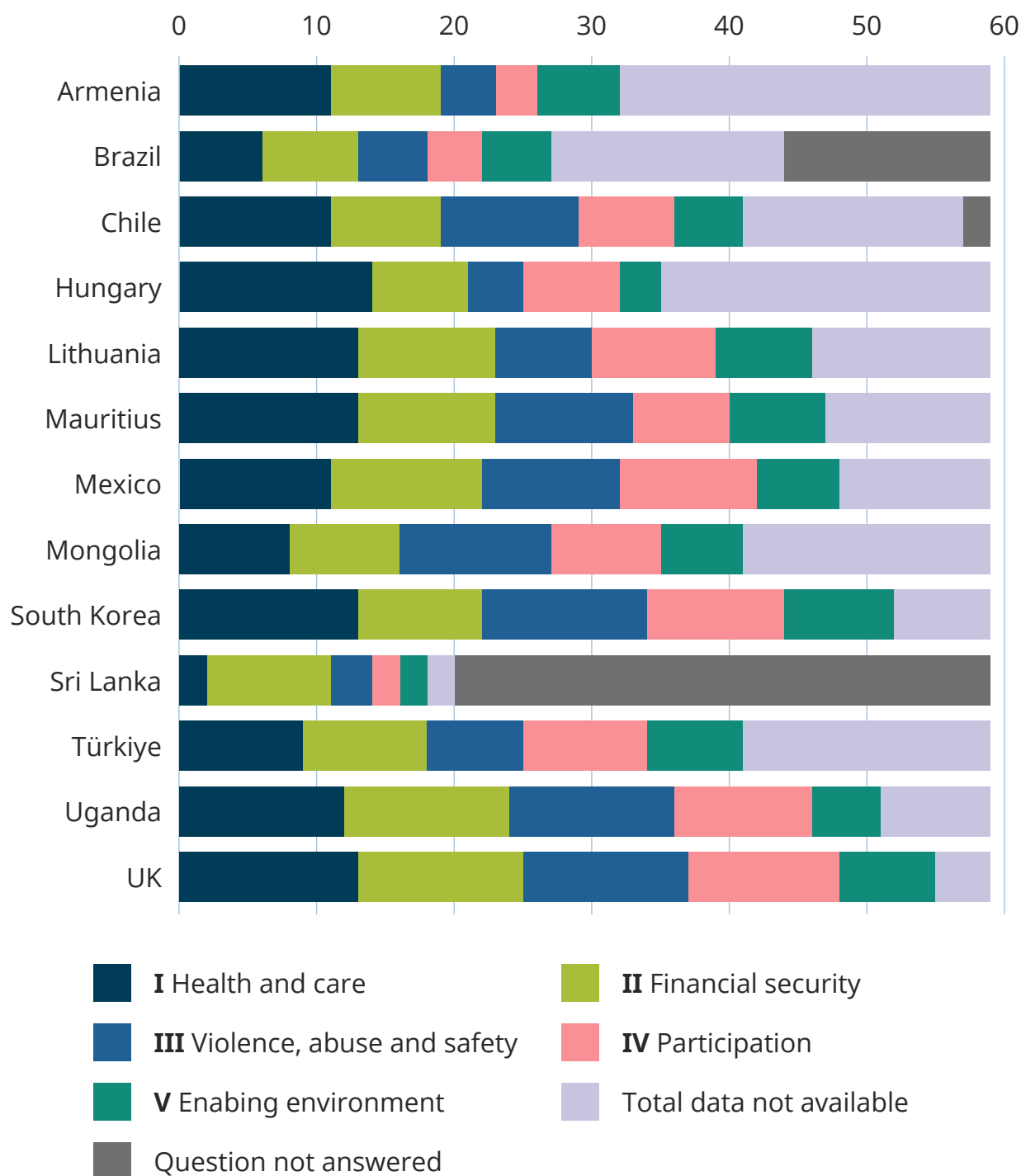
Chile stood out with the highest number of indicators (36) available across all policy priorities for people aged 60 years or older (Figure 20). Conversely, Mongolia had the fewest indicators (8) and only possessed data for the Health and Care, Financial Security, and Violence, Abuse and Safety priorities.

Figure 20: Availability of data for people aged 60 years or older by policy priority and country

Legend:
- **I** Health and care
- **II** Financial security
- **III** Violence, abuse and safety
- **IV** Participation
- **V** Enabing environment
- Total data not available
- Question not answered
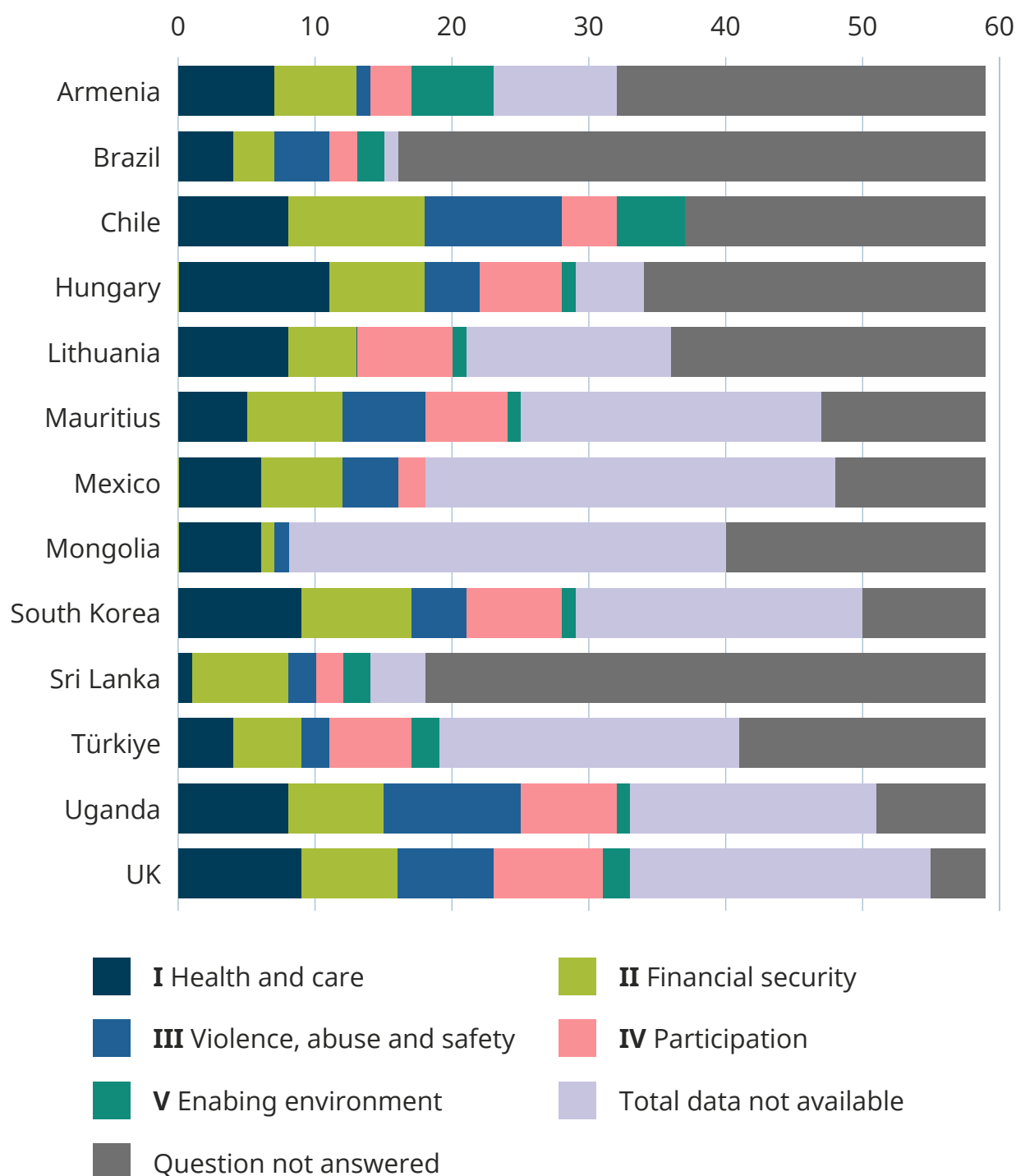
Chile also led in the availability of further age-disaggregated data, with 36 indicators providing additional breakdowns for older persons (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Availability of age-disaggregated data for people aged 60 years or older by policy priority and country

Legend:
- **I** Health and care
- **II** Financial security
- **III** Violence, abuse and safety
- **IV** Participation
- **V** Enabing environment
- Total data not available
- Question not answered
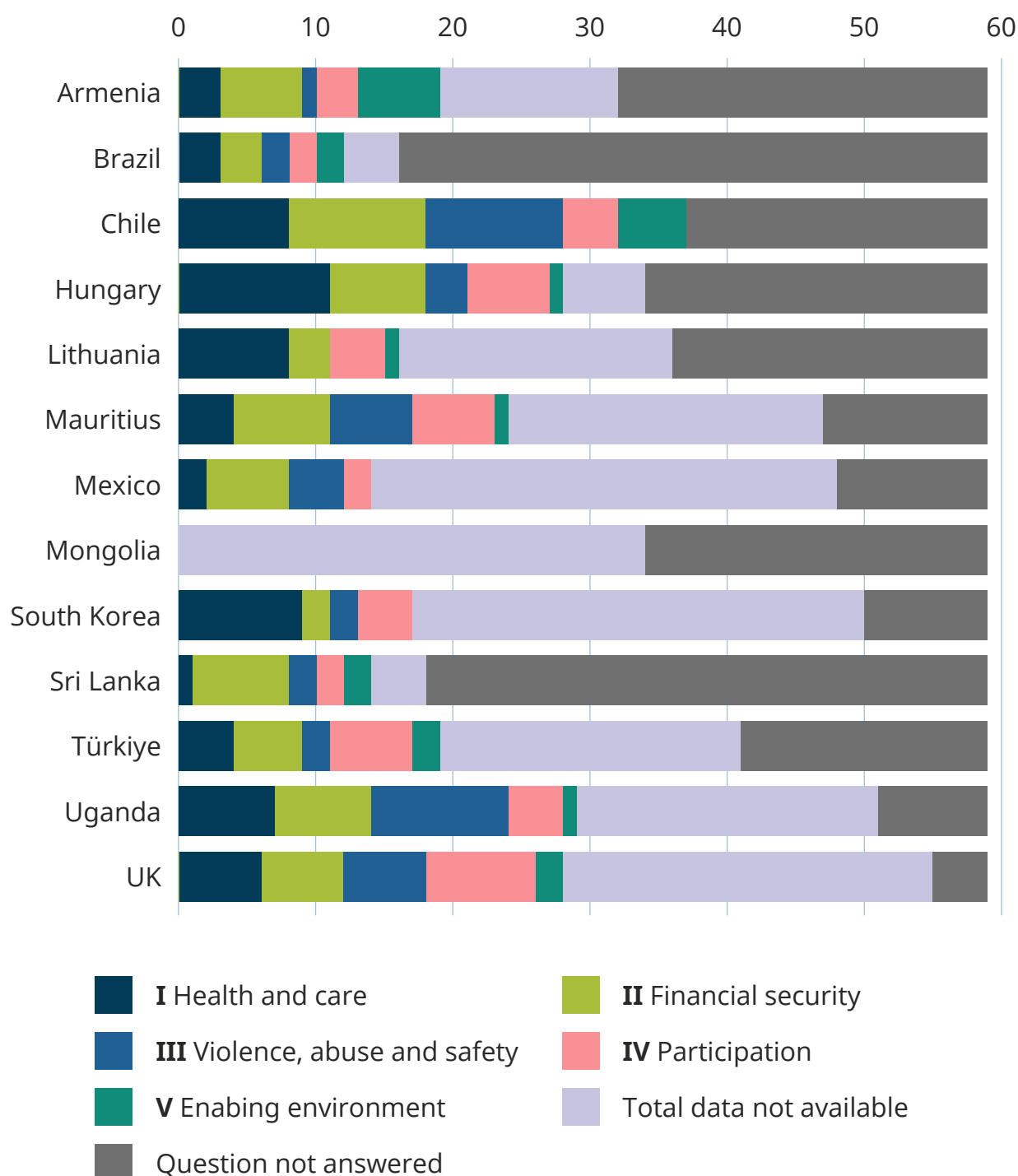
3.2.8 Plans to address data gaps

