Financing foundational ICT/digital statistics: the role of the World Bank

Andrea Barone (Senior Economist, World Bank)

WTIS-24

Geneva - 24 September 2024

THE WORLD BANK
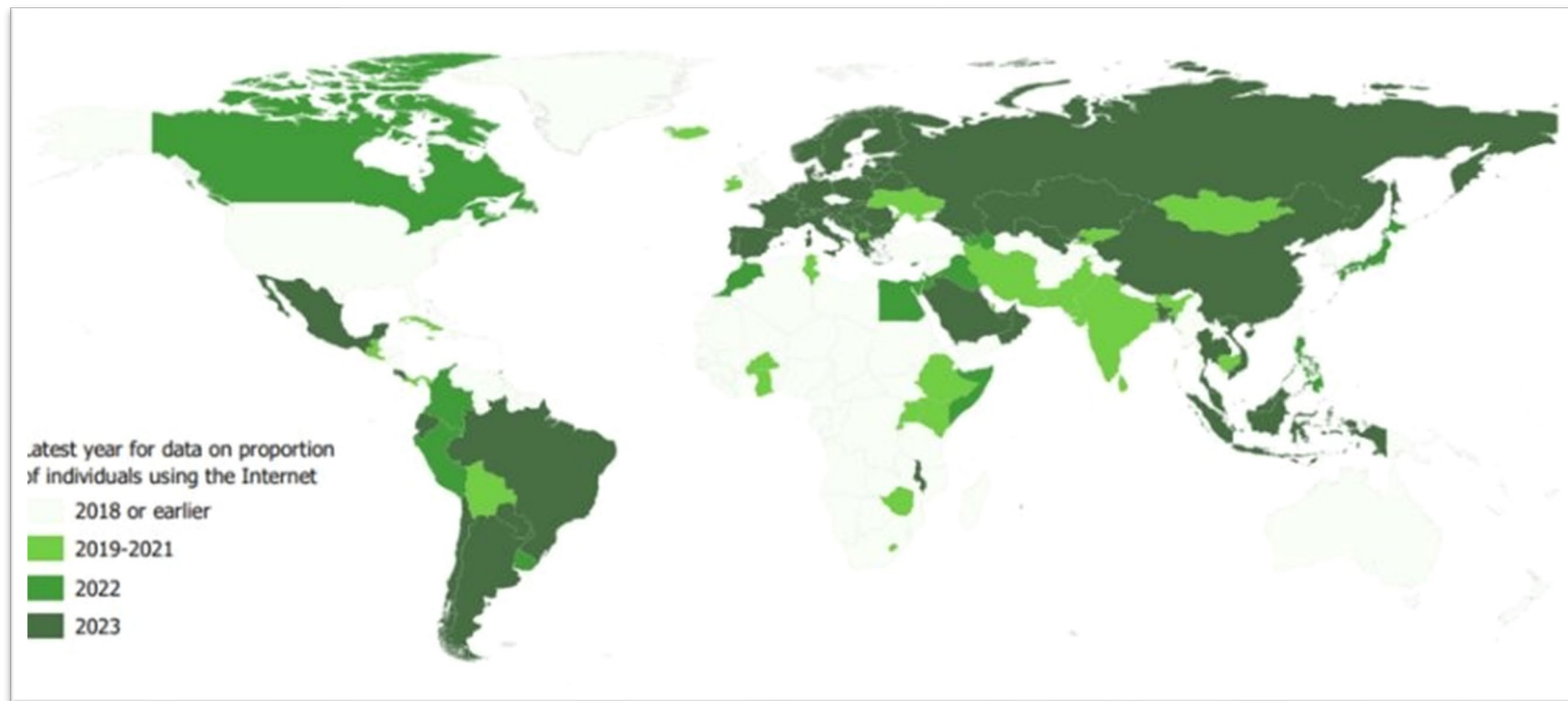IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

Why ICT/digital statistics?

- Growing body of literature demonstrating that **digital transformation** can **improve development outcomes**:
  - Hyort and Tian (forthcoming)
  - Aker and Cariolle (2023)
- We need good quality data to **refine our understanding** of:
  - the continuous evolution of ICT/digital technologies as they shape economies and societies
  - the causal link from ICT/digital investments to development
  - assess what digital policies work and what do not work to maximize positive impact of digital investments and minimize risks

THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

Which ICT/digital statistics?

