

SDG Indicators Framework: Lessons Learned and Future Direction

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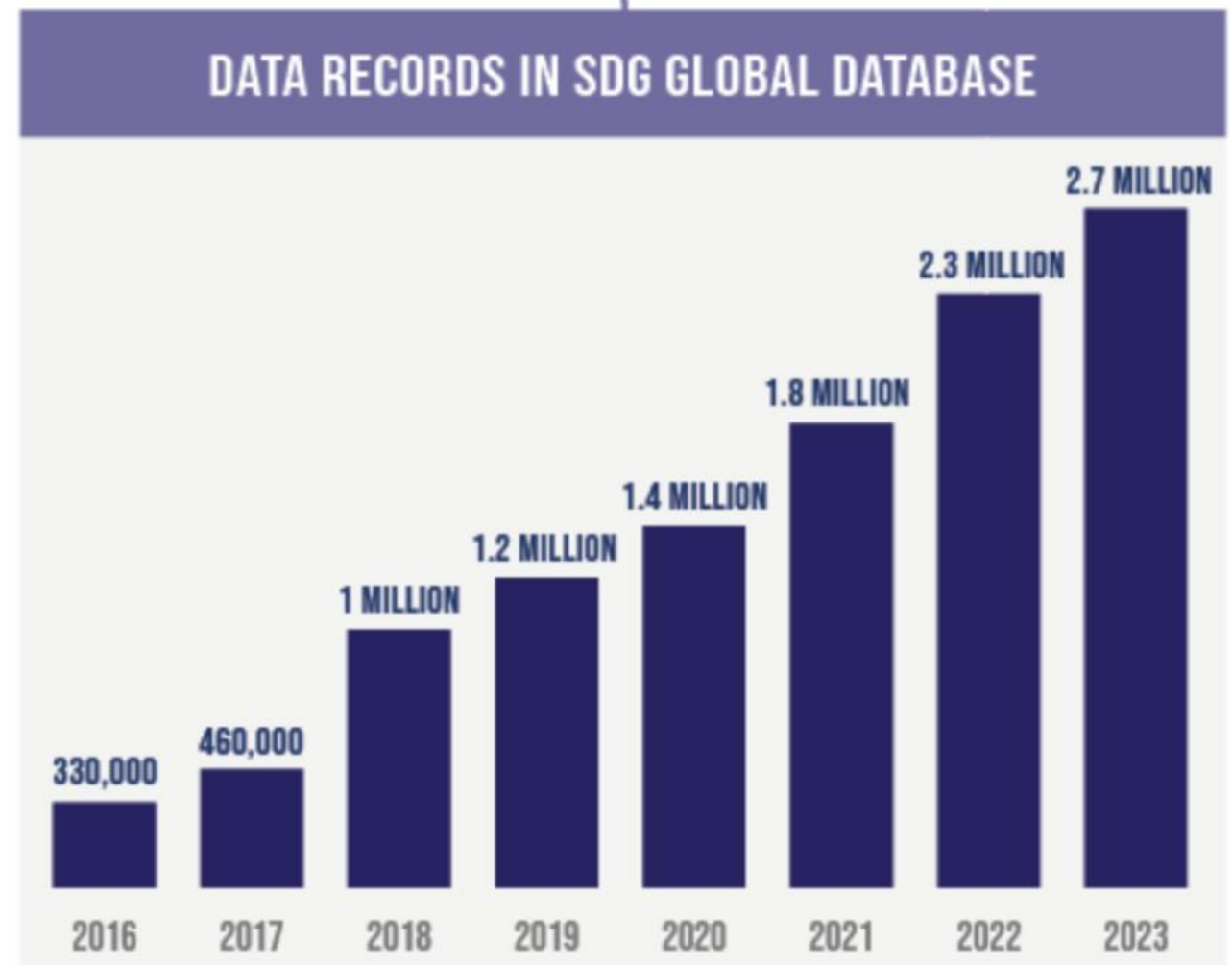
Global SDG Indicator Framework

- Mandated by the 2030 Agenda for global monitoring since 2015
- Developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (**IAEG-SDGs**)
 - statistical experts from 28 Member States
- Contains **231 unique indicators**, addressing each and every one of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by UN General Assembly in 2017
- The global indicators are **annually refined and comprehensively reviewed** by the UN Statistical Commission in 2020 and in 2025.

