



Oxford Policy Management

**Evaluation of the UNSD-DFID project:
‘Improving the collation, availability
and dissemination of national
development indicators, including
MDGs’**

Final Report

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the results of an independent evaluation of the UNSD-DFID project “Improving the collation, availability and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs” (henceforth referred to as “the project”). The evaluation has been carried out by Oxford Policy Management, a UK based consulting company contracted by DFID.

The objectives of the evaluation are: (i) to assess how well the project improved the collation, availability and dissemination of data for monitoring national development indicators (including the Millennium Development Goal indicators) among the project countries; (ii) to assess the relevance of the program in the context of the evolving statistical capacity development agenda, (iii) to provide guidance on how the programme could be strengthened and improved in the future; and (iv) to assess the governance and management of the project. The main evaluation instruments were: a review of all relevant documents, stakeholder interviews, six country case studies, and two eSurveys covering data producers and users.

The project, which took place from January 2010 to March 2015, was prompted by the problem that many of the MDG indicators used at the international level were unrecognisable to national officials in the countries they were describing. The project aimed to help by establishing improved channels for data and metadata dissemination. This in turn would; achieve better use of data for policy making at country and international level, reduce discrepancies between national and international estimates, and reduce the burden on National Statistics Offices (NSOs) from international data collections. The project has:

- Provided training and technical and material assistance to assist 11 countries (Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Palestine, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam) to improve or (in a few cases) develop online data repositories, and prepare and populate metadata handbooks
- Created a website called ‘Countrydata’ (<http://data.un.org/CountryData>) linked to these data repositories where this national data and metadata is compared to the “official” MDG indicators as presented on the UNSD’s mdgs.un.org and the differences between the two are analysed and explained.
- Provided training in SDMX. Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) is a set of international technical standards and statistical guidelines developed to facilitate the exchange of statistical data and metadata using modern information technology. It has an emphasis on aggregated data (i.e. indicators and time series). The UN, World Bank, IMF, and EUROSTAT are all members of the SDMX initiative which develops and manages SDMX.

The project was financed by DFID and implemented by the UN Statistical Division (UNSD)

Methods

The evaluation developed and agreed a set of evaluation questions based around OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The methodology followed was utilisation-focused and theory-based. It was ‘utilisation-focused’ in the sense that it aimed to provide a joint learning process and produce recommendations for immediate actions that could build on project successes as well lessons for further work, and “theory based” in the sense that the evaluators developed and validated a Theory of Change and systematically tested the assumptions in it. Data was collected through; a review of documentation, an examination of the CountryData

website and the older MDGLabs website, interactions with partners from the 11 partner countries at project meetings, presentation of lessons from analysis of discrepancies to Country representatives and members of the IAEG for MDGs at a side meeting during the Statistics Commission, semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders, short online questionnaires, and country case studies in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Ghana, Rwanda and Uganda.

Evidence supporting of a positive conclusion or an assumption maintained (or a negative conclusion/assumption not maintained) has been considered **strong** if it is drawn from written documents or direct observations of websites that has been triangulated and confirmed by other documents or by discussions with informants and/or responses from eSurveys, and **moderate** if it is drawn from a single source or represents the balance of different opinions that are quite evenly weighted. Evidence of the uniqueness of the project's SDMX training for developing country statisticians and international portal for country and international data and metadata has also been considered **strong** on the grounds that SDMX experts and international agency statisticians are both small cohesive groups so it would have been impossible to run such programmes effectively without them showing up in the meeting records reviewed for the evaluation or alerting the stakeholders interviewed.

Individual pieces of evidence for each evaluation question or assumption have been aggregated using the team's judgement and coded using a four colour scheme to indicate strong, less strong, or weak evidence of a positive conclusion/assumption maintained or strong evidence of a negative conclusion/assumption not maintained.

Findings

The evaluation concluded that the project was a **relevant** response to a global need, clearly expressed in successive reports to the annual UN Statistical Commission, the apex body for global statistics, though the connection between that need and the specific activities in the project was less clear. There was strong evidence that several of the project's contributions were **unique**. In particular, the systematic effort to gather and disseminate data on the discrepancies between national and international indicators, *and on the reasons for those discrepancies*, is both unique and valuable. Where there have been overlaps with other programmes, in particular ongoing country level efforts to develop national data portals, the project has been careful to be complementary rather than duplicate these efforts. National Statistics Offices (NSOs) were consulted on design and those interviewed feel the project is relevant to their needs.

