



Global  
Partnership  
for Sustainable  
Development Data

## WHERE NEXT FOR SDG DATA INTEROPERABILITY?

*Introducing the practitioner's guide to joining-up data in the development sector*

### DATE AND TIME:

8:30am – 10:00am  
(including a 15-minute  
networking session at the end)  
Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019

### LOCATION:

Nelson Mandela Room,  
Ford Foundation Centre for  
Social Justice, 320 E 43<sup>rd</sup> St,  
New York, NY 10017

*Breakfast will be served*

### POINT OF CONTACT:

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for Sustainable Development  
Data (GPSDD)

## BACKGROUND

### *Interoperability and the SDGs*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 targets, 169 goals and over 230 indicators is multi-dimensional; covering socio-economic, environmental, and inequality-related issues. When the leave no one behind agenda is added to the mix, the need for complex, granular and timely data to drive policy decisions and measure progress becomes ever more pressing. In order for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved and effectively monitored, the use of non-traditional sources of data is going to have to be incorporated into statistical production methods. New sources of data including earth observation data gleaned from satellite imagery, the use of big data sets and administrative datasets held by both public and private bodies, and telecommunications data are but some of the data sources that statisticians in national statistics offices around the world must now better understand and consider how to use and integrate into their methodologies and products.

However, these opportunities can only be effectively leveraged if the data that is collected and processed is produced in formats and organised in ways that are 'interoperable' – ensuring that datasets can be integrated with one another across information systems without losing meaning. This involves multiple stakeholders agreeing to follow common principles and procedures that allow for data standardisation, comparability, and integration.

In the sustainable development field, there is an unrealised opportunity to extract far more value from the vast quantities of data that already exist – whether they be data locked in Aid Information Management Systems (AIMS), surveys, censuses, satellite images, citizen-generated data, or any other source. Investing time and resources in the development and deployment of systemic, sector-wide interoperability solutions offers us all collectively an opportunity to make far more use of the data that currently sits in sectoral and institutional silos. Interoperability solutions can simplify our ability to access, share, manipulate, and use complex data to achieve and monitor the SDGs.



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## *Interoperability and international official statistics processes*

Over the course of the past four years, the need for data interoperability in the context of the SDGs has emerged as a recurrent theme within the official statistics community. It first emerged at the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) in March 2016, during the High-Level Forum held immediately prior to the Session and focusing on the theme of [Dialogue towards the UN World Data Forum](#) in the context of planning for the UN World Data Forum (UN-WDF).

Following the UNSC, interoperability then emerged at the UN-WDF held in Cape Town, South Africa in January 2017, where it was explicitly recognised in the Forum's outcome document, the [Cape Town Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data](#) as part of the need for innovation and modernisation of national statistical systems (Strategic Area 2). It was also at the UN-WDF that the UN Statistical Division (UNSD) and Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) jointly convened an informal breakfast meeting to discuss the need for a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism to promote greater interoperability between data communities.

Following the UN-WDF, in March 2017 at the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNSC in March 2017, the issue arose during the Friday Seminar on Emerging Issues within discussions on [Open data – adding value by matching access with privacy and security](#). Furthermore, during an official [side-event](#) to the 48<sup>th</sup> Session, the [Collaborative on SDG Data Interoperability](#) (the Collaborative) was formed by UNSD and the GPSDD with the purpose of furthering interoperability objectives as laid out in the Cape Town Action Agenda.

At the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNSC in March 2018, the Commission again considered data interoperability, this time as part of the official agenda within the context of deliberations around [official statistics and open data](#). As a result of these deliberations, the Commission agreed to incorporate a review of the interlinkages between open data and official statistics within its convening of a Friends of the Chair Group on the Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics (FOC-FPOS), whose mandate also covers considerations on issues of data interoperability and whose [report](#) has been submitted as a background document to the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission.

At the same time that the FOC-FPOS has been considering issues of interoperability within the context of open data and official statistics, following a consultative process and meeting at the [Data for Development Festival](#) held in Bristol, UK in March 2018, the Collaborative focused on the production of guidance on interoperability in relation to the SDGs in particular. This guidance – in the form of [Data interoperability: A practitioner's guide to joining-up data in the development sector](#) (the Guide) – was launched to much acclaim during a formal [side-event](#) at the 2018 UN-WDF held in Dubai, UAE in October 2018.

The Guide is the Collaborative's attempt to produce guidance designed for statisticians, development professionals who manage data, and suppliers of ICT solutions with a common reference point for interoperability issues. It is designed to be a living document that will both inform and be informed by common practices in the development sector. Its contents identify and cover five cross-cutting areas, or 'dimensions', of data interoperability that capture the broad range of issues and challenges that Collaborative members have highlighted as being integral to solving in order to make data interoperable at a systemic scale within the sustainable development field:

1. Data management, governance and interoperability;
2. Canonical data and metadata models;
3. Classifications and vocabularies;
4. Standardised interfaces; and
5. Implementation of linked-data approaches.



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## SESSION OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this session include:

1. Introducing the Guide to the official statistics community;
2. Exploring *where next?* to implement interoperability standards and best practices for SDG data,
3. Collectively exploring further opportunities to collaborate in further developing the Guide

## FORMAT AND SPEAKERS

<b>Opening remarks</b>	Claire Melamed, GPSDD & Francesca Perucci, UNSD	8:30 – 8:40am
<b>Introduction to the Guide</b>	Luis Gonzalez Morales, UNSD	8:40 – 8:50am
<b>Panel discussion on the question of <i>where next for data interoperability?</i></b>	<b>Moderator:</b> Shaida Badiee, Open Data Watch  <b>Discussants:</b>  Jonathan Challener, OECD  Marie Haldorson, Statistics Sweden  Yves Jacques, UNICEF  FOC-FPOS Representative - <i>tb</i>	8:50 – 9:30am
<b>Q&amp;A with audience</b>	All	9:30 – 9:45am
<b>Networking (optional)</b>	All	9:45 – 10:00am