

Concept Note

SDG7: Cooperation for energy tracking

Monday, 4 March 2019

1:15 pm – 2:30 pm

Conference Room 7

Meeting organized by United Nations Statistics Division

1. Context

In September 2011, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) as a global initiative that would mobilize actions by diverse actors in support of three core objectives, which were a precursor to the eventual Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7):

1. Ensuring universal access to modern energy services
2. Doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
3. Doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

Since 2013, the Global Tracking Framework (GTF) has provided the basis for regular global reporting on the three goals of SEforAll. The Global Tracking Framework, which published reports in 2013, 2015 and 2017, was co-led by the World Bank and IEA and supported by a broad consortium of more than 20 partner agencies, which contributed in a variety of ways, including provision of data, input to chapters, peer review, public consultation, dissemination and outreach. These partner agencies included WHO, IRENA, UNSD, the five UN Regional Economic Commissions, most of the other UN agencies active in UN Energy, as well as Sustainable Energy for All itself and several other CSOs. The World Bank received financial support for the report from the ESMAP donors.

In 2018, the advent of the first SDG7 Review process prompted a re-consideration of the branding and governance arrangements of the Global Tracking Framework, with a view to bringing these more closely into line with the new SDG framework. These discussions took place among the five SDG7 Custodian Agencies (IEA, IRENA, UNSD, WB, WHO), under the auspices of the Ad Hoc Informal Working Group created by UN DESA to support the SDG7 Review, in Bangkok (February 2018) and Paris (March 2018).

2. SDG7 Alignment

The genesis of the Global Tracking Framework was under the SEforALL process, where GTF played a pivotal role in demonstrating that the energy community was well organized in terms of its statistical capacity to measure and monitor any future SDG. When the SEforALL three core objectives were agreed upon, there was uniform recognition for the need to develop a set of metrics to track achievement of the three original goals, which went on to provide the core of SDG7. When the UN Statistical Commission approved the indicators for monitoring the achievement of SDG7 targets, it granted Tier 1 status to the indicators developed through the Global Tracking Framework and recognized the constituent data-publishing

institutions – IEA, IRENA, UNSD, WB, WHO – as Custodian Agencies for SDG7, and the broader partnership as “interested parties”.

Therefore, the proposed new arrangements for “Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report” provide some continuity with earlier arrangements, while at the same time introducing significant changes that better reflect the new context and the transition from SEforALL to SDG7. Specifically, these changes include the following.

First, the relevant indicators and targets are now those pertaining to SDG7. This particularly affects renewable energy (SDG 7.2) where the SDG does not set an explicit numerical target against which to assess progress, but rather a qualitative one. It also has implications for SDG 7.1, where affordability and reliability are highlighted as key attributes of universal access to energy.

Second, the SDG7 process has defined Custodian Agencies as officially recognized data sources for tracking of SDG7. As of December 2018, these Custodian Agencies are as follows: 7.1.1 Electrification (World Bank); 7.1.2 Cooking (WHO); 7.2 Renewables (IEA, IRENA & UNSD); 7.3 Efficiency (IEA & UNSD). While all Custodian Agencies were represented in the original Global Tracking Framework consortium, their special roles were not fully reflected in the previous governance arrangements.

Third, there is a need to situate the reporting within the new UN reporting process for all SDGs to provide an integrated and coherent picture on reporting. This process implies, firstly, a shift towards an annual publication cycle, as opposed to the prior biennial cycle. It also entails a dovetailing of the timeline to produce the report with the timeline for the production of the Secretary General’s annual progress report on SDGs. Specifically, the production cycle will be arranged so that final data are available in time for the SDG February submission deadline.

Importantly, the Custodian Agencies will coordinate their efforts throughout this process so that – where co-custodianship arrangements exist (currently 7.2 and 7.3) – a single integrated set of data and accompanying story line are submitted, and these will be the same that appear in “Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report”. This arrangement enables a holistic assessment of SDG7, one that takes into consideration the internal interlinkages between targets and indicators. Such close cooperation among Custodian Agencies is highly appreciated by the UN Statistical Commission and goes beyond what has currently been achieved with respect to other SDGs.

3. The event

This side event showcases the cooperation between the five custodian agencies involved in the production of this report and highlights the latest public results. Because the data submitted in 2019 are still embargoed, these results refer to the 2018 edition.