Figure 22 highlights the number of indicators for which countries reported plans to collect data in the future where gaps currently exist. Of the 13 participating countries, seven indicated such plans. Six had plans to collect data for gaps in the Financial Security policy priority. Armenia reported having plans to start collecting data for the highest number of indicators that they do not currently report on (23), covering all policy priorities.

Figure 22: Intention of countries to collect data in the future by country and policy priority

Legend:
- **I** Health and care
- **II** Financial security
- **III** Violence, abuse and safety
- **IV** Participation
- **V** Enabing environment
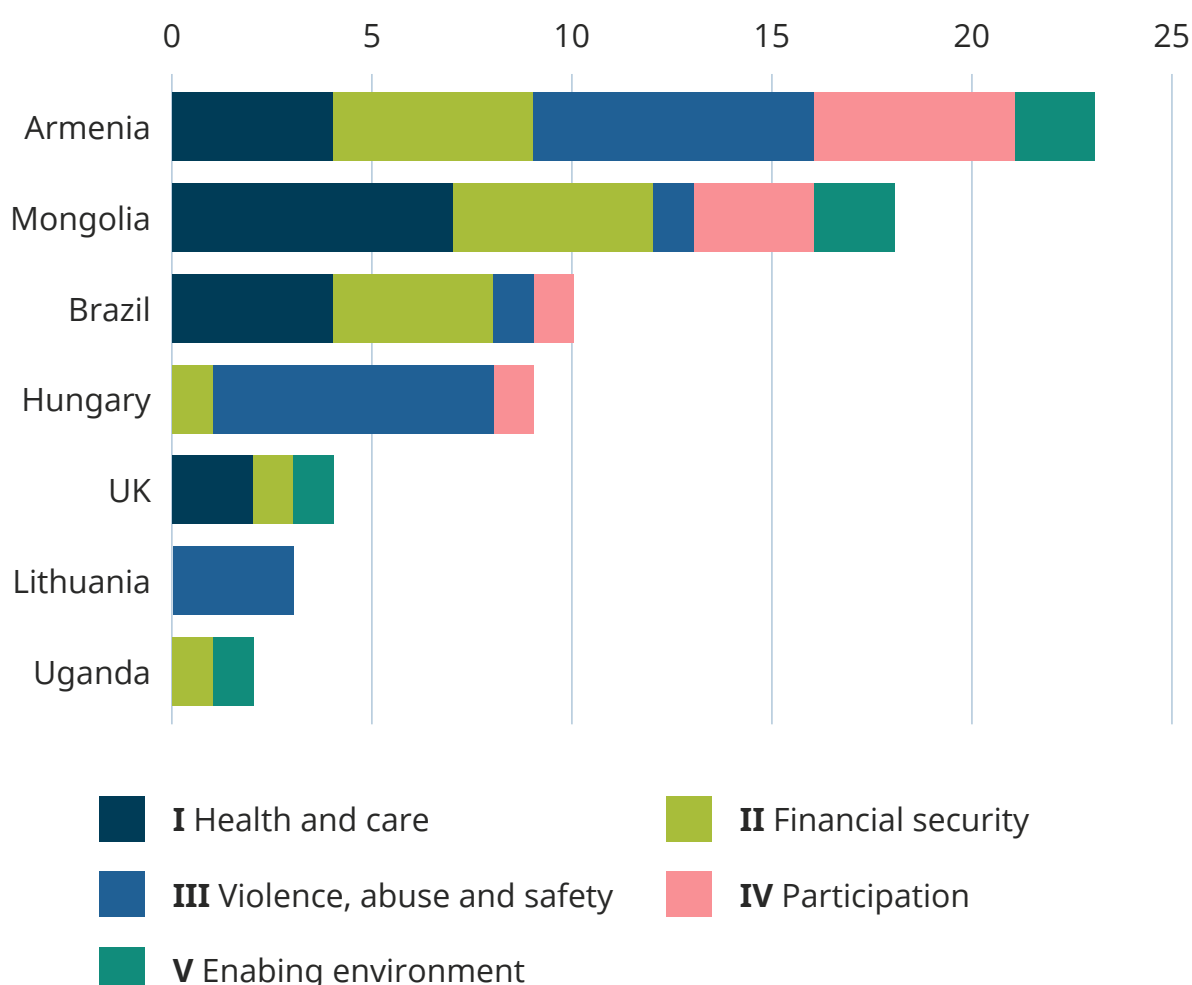
3.2.9 Data harmonisation

National Statistical Offices (NSOs) were queried about the extent to which data for each indicator was harmonised across countries or aligned with international standards.

When asked, "Is data collected consistently within the country?", the questionnaire sought to understand the degree data collection was harmonised.

For example, through having consistent definitions and categories through different modes of data collection. Responses revealed that, on average, 55% of indicators involved consistent data collection. However, as illustrated in Figure 23, there was significant variability across countries. For instance, South Korea reported a high level of consistency at 82% of indicators, while Sri Lanka reported only 18%, highlighting considerable disparities in internal data consistency among countries.

Figure 23: Percentage of SDG indicators for which data was collected consistently within countries.
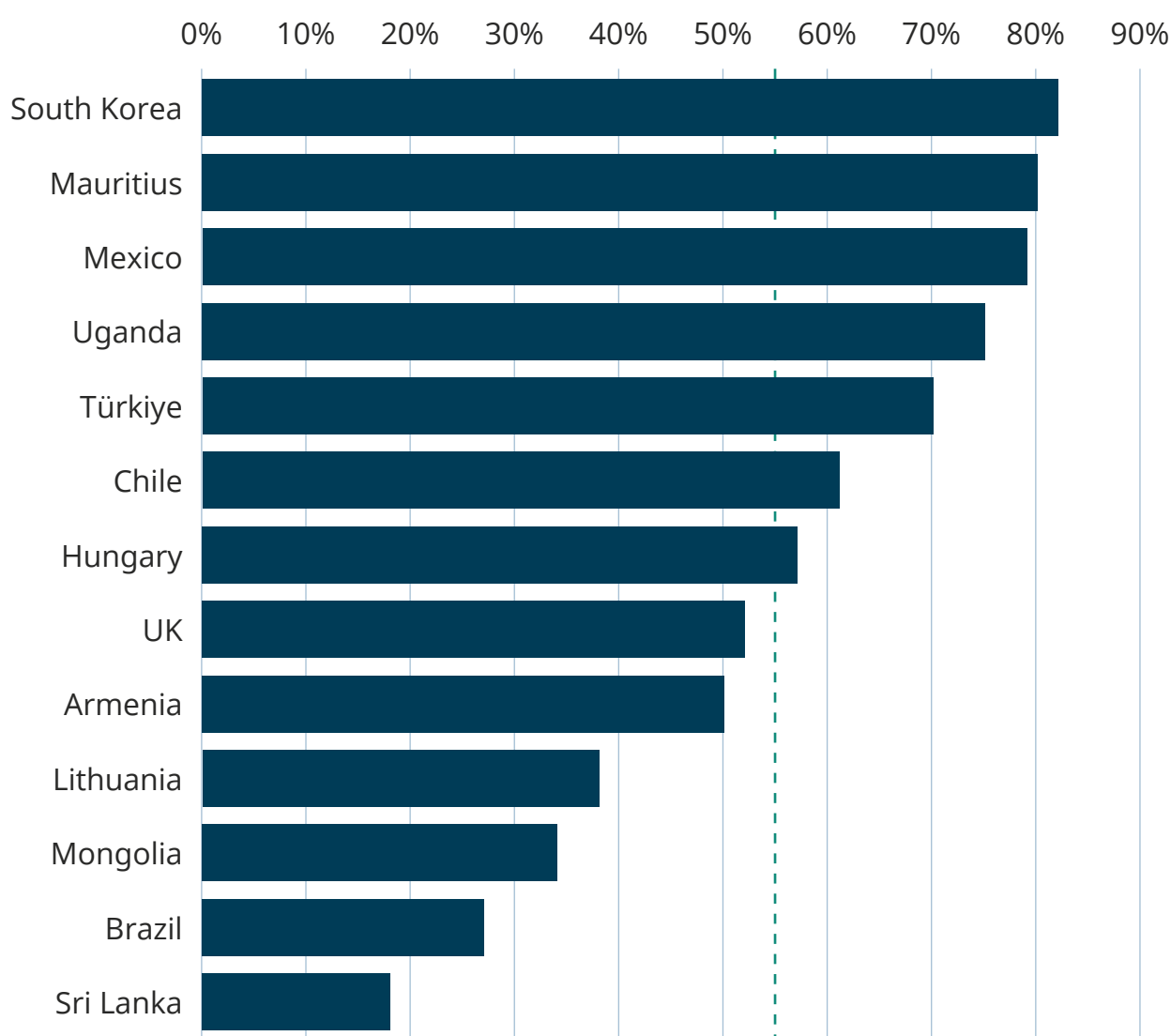
Moreover, when asked, "Is data harmonised in comparison with other countries or in alignment with some international standards?", Mauritius led with 80% of its data harmonised, whereas Brazil reported the lowest at 21%. The overall average across countries was 56%, though, as Figure 23 indicates, there was again substantial variability.