The problems that the project was designed to address will become even more **relevant to the post 2015 era**. Data gathered and discussions held during the evaluation highlight the **role of international agencies in producing estimates** independently as well as compiling them from country estimates. There is **no evidence that this role will disappear** as SDG monitoring is developed, so there will be more instances of alternative estimates for the same indicator circulating. Furthermore the data gathered by the project shows that most discrepancies arise from deliberate choices about the methodology or data source rather than differences in the definition of the statistic being measured. We have not made a systematic study of all these choices, but in the cases we have been able to examine **we judge that there are entirely legitimate reasons for estimates produced for national and international purposes to differ** even where the statistical concepts are identical. Simple examples include; the use by international agencies of models that produce estimates for every country in every year - and so allow the calculation of regional and global totals every year- as opposed to using results from national surveys that are only available in different years for each country; and the use by international agencies of UN population projections rather than each countries' own projections when calculating per capita ratios. The requirements prompting international agencies and countries to choose different methods and data sources are unlikely to disappear. Even if they did, all statistical production requires some exercise of judgement so two groups of equally competent statisticians working with identical methods and identical input data would still produce slightly different results.

We therefore judge that the project is relevant to the selected project countries. These issues were also identified in national statistical strategies.

The **project design** provided a clear plan of how outputs would be achieved. Its structure and staffing were strongly linked to this plan and the logframe contained clear indicators for these outputs. At a country level the project was delivered largely through clear Memoranda of Understanding with National Statistics Offices that specified milestones they were to deliver in return for funding. However **the design did not provide sufficient discussion of how the project's outputs were expected to achieve the medium to long term outcomes** of wider understanding among data users, let alone the intended long-term impacts of better policy. It is striking that the project memorandum refers to "key users" without any discussion of who these might be, and refers to "improved understanding and better coherence" sometimes as an output and sometimes as an outcome. Importantly it also lacked a rationale for the choice of partner countries. The project's design phase predated the adoption of theories of change as a standard DFID tool and, in our judgement, suffered from it. Finally it is worth noting that although, the project did make disaggregated data slightly more widely available, its design included no explicit steps to address gender and equity issues.

There is strong evidence that the project was largely **effective in achieving its logframe outputs in partner countries**. There were improvements to national data repositories and an international website was created. Furthermore NSO staff were trained in SDMX and metadata compilation and common SDMX data structures were developed. The evaluation did raise some specific issues on the organisation of the *CountryData* website and the supporting metadata; these were partially corrected during the evaluation process.

Evidence of **effectiveness was harder to find for achieving outcomes** than for outputs. The improved websites produced by the project were more coherent and made MDG metadata more accessible but we found **little evidence that these websites were accessed** by important potential users or those providing such users with data. International organisations do make some limited use of websites and this use is increasing but there has **not yet been a significant impact on the burden of international data collections**. Finally although there is evidence of some reductions in the size of discrepancies between national and international estimates there is **no evidence of a reduction in the proportion of series with discrepancies**.

There is therefore strong evidence that the **management and governance** structures were effective in achieving outputs, using a contract modality, but not that the structures and processes were effective in promoting outcomes. In particular the **steering group acted as an advisory body rather than in a governance role**. The relative neglect of outcomes was reinforced by the output focus in the current format of DFID annual reviews. The MoU system promoted strong accountability and transparency to partner country NSOs but accountability to other stakeholders was weaker.

There is **strong evidence of cost efficiency**. Expenditure followed budgets and that the project management took successful actions to promote cost efficiency, in particular the project avoided planned consultancy costs by making use of the existing DevInfo national data repositories - and their existing developer - and by working through MoUs with NSOs. However, the project did experience some delays in delivery. Initial visits and other inception activities took longer than planned and development work on IT systems continued until the end of the project. This squeezed out time for some critical planned activities concerned with achieving longer-term outcomes and sustainability.

