



# **“Monitoring the SDGs in Tajikistan”**

**Final report**

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## I. BACKGROUND

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, the 193 member States of the United Nations unanimously adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 associated targets, which build on the Millennium Development Goals and seek to complete what they did not achieve, particularly in reaching the most vulnerable. Member States also committed to the implementation of the goals within a timeframe of 15 years, endorsing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes that it has been accepted by all countries and is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities (para 5). It notes that indicators are being developed to assist with the follow up and review processes, and that quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress (para 48). The Agenda speaks frequently on the need to intensify efforts to strengthen statistical capacities and national data systems in developing countries. It expressly calls for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity building in member States to develop national and global baselines where they do not yet exist (para 57).

For the SDGs to have the greatest effect, it is vital that indicator data are available to the widest possible audience and that they are reliable, timely, and accessible. This will facilitate evidence-based decision making on the part of governments, researchers, international organizations, civil society, and other end users. However, the repeated emphasis on disaggregated data will certainly pose difficulties for even the most advanced statistical systems. It will undoubtedly increase the level of complexity for developing countries, many of which face challenges to produce even basic statistics which meet international standards. In addition, sometimes the data is produced and available, but users are unaware of it, or it is not presented in a manner that can be easily understood by non-experts. Finally, many National Statistical Systems are not well coordinated with line ministries such as Health and Education.

Between 2010 and 2015, UNSD implemented a DFID-funded project "Improving the collation, availability, and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs." The project worked in 11 countries: Burundi, Cambodia, Ghana, Lao, Liberia, Morocco, Rwanda, State of Palestine, Thailand, Uganda, and Viet Nam, and successfully completed in March 2015. The project established or improved national online repositories for development indicators in all project countries; helped the countries collect new and improve the quality of existing metadata; developed a central Web site, CountryData (<http://data.un.org/countryData>) where national development indicators from the countries were compared with official MDG indicators; established automated data exchange with all project countries using the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) standard; facilitated the improvement of cooperation within National Statistical Systems.

In 2015, UNSD launched a Development Account 9th tranche project (DA-9 Project) "Enhancing national statistical capacity to measure, monitor, assess and report on progress on achieving post-2015 goals and targets for sustainable development," whose implementation concluded in June 2018. Working in 6 countries (Cambodia, the Philippines, Viet Nam in the Asian region; and Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda in the African region), the project assisted the countries in assessing their capacities and developing national strategies for the implementation of SDGs monitoring.

In this context, UNSD has initiated a project to address the issues of availability, accessibility, and usage of development indicators. Building on the experience of the two projects, the current project aims to:

- a. Improve capacity of project countries to support SDGs monitoring by means of:
  - i. Engaging with producers and key users of SDG Indicators;
  - ii. Assessing statistical capacities and assisting in the development of national strategies for SDGs monitoring implementation;
  - iii. Improving coordination of National Statistical Systems around SDG Indicators.
- b. Increase availability and accessibility of SDG Indicators:
  - i. At international level through the SDGs Data and Visualization Platform;
  - ii. At national level through National SDGs Repositories.

The overall objective of the project is to make Sustainable Development Goals data open and available to the widest possible audience. The project will enable greater access to national indicators through national repositories and to international SDG indicators through the SDGs Data and Visualization Platform. Data exchange and improved dissemination, as well as improved metadata, will make SDG Indicators more accessible. Improved cooperation at national level will lead to better coherence of the data in the selected countries. Better availability, accessibility, and quality of SDG indicator data will promote the use of statistics in evidence-based decision making.

Specific objectives of the project in Tajikistan are as follows:

1. Strengthen the collaboration of agencies of the National Statistical System;
2. Compile data and metadata for SDG indicators and publish it on a national reporting platform to thereafter establish electronic data exchange with the global SDG platform.
3. Identify and engage key users of SDG indicators, and address their needs.

In meeting these objectives, the project aims to improve the availability, accessibility, and coherence of SDG indicators, and facilitate their used in evidence-based decision making.

## **II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This progress report covers a 20-month period and outlines activities implemented during the period from February 2020 to December 2021. Initiation of project activities was launched following the signing of the “UN Agency to UN Agency Contribution Agreement” (Annex 1) in February 2020 between UNDP and UNSD which set the ground for the commencement of subsequent preparatory works, specifically development of a Project Initiation Plan (Annex 2) and formalization of UNDP’s cooperation with the Agency on Statistics (AoS) through a Letter of Standard Agreement (Annex 3). Under the signed LoA, the AoS was committed to ensure the implementation of project activities within the frame of the “Monitoring SDGs in Tajikistan” project and meeting the objectives including but not limited to the below:

1. Develop a strategy for SDG monitoring and establish formal data sharing agreements with agencies of the National Statistical System.
2. Develop Tajikistan’s National Dissemination and Reporting Platform.
3. Engage key users of SDG indicators and Tajikistan’s National Dissemination and Reporting Platform.
4. Compile metadata for Sustainable Development Goals Indicators.

To achieve the above listed objectives, the AoS had to ensure (i) close interaction with UNDP and, as necessary, with other UN agencies in the implementation process; (ii) close coordination and involvement of national partners, ministries and agencies, development partners, civil society organizations; and (iii) engage a wide range of stakeholders in the discussion process in the framework of the interagency technical working group.

