



Task Group on ICT for SDGs - Terms of Reference (TOR)

21 September 2017

The Partners meeting held in May 2016 during the annual WSIS Forum agreed to create two new task groups: Task Group on ICT Skills and Task Group on ICT for SDGs. UNDESA and ITU indicated their willingness to co-lead the Task Group on ICT for SDGs late in 2016. This document contains the TOR for this task group.

Background

The outcome document¹ of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) reaffirmed the commitment of the Member States to the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the Geneva Plan of Action and its action lines, the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, and recognized the need for Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders to continue to work together to implement the WSIS vision beyond 2015. The document acknowledged the activities of the *Partnership on Measuring Information and Communications Technology for Development* that made a valuable contribution to data gathering and dissemination and recommended that its activities should be continued. It further requested United Nations entities facilitating the WSIS action lines to review their reporting and work plans to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

One of the key achievements of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development has been the identification of a core list of indicators². This list of over 60 indicators, which was agreed upon through a consultation process involving governments and international organisations, covers the following areas: ICT infrastructure and access; access and use of ICT by households and individuals; use of ICT by businesses; the ICT sector; trade in ICT goods; ICT in education; and e-government. The list was identified to help guide countries in measuring the information society.

The Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development has also taken a lead role in increasing awareness about the importance of ICT for development and in international ICT monitoring. The Partnership has made a concerted effort to highlight the role that ICTs will play in achieving the SDGs and prepared a joint proposal of ICT indicators to help track the Sustainable Development Goals and targets³. In March 2017, at its 48th session⁴, the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) adopted the global indicators framework for the SDGs and targets developed by Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). The framework includes 231 indicators, 7 of which are ICT indicators (See Table I). The seven indicators are an outcome of the Partnership's input to the indicators discussion for the monitoring framework. It was agreed that data for the agreed indicators should primarily be based on official statistics. During the same occasion, the Partnership reported on the progress made in the development of ICT statistics, including the revisions to the core list of ICT indicators, new work on measuring gender and ICT, and progress on the work related to measuring international trade in ICT services and ICT-enabled services, electronic waste and ICT in education. The report further highlighted the role of ICT indicators required for monitoring progress towards the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requested the Partnership to report back in 2018 on integration of ICT statistics in

¹ <http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN96078.pdf>

² http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/coreindicators/Core-List-of-Indicators_March2016.pdf

³ <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/intlcoop/partnership/Partnership-Background-note-on-ICT-indicator-proposal-for-Expert-Group.pdf>

⁴ https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/Resolution_on_Indicators_Clean_Version-E.pdf

the SDG monitoring framework.

The table below summarizes the targets with ICT indicators from the SDG Indicators global database⁵ which provides access to data compiled through the UN System in preparation for the Secretary-General's annual report on "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals".

Table I - ICT related targets within the Global SDG Indicators Database

Target	Indicator(s)	Tier	Data Source	Collected by
Target 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.	Proportion of youth/adults with ICT skills, by type of skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> connecting and installing new devices copying or moving a file or folder using basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet 	II	National household surveys	ITU and UIS
Target 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive an effective learning environments for all.	Proportion of schools with access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Internet for pedagogical purposes computers for pedagogical purposes 	II	Ministries of Education (administrative data)	UIS
Target 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.	Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	I	National household surveys	ITU
Target 9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.	Percentage of the population covered by a mobile network, broken down by technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2G mobile network 3G mobile network LTE mobile network 	I	National telecommunication/ICT regulatory authorities, telecommunication operators	ITU
Target 17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and	Fixed-Internet broadband subscriptions, broken down by speed	I	National telecommunication/ICT regulatory authorities, telecommunication operators, national household	ITU

⁵ <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

through a global technology facilitation mechanism.			surveys	
Target 17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	Proportion of individuals using the Internet	I	National telecommunication/ICT regulatory authorities, telecommunication operators, national household surveys	ITU

As can be seen, four out of seven indicators are Tier I which means data is easily available only for those three indicators. There is obviously a need for increasing data availability for the remaining three indicators.

In addition to the indicators contained in the SDG Indicators framework, there is a need to develop a more detailed list of thematic indicators to help countries measure their progress in the adoption and use of ICT in different sectors of the economy. Such a thematic list of indicators could include some of the Partnership core list of ICT indicators⁶ and can draw upon the joint proposal of ICT indicators by the Partnership to help track the Sustainable Development Goals.

Objectives

ICTs are recognized as a key development enabler. The important role that ICTs will play in achieving the SDGs has also been stressed by the ICT community, including the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS). To this end, it is important that all areas where ICTs will play a role are measured and monitored.

The main objective of the task group on ICT for SDGs is to propose a thematic list of ICT indicators that could be used to measure ICT availability and use in sectors relevant to the SDGs that are not covered in the SDG indicators framework. The TG should further aim at improving availability of disaggregated data, for the indicators that will be defined in the thematic list, in addition to the ICT indicators included in the SDG measurement framework.

Members

The task group is open to all members of the Partnership and other interested agencies and stakeholders. The current list of members is the following:

- ITU and UN-DESA (co-leads)
- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- David Souter (expert)
- UIS
- UNCTAD
- UNEP-SBC
- UNU-EGOV
- UNU-ViE
- Uruguay

⁶ <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/coreindicators/default.aspx>

New members can be included in the future depending on their interest and match in the work of the Task Group.

Overview of tasks/activities/outputs

- Develop a framework for monitoring the SDG targets with ICT indicators complementary to the existing global indicators framework. Identify and define a set of measurable ICT indicators for selected SDG targets including, as much as possible, the core indicators developed by the Partnership.
- Prepare a document including the set of indicators proposed for selected SDG targets along with their definitions, benchmarks and the methodologies. The TG could build upon the Joint proposal of ICT indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator framework that was prepared by the Partnership in 2015 and the core list of ICT indicators prepared by the Partnership.
- Disseminate the list of thematic indicators to stakeholders through online tools, printed documents, and relevant meetings. Each member organization of the TG will be interacting with their constituencies on the respective target(s).
- Present and discuss the monitoring framework at relevant global and regional events (e.g. global/regional WSIS-related meetings, Partnership events, UNSC, WTIS, etc.).
- Possibly prepare regular quantitative updates of progress made on the goals. A final report will be prepared for 2020, including a global assessment of progress achieved in reaching the goals.
- The progress of the work and achievements of the TG will be included in reporting of the Partnership to the Statistical Commission and will also be presented to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.

Modalities of work

The task group will collaborate through audio conferences and online; there will be one face-to-face meeting per year (for example, at the occasion of the WTIS, WSIS, IGF or STI Forums).

Time frame

The task group was initiated in January 2017 and will work between 2017 and 2020. The official launch was in June 2017 at the occasion of the WSIS Forum held in Geneva during the session organized by the Partnership. It can be extended until 2030 and the ToR will be reviewed regularly to reflect the changes in the overall SDG discussions.