# Integrating new data sources and data innovations for official statistics and partnerships with stakeholders

Workshop on Preparing Evidence-based Voluntary National Reviews for the 2021 High-level Political Forum

18-19 January 2021

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# Objective of this session

Identify best practices and share experiences in:

- Integrating new data sources and innovations in official statistics for SDG monitoring during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Leveraging partnerships with stakeholders to support evidence-based VNRs.

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# KEY QUESTIONS

- Are there any new data sources or data innovations used for SDG monitoring, particularly, in light of the COVID-19 situation?

- What could be the advantages for NSOs of using new data sources and innovations to report on SDG indicators?

- **How to harness data and statistics produced by non-official sources, such as data from the private sector, civil society, academia, and other research institutions, while ensuring data quality?**

# Leading the response of NSO's to the COVID-19 pandemic

- The worldwide spread of COVID-19 calls for a new kind of leadership by National Statistical Organizations.

- SDG monitoring systems cannot default to known approaches

- **"Next practices"** rather than **"best practices"**

- Success in the initial response by NSOs should be followed by continued, sustained focus on innovation, and changes and adaptations along the whole data value chain.

- For instance, there has to be a clear link between the outputs of data innovation projects and the VNR process, to ensure sustained demand from policy makers and other key stakeholders.

# COVID-19 has been a catalyst for collaboration and innovation

- Building an integrated statistical system for sustainable development in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic requires closer collaboration across providers and users of data, and within and across organizations.

- The COVID-19 pandemic is spurring data innovation at an unprecedented rate, especially in situations where resources and funding are made available to pursue data solutions that were regarded with more skepticism in the past

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# Collaborative data innovation

- Data innovation projects require multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary collaboration to:

  - Address methodological and institutional challenges

  - Process and analyze different data inputs

  - Share best practices

  - Promote experimentation and co-creation of information products

- Collaboration across organizations allows data innovation projects to draw a wide range of data assets, skills and resources.

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# Data integration Principles

- **Holistic approach**: Ensure data, methods, technology and skills are consistent, re-usable and interoperable.

- **End-result focus**: Make the envisioned output the reference starting point for the design of new statistical processes.

- **User value**: Design integrated statistical services that deliver value to end users

- **Sustainability**: Aim to maximize the long-term continuity, adaptability and growth of core statistical functions.

- **Re-use before designing new**: Re-use all existing capabilities and products before designing new ones.

- **Design new for re-use**: Design new capabilities and products to be re-used, making sure they can be easily standardized, assembled and adapted to accommodate changing demands.

- **Maximize use of existing data assets**: Leverage all currently existing data before collecting additional data; monitor and reduce respondents' burden over time.

# Data integration Principles

- **Discoverability and accessibility**: Ensure that statistical services are easily discoverable and accessible to enable sharing and re-use.

- **"Just-right" granularity**: Define statistical services at the level of granularity that is most relevant to the user needs.

- **Trust and security**: Conduct all business in a manner that builds trust and confidence in the statistical organization's ability to preserve the integrity, quality, security, and confidentiality of the data assets entrusted to it.

- **National and international partnerships**: Collaborate nationally and internationally to leverage and influence statistical and technological developments which support the sharing of statistical services.

# National ownership of data innovations for SDG monitoring

- Data innovation projects to help implement and monitor the 2030 Agenda will not survive very long without country ownership and funding.

- Decision makers in government and senior NSO officials need to be convinced that the project will help drive the national strategy for the development of statistics and other national policy agendas.

- National ownership requires local staff to have the ability and confidence to make the right choices regarding sources, technology and methods in their own needs and context.

# Partnerships and Technical expertise

- Data innovation projects need to identify and bring on board technical experts who are deeply knowledgeable of the data inputs, technologies, and methods being pursued, and with ample practical experience in their implementation in the field.

- It is particularly important to partner early on with local experts (including form UN Country Teams, World Bank, government agencies and local universities and think tanks), in order to stimulate interest in the project outcomes and learn more about country needs and priorities.

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# User engagement in data innovation projects

- It is also important to build strong ties of collaboration between technical experts developing data innovation projects and the user community.

- Representatives from key user groups need to be invited to be part of all data innovation activities from the beginning

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# Establishing trust in results of data innovation projects

- The reliability of the sources and methods involved in data innovation projects is central to their widespread acceptance and use.