A closer look at the distribution of harmonised indicators reveals further disparities. As shown in Figure 24, Mauritius had the highest number of indicators (45) harmonised according to international standards across all policy priorities.

Figure 24: Percentage of SDG indicator data sources that were harmonised compared with other countries or in alignment with some international standards.
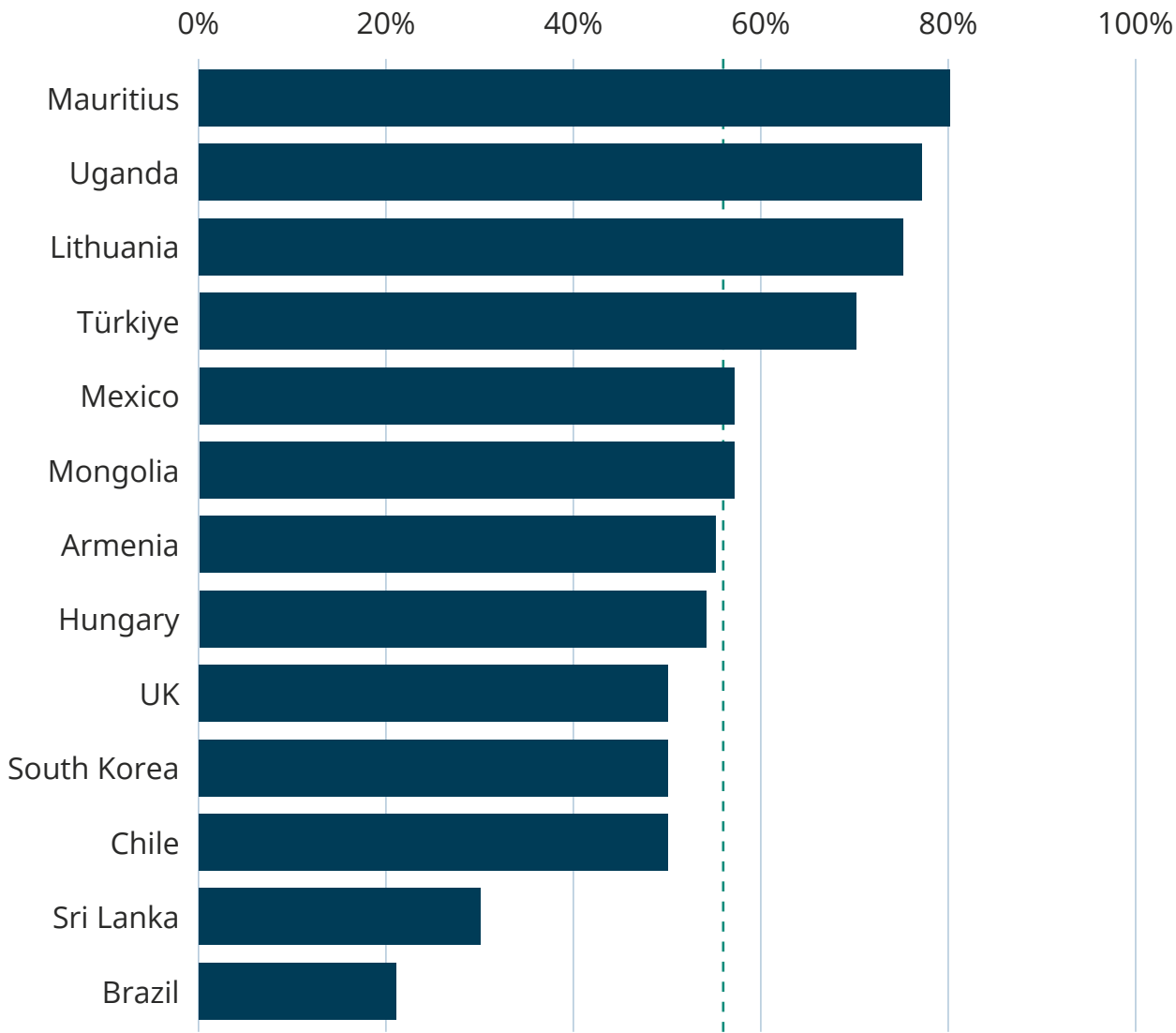
Figure 25 illustrates the harmonisation of data sources for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators across countries and policy priorities. The analysis shows that countries vary significantly in their alignment with international standards, with some countries demonstrating a high level of harmonisation, while others lag behind.

South Korea leads in the harmonisation of data sources, particularly across multiple policy areas, aligning 80% of its indicators with international standards.

Mauritius also performs well in the "Health and Care" priority, harmonising 12 out of 15 indicators. However, other countries, such as Brazil, report significantly lower levels of harmonisation, with only 25% of their data sources aligned across policy priorities, with no indicators for enabling environment. This disparity highlights the challenges in achieving consistency and comparability in data collection and reporting across countries, making international comparisons more difficult.

Figure 25: Harmonisation of data sources in alignment with international standards by country and Policy Priority

Legend:
- **I** Health and care
- **II** Financial security
- **III** Violence, abuse and safety
- **IV** Participation
- **V** Enabing environment
- Total not harmonised
- Question not answered
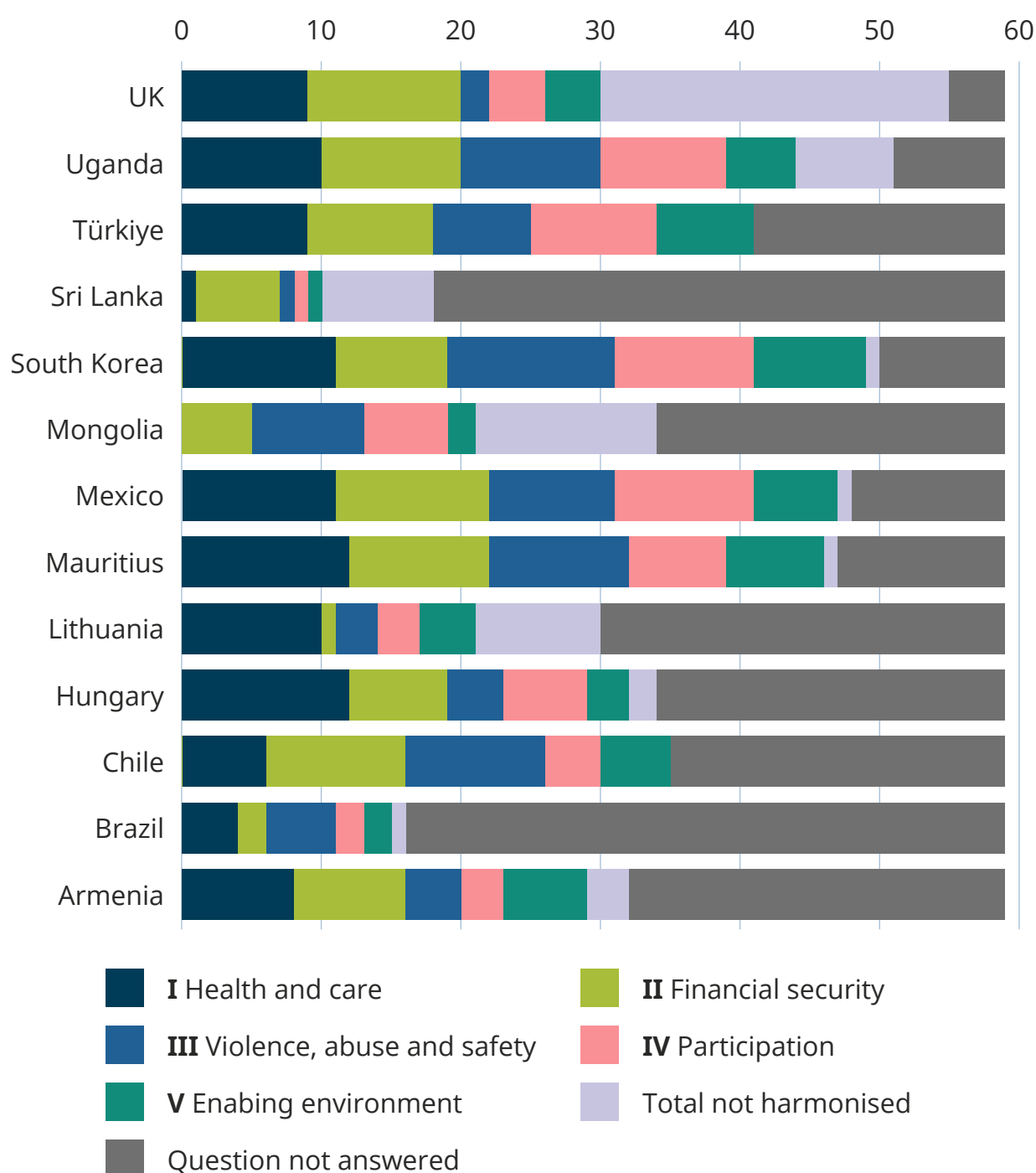
These findings underscore the challenges of achieving data harmonisation and comparability across countries, which is crucial for reliable international comparisons and for informing global policy-making. The significant variability in both data consistency and harmonisation reflects broader issues that countries face, including differing levels of capacity, resources, and adherence to international standards. These disparities can hinder the comparability of data across countries, complicating efforts to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a global scale.

As we conclude this section, it becomes evident that while some countries have made significant strides in harmonising their data collection processes, others lag behind, revealing a critical need for targeted support and capacity-building initiatives. Addressing these challenges is essential for creating a more consistent and comparable global data landscape, which in turn, will strengthen the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs, particularly those relevant to ageing and older persons.