Following the announcement of COVID-19 outbreak in Tajikistan, social distancing, self-isolation, telecommuting and shift to digital means were introduced both by UN Country Team in Tajikistan and government agencies. Given the new circumstances, UNDP jointly with UNSD was forced to adapt to the new realities and find an adequate solution to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 to ensure effective implementation of project activities by the Agency on Statistics. During the implementation period it was agreed to organize regular meetings with participation of representatives from UNSD, UNDP and AoS to closely monitor the implementation of project activities and to agree on the strategic priorities for the use of resources in support of the “Monitoring the SDGs in Tajikistan” project.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the request received from the AoS, UNSD approved to re-program 6,500 USD towards support for the Agency in (i) establishment of a dedicated project implementation unit responsible for financial and technical oversight of the project, (ii) procurement of wi-fi modems and internet packages for ICT connectivity and (iii) support AoS in research which contributed to UNDP’s “Assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on lives, livelihoods and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Tajikistan” (<https://bit.ly/3t3CggY>).

Detailed information on the project results implemented during the period from February 2020 to December 2021 is described in the next section.

### **III. PROJECT RESULTS**

Key results achieved by the project:

- Interdepartmental technical working group established under Agency of Statistics consisting of representatives from 21 GoT agencies.
- A National Strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals for the period up to 2030 developed
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs for 2020-2023.
- The Guide on metadata and national indicators developed.
- Draft interdepartmental agreement developed with list of indicators identified by level and government agencies
- AoS signed interdepartmental agreements with 4 (four) agencies and ministries: the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- Development of the National Platform for the Dissemination of Data on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Geographical Portal for the dissemination of other statistical data
- The draft Strategy of the AoS on user engagement prepared in-house



- Survey on users, their needs and information delivery channels implemented
- The Strategy for interaction with users for the periods 2021-2023 prepared
- Development of Open SDG platform for Tajikistan
- Compendium of national SDG indicator data and metadata published in three languages
- Contribution to UNDP Assessment on COVID19 impact on lives, livelihoods and MSMEs
- Production and broadcast of 3 video materials on SDG monitoring
- Overall 125 people (including 34 women) improved their knowledge on SDG monitoring strategy, SDG data and metadata, classification of indicators, user engagement, etc (government partners, media, civil society, academia, the private sector, etc.)

Output 1. Develop a strategy for SDG monitoring and establish formal data sharing agreements with agencies of the National Statistical System.

*Activity Result 1.1. Establishment of an interdepartmental technical working group on SDGs under the auspices of the interdepartmental statistical working group on improving statistical accounting.*

In 2019, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chairman of the National Development Council (NDC) of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, requested the GoT to take necessary measures to complete the classification of key indicators of the SDGs for certain sectors of the national economy. The list of nationalized indicators had to be submitted to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan (MEDT). Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan was responsible for collection of data jointly with the GoT ministries and agencies for a following consolidation and reporting to MEDT. In this context, MEDT jointly with AoS agreed to establish an interdepartmental working group on the nationalization of the SDGs. In accordance with the directive of the GoT an interdepartmental technical working group was established (Annex 4) consisting of representatives from 21 GoT agencies. It should be also mentioned that since 2017 the AoS have a functional internal working group responsible for development of SDG indicators (Annex 5) chaired by Director of the Agency and comprised of 10 departments under AoS.

During the reporting period, the interdepartmental technical working group made efforts to complete classification of the first phase of the SDGs in accordance with international standards (*Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3*) and latest data received from the GoT agencies (*Level 1 and Level 2*). It should be mentioned that during the reporting period, the GoT reshuffled some of the staff who were members of the established interdepartmental working group. Each respective agency provided a new staff and new composition was circulated by AoS among agencies.

*Activity Result 1.2. Development of a strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs, including draft national SDG indicator framework, on the basis of existing national strategies and programs.*

In October 2020, under direct supervision of the first Deputy Director of AoS, the Agency engaged three consultants for development of a strategy for the compilation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs, including development of the draft national SDG indicator framework, on

the basis of existing national strategies and programs. During the reporting period, the following work was completed:

- A table has been prepared by Indicator Type and Description;
- A table has been prepared for all SDG indicators: SDG Indicator, Indicator Level and responsible GoT agency for verification;
- Criteria / definitions of the classification level prepared;
- Grouping of indicators by level prepared;
- Current statistical capacity to compile global SDG indicators;
- Current statistical capacity of the AoS and other administrative data to compile SDGs by target;
- Prepared SDG indicators for continuous monitoring by level and by GoT Agencies for verification in accordance with the national SDG Report;
- Prepared Objectives of the guide describing the contained metadata
- Information about the organization responsible for compiling the indicator
- Data sources and collection methods;
- Calculation method and other methodological bases;
- Data availability and disaggregation;
- Comparability with international data / standards;
- Metadata prepared for all global SDG indicators (from 1.1.1 to 17.18.2);
- The classifications of levels have been studied and updated (as of 17 July 2020) with corresponding changes made to the indicators which are marked in red in the Guide on metadata and national indicators (Annex 6).

During November-December 2020, AoS prepared: (i) the draft Strategy (Annex 7) for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals for the period up to 2030 in Russian language and (ii) an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy (Annex 8) for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs for 2020-2023.

Conducted work was presented during the seminar held on 25 November 2020 with representatives of key ministries and departments of the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as development partners. The final version of the Strategy was discussed with key ministries and agencies and proposed for approval of the MoJ. Currently the strategy is under final consideration of the MoJ.

During the seminar convened for the technical interdepartmental working group a presentation was made for the representative of the GoT agencies to (i) review the first draft of the Strategy to Metadata for Global SDG Indicators with the metadata for each objective and indicators discussed in detail. The list of departments by the number of assigned indicators were described in the Strategy.