As with any project, it is only really possible to assess **sustainability** years after completion. NSOs have certainly made commitments to maintain outputs. However, the lack of an established user community, and of a separate sustainability strategy or time to implement it, mean that sustainability

will, in our judgement, be dependent on the follow up project. However, we did note that many of the planned activities connected with sustainability were not undertaken due to lack of time, including advocacy plans and dissemination.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The report presents ten short and medium term recommendations aimed at a variety of audiences in section four. The four **short term** recommendations (1-4) are focused on a limited number of practical actions that UNSD can take in the post-project period to move the agenda forward. These recommendations were shared with UNSD early in the evaluation process and some have already been acted on

The next four medium **term** recommendations (5-8) reflect lessons of the UNSD/DFID project which, in the judgment of the evaluation team, are of relevance to the design of the projects and programs to support SDG monitoring currently being prepared and in particular to the design of a follow-on UNSD/DFID project that DFID is contemplating. Some of these recommendations are also relevant to the design of other statistical projects.

The final two medium term recommendations (9-10) address the wider context of the role of international organisations in the international statistical system. The changes advocated cannot be implemented by UNSD and DFID Statisticians alone. Instead we are recommending that UNSD and DFID statisticians attempt to influence the international statistical community, especially the UN Statistical Commission and the International Agencies producing statistics, and suggesting how they might do this.

Each **recommendation** about *what* should be done is accompanied by a **justification** explaining *why* it should be done and by **suggestions** about *how* to take the recommendation forward.

The recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: Pending longer-term decisions on the future of the CountryData website, small but critical improvements should be made to make it easier for users to examine indicators by MDG goal within a country or across all countries.

Recommendation 2: The discrepancies data already gathered in the project should be further investigated and disseminated as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 3: UNSD should encourage the partner countries to provide prominent links from their national data repositories to CountryData and its successors to demonstrate their awareness of the alternative international estimates to users.

Recommendation 4: UNSD should seek new funding to continue and expand capacity development on metadata documentation and data transfer systems

Recommendation 5: We recommend that all statistical projects should develop an explicit and realistic theory of change (ToC) including assumptions and risks, consult stakeholders on this ToC as part of the project design phase, and review the links between outputs, outcomes and impacts on an annual basis.

Recommendation 6: We recommend that statistical projects should clearly identify expected data users as part of the project design phase. If improved decision making or policy formation is part of the justification for the project, design documents should describe how it is believed targeted data users obtain and use data at the moment and how their behaviour

is expected to change as a result of the project. Use of the project's outputs should be monitored as a logframe indicator.

Recommendation 7: We support the Governance Structure that has been proposed for the new UNSD/DFID SDG indicator dissemination project but suggest an explicit identification of responsibilities for governance as posed to management and some steps that might provide incentives for all participants to take an active role.

Recommendation 8: We recommend that Statistical capacity building activities allow some self-selection of participants and use both global and regional approaches to training.

Recommendation 9: UNSD and DFID Statisticians should try to influence the international statistical community, in particular the Statistics Commission and the international agencies producing statistics, to establish and promulgate a principle that it is legitimate for estimates of identical statistical concepts to differ when they have been produced for different purposes.

Recommendation 10: UNSD and DFID Statisticians should take steps to encourage greater methodological transparency among international agencies producing statistics.

Recommendation 9 is the most novel of the recommendations and so deserves some justification here. As remarked above we expect that differences between national and international estimates will persist and believe that there are legitimate reasons for these differences. However they have caused tension between NSIs and International Agencies in the past and there is also a danger that some users faced with apparently conflicting estimates, will conclude that one of the parties producing them must simply be wrong and that this will undermine trust in and use of data. These tensions and dangers might be averted by the public acceptance that such differences are a normal and legitimate feature of statistical production.

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List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
API	Application programming interface
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCSA	Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (UN)
CSF	Community Systems Foundation
DevInfo	MDG database for public, published by UNSD (http://www.DevInfo.org)
DFID	Department for International Development (of the United Kingdom)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DSD	Data structure definition
EMIS	Education management information system
EQ	Evaluation question
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN)
FOC	Friends of the Chair
GDP	Gross domestic product
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
GSSDP	Ghana Statistical Development Programme
HMIS	Health management information system
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IEAG	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDGs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	Intermediate (project) output
ISO	International Standards Organisation
IT	Information technology
KNDI	Key National Development Indicator (Thailand)
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LO	Longer-term outcome (of the project)

LSB	Lao PDR Statistics Bureau
LSIS	Lao Social Indicator Survey
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDGLabs	Database published by UNSD pilot project, (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdglabs)
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports (Uganda)
MOFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Uganda)
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NSDS	National statistical development strategy
NSO	National statistical office
NSS	National statistical system
OC	Main project outcome
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
OT	Main project output
PNSD	Plan for National Statistical Development
post-2015	Post-MDGs (SDGs)
PPBME	Policy Planning Budgeting Monitoring and Evaluation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange http://sdmx.org/
SDMX-ML	XML format of SDMX
SDMX-RI	SDMX Reference Infrastructure
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SEQAS	DFID Specialist Evaluation and Quality Assurance Services
STEA	Science, Technology and Environment Agency
ToR	Terms of Reference

UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UN CountryData	International website of this project, http://data.un.org/countryData/
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNSD	UN Statistics Division
WHO	World Health Organization
XML	eXtensible Markup Language
XSL	eXtensible Stylesheet Language
XSLFO	XSL Formatting Objects
XSLT	XSL Transformations

1 Introduction

1.1 Origins of this evaluation

OPM has been contracted to carry out a final evaluation of the UNSD–DFID project entitled ‘Improving the collation, availability and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs’ (hereafter referred to in this report as ‘the UNSD–DFID project or simply ‘the project’). The main aims of the project were: to develop a centralised data platform for use for monitoring national development indicators (including the MDG indicators) in 11 project countries; and to improve understanding, and promote reduction, of discrepancies between country and international data through the collation and dissemination of data and metadata.

This evaluation was commissioned by DFID on behalf of a joint UNSD–DFID Evaluation Management Group that was created to manage this evaluation.¹

1.2 Evaluation purpose, objectives and use

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide accountability for funding, inform decisions regarding next steps, and provide broader lessons for work with SDGs post-2015. The evaluation has both summative and formative elements, given that UNSD and DFID are considering the options for a follow-on project.

The specific objectives (taken from the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation) are:

- (i) to assess how well the project improved the collation, availability and dissemination of data for monitoring national development indicators (including the MDG indicators) among the 11 project countries;
- (ii) to assess the relevance of the programme in the context of the evolving statistical capacity development agenda;
- (iii) to provide guidance on how the programme could be strengthened and improved in the future; and
- (iv) to assess the governance and management of the project.

The UNSD project team and the DFID Data for Development team funding the project have been identified as the primary intended users of the evaluation. Other primary stakeholders include the NSOs of the 11 project countries; other ministries reporting MDG indicators; and the UNSD directorate. Indirect stakeholders who are an important audience for lessons learned include staff responsible for collating MDGs and acting as the secretariat for the development of the post-2015 SDGs within UNSD.

The results of the evaluation will be used, at a minimum:

- by UNSD and DFID to make decisions on the project follow-up; and
- by DFID as part of its accountability to the UK public in regard to aid money.

¹ Evaluation independence has been promoted mainly through the hiring of an independent evaluation team and by allowing and facilitating the team to do its work in an independent manner. Information has been freely shared with the evaluation team and no pressure has been put on the team to modify our findings or conclusions in any way.

1.3 Changes to ToR

The ToR, provided in Annex A, were slightly modified in the inception phase as outlined in the Inception Report. Two key changes were as follows:

- Given the scope and time-frame of the UNSD–DFID project, it was agreed that it was not realistic to investigate project impact.²
- New evaluation sub-questions were added regarding SDMX, a major activity of the project not adequately covered in the original ToR.

1.4 Background and context

In September 2000 leaders from 189 nations agreed on a vision for the future. This vision took the shape of eight MDGs, which provided a framework of time-bound targets by which progress on development could be measured. To help track progress on the commitments made in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (in the year 2000), international and national statistical experts selected more than 60 **MDG indicators** to be used to assess progress over the period from 1990 to 2015, when targets were expected to be met. Each year the Secretary General presented a report to the United Nations General Assembly on progress achieved towards implementing the Declaration, based on data on the selected indicators, aggregated at global and regional levels.