4 Harmonisation gaps

To effectively address harmonisation gaps in age-related data across countries, it's essential to first understand the disparities in how data is collected, categorised, and reported. This section delves into these discrepancies, particularly focusing on how different countries align with international standards and each other when it comes to age-disaggregated data. Harmonisation is crucial not only for ensuring consistency in definitions and age bands across national datasets but also for standardising Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) reporting practices on a global scale. Without such alignment, the accessibility and utility of age-related data are significantly compromised, affecting both national and international policy-making. Through an analysis of survey responses from thirteen countries and insights from three case studies, this section identifies key areas where harmonisation is lacking and explores the implications for global data comparability.

4.1 SDG data harmonisation

The survey responses revealed that eleven countries consistently disaggregate data by age. Of these, five countries confirmed that they have a standard approach to collecting data on age, with two specifically mentioning the use of date of birth. Additionally, five countries indicated that their data collection methods for each indicator are harmonised with those of other countries, with

one providing details about the use of date of birth in their approach. A higher degree of harmonisation was observed in more general definitions of ageing, where all thirteen countries defined old age or older persons as those aged either 60 or 65 years or older. Retirement age, however, varied between 55 and 68 years across these countries.

4.1.1 Within-country harmonisation across indicators

The comparison of age groups used for older persons (60+) across the 56 selected indicators within each country is summarised in Annex D. This information was gathered from publicly accessible SDG reports and data sources cited by countries in their survey responses, though additional data may exist nationally that is not publicly available. The summary in Annex D reveals that each country employed a range of different age groups for older persons across various indicators. All countries used at least two different oldest age groups, with seven countries using three or more different age groups. Across all countries and indicators, nine unique oldest age groups were identified.

4.1.2 Cross-country harmonisation

Annex D also highlights that certain age groups are more commonly used across countries, although these groups are not consistently applied to the same indicators in each country. For example, twelve countries used 65+ as their oldest age group for at least some indicators, nine countries used 60+, four used 70+, three used 80+, and two countries used 85+ as their oldest age group for specific indicators. However, this mapping of age groups to indicators is not standardised across countries.

The lack of standardisation in the use of age groups across countries has significant implications. It complicates the comparison of data on older persons at the international level and hinders the ability to assess global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concerning this age-group. For instance, few indicators consistently use the same oldest age groups across countries. A notable exception is tuberculosis incidence (3.3.2), where the age groups 55-64 years and 65+ are used by all countries, reflecting the mandatory reporting to the WHO Global Tuberculosis Program. Table 4 highlights the indicators with the highest levels of cross-country harmonisation, showing that the 65+ age group is used in almost all of these cases. The remaining 48 indicators not listed in this table show minimal harmonisation, with no more than two countries using the same age groups for their oldest citizens.

Table 4. Age groups used across indicators for SDG reporting within each country

Indicator		Number of harmonised countries	Oldest age group used
3.3.2	Tuberculosis incidence	13	65+
8.5.1	Average hourly earnings	6	60+
1.1.1	Population below the international poverty line	5	65+
5.4.1	Time spent on unpaid domestic and care work	5	65+
2.1.1	Prevalence of undernourishment	3	65+
1.2.1	Population below the national poverty line	3	65+
1.2.2	People living in poverty	3	65+
10.2.1	People living below 50 per cent of median income	3	65+

4.1.3 Barriers and needs

Countries reported various barriers to achieving harmonised age-related data in their questionnaire responses. It was noted that harmonisation in data collection does not necessarily lead to harmonised outputs, but achieving such outputs is challenging without first harmonising the data collection process. One NSO pointed out that the upper age limits and sample sizes of some surveys made it impossible to disaggregate data for older age groups. Another highlighted the lack of international consensus regarding definitions of ageing and the absence of national infrastructure for integrating administrative records into the general population register. Additional barriers included budgetary restrictions following the pandemic and a lack of consensus among different government agencies.

Case study - Mongolia

Data availability, sharing, and resource challenges

In 2023, Mongolia reported on 63% of all SDG indicators, a significant improvement from 20% in 2015. The National Statistics Office of Mongolia (NSO) coordinates and reports these indicators on a dedicated website, as mandated by the Mongolian Law on Statistics (1997). This law positions the NSO as the leader in statistical activities, with ministries and other state organisations contributing relevant data.

Within the NSO, a single staff member is tasked with collating and reporting SDG indicators. Data collection involves sending official requests to ministries, the central bank, and other agencies, followed by verification. This process can be time-consuming due to the lack of technical expertise in other organisations, requiring the NSO to provide ongoing support. High staff turnover further complicates data collection, as the NSO must continually identify and assist new personnel. To streamline data sharing, the NSO staff member developed an Excel template for use by all organisations.

Despite recent progress, some indicators are still not reported, primarily because the data is either not collected or unavailable to the NSO. When possible, Mongolia provides data disaggregated by age, but often age-specific data is not collected. The NSO is establishing a technical working group on SDGs to collaborate with other organisations on methodologies, disaggregation, and data sharing. However, six months after requesting designated contacts from these organisations, the NSO had received no responses, likely due to the organisations being overburdened and under-resourced.

Data harmonisation

The NSO colleagues responsible for SDGs strives to align Mongolia's data reporting with international standards by following UN metadata and using the UN database as a reference. This staff member also examines how other countries present their data to improve Mongolia's practices. In 2023, the NSO participated in an international training program for SDGs in Uzbekistan, which provided valuable insights into monitoring and reporting best practices.

New data sources

Most SDG indicator data in Mongolia comes from administrative sources or surveys. The NSO is actively exploring new, non-traditional data sources to address gaps. For example, they have experimented with satellite imagery and Google Maps data to estimate the population living in adequate housing and within 2km of an all-season road. However, the quality of this data was not sufficient for the most recent reporting round. The NSO continues to work on improving these data sources with the aim of enhancing future reports.

When asked about the platforms they currently use for guidance, countries mentioned the UNSD (UN DESA), international concepts and definitions, consultation with peers and other NSOs, and international organisations and websites.

Regarding the needs from a good practice sharing platform, countries expressed interest in accessing case studies, questionnaire examples, and guides to good practice on the use of administrative records and longitudinal surveys. They also hoped this platform could foster creative and innovative ideas, improve time and efficiency, and enhance decision-making.

4.1.4 Data harmonisation in low-income countries

Data gaps in low-income nations pose a significant challenge for the effective implementation of policies aimed at supporting older populations. The scarcity of resources and technical capacity in these countries often hinders the collection and disaggregation of age-related data, which is vital for monitoring the progress of older persons toward achieving the SDGs. Without accurate and granular data, particularly from administrative registers or household surveys, policymakers lack the necessary evidence to formulate targeted interventions for the older population.

The absence of age-disaggregated data in many low-income countries is partly due to inadequate infrastructure for data collection and reporting. Moreover, limited access to advanced technologies and skilled personnel often exacerbates these gaps. Consequently, many countries rely on proxy data or outdated census information, which may not reflect the current needs of older persons. Bridging these data gaps is critical for ensuring that ageing-related policies are inclusive, especially in regions where older adults are most vulnerable. Strengthening data harmonisation in low-income nations will require substantial investment in national statistical systems, capacity-building, and international cooperation to establish consistent and reliable data streams that are comparable with global standards.

4.1.5 Age-disaggregation and climate change

Older persons are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and disruptions to food and water supplies. The intersection between ageing and climate change is becoming increasingly important, yet it is underrepresented in global data systems. Harmonising age-disaggregated data on how climate change impacts older populations could help bridge this gap.

Climate change exacerbates issues such as health vulnerabilities, displacement, and loss of livelihoods for older people. Without age-specific data on these impacts, the needs of older persons are often overlooked in national adaptation strategies. Countries should aim to integrate ageing perspectives into climate-related data collection and policy frameworks, ensuring that older adults are

considered in disaster risk reduction, urban planning, and environmental sustainability efforts. Global cooperation is essential in supporting low-income countries to build resilient data systems that can track the climate change-related risks faced by older populations, ensuring that climate action also leaves no one behind.

4.2 SDG data accessibility

To identify gaps in the harmonisation of age-related data, we examined the data underlying the survey responses, which were drawn from various sources, including the UN Global SDG Database , national SDG websites, and documentation provided by countries in their survey responses. This process offered additional insights into the accessibility and transparency of age-disaggregated national SDG data, the harmonisation of SDG reporting systems, and potential areas for improvement. These insights are crucial because data can only be effective if it is accessible.

Age-related data was considered accessible if it was available in at least one of the publicly available data sources mentioned above, for at least one age group starting at 60 years or older. However, the accessibility of age-disaggregated data for older persons at the national level—accessible for an average of 16% of the 56 selected indicators, ranging from 4% to 52% across countries—was consistently lower than the availability reported by countries in the survey. According to survey responses, age-disaggregated data was available for an average of 40% of indicators, with a range from 14% to 64% across countries.

The following sections detail the user experience of accessing age-disaggregated SDG data both at the national level and from the UN Global SDG Database. Additionally, potential explanations for the discrepancies between the availability of data (as reported in the survey) and the actual accessibility of data are explored. These findings highlight the need for clearer guidance to improve the harmonisation of SDG reporting.

4.2.1 National SDG reporting

Nine of the 13 countries (Armenia, Brazil, Chile, Lithuania, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Türkiye, Uganda, and the UK) have established national SDG reporting websites that are well-organised using the UN indicator naming and numbering system. These websites provide users with quick and easy access to relevant data, metadata, and other critical information such as the methodologies and definitions used, as well as identifying indicators that currently lack data. Additionally, there are larger regional SDG knowledge management platforms, like the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which present data for countries within that region, as well as the UN Global SDG Database.

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* Source: https://agenda2030lac.org/en

Case study - United Kingdom

Data availability, collection, and sharing

The UK reported on the majority of SDG indicators and reported 94.5% of the 56 indicators identified as most relevant to ageing. Data for the SDGs was collated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and published on a dedicated portal.

The success of SDG reporting in the UK is attributed to the high priority placed on it by the government, supported by a well-established statistical system. When the SDGs were introduced, the UK's Prime Minister ensured that SDG implementation and reporting were prioritised and adequately funded.

The 2019 National Voluntary Review was successful but resource-intensive. A dedicated ONS team, with support from other government departments, handled the data collection. Of the 56 indicators relevant to ageing, ONS directly collected 27, with the remainder sourced from other government departments and organisations. However, the process was time-consuming, involving manual data collection from various sources with no established process. The ONS team received data in multiple formats, often requiring significant processing, and aimed for a more automated, centralised system in the future.

The UK does not report on four of the 56 relevant indicators due to specific challenges, such as localised healthcare systems that collect data differently across the UK, or because some indicators are not national priorities. As a high-income country, some indicators are not deemed relevant to the UK's context.