Developed Guide on metadata and national indicators will be continuously updated throughout the SDG implementation period (until 2030) in order to reflect new methodological and technological developments, specifically (i) in accordance with the updates introduced by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), (ii) based on changes approved by the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) and (iii) on best practices at the institutional level, which can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring. The Guide metadata for monitoring the global SDGs and national indicators is enclosed to this report.



### Activity Result 1.3. Organization of a two-day seminar to discuss and finalize draft SDG monitoring Strategy

Two-day seminar envisaged within the frame of the project was held during 25-26 November 2020 with participation of 27 members of the technical interdepartmental working group from key GoT agencies as well as development partners. It is important to note that engagement of development partners in the discussion, in particularly UN Agencies, were possible due to UNDP's assistance which requested the support of UN Resident Coordinators Office (UN RCO) in Tajikistan to coordinate the process for involvement of representatives from UN Country Team. Due to COVID-19 preventative measures, UNDP organized a Zoom meeting to ensure participation of UN Agencies and contribution to the discussion on the Strategy for monitoring the SDGs.

During the seminar, the AoS presented the progress on implementation of activities on Development of a strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs, including draft national SDG indicator framework (on the basis of existing national strategies and programs reflected under the Activity Result 1.2) and covered the following issues:

1. Short overview of the "Monitoring the SDGs in Tajikistan" project.
2. The draft SDG Monitoring Strategy.
3. Key aspects taken into account during the development of the draft Strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs in Tajikistan.
4. Overview of the Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs in Tajikistan.

During the seminar (agenda in Annex 9), the Agency of Statistics presented the Strategy for preparation of data and metadata for global and national SDGs and indicators of the National Development Strategy up to the period of 2030 (NDS-2030) . Participants got acquainted with the presentation on the progress for development of the Guideline on preparation of metadata for global SDG indicators and the guidelines for the preparation of metadata on national indicators for NDS-2030.

As a result of the conducted two-day the seminar, the following tasks were assigned to the interdepartmental working group:

- Review the draft Strategy and the draft Action and provide feedback to AoS.
- Provide translation of the draft Strategy from Russian into English and Tajik and the draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals for 2020-2023 by 4 December 2020.
- Send the draft version of the Russian version of the draft Strategy for the preparation of indicators and their metadata for monitoring the SDGs for the period up to 2030 and the draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for the Monitoring Strategy 2020 -2023 to government agencies and development partners.
- Members of the technical interdepartmental working group must submit their comments to the Secretariat of the Working Group on by 4 December 2020.
- Within three working days, responsible ministries and agencies must submit to the Secretariat of the Working Group the names of the responsible persons, indicating the legal address, e-mail and position held, along with list of indicators applicable to their respective agencies.

- The Secretariat of the Working Group was tasked to develop a corresponding protocol/minutes and submit to UNDP (Annex 10).

On 27 November 2020, the AoS circulated the draft Strategy and the Action Plan to GoT agencies and development partners for comments and feedback. Several comments were received from stakeholders, including National Bank of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. Received comments were reflected in the final draft version of the Strategy. The AoS also analyzed the new trends in methodology for development of SDG indicators following which reviewed documents were translated into Tajik language.

The Agency submitted the application to the Ministry of Justice for review and registration of the Strategy. The Strategy is under consideration of the Ministry of Justice. According to AoS the delay with response is linked with staff turnover in the MoJ. AoS has approached MoJ in January 2022, however no response received by the date. The final draft version is attached to the report (Annex).

*Activity Result 1.4. Organization of seminar on coordination of SDG data and metadata exchange with the ministries and departments of the technical working group on SDGs and discussion of the specification of the national reporting platform*

On 27 November 2020, the AoS organized a seminar on coordination of SDG data and metadata exchange with the ministries and departments of the technical working group on SDGs and discussion of the specification of the national reporting platform (28 people took part, including 10 women). The seminar was attended by representatives of the technical interdepartmental working group and representatives of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. The seminar was organized in a hybrid format with a number of participants connecting via Zoom platform.

The following issues were discussed during the seminar:

- Tools and methods for producing and disseminating SDG indicators and researching the relevance of the indicators (focused on communication tools such as national platform and online user questionnaire) (Zoom).
- Draft Technical Specification of the National Data Dissemination Platform (Zoom).
- Draft interdepartmental agreement on data exchange.
- Discussion of the draft strategy and guidelines / plans for the implementation of further actions for further development / approval of documents and their actual implementation.

During the seminar, AoS presented the Agency's plan for implementation of a platform for the dissemination of SDG indicators, discussed the specifications for establishment of the national platform. Additionally, attention was made to online questionnaires for users, distribution of indicators by ministries and agencies and the draft interdepartmental agreement on data exchange. As part of the outcomes of the seminar and in accordance with the feedback received from participants and partners, the following goals and objectives were set for follow-up:

1. To take note of the information on the means and methods of compilation and dissemination of information on the SDGs.

2. To approve the draft specification for the development of a national platform for the dissemination of SDG data, and send the updated version to UNSD and UNDP no later than 30 November 2020.
3. Instruct the secretariat of the working group to expand the range of users to fill out the questionnaire "Determining user needs for the SDGs", in particular to involve government agencies, private companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), of media representatives, international organizations (English version), providing the necessary information regarding the survey and the ability to complete the survey by 1 December 2020.
4. State Institution "Main Computing Center" under AoS must complete the processing of "User needs with regard to monitoring the SDGs" survey results by 10 December 2020 and submit to the secretariat to the working group for inclusion in the Strategy for the preparation of indicators and metadata for monitoring the SDGs.
5. Approve the draft interdepartmental agreement on the exchange of data on the SDGs.
6. Instruct the secretariat of the interdepartmental technical working group on SDGs to complete the following tasks with the support of engaged technical expertise:
  - revise the distribution of indicators by ministries and departments and approve (in writing) at the heads of departments level.
  - by 10 December 2020 introduce appropriate revisions in the previously signed agreements with the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank
  - by 15 December 2020 implement (on a pilot basis) interdepartmental data exchange based on signed agreements for 3 ministries and departments (it is planned to sign and implement with the following departments: Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ministry of Agriculture, State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy).
  - by 20 December 2020 submit the final version for signing to ministries and departments.