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

Unfolding a remarkable journey of SDG data and monitoring

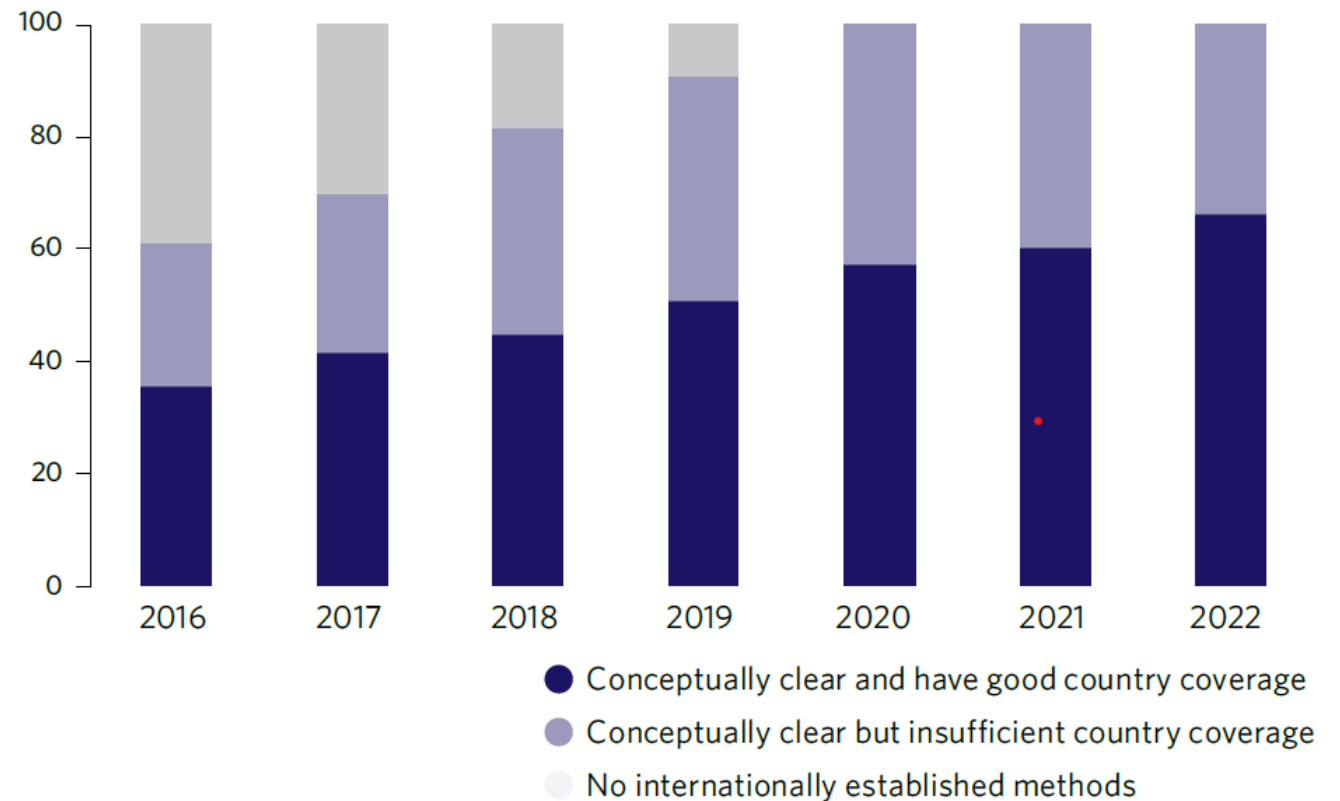
- The number of indicators included in the global SDG database has increased from 115 in 2016 to 225 in 2023.
- The number of data records in the database has increased from 330,000 in 2016 to 2.7 million as of May 2023.



Significant strides have also been made in the methodological development

- In 2016, a concerning 39% of the SDG indicators lacked internationally established methodology or standards. By 2020, the indicator framework has no tier III indicator.
- Moreover, the proportion of Tier I indicators has increased significantly from 36% in 2016 to 66% in 2022.
- SDGs offered space to develop some very politically sensitive statistics (such as south-south cooperation, illicit financial flows)

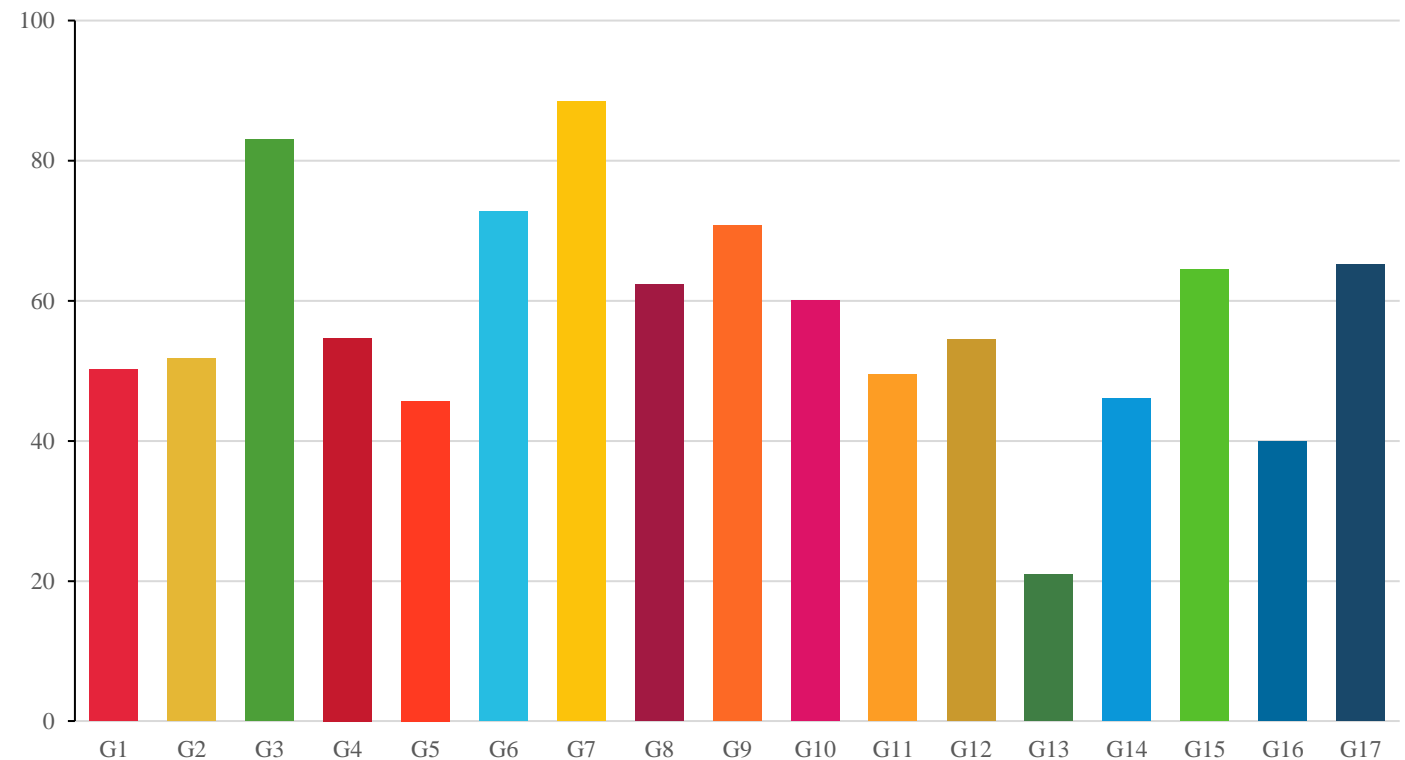
Proportion of global SDG indicators, by availability of standards and national data, 2016-2022 (percentage)



Persistent data gaps still challenge our SDG data landscape

- **Geographic coverage, timeliness, and disaggregation remain areas of concern.**
- **For several crosscutting goals such as Goal 13, Goal 5, and Goal 16, less than half of the 193 countries or areas have internationally comparable data since 2015.**

Proportion of countries or areas with available data since 2015, by Goal (percentage)



Benefits of having a global SDG indicator framework

A. Standardization of Monitoring and Reporting

- The global SDG indicator framework provides a **standardized set of indicators** that countries can use to monitor and report on progress towards the SDGs.
- This helps create a **common global language** for measuring and comparing sustainable development outcomes.
- It promotes **data harmonization, comparability, and transparency** across countries.

B. Improvement of data collection, quality and availability

- The SDG indicator framework has stimulated efforts to **improve data collection and availability**, particularly in areas where data gaps previously existed.
- It helps improve **the quality of data** because the framework provides **clear definitions and methodologies** for collecting and reporting data on the SDGs.
- It has led to increased **investments in data infrastructure, statistical capacity building, and the development of new data collection methods and technologies.**

C. Promotion of Evidence-Based Decision Making, Accountability and Transparency

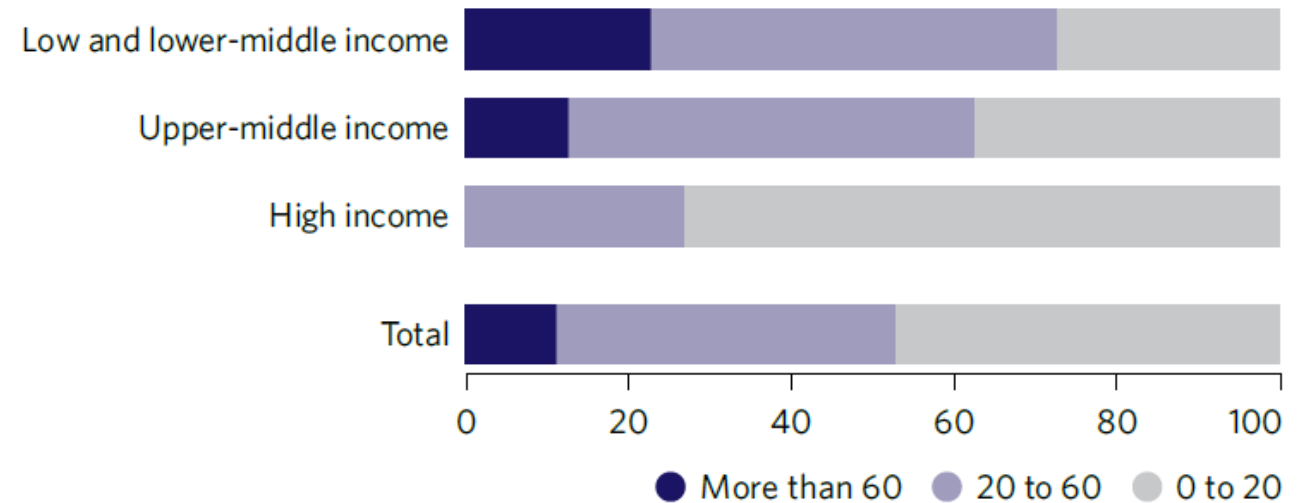
- The framework promotes **evidence-based decision making** and enables policymakers to assess the impact of policies and interventions, track progress over time, and design targeted interventions and allocated resources based on **data-driven insights**.
- The framework **enhances accountability and transparency** by enabling governments, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to track and monitor progress towards the SDGs.
- The framework has helped to **raise awareness of the SDGs** because it has made it easier for people to understand what the SDGs are and how they can be achieved.

D. Other important benefits

- National statistical offices are increasingly playing a coordination role, but challenges persist.
- The data demand for the 2030 Agenda has unleashed innovation
- Important partnerships are being established for better and more inclusive data for development.
- It promotes increased openness, accessibility and effective use of data, which have helped achieve better data impact

Investing in better data is key to supporting a rescue plan for people and the planet

Funding gap for national statistical offices' work programme, by income level, July 2021 (percentage)



Some lessons Learned and the way forward

- A. **Developing a global indicator framework presents both technical and political challenges**
- B. **Involving statisticians in setting the global development agenda is essential**
- C. **More partnerships and data innovations are needed**

- **Too many or too few indicators?**
 - 231 SDG indicators vs 60 MDG indicators
 - Complexity of the SDGs vs a critique of reductionism with 1-2 indicators per target
- **Statisticians had limited involvement in setting the 2030 Agenda**
 - Some targets pose challenges when it comes to measurability.
 - However, the statistical community rose to the challenges and successfully developed the SDG indicator framework within just eight months.
- **2025 Comprehensive Review** provides an opportunity to reflect lessons learned and can prepare for the next global development agenda.



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**Some lessons learned can be found
from the Data Story in the SDG Report:**

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023>

Thank you

 **2023**

The Sustainable Development Goals Report
Special edition