The UK publishes indicators broken down by various age groups, including those for older persons. However, inconsistent age groupings across data sources and the lack of age-disaggregated data presented challenges. Some data are not collected by age, and even when they exist, access to them can be difficult for the ONS.

Data harmonisation within the UK and internationally

The UK's data harmonisation faces challenges due to its devolved governance structure, where some policy issues are managed at the national level, while others are handled by the constituent country governments. This results in inconsistent data collection across the UK, with some indicators only covering certain regions.

Internationally, while UN metadata provides guidance for harmonisation, the ONS found that age groupings for disaggregated indicators are not always specified. Reporting data in prescribed formats is challenging, particularly when data are collected by other organisations with different priorities. Persuading these organisations to adjust their data collection to align with international standards has proven difficult.

Resource challenges

Between 2017 and 2023, the UK published a comprehensive set of SDG indicators online. However, the website is no longer maintained as the ONS has restructured its approach to SDG reporting. Responsibility for reporting has been transitioned to relevant topic departments, with coordination managed by a central team within the ONS. This strategic shift aims to enhance efficiency but also presents challenges in ensuring consistent and cohesive SDG reporting amid evolving government priorities and financial constraints. The ONS remains committed to engaging with SDG efforts, working closely with individual departments to maintain the quality and comprehensiveness of reporting.

Sri Lanka has a more basic SDG website where data summaries can be viewed according to indicator number. However, the levels of accessible age-disaggregated data on these platforms were generally lower than those reported by most countries in the survey, indicating a disconnect between national internal data sources and SDG reporting platforms.

Countries like Hungary, Mauritius, and Mongolia do not have dedicated national SDG reporting websites, making it challenging for users to access data associated with indicators. Mauritius provided a spreadsheet containing named and numbered indicators with some level of disaggregation. Mongolia directed users to the homepage of their National Statistics Office (NSO), which does not have a specific SDG section. This lack of dedicated platforms further complicates data accessibility and hampers the ability to analyse age-disaggregated information effectively.

Language barriers also pose a significant challenge to accessing SDG data. While using the UN SDG indicator numbering system helps mitigate some of these issues, the absence of translation options on national SDG websites can limit accessibility for international users. Some countries, such as Lithuania, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Türkiye, and Armenia, offer language translation options, while others, like Hungary, the UK, Brazil, and Chile, do not. Although internet browsers with translation capabilities can assist users in accessing information, they are often ineffective with PDF reports and other attached documents. Many countries provided links to internal data sources that supported their survey responses, often leading to large PDF reports in the home language, which were inaccessible to international users. Furthermore, these sources frequently linked to NSO or departmental homepages with extensive collections of webpages and documents, making it difficult to locate specific data related to SDG indicators.

Another challenge is that these data sources often relied on proxy data—information related to an indicator but not directly measuring the same variable—and rarely provided data at the recommended level of disaggregation. For example, in the UK, some supporting data reported only covered England, such as HIV infection data. Evidence from case study interviews suggests that countries often have to adopt a pragmatic approach, using the most relevant data available, as full SDG reporting demands substantial resources.

These challenges have led to lower percentages of accessible age-disaggregated data for individuals aged 60 years or older compared to the percentages reported by countries in the survey. Additionally, there are several country-specific issues. For instance, Brazil's SDG metadata described using 5-year age bands in their calculation methods to produce overall figures that are not age-disaggregated at the point of reporting, such as mortality rate data, indicating that age-disaggregated data is sometimes available but not integrated into SDG reporting.

Case study - Mexico

Data availability, collection and sharing

Mexico has a high proportion of available SDG indicators relevant to older persons, integrated into its Constitution. The National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) oversees the National System of Statistical and Geographic Information as mandated by the Mexican Constitution (Article 26, Section B). The implementation and monitoring of SDGs are prioritised by the Mexican government, with INEGI coordinating and reporting SDG data.

A technical committee led by the Ministry of Economy handles SDG monitoring, with INEGI as the technical secretariat, while the National Council for the 2030 Agenda addresses policy issues. Despite consistent data collection, changing government priorities pose challenges, as new administrations often shift focus. INEGI actively engages with new leadership to maintain SDG reporting momentum.

INEGI coordinates data collection across more than 25 ministries and municipal authorities. The process involves requesting data via email, with follow-ups often necessary, making the task time-consuming. INEGI provides technical support and works with data suppliers to find proxy data when direct data is unavailable. Challenges include budgetary constraints, limited resources, and leadership changes within ministries, which impact data production and consistency.

Not all 56 SDG indicators relevant to older persons are fully covered, particularly in Health and Care. The Department of Health faces difficulties in collecting and providing administrative data, leading INEGI to rely on surveys to fill data gaps.

Age disaggregation

Mexico disaggregates data for older persons (aged 60 or 65 and above) for some of the 56 relevant SDG indicators. INEGI is exploring the need for more disaggregated data across various variables, though this requires increased data collection, adding to costs. Challenges include the focus of many surveys on the labor market, often excluding those over 65, or grouping all individuals over 65 into a single category. Census data, collected every ten years, provides age-disaggregated data, with the next inter-censal survey in 2025 expected to enhance this dataset.

Data harmonisation

Harmonisation with international standards remains a significant challenge. While INEGI follows UN-provided metadata, inconsistencies and contradictions within these guidelines complicate the process. When specific data is unavailable, proxies or alternative formats are used, resulting in non-harmonised data.

INEGI participates in an NSO forum for SDG implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean, offering technical assistance and engaging in working groups that explore advanced data collection methods, including satellite imagery and Big Data.

Similarly, several countries had low levels of accessible age-disaggregated data for individuals aged 60 years or older, despite claiming in the survey that such data was available internally. In Türkiye, some data was disaggregated only up to the 55+ age group, falling short of the 60+ criteria specified in the ageing-related survey question. Türkiye also used "retired" as a disaggregate for at least one indicator (internet use), but this was treated as an economic variable rather than an age-related one. In Uganda, age-disaggregation typically stopped at the age of 49 years.

Addressing these issues requires better international harmonisation of age-related data, with clearer guidelines on definitions of ageing, improved connectivity between data sources, and more consistent standards for SDG reporting.

4.2.2 UN global SDG database

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs hosts a centralised global database, the UN SDG Indicators Database (unstats.un.org/sdgs), which collates national SDG data which meets international standards from all UN member states. Users can search for goals or indicators either globally or by country/area. When searching by country, SDG data can be accessed through the Global SDG Country Profiles or the Data Commons portal. The Data Commons portal organises SDG data by indicator number and complete indicator name, although some data are aggregated together, such as violence against women and girls. In contrast, the Global SDG Country Profiles are more difficult to navigate because indicators are not numbered, and data for indicators that countries have not reported are removed entirely. There is also inconsistency between the two platforms, with some indicators appearing on the Data Commons portal but not on the Global SDG Country Profiles (e.g., Goal 4 parity indices and Goal 5 age-disaggregation for Hungary). This inconsistency suggests a disconnect between the data pipelines that supply these resources, even though the Data Commons portal often cites the Global SDG Database as the data source for many SDGs. For example, the Data Commons portal pulls data for tuberculosis incidence (SDG 3.3.2) from the WHO Global Tuberculosis Program, but this data is not disaggregated by age, even though age-disaggregated data is available at the source from the WHO.

The UN SDG Indicators Database includes a data availability tool that allows users to see global levels of age disaggregation for each SDG indicator. However, this tool does not provide specific information about the age bands used for disaggregation, nor does it return results for indicators where fewer than one-third of countries have reported data. The results below show how few SDG indicators have had at least one-third of countries report any age-disaggregated data since 2015 (highlighted in green).

Figure 26: Indicators with at least one third of countries worldwide reporting disaggregated data for at least one year since 2015

1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
1.1.1	2.1.1	3.1.1	4.1.1	5.1.1	6.1.1	7.1.1	8.1.1	9.1.1	10.1.1	11.1.1	12.1.1	13.1.1	14.1.1	15.1.1	16.1.1	17.1.1
1.2.1	**2.1.2**	3.1.2	4.1.2	**5.2.1**	6.2.1	7.1.2	8.2.1	9.1.2	10.2.1	11.2.1	12.2.1	13.1.2	14.2.1	15.1.2	**16.1.2**	17.1.2
1.2.2	2.2.1	3.2.1	4.2.1	5.2.2	6.3.1	7.2.1	8.3.1	9.2.1	10.3.1	11.3.1	12.2.2	13.1.3	14.3.1	15.2.1	16.1.3	17.2.1
1.3.1	2.2.2	3.2.2	4.2.2	5.3.1	6.3.2	7.3.1	8.4.1	9.2.2	10.4.1	11.3.2	12.3.1	13.2.1	14.4.1	15.3.1	16.1.4	17.3.1
1.4.1	2.2.3	**3.3.1**	**4.3.1**	5.3.2	6.4.1	7.a.1	8.4.2	9.3.1	10.4.2	11.4.1	12.4.1	13.2.2	14.5.1	15.4.1	16.2.1	17.3.2
1.4.2	2.3.1	3.3.2	**4.4.1**	**5.4.1**	6.4.2	7.b.1	8.5.1	9.3.2	10.5.1	11.5.1	12.4.2	13.3.1	14.6.1	15.4.2	**16.2.2**	17.4.1
1.5.1	2.3.2	3.3.3	**4.5.1**	5.5.1	6.5.1		**8.5.2**	9.4.1	10.6.1	11.5.2	12.5.1	13.a.1	14.7.1	15.5.1	16.2.3	17.5.1
1.5.2	2.4.1	3.3.4	4.6.1	5.5.2	6.5.2		8.6.1	9.5.1	10.7.1	11.5.3	12.6.1	13.b.1	14.a.1	15.6.1	16.3.1	17.6.1
1.5.3	2.5.1	3.3.5	4.7.1	5.6.1	6.6.1		8.7.1	9.5.2	10.7.2	11.6.1	12.7.1		14.b.1	15.7.1	16.3.2	17.7.1
1.5.4	2.5.2	3.4.1	4.a.1	5.6.2	6/a/1		8.8.1	9.a.1	10.7.3	11.6.2	12.8.1		14.c.1	15.8.1	16.3.3	17.8.1
1.a.1	2.a.1	3.4.2	4.b.1	5.a.1	6.b.1		8.8.2	9.b.1	10.7.4	11.7.1	12.a.1			15.9.1	16.4.1	17.9.1
1.a.2	2.a.2	3.5.1	4.c.1	5.a.2			8.9.1	9.c.1	10.a.1	11.7.2	12.b.1			15.a.1	16.4.2	17.10.1
1.b.1	2.b.1	3.5.2		5.b.1			8.10.1		10.b.1	11.a.1	12.c.1			15.b.1	16.5.1	17.11.1
	2.c.1	3.6.1		5.c.1			**8.10.2**		10.c.1	11.b.1				15.c.1	16.5.2	17.12.1
		3.7.1					8.a.1			11.b.2					16.6.1	17.13.1
		3.7.2					8.b.1								**16.6.2**	17.14.1
		3.8.1													**16.7.1**	17.15.1
		3.8.2													**16.7.2**	17.16.1
		3.9.1													16.8.1	17.17.1
		3.9.2													**16.9.1**	17.18.1
		3.9.3													16.10.1	17.18.2
		3.a.1													16.10.2	17.18.3
		3.b.1													16.a.1	17.19.1
		3.b.2													16.b.1	17.19.2
		3.b.3														
		3.c.1														
		3.d.1														
		3.d.2														

