Open SDG webinar – 17th June 2020:

Questions & answers

**Q:** How will changes to the UN SDG indicator framework be managed in Open SDG?

**A:** We are going to create a branch in the [sdg-translations repository](https://github.com/open-sdg/sdg-translations) where we will work on translating the necessary indicator titles for the new framework so that it's ready for after the 2020 reporting cycle (i.e. after any countries have submitted voluntary national reviews). We will post guidance on how countries can switch to the new set of indicators. Users will have the option to stick with the current set as long as they need to.

**Q:** I'd like to share Open SDG with other Italian regions but I'm afraid the files I changed are too local: should local repos be forked from a master national one?

**A:** First we would recommend deciding what are the things that other regions can usefully share. For example, the Italian translation. In that case, I would recommend putting the Italian translation in its own repository (or submitting a PR to SDG Translations) so that other regions can share them. This might involve splitting out any translations specific to your region. There may also be images and other resources which can be shared.

**Q:** How do I add sub-national indicators, additional to the global indicator set? Can I identify them as a 4-part indicator reference e.g. 17-1-1-a?

**A:** Open SDG team**:** Yes, using a 4-part number is an approach already being used for reporting national and sub-national indicators in an Open SDG platform alongside global indicators. For example on the [Kyrgyzstan platform](https://sustainabledevelopment-kyrgyzstan.github.io/en/) national indicators are identified with a 4-part indicator reference which either uses a single 4th number e.g. 3.5.1.1 or where there are multiple national indicators related to a global indicators then a number/letter combination for the 4th part e.g. 1.3.1.1c, 1.3.1.1e etc.

**A:** UNSD**:** We don’t recommend a particular approach as countries have already began numbering their national indicators. The 4-part indicator reference is one approach, but we have also seen cases where countries use a geocode. For example, the three-part indicator code followed by a two-letter country code and indicating whether there is one or more national indicator associated with the global indicator. It really depends on the country, but any approach that clearly distinguishes the national indicators from the global indicators works fine. We have indicators and we have series – indicators that are part of the framework explain how to assign numbers to the indicators, but at the data level we are dealing with series because one single indicator can include multiple series, and if you want to add national indicators to the global data structure definition, there are a set of guideline which explain how to do that. The guidelines are available on the [IAEG-SDGs SDMX Working Group part of the UNSD website](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/sdmx-working-group/).

**Q:** Could COVID-19 data also be reported on an Open SDG platform?

**A:** Open SDG can be used for other initiatives beside the SDGs and we have had interest from a couple of organisations to do so. There are three different ways that Open SDG could be used to report another initiative such as COVID-19:

1. An Open SDG platform could be set up purely for reporting a different initiative and could be easily customised for the initiative e.g. goal images could be changed, SDG logos changed
2. An 18th 'goal' could be added where COVID-19 data could be added, data would need to be mapped to indicator structure. There is already a proof of concept available where a country is reporting data under an 18th goal
3. COVID-19 data/indicator could be mapped to SDG indicator framework (similar to national indicators) and added to existing goal(s) (probably mostly goal 3)

**Q:** Do you have a plan to implement GIS system on Open SDG or it is already possible?

**A:** It’s already possible to display a map on Open SDG platforms using a Geocode column in the data and specifying a boundary file. Currently headline data can be displayed for different years. We are open to feature requests relating to displaying data on maps. We have already had a feature request for disaggregations to be displayed on a map, and this is something we are currently working on. More information is available in the [Maps section of the documentation](https://open-sdg.readthedocs.io/en/latest/maps/).

**Q:** Open SDG is awesome and easy to adopt. What is preventing more countries from using it?

**A:** There are various platforms available for countries to choose from to report their SDG data. When choosing a platform, it’s not just about how easy a platform is to set up. It’s related to the skills required and also the legacy systems that are in place. We need to show how easy the adoption of an Open SDG platform is, maybe through videos or tutorials. This is something we can investigate creating in the future.

**Q:** Is the Open SDG currently allowing the use of multiple series for an indicator?

**A:** We became aware of this need a couple of months ago and now this functionality is currently being worked on within Open SDG. However, the feature still requires some testing before it goes into a release.

**Q:** Does Open SDG work with SDMX?

**A:** Open SDG can already use SDMX input, either as files or from an SDMX-API. Kyrgyzstan are already using Open SDG with SDMX-ML files and we have set up a proof of concept, where data input in SDMX-API. We are working on some guidance for the best way to switch from the CSV workflow to an SDMX workflow, including recommendations on required technical expertise and useful trainings. In addition, we're working on the functionality needed to post the SDMX files on the platform.

**Q:** Could you please brief us the steps needed for upgrading to the latest release for those countries who already have implemented previous versions of Open SDG?

**A:** At a high-level, one thing that needs to be done is some translation updates if you aren’t using sdg-translations directly i.e. if you have forked sdg-translations: some translations will need to be added. Next sdg-build, a dependency of open-sdg will need to be upgraded. There are a few special metadata fields which will need to be changed slightly. For example, the structure of the ‘data\_start\_value’ metadata field has changed. We have also adopted a model, where the translations now need to be stored in the data repository. However, the structure has remained the same, so moving them should be quite straightforward. Depending on any customisations that have been made to an existing Open SDG platform, some work will need to be done to ensure that any changes are made to bring the file up-to-date with the file that’s in Open SDG v1.0.0. More information is available in the [Upgrading to 1.0.0 section of the documentation](https://open-sdg.readthedocs.io/en/latest/upgrades/upgrading-1-0-0/).

**Q:** How long does it take to set up Open SDG from scratch? And what skills are needed?

**A:** Depending on the skills of the person, an Open SDG platform can be set up between an hour and a day. At that point you will have an empty Open SDG platform, which you can view in a browser. The next step is to prepare and collect the data and metadata for the SDG indicators, which can take some time. Regarding the skills needed, we have tried to make the quick start as easy as possible to follow, and no technical skills are required. However, if you want to customise an Open SDG platform further, some technical skills will be needed. Different levels of support are available from Open SDG team when setting up a platform.

**Q:** I manually edited each metadata, but I think there is some sort of automated procedure, isn't there?

**A:** There are a few options when it comes to metadata. First, there are currently three options for the format in which metadata can be inputted: Markdown YAML, CSV, Excel (more info in [Metadata file formats of the documentation](https://open-sdg.readthedocs.io/en/latest/metadata-file-formats/)). If you choose to have data in the Markdown YAML format you also have the option to edit your metadata using Prose, which is an online editor. This method is slightly easier than editing a Markdown file directly. In the UK, we use a different model where we have our metadata stored in Excel files, and we’ve automated that being converted into a Markdown file before it’s uploaded to the UK Open SDG platform. Again this is easier than editing the metadata directly in a Markdown file.

**Q:** Is Open SDG always going to be open?

**A:** Yes, one of our design principles is for the platform to be open source, so it will always remain open

**Q:** Could you make video training materials on how to set up Open SDG?

**A:** We are currently considering the best way to make further Open SDG training materials available.