- **Traditional surveys**:
  - Population and Housing Census
  - Household Income and Expenditure Surveys
  - Social and Living Conditions Surveys
  - Labor Force Surveys
  - Consumer Price Index (CPI) Surveys
  - Business and Enterprise Surveys
  - National Health Surveys
  - Education Surveys
  - Environmental and energy Surveys
  - Transport Surveys

- **Administrative data**:
  - By looking at the "architecture" for administrative data we can measure the extent of diffusion, quality and usage of e-government services
  - The promise of Digital Public Infrastructure: elimination of data silos & real time insights

- **"Big data"**:
  - Scientific challenge: what are the appropriate statistical methodologies to use them effectively?
  - Aligning incentives with "big tech"
  - Privacy and ethical concerns

ICT/digital statistics: the state of play

Source: ITU

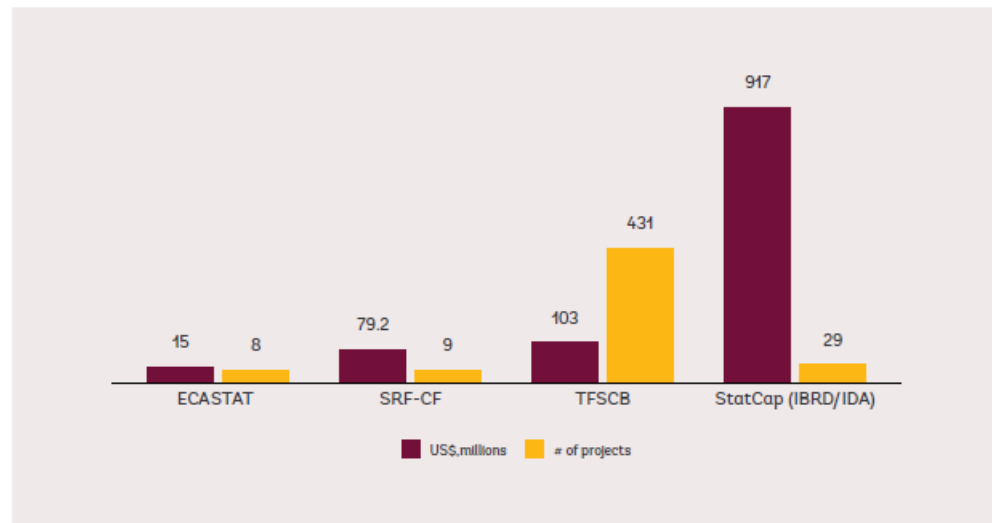# Data is central to achieve the World Bank's mission of "a world free of poverty in a livable planet"

- New "**social contact**" grounded on the principles of **value**, **equity**, and **trust** (WDR 2021)

- "*every dollar invested in data systems creates an average of $32 in economic benefits*" (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2022)

Historic retrospective: loans, grants and TF resources

> > >
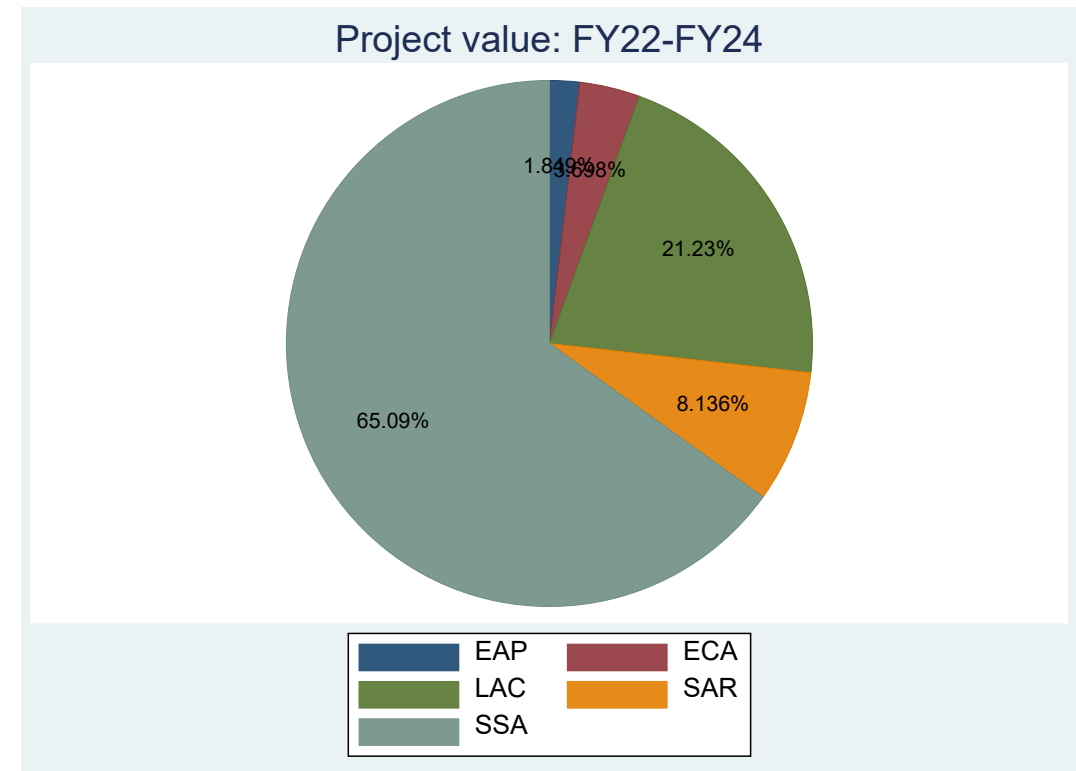FIGURE 2 - World Bank Financing for Statistical Development, 1999–2021

