Summary

The Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (ESCWA) in collaboration with the United Nation Statistics Division (UNSD), organized the Third Regional Workshop on the Use of SDMX in SDG Reporting to improve countries skills in mapping and converting SDG data and metadata, raise awareness on latest developments and promote the implementation of SDMX at the national level.

The workshop, a third in a series of ESCWA/UNSD joint workshops, aims to familiarize participants with techniques of mapping and converting SDG data as per international standards, respecting a content constraint for disaggregation adhering to official SDGs framework, using conversion tools including web-based ones, and process of customizing a national DSD. The training encouraged interactive dialogue, sharing of national experiences in SDMX including challenges, queries, and concerns.
1. Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) is designed to enable automation of data & metadata exchange between two or more entities and within same entity, this process normalizing of data exchange has improved the efficiency of sharing both statistical data and metadata across statistical organizations and entities, providing an integrated approach and enabling interoperable implementation of exchanging, reporting, and disseminating statistical data and metadata within and between systems.

2. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) and the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) jointly organized the 3rd virtual Workshop on the Use of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX)-Advanced Level I, from 15 to 17 November 2021– Advanced level I – on Zoom platform, as part of a series of capacity building workshops on SDMX. The workshop is in response to the resolution (A/RES/70/1) on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development in September 2015, to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable, and disaggregated data by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. It also responds to Member States’ request to the 14th Statistical Committee for ESCWA to hold advanced training on SDMX emphasizing the importance of SDMX

3. The three-day workshop was attended by 68 statisticians and IT specialists (32 male 36 female), representatives of 17 national statistical offices. The presentations were made available in both Arabic and English and there was simultaneous interpretation to the Arabic and English.

4. The objectives of the workshop are to improve countries skills in mapping and converting SDG data, raise awareness on latest developments and promote the implementation of SDMX at the national level.

5. The Workshop agenda covered the following items:
   • Overview of the latest revision of the SDG Data Structure Definition (DSD), Dataflows, and Content Constraints.
   • Demonstration of web based SDMX conversion tools.
   • Overview of the SDG Metadata Structure Definition (MSD), and Metadata Template.
   • Metadata Exchange using SDG Lab.
   • Customizing the SDG DSD for national use.
6. Six countries successfully submitted the pre-requisite homework to correctly map and convert 15% of national SDG data adhering to content constraints before the workshop. The deadline was extended for remaining countries to present their homework after the workshop and to enable them to continue their learning in upcoming workshops and received the certificate for participating.

7. The following recommendations and the way forward were reached to shape future work and plan for upcoming workshops:

- ESCWA and UNSD to jointly organize a hands-on workshop to practice mapping and conversion of data and metadata to the SDG lab and make use of other tools designed to facilitate the work of national statistical systems and reduce reporting burden in exchange of SDG data and metadata.
- Countries are requested to complete their pre-requisite homework and use metadata template for selected national indicators (15%). UNSD to upload completed submissions to SDG lab and create country accounts to review the discrepancies.
- ESCWA will follow-up with countries on completing pre-requisite and metadata homework and help through bilateral consultation or sub-regional crash courses, where needed, and to notify NSOs of latest releases and updates.

8. Workshop Evaluation: Among 68 participants, 24 participants provided their feedback. Overall, 40% of the participants rated the workshop as excellent, and 48% as very good. In terms of workshop quality, 33% of the respondents found the workshop quality as excellent, and 54% gave a very good rating. Participants were asked if the workshop objectives were met, 46% of the participants gave an excellent rating and 42% gave a very good rating. In terms of presenters’ inputs 33% of respondents rated the presentations as excellent and 50% rated the presentations as very good. Finally, 46% of the participants rated the logistics and organization of the workshop as excellent, and 46% as very good.


10. Further useful resources and links to past workshops:

- Guidelines for the Global DSD for SDGs
- Guidelines for the Customization of the Global DSD
- SDG Dataflows and Content Constraints
- SDMX Global Registry
- SDG Global Country Dataflow
- SDG Global Harmonized Dataflow
- SDMX Converter
- SDMX Online Converter
- SDG Data Matrix v 1.6
- Metadata Online Converter
- SDGs Metadata Template
- Tutorial & Materials
- SDMX Crash Course
- Workshop I
- Workshop II

11. Group photo