- This highlights the importance of **transparent and participatory validation**:
    - Validate quality of data inputs
    - Validate methodology
    - Ensure that data production processes are reproducible by independent reviewers
    - Check for internal and external consistency of results
    - Compare pre-existing users' perceptions with project results

# Data privacy issues in data innovation projects

- Data innovation projects need to have data privacy and security protocols in place when linking records from different data sources through common identifiers of individuals, households, businesses or geographies.

- This is fundamental to avoid any reputation damage and ensure that organization that owns the project is trusted by all stakeholders, thus being able to keep the project running in the long term.

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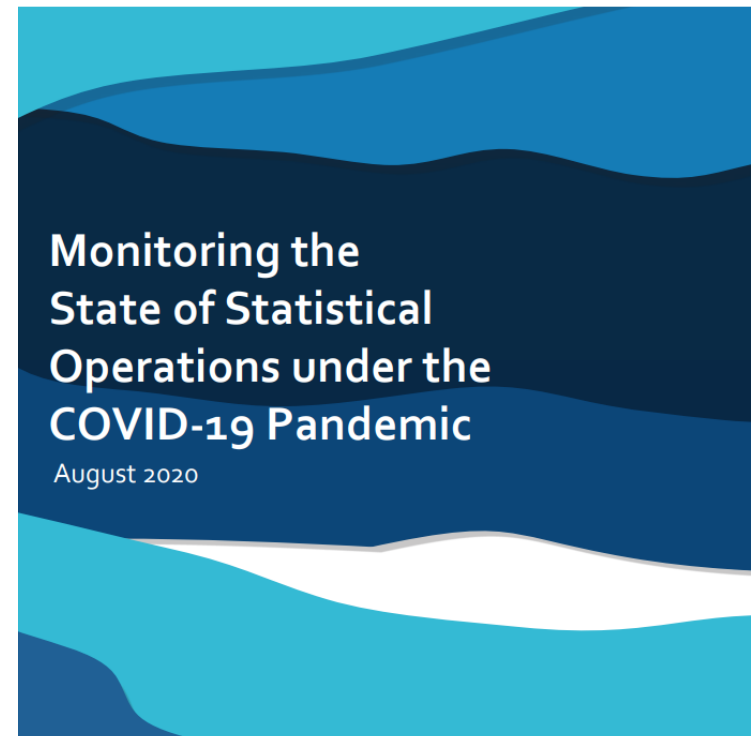Statistics

# Bottom-up data innovation

- Small, bottom-up initiatives can play an important role in a statistical organization's response to the disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Data innovation projects should prioritize and maximize the use of data sources and tools that are already under the control of the NSO and other members of the National Statistical System.

- In times of crisis, information sharing, listening and learning must take precedence, in order to be able to draw from the collective knowledge and skills of multiple stakeholders and partners

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# The Global COVID-19 survey of NSOs

- **Objective:** Provide information to the global statistical community, donors, development partners and the general public to effectively mobilize technical and financial support to statistical activities that most urgently need it.

- **Conveners:** United Nations Statistical Division and World Bank's Development Data Group, in coordination with UN Regional Commissions

- **Three waves** to date:

  5 – 17 May 2020 (response rate: 122/218)
  7 – 25 Jul 2020 (response rate: 112/195)
  23 Sep – 15 Oct 2020 (response rate: 125/195)

- **Mode**: Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI), programmed in Survey Solutions

- **Reports** disseminated by UNSD and World Bank



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**Monitoring the State of Statistical Operations under the COVID-19 Pandemic**

August 2020

Highlights from the second round of a global COVID-19 survey of National Statistical Offices

# Priorities for official statistics in the context of COVID-19 challenges

- **Mobilize resources** to support regular SDG monitoring activities affected by the pandemic and to launch and run new statistical activities to satisfy new data demands

- **Obtain access to new authoritative, reliable sources of data** to monitor the day-to-day evolution of the health crisis, to assess and monitor social, economic and environmental impact of the pandemic, and to inform recovery policies over the longer term

- **Obtain access to methodological guidance** on how the use of new data sources, methods and technologies for the collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and communication of data and statistics

- **Coordinate initiatives** that respond to the needs of national statistical systems

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# The Data for Now initiative

- Supports countries in the use of innovative sources, technologies and methods for the streamlined production and dissemination of better, more timely and disaggregated data for sustainable development.

- Is co-led by the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network

- Launched by UN Deputy-Secretary General Amina Mohammed on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, in September 2019.

- National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are the main partners in countries. Eight trailblazer countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

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Thank you!

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