The Project Implementation Group was instructed to consider the possibilities of carrying out the following activities:

- On 4 December 2020 – organize a round table with users on the issue of consideration of the Draft strategy of interaction with users (participants: members of the working group, media representatives, NGOs, international organizations), a conference is foreseen on the system of on-line discussion with development partners, NGOs, mass media) (paragraph 3.3 of the Project implementation plan). More than 20 mass media representatives took part in the workshop. After the workshop participants increased their knowledge on SDG targets and indicators, on the basic aspects of metadata and importance of data collection process and data quality.
- On 10 December 2020 - conduct a training seminar on statistical literacy in the context of the SDGs (participants: members of the working group, media representatives, NGOs) (paragraph 3.4 of the project implementation plan).
- During 14-17 December 2020 – conduct training workshops for representatives of the National Statistical System to build capacity to produce SDG data and metadata from administrative sources and to ensure the use of a consistent classification system in combination with administrative data sources to support SDG monitoring.

### Activity 1.5 Improvement of the dissemination and exchange of official statistical information, in coordination with ministries and departments

To carry out the implementation of the planned activity, the AoS engaged two consultants whose responsibilities included development of a draft interdepartmental agreement on the exchange and dissemination of data and metadata.

During the reporting period, the following activities were completed:

- Reviewed and grouped SDG indicators considering the availability of data on national indicators;
- Breakdown of collection, calculation and provision of data for SDG indicators from ministries and agencies;
- Defined a number of indicators to be filled in by a specific ministry/agency;
- Defined a number of indicators to be filled in and provided by several ministries / agencies;
- Prepared a draft Interdepartmental Agreement between the Statistical Agency and the relevant ministries and departments;
- An analysis was prepared for SDG indicators: existing gaps, challenges in developing national indicator methodology, identification of responsible agencies were identified;
- Situation overview on key national indicators;
- Harmonized statistical information resources developed by departmental statistics;
- Draft of the interdepartmental agreement between the Agency on Statistics and the Ministry of Economy and Trade on the exchange and dissemination of SDG data and metadata has been prepared.

Draft interdepartmental agreement (Annex 11) with list of indicators identified by level and government agencies is enclosed to this report. The 9<sup>th</sup> draft of the agreement between the AoS and key ministries and agencies determines responsible agencies for provision of data for reporting on 10 global indicators. The Agency requested (via official communication) provision of data for reporting on the global SDG indicators for the period of 2015 – 2020 with a deadline set for this exercise 30 April 2021. The relevant data was provided by the ministries and agencies. However, some agencies provided data with delay due to additional clarification from AoS on reporting format.

In 2021 AoS signed interdepartmental agreements with 4 (four) agencies and ministries: the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mol). The draft agreement was also sent to the MEDT, SCICPM, Ministry of justice, Committee for environmental protection and Ministry of Energy and water resources. However, ministries have not provided responses by the date. The AoS approached to ministries several times, however an official response has not received. AoS will continue contact ministries on the issue and will provide additional clarification if needed. According to the AoS staff the discussion between AoS and ministries to be conducted in March 2022.

### Activity 1.6. Piloting of data and metadata exchange with 3-5 ministries and agencies

During the workshop on 29-30 June 2021 AoS conducted exchange of data between ministries and agencies and AoS.



Representatives of ministries and agencies participated in the workshop held on June 29, 2021. During the workshop AoS tested the data exchange process based on usual excel forms. The data was entered into the format and collected in summary tables.

The next step was to pilot the data in the national dissemination platform. During a workshop held by the agency on October 26, 2021 the platform was introduced to stakeholders. Representatives of ministries and agencies were able to try the use of the platform for data exchange, and a step-by-step training on the use of the platform was held. The piloting of the data was successful, during the process some system errors were identified, which were corrected taking into account the comments and recommendations of users.

Based on the developed National dissemination SDG platform the data exchange is currently in process.

Activity 1.7. Organization of a roundtable to discuss the results of the SDG data and metadata exchange pilot with ministries and departments, supported by consultants

On 29 June 2021, the Agency on Statistics held a round table on the results of testing the exchange of data and metadata between relevant ministries and departments. The workshop, was attended by staff of the Agency for Statistics and representatives of ministries and departments, including: Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Agriculture, Committee on Women and Family Affairs, State Committee on Investments and State Property Management, Committee on Emergency Situations and Civil Defence, Committee for Architecture and Construction, Agency for State Financial Control and Anti-Corruption, National Bank, Ombudsman Office and Public Association “League of Women Lawyers” , MoF, and the Liaison Service (35 participants, including 11 women).

The main objective of the roundtable was to identify gaps in data collection process related to SDG indicators and national indicators. Methodology of data collection was also discussed and it was agreed that the AoS will conduct working sessions among representatives of ministries and agencies. 40 participants took part in the discussion during the round table (Annex 12).



Mr. Shokirzoda Shodmon briefly commented on the results of testing the exchange of data and metadata between ministries and departments within the framework of the SDG Monitoring project in the Republic of Tajikistan.