Note: Regional projects covering more than one country are counted as one project. SRF-CF: Statistics for Results Facility Catalytic Fund; STATCAP: Statistical Capacity Building Program; TFSCB: Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building.

Source: World Bank (2023)

- More than **$1 billion in financing** for statistical development projects **from 1999 to 2021**; **~$50 million per year**

- Support over **125 countries** in strengthening their National Statistical Systems (NSSs)

- Varying emphasis on ICT/digital component of the different foundational surveys
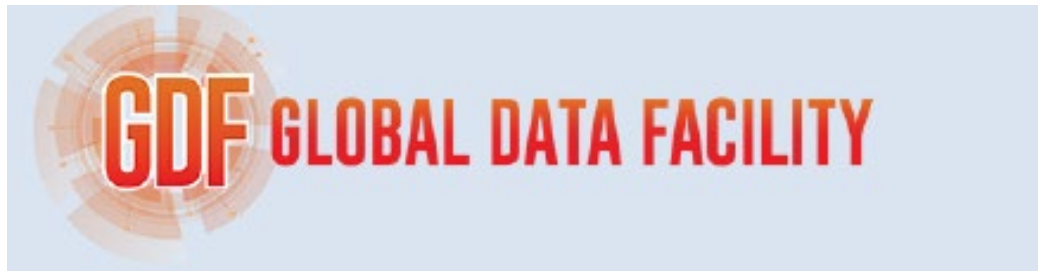
Substantial acceleration since 2022

- In period FY22-FY24: approved projects collectively amount to **$1.4 billion** ($1.2b IDA / $.2b IBRD)

- Pipeline FY25: **$640 million** of projected commitments

Project value: FY22-FY24

EAP	ECA
LAC	SAR
SSA	

Pie chart values: 1.849%, 3.698%, 21.23%, 8.136%, 65.09%

THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

Trust Funds

- Complement to lending

- Focus on:
  - Establishing **data standards** to ensure definition/methodology **harmonization** and **comparability** across countries
  - Mainstreaming established **innovative statistical methods** and data sources
  - Conduct / support / disseminate **frontier research**

Trust Funds - Global Data Facility (GDF)

GDF GLOBAL DATA FACILITY

- **Partnership** with United Nations Statistical Commission and several donors

- Objective: **coordinate and support critical data initiatives worldwide**, fostering lasting impact

- Approach: **demand-driven priority setting**

- Financial Goal: **mobilize a minimum of $500 million in funding by 2030**

- Many areas of work, including "DATA AS A GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD" and "INCLUSIVE DATA AND CLOSING DATA GAPS"

THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

Partnerships

DEVELOPMENT DATA PARTNERSHIP

- Collaboration between international organizations and technology companies established in 2019
- Objective: facilitate the efficient and responsible use of third-party data in international development
- Based on standardized legal, IT, and governance procedures
- About 150 data projects implemented

Specific platforms to support data collection

Survey Solutions

Survey Solutions is free software and a globally trusted platform for data collection used by national data collecting agencies.

LSMS — Living Standards Measurement Study

The Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) is the World Bank's flagship household survey program focused on strengthening household survey systems in client countries and on improving the quality of microdata to better inform development policies.

THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP