

Joint Review of National Data Availability for SDGs¹

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1. Introduction

Following the tremendous effort by most developing countries attempting to reach their MDGs over the period between 1990 and 2015, a series of meeting and working groups led to a post-2015 development agenda encompassing seventeen goals that are contained in paragraph 51 United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015². The resulting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include most of the MDGs but go much further in comprehensiveness. Prior to that, on March 6th, 2015, at its forty-sixth session, the United Nations Statistical Commission created an Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), composed of Member States and including regional and international agencies as observers.

From a wide ranging consultation, the IAEG-SDGs group 17 SDGs that can be decomposed into 169 targets and a longer list of indicators. A first list of 304 indicators was published in March 2015³. Since then, the 2nd IAEG-SDGs meeting held in Bangkok in November 4-7, 2015 led to a new and streamlined list of 224 global indicators⁴. In order to help the Government of Mongolia in computing those indicators the Ulaanbaatar-based UNEP and UNDP offices sponsored a team of consultants to examine the feasibility of computing those indicators in the case of Mongolia. The work, performed in close collaboration with the Mongolian National Statistical Office (NSO) staff, involve of review of each global indicators and then determined whether they applied to Mongolia, and if so, whether they are already available or not.

It should be noted that those indicators are not definitive yet. Actually, a significant proportion of indicators are not consensual for the time being but work is continuing on trying to reach a consensus on the definition of those indicators. Ultimately the IAEG-SDGs will provide a proposal of a global indicator framework (and associated global and universal indicators) for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session in March 2016.

The UN has also encouraged government to set their own national targets and indicators to take into account national particularities. In order to stimulate the Governmental exercise, we are proposing a series of indicators deem important in the context of Mongolia. Those indicators are proposal and additional ones are likely to come up in the forthcoming months, either from NSO, Development Partners or the Government of Mongolia.

We provided technical expertise to the Research Unit of the Mongolian Parliament by providing a list of possible SDG indicators that could be incorporated in the long-term vision of policy document of the country. The Research Unit has developed the long-term vision of policy document and submitted to the Parliament for approval in December 2015.

² Much information on the whole process can be found on the IAEG-SDG website; <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/>

³ ["Technical report by the Bureau of the United Nations Statistical Commission \(UNSC\) on the process of the development of an indicator framework for the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda - working draft"](#) (PDF). March 2015.

⁴ "Results of the list of indicators reviewed at the second IAEG-SDG meeting" that can be found at <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-02/Outcomes/Agenda%20Item%204%20-%20Review%20of%20proposed%20indicators%20-%2020%20Nov%202015.pdf>

The next section looks at the different database use for our exercise, while section 3 analyze the work done so far. Section 4 looks at how we can localize the indicators while we complete the report by proposing what should be the next tasks to be performed in order to operationalize those SDG indicators.

The main output of this consultancy is a large spreadsheet where a series of key information is provided for each indicator. The current report should be as a companion to this spreadsheet.

2. Databases Used

The SDGs cover 17 different goals covering a great number of socio-economic and natural dimensions that can be measured either at micro level (e.g. health or education) or at macro level (e.g. Inequality, Climate or Infrastructure). Given the wide variety of indicators it would not be a surprise to assert that the computation of those SDG indicators demands data from many sources, some easily available while other less so.

Broadly speaking, the different indicators could either come micro sources such as household survey or population census, or from administrative database such as compilation from different ministries. Among indicators that should be computed from household surveys or population censuses, we found out that some indicators were already computed, some could be easily computed from existing databases and finally, some more indicators could be estimated by adding questions to forthcoming household surveys or population censuses.

From our consultancy, we found out that the most useful micro-level databases have been:

- Social Indicator Sample Survey (SISS) 2013-14
- Labour Force Survey
- Household Socio-Economic Survey (HSES)
- Population and Housing Census

The other sources of data have been a series of report produced by different ministries or organization link to the Government of Mongolia. Table 1 gives the list of the different reports used.

Table 1: List of Documents Used

Code	References
1	2014 Human Development Statistical Tables

2	Mongolia Poverty Profile 2014 (in Mongolian only)
3	Mongolia Poverty Map 2011, NSO
4	Definitive Excel files for the English version of the forthcoming SISS report
5	Mongolian Statistical Yearbook 2014, NSO
6	Agricultural Census Report, 2011, NSO
7	Center for Health Development (2014), Health Indicators 2014,
8	Special compilation from Mental National Health Center of the Ministry of Health and Sport
9	Police department - Administrative report 2014
10	Special compilation from Ministry of Health
11	Social Indicators' sample Survey report, NSO, 2015 (Tables in English)
12	Report of Time Use Survey, NSO, 2011
13	2010 Population and Housing Census national report, NSO, (English version)
14	Thematic census report: Economic activity, NSO, 2011
15	Report on Labour Force Survey, NSO, 2014. (in Mongolian only)
16	Report of the UB Statistics Division, UBSD, 2014.
17	Statistical aggregated data on hazardous and natural disasters, NEMA, 2015
18	Living environment in Ulaanbaatar city, UBSD, 2014. http://ubstat.mn/Report
19	September 2015 crime statistical report, NSO, 2015
20	Statistical yearbook, NSO, 2014
21	Trade Policy Review, WTO, 2014

3. Goals, Targets and Global Indicators

For each of the 17 goals, Table 2 presents the number of global indicators according to different criteria. In the latest document produced by the IAEG-SDGs group (in November 2015), 224 indicators are defined across all goals. However, the numbers of indicators vary a lot across goals. While Health, Justice and Global Development has more than 20 indicators each, climate has only 5 indicators and energy 6.

Out of 224 indicators, 161 had been coded “green” by the IAEG-SDGs group which means that a consensus had been reached between its members while the remaining 63 “grey” coded indicators are still to be validated by the group. The non-validated indicators are found in almost all goals although the macro goals (climate, justice, forest etc.) seem to be less consensual. The IAEG-SDGs group is currently running a global consultation (mid-December 2015) in order to achieve a consensus as soon as possible. However, we do not expect that all indicators would be consensual before the March 2016 meeting when all those indicators would be validated. Some of those global indicators are clearly not relevant to Mongolia and it is without surprise that most of the not applicable indicators are related to the Ocean goals. Once we removed those 13 non-applicable indicators, we have 211 indicators we consider relevant to Mongolia.

A close examination of those 211 indicators clearly shows that in practice many indicators have to be split into sub-indicators. For example, indicator 9.1.2 concerning “Passenger and freight volumes (by air, road and rail)” has been split into six different indicators: passenger by air, passenger by road and passenger by rail, plus freight by respectively air, road and rail. Once that exercise is done for each indicator, the total number of indicators to be calculated becomes 257.

Table 2: Number of Global and Mongolian SDG Indicators, by Goal

Goal Code	Goal Name	Number of Global SDGs Indicators				Not Applicable to Mongolia	Number of Global SDG Indicators Assessed	Number of Mongolian SDG Indicators Proposed
		Total (March 2015)	Total (Nov. 2015)	Out of which:				
				Green	Grey			
1	Poverty	10	9	6	3	0	9	25
2	Hunger	12	15	10	5	0	15	15
3	Health	22	24	21	3	2	22	26
4	Education	15	11	10	1	0	11	15
5	Gender	18	14	14	0	1	13	17
6	Water	10	10	7	3	0	10	11
7	Energy	10	6	5	1	0	6	6
8	Economic	22	15	12	3	0	15	15
9	Infrastructure	16	12	11	1	0	12	14
10	Inequality	17	12	9	3	0	12	12
11	Urban	20	12	7	5	0	12	19
12	Consumption	21	12	7	5	0	12	12
13	Climate	8	5	1	4	1	4	8
14	Ocean	20	10	5	5	7	3	3
15	Forest	24	15	8	7	0	15	18
16	Justice	21	21	13	8	0	21	22
17	Global Dev.	38	21	15	6	2	19	19
Total		304	224	161	63	13	211	257

Based on the information available to us during the consultancy, it became clear immediately that not all indicators were created equal. Some were already calculated and available in official reports while some other indicators were just puzzling. In reviewing each of the 257 indicators found to be applicable to Mongolia, we created a typology according to the easiness of computation. We defined 8 category status as follow:

- 1. Indicators readily available:** Those indicators (45) were considered well defined as well as being already computed. For example, the “prevalence of undernourishment” (indicator 2.1.1) has already been computed from the latest SISS survey and it is about to be officially published.
- 2. Indicators available after little effort:** the information needed to compute those indicators (64) were found although the actual computation has not been done yet. For example, “the proportion of the population with access to electricity” (indicator 1.4.1h) could easily be computed from the latest HSES survey as a relevant question had been asked in that survey.
- 3. Indicator available after more effort:** similarly to the previous category, we consider that the information needed to compute those indicators (28) is available although the actual computation would be much more demanding.

For example, the “Share of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all season road” (indicator 9.1.1) could be computed by combining information from the population census and road maps using GIS techniques. That could be done with existing information but this is a non-trivial task.

4. **Indicator available if data collection changed:** for indicators (72) falling in that category, we could not find any existing information and therefore further effort in data collection would be needed before those indicators could be computed. For example, “Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public service” (indicator 16.6.2) could be easily be computed once a relevant question had been added in a forthcoming survey or in a completely new survey assimilated to opinion poll.
5. **Indicator non applicable in the case of Mongolia:** since the list of global indicators would be shared by most developing countries from all continents it is unsurprising that some of those global indicators are clearly not relevant in the case of non-tropical country such Mongolia. An obvious example is “Malaria incident cases per 1,000 person years” (indicator 3.3.3). That was the case of 13 indicators.
6. **Indicator coming from external institution:** A few indicators (5) are synthetic index developed by different international organization that would be centrally computed for all countries. An example is the “Percentage of attributes of 13 core capacities that have been attained at a specific point in time” (indicator 3.c.2) that is being computing by WHO.
7. **Not clear/Don't know:** the wording of quite a few indicators (21) was unclear and puzzling to us. In such case, further investigation would be needed to better understand and defined more precisely those indicators. An example of such indicator is the “Proportion of population with access to affordable essential medicines on a sustainable basis” (indicator 3.b.1) were the concepts of *access*, *essential*, and *sustainability* needs to be properly defined.
8. **Grey standby:** and finally, a significant number of indicators (22) had been coded “grey” by the IAEG-SDGs group, meaning they were not consensual yet. In many cases, although not definitively adopted yet we would be able to compute them if they are made official. However, some of them are simply not properly defined enough to be investigated. An example of the latter case is “Percentage of 15-year old students enrolled in secondary school demonstrating at least a fixed level of knowledge across a selection of topics in environmental science and geoscience” (indicator 4.7.1).

Table 3 presents a breakdown of the 257 indicators by goal and status. Although only 45 indicators were readily available, a further 64 can be computed very easily. In particular, some 20 poverty indicators could be computed in less than a day as raw survey data needed to compute them are already available. A more serious issue concerns the fourth category, indicators for which new data collection effort would be needed. In particular, almost Forest and Justice indicators would require serious data collection effort.

Table 3: Status of Indicators, by Goal

Goal code	Goal name	Status of Indicators						
		Readily available	Available after little effort	Available after more effort	Available if data collection changed	From external institution	Not clear/ Don't know	Grey on standby
1	Poverty	3	20	1	0	0	0	2
2	Hunger	3	3	2	0	1	3	3
3	Health	10	9	1	0	1	2	3
4	Education	1	4	6	3	0	0	1
5	Gender	4	1	6	6	0	0	0
6	Water	2	0	0	8	0	0	0
7	Energy	0	4	0	0	0	1	1
8	Economic	3	7	1	0	0	1	3
9	Infrastructure	4	4	3	1	0	1	1
10	Inequality	1	2	2	0	0	3	4
11	Urban	7	3	1	6	0	2	0
12	Consumption	0	0	1	1	1	5	4
13	Climate	2	3	0	3	0	0	0
14	Ocean	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
15	Forest	0	0	0	18	0	0	0
16	Justice	1	2	0	18	0	1	0
17	Global Dev.	4	1	4	6	2	2	0
Total GSDG		45	64	28	72	5	21	22

4. Mongolian SDG Indicators

As we said earlier, the IAEG-SDGs group encourage countries to localized their indicators by estimating country-specific indicators reflecting local context. In the case of Mongolia, we are proposing some 21 additional indicators. Those indicators and their rational can be found in Annex 1. With those proposed indicators, we now have 278 indicators although they are subject to revision after March 2016.

It should be noted that those 21 localized indicators should be seen as proposal subject to changes in the coming months. Furthermore, we strongly encourage the different Development Partners, Ministries and NSO to come up with comments on these 21 indicators as well to propose others.

Soum Level indicators

From some informal discussion with NSO managers we understand there is a willingness to collect as many indicators as possible as soum level, or at least at aimag level. While computing statistically valid indicators at aimag level is possible from the HSES, SSIS or the LF surveys given their decent size sample, computing those indicators at soum level is probably more realistic is done within the census data collection. We suggest that NSO along with its Development Partners defined more

precisely the indicators that would be really useful to have at some level. And then amend the census questionnaire in order to achieve those objectives.

5. Proposed Next Stages

Although this initial analysis on the feasibility of computing the numerous SDG indicators has been particularly enlightening, it should be considered a first exploratory stage. In particular, we noted that an important proportion of the indicators proposed by the IAEG-SDG group is still to be refined and then green coded, meaning a consensus has to be found among the group members.

In other words, the actual list of indicators is far from being definitive. Officially no consensus yet has been achieved for 28% of global indicators, i.e. 63 out of 224 indicators were coded “grey”. Even among the so-called consensual global indicators (the green ones) a few are still to be defined.

An open consultation led by the IAEG-SDG group on the proposed SDG Indicators coded 'grey' has just been completed (December 9-15). It would hopefully solve many indicator issues although we believe the final list of indicators would not be ready before the final meeting next March.

More formally, we are proposing the following tasks for the coming months in order to complete an exhaustive feasibility study as well as putting those results in practice:

1. Set up an institution or assign an institution which will be responsible for finalizing SDG indicator framework, monitoring and reporting against targets. That institution needs to work in close collaboration with line ministries and agencies on updating this “preliminary” assessment;
2. Revise the current assessment after March 2016 once the definite list of SDG indicators is approved by the UNSC;
3. Develop methodological guidelines in three separate booklets: Social, economic and environment. Those guidelines would detail very precisely how each indicator was computed. This is particularly important to ensure that the different indicators would still be computed the same way in 2030 as they were initially done in 2015. Otherwise overtime comparison would be deceptive;
4. Define baseline (2015) figures for all indicators that can be computed in a timely manner (the first three categories in Table 3). For the 72 indicators for which new data collection is needed, formal proposition would be made;
5. Carry out research studies to define realistic target for each indicator to be achieved by 2030;
6. Provide training for the relevant ministries and NSO in computing SDG indicators now and for the future;
7. A Website where all the relevant information could be found, including all results at all levels, documentation etc. should be established.

Annex 1: The list of proposed new indicators* that are specific to Mongolia and to be included in Mongolian SDG indicator framework

#	Goal code	Goal name	Indicator name	Evidence of including in SDG of Mongolia
1	2	Hunger	Food security**....	At least one indicator should be developed on this topic.
2	3	Health	The gap in life expectancy at birth between women and men**.	The gap in life expectancy at birth between women and men is on the rise from 7.3 years in 2010 to 9.6 years in 2013 and 2014. Men' health is becoming an issue in Mongolia. This indicator should be estimated at regional, aimag and UB level.
3	3	Health	Number of new hepatitis C infections per 10,000 population in a given year	Hepatitis C infection is the one of the leading causes of mortality that lead to cancer and infectious diseases in Mongolia.
4	3	Health	Abortion rate by agegroup, urban/rural divide and aimags**	SISS 2013 indicates that abortion rate is higher in urban areas than that in rural ones. For instance, abortion rate among teenagers (aged 15-19) is 2.7 times higher in urban areas than that in rural ones. It is on the rise among teenagers aged 15-19 and women aged 20-29.
5	3	Health	The prevalence of STIs among youth aged 15-34 byage, urban/ruraland aimag.	The total number of syphilis incidence has increased from 4268 in 2011 to 6890 in 2014. Many of these incidences account for youth. The rising prevalence of STIs is one of the major health issues among youth in Mongolia.
6	4	Education	Net enrollment rate in primary, secondary and tertiary education, by gender	Although Mongolia is one of the well-performing countries with regard to this indicator, it is valuable to keep it in SDG
7	4	Education	Gross enrollment rate in primary, secondary and tertiary education, be gender	Although Mongolia is one of the well-performing countries with regard to this indicator, it is valuable to keep it in SDG
8	4	Education	Percentage of the allocation of lesson hours in science-related subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology.	National HDR 2015 indicates that this percentage has decreased by 11-40 percent in the new curriculum.
9	4	Education	Average number of students per class in	Classes are crowded in rural areas and in ger areas of

			primary, lower and upper secondary schools; at aimag and soum level, by region, by urban/rural.	Ulaanbaatar.
10	4	Education	Gross enrolment rate in education of children/youth with disabilities aged 18-29**	It has been documented that school enrolments were significantly lower among 18 to 29-year-olds with disabilities.
11	4	Education	Percentage of people with disabilities who have higher education	The results of the 2010 population census shows that only 8 percent of the people with disabilities have higher education that is about 56 percentage point lower than that the rest of the population.
12	4	Education	Percentage of people with disabilities who are illiterate by age, sex, urban/rural, soum and aimag.	The latest population census indicates that almost half of the people with disabilities were illiterate.
13	4	Education	Pupil-Teacher ratio by region, aimag and soum**	This ratio is low in rural soums while it is high in urban areas and Ulaanbaatar.
14	5	Gender	Percentage of households headed by women**	The number of divorces has risen by 46.1 percent in 2014 as opposed to 2012 (NSO 2104). Hence, it is more likely that women headed of households may increase as a result of rising number of divorces.
15	5	Gender	Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.	Mongolia has a problem of gender imbalance in tertiary education although it is decreasing. For instance, as of 2012 the girls to boys ratio was 1.40.
16	8	Economic growth and employment	Employment rate of youth (aged 15-34) with disabilities by age, sex, urban/rural and aimag.	Youth with disabilities have limited opportunities for employment, especially in rural areas, and most of them are self-employed (NHDR 2015).
17	8	Economic growth and employment	Percentage of youth who graduated from Technical and Vocational Education and who were employed.	Mongolia lacks of people who have acquired technical and vocational skills. On the other side, there is mismatch between demand and supply of jobs that require technical and vocational skills.
18	8	Economic	Unemployment rate of youth by age (15-24; 25-	Youth comprise nearly 60 percent of all unemployed (NHDR

		growth and employment	30; 30-34), sex, aimag and soum	2015).
19	9	Infrastructure	The length of improved road at the national level**	
20	11	Urban development	Growth rate of migrants who moved in to Ulaanbaatar during the last 12 months**	
21	15	Forest	Damaged landscape as a result of both large-scale mining industries and artisanal and small scale mining (ASSM) companies' activities**.	A recent Government inspection reported that of 22,752 hectares of mined land, 4,256 hectares has been damaged by mining activities and abandoned with no rehabilitation.

Note: * This list contains new indicators that NOT been included in Excel sheet. The Excel sheet also proposed new indicators as a result of split or rephrasing of existing Global SDG indicators. Please have a close look at the NOTE of the Excel sheet where we proposed new indicators.

** These indicators are fully or partly included in NSO's list of socio-economic indicators (bounded in 48 groups) that are reflected in the Statistical Law.