Source: UN SDG Indicators Database data availability tool

The UN also publishes metadata for each SDG indicator, but the purpose of this metadata is not always clear. It is uncertain whether the metadata is intended to guide SDG data disaggregation or simply to describe the data that is available. For some indicators, the "indicator information" section in the SDG metadata mentions age disaggregation, while in others, age is discussed as an analytical factor in the "method of computation." The "data availability and disaggregation" section sometimes mentions age, but this information is not always consistent with other sections, and the figures presented here do not always align with those from the Global SDG Database data availability tool.

Age is not listed as a disaggregating factor for 29 of the 56 SDG indicators (52%) in the SDG metadata. When age is mentioned, the metadata fails to define age bands for 41% of indicators. Specific age groups are recommended for only 4 of the 56 indicators (7%). Much of this information is replicated in the UN E-Handbook on SDG Indicators, although disaggregation guidance is missing for some indicators in this handbook. The 'Minimum disaggregation set,' which lists all metadata disaggregation dimensions for each indicator (9), specifies age for only 27 out of all 234 SDG indicators (12%), and age bands are rarely defined. Greater clarity and direction on SDG age-disaggregation requirements could significantly enhance the harmonisation of ageing-related data across countries, as reported by National Statistics Offices (NSOs) in survey responses and case study interviews.

The UN's Recommendation on Ageing-related Statistics, published in 2017 (10), advised that older populations should start at age 55 and be measured in 5-year age bands up to 85 years. It acknowledged that 10-year age bands up to age 75 could be used as a minimum if sample sizes were small. More recently, it has been recommended that these 5-year age bands should continue up to 100 years (11).

4.3 How could harmonisation and accessibility of age-related data be improved?

Clear and transparent SDG reporting systems are essential for improving the accessibility of age-related data. Several countries in our survey have national SDG reporting websites that provide summaries and datasets aligned with the UN's naming and numbering system, including some with translation options to overcome language barriers. These best practices enhance data accessibility and transparency. However, other countries still face challenges, such as poorly defined indicators, over-reliance on proxy data, and inaccessible data sources. The inconsistency between reported age-disaggregated data and what is accessible on national websites could be due in part to difficulties in navigating different languages and platforms. Similarly, the Global SDG Country Profiles tool, while useful, lacks numbered indicators and excludes data when not reported by a country, making it harder to locate specific data efficiently.

Our analysis of the underlying data and metadata from the 13 surveyed countries revealed a significant gap between reported data availability and actual SDG data reporting. On average, only 16% of the 56 ageing-related SDG indicators had accessible age-disaggregated data. This discrepancy underscores the need for clearer guidelines and improved practices in age-disaggregated reporting.

The findings from our survey indicated that some countries might have responded affirmatively to questions about the availability of data for older persons (age 60+) or specific age groups of older persons (e.g., 60-64, 65-69) even if the data was not fully disaggregated from younger age groups. For example, a 25 to 74-year age band may include older persons, but it does not specifically disaggregate data for those aged 60 years and over. This highlights the importance of precise and harmonised guidance for age disaggregation of older persons. Clearer directives from the UN on how National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and other monitoring bodies should disaggregate data by age for a broader range of SDG indicators could lead to more accurate and comprehensive data for older populations.

The responsibility for monitoring SDG indicators is spread across various agencies (e.g., FAO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank), which can complicate the collection and disaggregation of data, particularly in countries with smaller sample sizes. An example of this challenge is malaria incidence in non-malarial countries, where meaningful age disaggregation may be difficult due to limited data.

Recommendations for improving harmonisation and accessibility

Given the challenges identified in data harmonisation and accessibility, we propose the following recommendations:

1. **Clearer ageing-related definitions:** The availability of age-disaggregated data for ageing-related indicators is inconsistent and often uses different age bands across countries. We recommend that countries adopt the UN's Recommendation on Ageing-related Statistics (2017), which advises starting age measurements at 55 years and using 5-year age bands up to 85 years. Where sample sizes are small, 10-year age bands up to 75 years can be a minimum standard. These recommendations should be clearly communicated through the UN SDG metadata repository and the UN E-Handbook on SDG Indicators for all relevant indicators.

2. **Standardised reporting methods:** The WHO Global Tuberculosis Program exemplifies how harmonised data reporting can be achieved through the use of standardised online forms, which require all countries to return age-disaggregated data in a consistent format. We recommend that central monitoring agencies responsible for age-related SDG indicators implement similar standardised forms to facilitate easier and more efficient data reporting.

3. **Standardised national SDG reporting:** Transparent and clear SDG reporting systems are vital for data accessibility. We recommend that countries establish national SDG reporting websites where indicators are organised according to the UN SDG numbering and naming system. Each indicator should be accompanied by downloadable datasets and metadata. Additionally, data should be reported back to the UN Global SDG Database using their established system. Where countries are using proxy data, improved knowledge sharing systems and guidance should be provided to help this meet international standards.

4. **Connected data systems:** Age-disaggregated data often exists but is not consistently transferred to national SDG platforms or the UN Global SDG Database. We recommend the creation of better data connections and notification systems between central monitoring agencies (e.g., WHO) and national and international SDG reporting platforms to ensure data is efficiently shared and accessible.

5. **Transparent centralised SDG reporting:** The UN's Global SDG Country Profiles should also organise indicators according to the SDG numbering and naming system, with each indicator supported by downloadable datasets and metadata. For full transparency, indicators should not be removed from the platform, even if there are no supporting data, to maintain a complete record of SDG reporting.

6. **Mitigate language barriers:** Reducing language barriers is crucial for global data sharing. We recommend that countries avoid reporting SDG data in documents attached to NSO websites, as these are less accessible for translation software. Instead, data should be shared via national and international SDG web-based platforms, as described above. Additionally, allowing users to identify datasets by indicator number will further reduce language barriers, enhancing data accessibility across different regions.

Improving the harmonisation and accessibility of age-related SDG data is essential for advancing global efforts to monitor and address the needs of older populations. The recommendations outlined above are designed to bridge the data gaps internationally. This sets the stage for the final section, where we outline specific policy recommendations aimed at achieving these goals.

5 Policy recommendations

The proportion of people aged 60 years and older is rapidly increasing, with the global population of older persons projected to reach 2.1 billion by 2050. This growth is driven by significant improvements in life expectancy, advancements in public health, and a general decline in fertility rates. Consequently, it is essential to generate age-disaggregated data to develop policies that address the specific needs of this expanding demographic based on accurate, age-specific evidence.

To ensure that no one, regardless of their age, is left behind in the implementation of the SDGs and other policy initiatives thereafter, it will be important to plan how to continue this work beyond 2030. It is essential to develop more granular strategies for data disaggregation by age and gender, as well as, where possible, by income, health status, and disability. While current national statistics often provide useful insights, they can sometimes mask disparities at the community, household, and individual levels. Implementing the SDGs for ageing and older persons requires a more nuanced approach that builds on existing systems while enhancing their capacity to capture detailed information on all population groups.

Better age-disaggregated data can be achieved through several measures, which are discussed in the following sections. These recommendations aim to strengthen the quality and coverage of data related to ageing and older persons, thereby supporting more effective policy-making and progress toward the 2030 Agenda and beyond.

a. Leverage diverse data sources

According to the survey, countries continue to rely heavily on survey data to track SDG progress. Because many surveys do not collect information on marginalised groups, survey data has several flaws in relation to the 'leave no one behind' agenda. Intra-household disparities may be overlooked because survey data is mostly collected at the household level. Furthermore, in some countries, such as the UK, household surveys have experienced low response rates due to various factors, including non-response and the effects of COVID-19 on data collection operations.

Another significant issue is that, by definition, household surveys exclude older people living in institutions, such as care homes, which can lead to an underrepresentation of this segment of the population in the data. Additionally, many surveys face challenges related to sample sizes, making age disaggregation at older ages difficult, often leading to grouped upper age categories that mask important differences among older age groups. To address these issues, we recommend the use of booster samples in surveys to enable more detailed age disaggregation and the inclusion of alternative data sources

that capture the experiences of older persons living in institutions. This approach would ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse needs of older populations.

Thus, countries need to expand the use of under-exploited data sources, such as administrative data, to help fill existing data gaps. For example, administrative registers can be a valuable source of age-disaggregated data, particularly from beneficiaries of various government schemes, such as non-contributory pensions, healthcare, disability benefits, and other services. In fact, older people are more likely to access government services, making these registers a potentially rich source of information on this age group.

However, it is important to note that administrative data sources cannot fully replace sample surveys, as they may still exclude some vulnerable groups who, despite being eligible, might not access these services or be recorded in these registers. To further enhance data availability, countries should consider linking census data with administrative sources. This linkage would provide a more comprehensive and nuanced dataset, combining the broad coverage of censuses with the detailed information available in administrative registers, thereby allowing for finer age-disaggregation and a better understanding of the population's needs. Additionally, we recommend referring to the March 2020 UNECE report on Recommendations for Measuring Older Populations in Institutions, which provides more detailed guidance on the use of administrative data to measure the demographic characteristics of people living in institutions, as well as the limitations of this approach (12).

b. Standardise data collection

Improved harmonisation of definitions and categories in relevant data collection instruments is essential for effective age disaggregation. For example, it is important to clearly define the start of older age in surveys and to address challenges associated with collecting data from older persons, particularly those who may be difficult to reach or who might have proxies speaking on their behalf, such as when they are living with younger family members or in institutions.