It was noted that in all existing indicators of the SDGs, the AoS is a key department in developing indicators and is currently working with 26 relevant ministries and agencies to develop a national SDG platform for sharing global SDG data. During the meeting, representatives of ministries and agencies presented a brief report on the status of signing draft interdepartmental agreements on cooperation between the Statistical Agency and ministries and departments.

Activity 1.8. Procurement of equipment for the secretariat of the interdepartmental technical working group on SDGs and 1.9. Development of a ToR for Data Exchange, Processing and Dissemination Center to facilitate SDG data dissemination and exchange within the NSS

During the implementation period, the AoS informed UNDP and UNSD that procurement of equipment for the secretariat of the interdepartmental working group lost its relevance as most of the equipment was already purchased by the Agency within its own financial means. Taking this into account, the Agency submitted a proposal (Annex 13) for UNSD's consideration which envisages re-programming of the Activities 1.8 and 1.9 towards procurement of ICT equipment and software for data protection of the Data Processing and Dissemination Center (DPDC) within the AoS.

Following the receipt of approval from UNSD to reprogram resources for procurement of ICT equipment for the AoS, UNDP initiated a tender procedure in July 2021. In December 2021, UNDP delivered the equipment and completed installation works in close cooperation with the responsible staff of the AoS (Annex 14).

Output 2. Development of Tajikistan's National Dissemination and Reporting Platform.

Activity 2.1. Consultancy to develop a specification for the national SDG dissemination platform.

Draft version of specifications were developed in-house with the support of UNSD representatives following which they were sent for the review of the interdepartmental technical working group. During the specifications development the following work was carried out:

- Assessment of existing international instruments for disseminating SDG data.
- Review of all existing databases of the Agency for Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Platform specifications divided into subsystems to prioritize the order of platform development;
- Analysis of the mapping tool was carried out and the corresponding technical specifications were included in the ToR by levels - national, regional, district, jamoat and village levels (Annex 15);
- Opinions of users on the functionality of the data collection and subsystem dissemination were taken into account.

Activity 2.2. Development of the national dissemination and reporting platform for monitoring progress toward achievement of the SDGs and increasing public awareness thereof and Activity 2.3. Testing, deployment and maintenance of the national reporting platform

In July 2021, UNDP engaged an IT company for establishment of a dissemination platform on SDGs and national indicators. In August 2021, the company submitted the workplan for implementation the activities under the contract in close collaboration with the responsible staff of the AoS. Within the assigned works, the company designed the structure and database of the platform. By November 2021, a prototype of the platform was elaborated.

Thus, during the reporting period, algorithms for the operation of the application were developed, program codes were written, testing and debugging were carried out, a system for entering primary data and a system for constructing and outputting reports on SDG data and other statistical data were developed. The mapping of areas (on the regional, district, jamoat and village levels respectively) of the territories of the Republic of Tajikistan has been completed (ArcGis) with the data imported into the developed platform database structure.



Several working meetings were held with UNDP and the AoS. During the meeting with the staff of the AoS, the final versions of the National Platform for the Dissemination of Data on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Geographical Portal for the dissemination of other statistical data were demonstrated and agreed upon. The Platform was developed based on ArcGis software, which allow mapping the data by geographic areas of the country.

Established National platform for the dissemination of data on the SDGs and the Geographic Portal for the dissemination of other statistical data are installed on the servers of the Agency on Statistics and are available on <http://sdg.stat.tj> and <http://geo.stat.tj> web-sites. Currently, the Platform works on existing data and AoS staff is continue entering data process. It is expected that data will be updated at the permanent basis by responsible staff of AoS.

Activity result 2.4. Training to improve the statistical literacy of users and their capacity to use the national reporting platform.



UNDP developed users manual for SDG platform. The detailed steps how to use Platform were presented among stakeholders during the workshop conducted on October 26-27, 2021 (Annex 16). UNDP conducted capacity building activities for AoS staff on of the National Dissemination and Reporting Platform (5 staff members of AoS were trained). Trainings and working sessions were held on the basis of the User's Manual of the National Data Dissemination Platform.

During the session, National Platform for Dissemination of Data on the Sustainable Development Goals was demonstrated in real time.

Platforms operational value:

1. A platform has been developed for collecting data on the SDGs and other statistical data;
2. Web-API of the National platform for the dissemination of data on SDGs and other statistical data was developed;





implementation of programs. More than half of the respondents reported that their agencies/organizations are responsible for collection of SDG related data.

On the availability of official SDG indicators by administrative sources, on average, more than half answered that there is “not enough data”, while more than 40% of respondents reported on “sufficient amount of data”, with another 3.8% respondents reporting – “no data available”. On data collection, respondents experience difficulties mainly due to absence of methodology, with quarter of respondents finding “no difficulties in data collection”.

For official statistics, the following data is mainly used: National accounts (GDP), Demographic statistics, Social sector (health, education), Employment statistics, Regional statistics. Occasionally data on Balance of Payments and Environment Statistics are used.

Users mainly obtain official statistics from the official publications of the Agency on Statistics (<https://www.stat.tj/>), other government agencies, websites of international organizations and official press releases. More than 90% of respondents refer to the use of official descriptions of sources and methods in the compilation of official statistics.

“Not satisfied” and “very dissatisfied” with the availability of official statistics with the requirements of priority data was reported by 44% of respondents with 46% “completely satisfied”. More than 80% use the website of the Statistics Agency. More than 60% of respondents are satisfied with the Agency's website, clarity and structure, statistics, publications, etc. Official statistics are mainly used for analysis of (i) new developments in order to make short-term decisions, (ii) trends in order to form a long-term strategy and (iii) use official statistics for research purposes.

The results of the survey were used during elaboration of the Platform and monitoring needs.

### Activity 3.2. Consultancy to develop a user engagement strategy on the basis of the user needs assessment.

For implementation of this activity the following works were conducted:

- The draft strategy of the AoS on user engagement prepared in-house (Annex 18).
- Users, their needs and information delivery channels are defined
- Media trainings were held to increase the capacity of journalists on the data collection methods (Annex 19).

Official website of the Agency ([www.stat.tj](http://www.stat.tj)) and other web-sites of the government agencies such as the Ministry of economic development and trade ([www.medt.tj](http://www.medt.tj)) serve as the main channels for dissemination of official statistics and data on the SDG programs and other analytical materials related to the SDGs. Currently, the AoS is exploring options for expanding the dissemination of official data and statistics through mass media and online social platforms for a more wider outreach of the population.

From the perspective of the AoS, media outlets serve both as the target audience and a channel for disseminating the official information. In addition, social networks are used as an additional channel for expanding the audience of users not covered by the official sources. The most important target group and the largest channel for disseminating both statistical data and analytical materials remains mass media. The AoS is closely monitoring the changing



environment in the traditional media where online social platforms has been increasingly complementing mass media. In this context, the Agency needs to adapt in order to remain relevant in the media content.

Staff of the Agency, who play an important role in strengthening the reputation of national statistics system, should intensify their efforts to expand contacts with various user groups through engagement with other government agencies. This can be done through organization of workshops, roundtables and forums to increase the outreach and engagement not only with government agencies but also with academia, mass media, CSOs and other stakeholders. In addition to this, the Agency is considering introduction of:

- electronic mailings for interagency communication.
- capacity building and awareness raising events - press conferences, media trainings, forums and other outreach events.

Providing all user groups with complete, reliable and timely official information on the social, economic, demographic and environmental situation of the country remains one of the main tasks of the national statistical system.

In line with the above, the Agency understands that one of the main priorities is to increase the efficiency of interaction with this group of users. At the same time, one should take into account the availability of methodological explanations, set out in a simple and understandable language for this group of users, in order to further guide the interpretation of both statistical and SDG data (Annex 20).

### Activity 3.3. Report on the roundtable; Updated draft user engagement strategy.



On 4 December 2020, a roundtable was held to discuss the draft user engagement strategy developed based on the assessment of user needs. Roundtable was organized with the participation of members of the interdepartmental technical working group, media representatives, NGOs and international organizations (Annex 21). A brief overview of the Agency's draft Strategy for Statistics on User Interaction Based on User Needs Assessment, tools and methods for the production

and dissemination of SDG indicators, as well as a study of the demand for indicators was presented for discussion (focused on communication tools including national platform and an online user questionnaire). Overall 21 people took part in the workshop, including 7 women.

Based on the results of the survey, the final version of the Strategy for interaction with users for the periods 2021-2023 was prepared. On the basis of the strategy, a "User Calendar" was developed on the website, which provides information on the date and exact time of release of official statistical information. This will increase mutual understanding and trust among users

(including media representatives) on statistical data, as well as improve the provision of official information in a user-friendly format.

#### Activity 3.4. Training/seminar on statistical literacy in the context of the SDGs

On 30 December 2020, AoS conducted a training seminar on statistical literacy in the context of the SDGs with participation of representatives of the National Academy of Sciences, Tajikistan National University, media and national experts from the Agency on Statistics. Presentations were made on the following issues: "Indicators of DHS -2017 in the context of the SDGs", "Seasonal adjustment in statistics and its use", "Linking the theory of probability and statistics", "Statistical literacy as an indicator of the quality of higher education", "Problems of increasing statistical literacy in Tajikistan", "What statistical information is more needed and in demand".

The participants of the workshop learned the use of statistical tables and statistical charts. Representatives of the media and academia took part in the workgroup sessions. Participants were also able to participate in the development of SDG indicators on statistical research, increase statistical awareness among users, use of statistical theory. 23 people improved their knowledge on the topic, including 8 women. A new knowledge let participants to use new forms and tables for reporting on SDGs and national indicators.

#### Activity 3.5. Training seminar with representatives of SDG stakeholders (civil society, academia, the private sector, etc.)

On 30 June 2021, the AoS conducted workshop on data and metadata of the SDGs with representatives of academia, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders.

During the workshop, the results of an online survey of users, indicators of the SDGs for sustainable development, and the availability of SDG indicators for stakeholders, in particular civil society, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders, were discussed.

During the workshop UNDP expert presented the monitoring and evaluation system of the NDS 2030 and the Mid-Term Development Program of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025, with linkage to the SDGs.

A discussion on collecting and disseminating SDG indicators for users was arranged.

During the workshop participants learned SDG targets, its indicators based on groups and custodian organizations for each indicator and the responsible ministries and agencies for implementation of each indicator were discussed.

More than 25 people (including 9 women) took part in the event and improved knowledge on SDGs and national strategic documents. (Annex 22)

#### Activity 3.6. Consultancy to develop a video advertisement for the SDGs

Jointly with the Agency on Statistics, UNDP has elaborated terms of reference for production of 3 (three) animated videos promoting SDGs and M&E implementation of Agenda 2030. In July 2021, UNDP engaged a production studio to produce and ensure broadcasting of animated videos. Broadcasting of the animated videos was ensured through 1 national and 2 regional TV channels for a period of 15 days. Video materials were broadcasted on "Safina", "Dushanbe HD" and "Jahonamo" channels between 15-30 November 2021 (Annex 23).

Two out of three animated videos are of informational character aiming to raise the awareness of the population on the SDGs and its implementation in the country. The third animated video was developed for the members of the National Statistical System working groups for capacity building purposes and is focused on describing M&E processes of SDGs implementation.



Developed video were also used during capacity building activities within other UNDP projects, such as “SDG Financing in Tajikistan” and Support to National Development Council Secretariat. Especially, video was provided to NDC WG members on monitoring and reporting issues. UNDP and AoS will use the video for further

capacity building activities.

Activity 3.7. National seminar on progress towards the achievement of the SDGs with ministries, departments, scientific community, civil society, international organizations, and the international experts

On 28-29 October 2021 the workshop was conducted among stakeholders. The participants were shown and explained the procedure for displaying and obtaining the necessary information on certain SDGs, and other statistical data based on the Geographic Information System for displaying data. The workshop was organized in accordance with the developed User Manual of the National Platform. The Platform was hand overed to the Agency on Statistics an electronic version of the User's Manual in \*.htm format, and a compiled html help file in \*.chm format, which can be used by the Agency's employees and other users.

During the workshop a discussion on the achievement of the SDGs and the process of nationalization of indicators was held. A strategy for developing indicators and metadata for the SDGs was considered and feedback from stakeholders received. The document is the main guidance to work with indicators and is useful for the staff of ministries and agencies responsible for SDG monitoring. 22 participants, including 7 women improved their knowledge on SDG indicators during this event.

Activity 3.8. Events on SDGs and their implementation in Tajikistan

The main idea of the activity was to raise awareness of WG members, as well as other participants of workshops on SDGs. Thus, UNDP has prepared list of visibility materials for trainings and workshops, which was approved by the AoS. All visibility materials were prepared according with Agenda 2030. Visibility materials were developed and transferred to AoS for dissemination among participants of the workshops and events. These materials are used to increase visibility of Agenda 2030





among beneficiaries. (27 different items were developed). Some of materials were used during the workshops conducted in October and November 2021.

#### Output 4. Compilation of metadata for Sustainable Development Goals Indicators

Activity 4.1. Consultancy for the preparation of the publication "Statistical Classifications for SDG Indicators" with the aim of improving interdepartmental coordination as concerns the harmonization of methodology and classification of SDGs and preparation of metadata on statistical classifications used in national SDG indicators.

The implementation of this event was completed by the end of August 2021. 14 statistical classifiers were prepared. Under the activity the national consultant for Open SDG platform was hired. As part of the contract an expert adopted data of the country for OpenSDG platform using the exchange of statistical data and metadata (SDMX) for the AoS. The international experience in implementation of Open SDGs was considered for development of the part of OpenSDG platform for Tajikistan.

A classifier strategy for SDG indicators is necessary for the development and adaptation of national indicators, including a linkage with indicators of the country's strategic documents (NDS 2030 and MTDP 2025). One of the strategy objective is to engage various stakeholders in the process development of national indicators. Thus, AoS developed draft agreements with ministries and agencies, some of which have already been signed. The classification process may take longer than planned by the government. However, as indicators are adopted and move from one category to another, the list of indicators will be updated, which will improve the quality of data and reporting for SDG monitoring.

Activity 4.2. Training / workshop targeting representatives of NSS to build capacity of the production of SDG data and metadata from administrative sources, and to ensure use of harmonized classification system in conjunction of administrative data sources in support on SDG monitoring.

From 22 to 25 December 2020, with the participation of representatives of the national statistical system and representatives of the government agencies (overall 25 people, including 9 women), the AoS organized a three-day training workshop to ensure the use of an agreed classification system in combination with administrative data sources in support of "Monitoring the SDGs in Tajikistan" project. During the training the AoS presented 15 statistical classifiers. The following topics were covered during the three-day event:

- "Classifier of individual consumption by purpose for the HBS".
- "Ensuring the use of an agreed classification system in combination of administrative data in support of SDG monitoring".
- "Updated version of the metadata of the global SDG indicators".
- "Updated version of SDG indicators by ministries and departments".
- "Ensuring the use of a consistent classification system in combination of administrative data to support SDG monitoring".
- "Classifier of administrative-territorial objects" and "Classifier employed".
- "Availability of indicators for emergency and forestry for the SDGs".
- "Application of classifiers in statistics bodies" and "Classifier of forms of ownership of the Republic of Tajikistan".

- "International tourism statistics" in combination of administrative data in support of monitoring the SDGs".
- "Project Classifier of Enterprise Types of the Republic of Tajikistan" in combination of administrative data in support of SDG monitoring:
- "Classifier of TNVED and Classifier of organizational and legal forms of the Republic of Tajikistan".
- "National classification of waste":
- "Formation of SDG indicators and metadata on statistics of agriculture and rural areas":
- "Classifier of sectors of the economy", "Classifier of public administration bodies", "Classification of services for the formation of satellite accounts":
- "Formation of SDG indicators for SNA and finance statistics":
- "Formation of SDG indicators for industrial statistics and investment in construction" and "Metadata and dynamics of indicators".

Agenda of the four-day training workshop attached as an annex to this report (Annex 24).

Activity 4.3. Consultancy for the development and adaptation of SDG metadata for the existing indicators in the national statistical system

For implementation of this activity, the Agency engaged 4 following experts: Expert on elaboration and adopting of SDG metadata in agriculture and climate change sectors, 2 Experts on collecting of data of the national statistics and an Expert on elaboration of metadata for SDGs on transport, energy, industry and foreign trade sectors.

During the reporting period, time series of international indicators as well as proxy indicators for each global indicator for the period 2015-2019 have been prepared for the SDG goals 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,15,16 and 17. Collection of individual indicators for the above-mentioned goals as well as for SDG goals 6, 12, 13 and 14, work is currently underway to collect information in accordance with the requirements of the SDGs, work continues to disaggregate existing indicators by sex, age and place of residence. List of indicators which are currently available at the national level are enclosed to this report.

Updates on global and national indicators will be continued by the AoS until the period of 2030.

Activity 4.4. Discussion of first draft compendium with line ministries and agencies - member of IAWG, including international partners

The final version of compendium was cleared by the AoS and submitted for further publishing. The detailed SDG metadata printing material was discussed with stakeholders during the workshop conducted on October 28, 2021. The document will be updated as per availability of SDG indicators.

Activity 4.5. Compendium of national SDG indicator data and metadata

The final version of Compendium was translated from Russian into English and Tajik. The compendium was published in English, Russian and Tajik. (Annex 25)

Output 5 – Reprogrammed activities in the context of COVID

Activity 5.1. Ensuring constant communication with the Project Implementation Group

The project team has conducted regular meetings with AoS and donor to ensure proper implementation of activities. UNDP ensured follow up activities on ongoing issues faced by AoS during implementation. UNDP and UNSD organized quarterly meetings to update on the ongoing activities. Follow up meetings were helpful to identify issues and mitigate delays in implementation.

AoS has also requested UNSD to reprogramme a part of funds for the technical support of the agency in implementation of project activities. As agreed between AoS and UNSD the Agency has procured 7 sets of communications equipment and internet packages for ICT connectivity: Wi-Fi communication (2 AU manual, 1 for international relations department, 1 programming department and 1 finance and accounting department, 1 demography and social statistics department).

#### Activity 5.2. Introductions of financial and technical reporting.

Due to sudden outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Tajikistan and in accordance with the request received from the AoS, UNSD agreed to re-program 6,500 USD towards support for the Agency in establishment of a dedicated project implementation unit responsible for development of terms of references for consultants engaged within the project as well as financial and technical oversight under the supervision of the Deputy Director of the Agency on Statistics.

#### Activity 5.3. Preparing a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on household welfare.

AoS supported UNDP's "Assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on lives, livelihoods and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Tajikistan" (<https://bit.ly/3t3CggY>) through provision of data on households.

## **IV. CHALLENGES**

- COVID-19 pandemic resulted in delays for implementation of envisaged activities under the project during the period of April – June 2020. Following the announcement of COVID-19 outbreak in Tajikistan, social distancing, self-isolation, telecommuting and shift to digital means were introduced both by UN Country Team in Tajikistan and government agencies. Given the new circumstances, UNDP jointly with UNSD was forced to adopt to the new realities and find an adequate solution to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 to ensure effective implementation of project activities by the Agency on Statistics. During the implementation period it was agreed to organize regular meetings with participation of representatives from UNSD, UNDP and AoS to closely monitor the implementation of project activities and consult to agree on the strategic priorities for the use of resources in support of the "Monitoring the SDGs in Tajikistan" project.
- During the period of August to September 2020 the AoS was conducting a national Census exercise done once every decade (last one conducted in 2010). In this regard, the Agency prioritized this exercise and put all its efforts in implementation of the Census which postponed organization of seminars envisaged within the project.

- It is also important to note that the low capacity of the Agency's staff was observed with some activities being delayed due to back-and-forth quality assurance processed between AoS and UNDP/UNSD. In particular, revision of terms of references for consultants, review of specifications for the SDG monitoring Platform and other associated issues.
- The pandemic has also impeded the implementation of the project in that several key project staff were hospitalized with COVID for a total of several weeks, which led to further delays.

## **V. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Financial Summary and detailed report are attached in the separate file.

## **VI. ANNEXES**

***Annex 1 – UN Agency to UN Agency Agreement***

***Annex 2 – Project Initiation Plan***

***Annex 3 – Letter of Standard Agreement (LoA) signed between UNDP and AoS***

***Annex 4 – Interdepartmental Technical Working Group on SDGs***

***Annex 5 – AoS Working Group on SDGs***

***Annex 6 – Guide on Metadata and National Indicators***

***Annex 7 – Draft SDG Monitoring Strategy and Indicator Framework***

***Annex 8 – Action Plan for Implementation of the SDG Monitoring Strategy***

***Annex 9 – Agenda, Letter to GoT & UN Agencies (Workshop to discuss and finalize draft SDG monitoring Strategy held on 25-27 November 2020)***

***Annex 10 – Report on the Workshop held during 25-27 November 2020***

***Annex 11 – Draft Interdepartmental Agreement TJK and ENG***

***Annex 12 – Roundtable to discuss data and metadata-29 June***

***Annex 13 - Justification for re-programming Activities 1.8 & 1.9***

***Annex 14 – Transfer of Assets from UNDP to AoS***

***Annex 15 – Specifications of SDG Reporting Platform***

***Annex 16 – Report on workshop October 26 – Progress on SDGs achievement***

***Annex 17 – Step by step instruction for the National SDG platform***

***Annex 18 – Roundtable on user engagement strategy development, Dec. 4, 2020***

***Annex 19 – Seminar on Statistical Literacy (Agenda & LoP)***

***Annex 20 – List of Indicators***

***Annex 21 – Draft User Engagement Strategy***

***Annex 22 – Report on the seminar June 29-30 on data and metadata exchange (Agenda, LoP, Presentations)***

***Annex 23 – Media plan for broadcasting of video on TV***

***Annex 24 – Report for seminars conducted on 22-25 Dec, 2020***

***Annex 25 – Metadata regulations***