In-depth studies on sampling methods, data collection strategies, and estimation techniques are required to capture heterogeneous subgroups of older persons more accurately in surveys, such as older women. This can help to ensure that all older persons, including those in the most vulnerable or marginalised groups, are adequately represented in the data.

Whenever precise guidance is unavailable for specific indicators, the UN's Recommendations on Ageing-related Statistics (2017) provide valuable recommendations, such as the use of 5-year age bands between 55 and 85 years, to ensure consistency and comparability across data sets.

c. Revise and enhance surveys

While in many countries, most data will continue to be collected from existing sample surveys, such as the Demographic and Health Surveys, Social and Labour Surveys, and Living Standards Surveys, revisions and modifications are necessary to ensure that older age groups are more regularly and adequately represented. Current survey methodologies tend to focus more on younger age groups, leading to the under-representation of older persons in the data collected.

To address this imbalance, it is essential to take action to collect data that were previously overlooked and to increase coverage through more inclusive reporting. This may involve revising existing survey instruments and introducing new ones that specifically target older populations. Additionally, it is recommended that the UN Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGH) explicitly consider in their work how technical issues within household surveys can be addressed to improve the coverage and granularity of statistics on older persons. Such efforts will ensure that the needs and experiences of older persons are better captured and reflected in the data, thereby supporting more effective policy-making.

d. Invest in national statistical systems

Delivering effective policies on leaving no one behind needs greater investment in data. To reduce data gaps and improve the quality of the disaggregated data, national statistical systems require increased investment and broad capacity. According to the UNDESA (2018), only 56 of the 102 countries with statistical plans have managed to raise enough funding to implement those plans. Increasing the financial capacity in national statistical systems is an essential and basic step to generate relevant policy evidence. Systems for reporting data also require investment; clear and transparent national SDG websites with indicators organised according to the UN SDG numbering and naming system are recommended, with datasets and metadata provided for each indicator. This system should also be fully adopted by international organisations when reporting global SDG indicator data for maximum transparency and data accessibility.

e. Foster global collaboration

The proactive engagement of international organisations and many governments with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has created a favourable environment for establishing robust systems to implement the SDGs. It is recommended that international organisations, development partners, and all nations committed to SDG implementation collaborate more closely, with a clear understanding of common principles and policy frameworks. This approach will facilitate mutual learning, enhance the capacity to compare data internationally, and promote the harmonisation of practices for collecting and analysing age-disaggregated and ageing-related data.

International statistical agencies play a pivotal role in the custodianship and reporting of SDG indicators. Their technical expertise is crucial in strengthening the capacities of national agencies to produce reliable age-disaggregated data. A good practice example is the WHO's Global Tuberculosis Program, which requires all countries to submit age-disaggregated data using a standardised online form to a central repository. Additionally, there is a need to improve data pipelines and notification systems between centralised agencies to ensure that disaggregated data is made available to all reporting systems whenever possible.

The data gap analysis indicates that, despite significant progress, ageing-related data is still missing in many countries. Thus, the global and national statistics communities must intensify their efforts to address several key challenges:

1. **Inclusivity in data collection:** It is essential to include all population subgroups and produce data that go beyond national averages. Data should reflect the diverse living conditions of all groups, including older persons, to ensure that policy priorities address the multidimensional aspects of their lives. While the case study countries have made strides in this area, further policy development and implementation based on inclusivity are required to reduce vulnerabilities and leverage the opportunities presented by an ageing population.

2. **Investment in data analytics:** National research institutes should collaborate with international organisations and development partners to improve data analytics. Existing data offer valuable opportunities for evidence-based analyses that can inform the integration of ageing policies into the broader implementation of the 2030 Agenda. International collaboration not only enhances data quality but also provides avenues for mutual learning and better harmonisation across countries.

As we conclude this report, it is important to highlight that an ageing population presents not only challenges but also significant opportunities. By focusing on inclusivity, collaboration, and the use of data-driven insights, countries can harness the potential of older persons to contribute to sustainable development. The global commitment to these principles will be key to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

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Annex A: Identification of indicators and gaps for tracking SDGs that are relevant to older persons

I. Health and care

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment	15/05/2023	160	0
3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations	28/03/2024	172	172
	3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population	15/12/2023	194	194
	3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population	28/03/2024	109	0
	3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population	01/04/2021	194	194 (under 5s only)
	3.3.5 Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	28/03/2024	194	194 (children/adults only)

I. Health and care (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing	3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	01/03/2021	128	70
	3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate	01/05/2021	128	70
3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders	24/05/2024	30	0
	3.5.2 Alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol	31/03/2023	190	190
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services	15/12/2023	194	0
	3.8.2 Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income	15/05/2023	194	Not reported
3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	3.a.1 Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older	06/12/2021	Not reported	Not reported

I. Health and care (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	3.b.1 Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme	15/12/2023	Not reported	Not reported
	3.b.3 Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis	01/01/2019	55	0

Global availability of data for each indicator as reported by the most recently updated metadata for that indicator in the UN SDG Metadata repository.

II. Financial security

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day	1.1.1 Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status and geographic location (urban/rural)	31/03/2023	160	0
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	31/03/2023	150	0
	1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	28/03/2024	84	12
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	28/03/2024	130+	0
1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services	18/07/2023	143	0

II. Financial security (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	15/05/2023	140	0
2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status	15/05/2023	Not reported	0
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure	15/05/2023	Not reported	0

II. Financial security (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex	15/12/2023	136	0
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities	28/03/2024	130	Not reported
	8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	28/03/2024	218 or 128 (13th or 19th ICLS series)	218 or 128 (13th or 19th ICLS series)
8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all	8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	31/03/2023	162	162

II. Financial security (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	31/03/2023	160	0

III. Violence, abuse and safety

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure	01/08/2021	116	0
1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	1.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	15/12/2023	Not reported	0
3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries	01/03/2021	128	70

III. Violence, abuse and safety (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	31/03/2022	161	161
	5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	09/07/2017	100	100
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	8.8.1 Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status	28/03/2024	96	0
10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	10.3.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law	03/12/2018	Not reported	Not reported

III. Violence, abuse and safety (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months	01/03/2021	712 cities	Not reported
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	31/03/2023	0	0
	16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months	28/03/2024	0	0
	16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live	31/03/2023	0	0
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	28/03/2024	0	0

Global availability of data for each indicator as reported by the most recently updated metadata for that indicator in the UN SDG Metadata repository.

IV. Participation

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	31/03/2023	154	154
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill	24/05/2024	90+	Not reported
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	31/03/2022	Not reported	Not reported
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	31/03/2022	45	45

IV. Participation (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location	31/03/2023	92	92
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	31/03/2023	80+	Not reported
10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	10.3.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law	03/12/2018	Not reported	Not reported
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	01/03/2021	712 cities	Not reported
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services	31/03/2023	Not reported	Not reported

IV. Participation (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group	31/03/2023	Not reported	Not reported
17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet	31/03/2023	200	Not reported

Global availability of data for each indicator as reported by the most recently updated metadata for that indicator in the UN SDG Metadata repository.

V. Enabling environment

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	20/12/2021	138	Not reported
6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	6.2.1 Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water	20/12/2021	120	Not reported
7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity	28/03/2024	Not reported	0
	7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology	28/03/2024	171	0
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing	20/12/2021	38 OECD countries and 320+ cities	Not reported

V. Enabling environment (continued)

SDG targets	SDG indicators	Date of metadata	Number of countries with available metadata	Number of countries reporting age-disaggregated data
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	01/09/2021	Not reported	Not reported
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	01/03/2021	712 cities	Not reported
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services	31/03/2023	Not reported	Not reported

Annex B: Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to measure the quality and availability of data in each of the 56 SDG indicators that were identified across the five policy priorities for ageing and older persons.

The set of 20 questions that was asked with regards to each indicator is presented below.

Questionnaire to measure the availability and quality of available data to inform policy priorities and indicators for ageing and older persons

No.	Description	Response categories	Comments
1	Is data available for reporting?	1 = Yes 2 = No	If no, skip to Q19 and Q20 before moving to the next policy indicator
2	Is this indicator included in the current SDG reporting?	1 = Yes 2 = No	Questions 2-18 were only answered by respondents who had data available
3	Level of Priority	1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	
4	Is data collected consistently within the country?	1 = Yes 2 = No	
5	Is data harmonized in comparison with other countries or in alignment with some international standards?	1 = Yes 2 = No	
6	Is data available for older persons (age 60+)?	1 = Yes 2 = No	
7	Is data available for age groups of older adults, e.g. 60-64, 65-69, etc)	1 = Yes 2 = No	
8	Sex Breakdown	1 = Yes 2 = No	

No.	Description	Response categories	Comments
9	Who produces the data?	1 = National statistical office 2 = Relevant ministry 3 = International organisation 4 = Other	
10	Name of the data source	1 = National statistical office 2 = Relevant ministry 3 = International organisation 4 = Other	
11	Type of data source	1 = Survey 2 = Administrative registers 3 = Census 4 = Other	Where two or more sources were mentioned, the source that was mentioned first was considered the primary source
12	Number of respondents (e.g. sample size for the survey data)		Specify the applicable units, e.g. households, population, women
13	Latest Year (in bracket, previous years since 2000)		
14	Online (add site link if available)		Link to where the data is available to view or download
15	Tabulation		
16	Link(s) to all documentation for survey/data source		
17	Further information (if applicable)		
18	Other remarks		
19	Are there any plans for collecting this data in the future?	1 = Yes 2 = No	This question is only relevant if you have responded 'NO' to Q.1
20	What could possibly be the new data source for this indicator in your country?		This question is only relevant if you have responded 'NO' to Q.1

This was accompanied by the following set of questions:

1. **How do you currently collect data on age in your country?**
   a. Survey data on age
   b. Survey data on date of birth
   c. Administrative data on age
   d. Administrative data on date of birth

2. **Do you currently have a standard approach to collecting data on age in your country? For example, think about multiple government departments collecting data on age in the same way.**

3. **(If yes to question 2) Are you aware of being harmonized with any other countries?**

4. **Do you currently output your data on age in a harmonized way (age bands etc.)? For example, think about multiple government departments or organizations presenting data on age in the same way.**

5. **How do you define:**
   a. Young person or youth?
   b. Infant?
   c. Child?
   d. Adolescent?
   e. Working age?
   f. Old age?
   g. Elderly?
   h. Senior?
   i. State pension age (if applicable)?
   j. Retirement age

6. **Which of the following variables do you currently and consistently disaggregate data by?**
   a. Age
   b. Gender
   c. Education
   d. Employment
   e. Relationship status
   f. Health status or disability
   g. Living situation, for example intergenerational households
   h. Urban or rural locality
   i. Income
   j. Wealth
   k. Other, please specify

7. **Are there any barriers you can foresee to you adopting a harmonized way of collecting data on ageing and older people?**

8. **Do you foresee any future needs you may have for this work?**

9. **What platforms do you currently use when you want information or guidance?**

10. **What aspects would you need on a good practice sharing platform? Think about aspects such as where you would need it, what functionality you would need, and what access you have in your country.**

Annex C: The distribution of the 56 SDG indicators across the five policy priority areas

I. Health and care

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
2 ZERO HUNGER	2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	2.1.1: Prevalence of undernourishment	Prevalence of undernourishment, by age
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	3.3: By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	3.3.1: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations	Number of HIV infected older people population
		3.3.2: Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population	Tuberculosis incidence in older people population
		3.3.3: Malaria incidence per 1,000 population	Malaria incidence in older people population
		3.3.4: Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population	Hepatitis B incidence in older people population
		3.3.5: Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	Number of older people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases

I. Health and care (continued)

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	3.4: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	3.4.1: Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease, by age
		3.4.2: Suicide mortality rate	Suicide mortality rate of older population
	3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	3.5.1: Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders	Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorder, by age
		3.5.2: Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol	Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol, by age
	3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	3.8.1: Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)	Coverage of essential health services, by age
		3.8.2: Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income	Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income, by age

I. Health and care (continued)
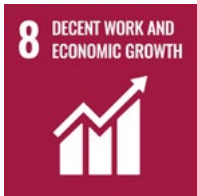
SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	3.a: Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	3.a.1: Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older	Prevalence of current tobacco use among older people
	3.b: Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	3.b.1: Proportion of the population with access to affordable medicines and vaccines on a sustainable basis	Proportion of older population with access to affordable medicines and vaccines on a sustainable basis
		3.b.3: Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis	This indicator reflects on the quality of healthcare facilities

II. Financial security

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
1 NO POVERTY	1.1: By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day	1.1.1: Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)	Proportion of older population below the international poverty line
	1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	1.2.1: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	Proportion of older population living below the national poverty line
		1.2.2: Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	Proportion of older men and women living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
	1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	1.3.1: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	Proportion of older population covered by social protection floors/systems
	1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	1.4.1: Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services	Proportion of older population living in households with access to basic services

II. Financial security (continued)

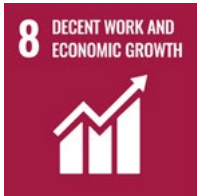| SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
2 ZERO HUNGER	2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	2.1.2: Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the older population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)
	2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	2.3.2: Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status	This reflects on the livelihood of older persons
5 GENDER EQUALITY	5.a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	5.a.1: (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure	Proportion of older population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by type of tenure

II. Financial security (continued)

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	Proportion of older population in informal employment (non-agriculture employment)
	8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	8.5.1: Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities	Average hourly earnings of older female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities
		8.5.2: Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	This reflects on the labour market activity status of older population
	8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all	8.10.2: Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Proportion of older persons with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	10.2.1: Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities	Proportion of older people living below 50 per cent of median income

III. Violence, abuse and safety

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
1 NO POVERTY	1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	1.4.2: Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure	Proportion of older population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure
	1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	1.5.1: Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people	Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster by age
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	3.6: By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	3.6.1: Death rate due to road traffic injuries	Death rate of older population due to road traffic injuries

III. Violence, abuse and safety (continued)

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
5 GENDER EQUALITY	5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	Proportion of ever-partnered older women subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence
		5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	Proportion of older women subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months by place of occurrence
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	8.8.1: Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	Frequency rates of older population in fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	10.3.1: Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed within the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law	Proportion of the older population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed within the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

III. Violence, abuse and safety (continued)

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.2: Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months	Proportion of older persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	Number of victims of intentional homicide by sex and age
		16.1.3: Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Proportion of older persons subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months
		16.1.4: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live	Proportion of older persons that feel safe walking alone around the area they live
	16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	16.3.1: Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms by age

IV. Participation

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	4.3.1: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	Participation rate of older adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
	4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	4.4.1: Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill	Proportion of older adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
	4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	4.5.1: Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	Educational attainment by sex, age, disability and population group
	4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	4.6.1: Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	Percentage of older population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex
5 GENDER EQUALITY	5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	5.4.1: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location	Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

IV. Participation (continued)

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
5 GENDER EQUALITY	5.b: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b.1: Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	Proportion of older individuals who own a mobile telephone
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	10.3.1: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law	This reflects on the violation of rights of older persons
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.1: Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Public space accessibility is an important prerequisite of participation
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	16.6.2: Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services	Public services are an important part of satisfaction of needs and aspirations of older persons
	16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	16.7.2: Proportion of older population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group	Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

IV. Participation (continued)

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	17.8: Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	17.8.1: Proportion of individuals using the Internet	Proportion of older individuals using the Internet

V. Enabling environment

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	Proportion of older population using safely managed drinking water services
	6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	6.2.1: Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water	Proportion of older population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	7.1: By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	7.1.1: Proportion of population with access to electricity	Proportion of older population with access to electricity
		7.1.2: Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology	Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	11.1.1: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing	Proportion of urban older population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
	11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	11.2.1: Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

V. Enabling environment (continued)

SDG goal	SDG target	Priority indicators from the SDG meta data framework	Relevance to older persons (aged 60 years and older)
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.1: Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Public space accessibility is an important prerequisite of participation
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	16.6.2: Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services	Public services are an important part of satisfaction of needs and aspirations of older persons

Annex D: Age groups used for older adults in the reporting of SDG indicator data

This information was gathered from publicly accessible SDG reports and data sources cited by countries in their survey responses, though additional data may exist nationally that is not publicly available.

Country	Indicators with accessible data for persons aged 60+ years	Oldest age groups reported by each surveyed country
Armenia	7	• 65+ for 4 indicators • 18-66 years for 1 indicator • 60-74 years for 2 indicators
Brazil	12	• 60+ for 6 indicators • 65+ for 3 indicators • 70+ for 1 indicator (10-year bands) • 80+ for 2 indicators (one 5-year band, one 10-year band)
Chile	11	• 60+ for 4 indicators • 65+ for 4 indicators • 56-65 years for 2 indicators • 70+ for 1 indicator
Hungary	7	• 60+ for 6 indicators • 60-64 years for 1 indicator
Lithuania	8	• 60+ for 1 indicator • 65+ for 6 indicators • 80+ for 1 indicator (10-year bands)
Mauritius	2	• 60+ for 1 indicator • 65+ for 1 indicator
Mexico	8	• 65+ for 7 indicators • 85+ for 1 indicator (5-year bands)
Mongolia	2	• 65+ for 1 indicator • 70+ for 1 indicator (5-year bands)
South Korea	8	• 65+ for 4 indicators • 70+ for 3 indicators (10-year bands) • 80+ for 1 indicator (10-year bands)

Country	Indicators with accessible data for persons aged 60+ years	Oldest age groups reported by each surveyed country
Sri Lanka	3	• 60+ for 1 indicator • 65+ for 2 indicators
Türkiye	9	• 60+ for 2 indicators • 65+ for 4 indicators • 65-74 years for 1 indicator • 75+ for 2 indicators
Uganda	3	• 60+ for 3 indicators • 65+ for 3 indicators
United Kingdom	27	• 60+ for 1 indicator • 65+ for 9 indicators • 75+ for 10 indicators • 85+ for 5 indicators (5-year bands) • 10-year bands for 2 indicators (oldest age not stated)

Annex E: The story so far

1 The foundations are laid
Pre 2015

Demand for evidence based data and statistics on older persons has been called for since the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2002. Various initiatives, including the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-Related Statistics, continued to document and call attention to these gaps over the subsequent years.

2 The Sustainable Development Goals create new opportunities
2015

The adoption of the SDGs in 2015 and the pledge to Leave No One Behind stimulated a global conversation about how progress could be measured. Space opened up to talk about the significant gaps in ageing statistics and age-disaggregated data and the need for concrete solutions.

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DFID brings people together around data disaggregation and ageing
February – August 2016

Recognising the significant issues, DFID launched an Open Policy Making Initiative on age disaggregation across the life course. This culminated in a conference with CSO partners, representatives of UN agencies and USAID where the idea of a city group was first proposed. DFID & CSO participants continued to work together to consider how to drive forward this important agenda – which lead to DFID's development of its Data Disaggregation Action Plan with a commitment to work towards a city group on age and ageing data.

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4 Widening the circle
2016

Throughout remainder of 2016, DFID and HelpAge explored the City Group option and worked to build support for the idea of a UN city group with a wider group of agencies. Several partners came on board, including UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO.

5 UK Office for National Statistics comes on board at the World Data Forum
15 – 18 January 2017

At the first World Data Forum in Cape Town, the core group – then ONS, DFID, HelpAge, UN Women and UNDP – convened a meeting with various country statistical offices and representatives of other agencies and held bilateral discussions to bring statistical offices on board. Following the World Data Forum the United Kingdom Office for National Statistics (ONS) offered to lead the proposed City Group and several statistical offices joined.

6 A City group first raised at the 48th Session of United Nations Statistical Commission
7 – 10 March 2017

At the Statistical Commission in 2017, the City Group was first proposed by ONS and the Commission agreed that it could be added to the agenda of the 2018 Statistical Commission.

7 Preparations start for UN Statistical Commission 2018
Summer 2017

Throughout 2017 the core group grew and began meeting regularly to prepare for the 49th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission and planning a seminar in Winchester.

8 The Winchester Seminar brings everyone together
22 – 24 August 2017

The informal core group held a first meeting as the 'Proposed Titchfield Group' in the UK in August 2017 to discuss the scope of the group's work and decide on the important elements of the report and proposal that the UK would present to the Statistical Commission in March 2018.

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9 The City Group is agreed at the 49th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission
6 – 9 March 2018

ONS presented the report on ageing related statistics and age-disaggregated data to the Commission, including a proposal to establish the Titchfield Group. The proposal was accepted by the Commission with strong support and no opposition.

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10 The first formal meeting takes place in Chichester
June 2018

The first formal meeting takes place to discuss and agree the work plan and ways of working.

Completion
2023