The UNSD maintains a database containing the data series related to the MDGs. Indicators are supplied by designated international agencies but these agencies frequently have to resort to modelling to obtain the timely, consistent series they need. Moreover, most MDG data are reported through parallel systems (often through direct contact between each ‘lead international agency’, such as the WHO and its counterpart in the relevant national ministry), leading to a confusing plethora of data sources and definitions for many indicators.

MDG indicators, like most indicators published by NSOs in developed countries, are time series. However, most developing country NSOs have traditionally published one-off survey reports or other datasets relating to a short time period. These report and datasets are not always revised. One early step to develop a capacity to store indicator data was the UN Children’s Fund’s (UNICEF’s) 1995 launch of a database called ChildInfo, to monitor the World Summit for Children goals. ChildInfo was later upgraded to DevInfo, a software application for data storage, access and dissemination of human development indicators – specifically, the MDGs. Although many countries have adopted DevInfo, or developed their own equivalents, the data in their own databases often vary significantly from those created and used by international organisations. This can create many problems for analysts who attempt to use the data.

The MDG period came to an end in 2015 and the MDGs will be replaced by SDGs. There are 17 SDGs and 169 targets in the document which has been proposed by the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, which was agreed by the UN General Assembly in September (UN SDG Summit, 2015). The establishment of indicators for the SDGs is currently under discussion. What is already clear, however, is that the burden of data collection and reporting is likely to significantly increase, and there are likely to be numerous challenges in defining indicators, methods and data sources. As well as an increase in the number of indicators, there is stronger demand for the data to be disaggregated by a wide range of variables, including by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other

² However, the evaluation does cover the issues listed under ‘impact’ in the ToR, under the heading of effectiveness. The evaluation uses standard international evaluation definitions of effectiveness and impact (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), 2002).

characteristics relevant in national contexts. UNSC has released a list of indicators for consideration and recommends that ‘all indicators should be disaggregated by sex, age, residence (urban/rural) and other characteristics, as relevant and possible’. For example, it suggests that the UNSC recommends that the SDG indicator on poverty should also be disaggregated by employment status.³

1.4.1 Description of the project being evaluated

The UNSD-DFID project entitled ‘Improving the collation, availability and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs’ was established in January 2010 and finished in January 2015. The project was implemented by the UNSD, with financial support from DFID’s Data for Development Team, and had a budget of \$6.2 million. The main problem the project was intended to address was that many of the MDG indicators used at the international level were unrecognisable to national officials in the countries that they were supposed to be describing. The intention was to help resolve this problem by establishing a channel for data and **metadata** dissemination at the country level, and between the country and international levels. This was eventually supposed to result in better use of data for policy-making at country and international level.

Metadata are ‘data about data’. There are two main types of metadata. Structural metadata defines the structure of statistical data sets and metadata sets, i.e. where to find a particular value in the dataset. Reference metadata describe the contents and quality of the statistical data. Reference metadata can include: conceptual metadata – describing the concepts used and their practical implementation; methodological metadata – describing methods used for generation of the data; and quality metadata – describing the different quality dimensions of the resulting statistics (such as timeliness and accuracy). Reference metadata may refer to specific statistical data, entire data collections or even to an institution that provides data. International standards for metadata are maintained and promoted by the Data Documentation Initiative (<http://www.ddialliance.org/what>) and the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (<http://dublincore.org/>).

The project logical framework (logframe) is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: UNSD/DFID project logframe: version from February 2014

Logframe level	Indicators	Notes, assumptions and risks
IMPACT	Impact Indicator 1	Note
Better evidence-informed policy-making	Score for use of evidence in policy-making process (global figure)*	* This is a high-level impact measure – project activities are related to this impact but the project score is not based upon changes in this measure
OUTCOME	Outcome Indicator 1	Assumptions
Improved access to more coherent MDG and other key national development indicators	The number of health and education line ministries submitting national MDG indicators to the national repository at least once per year	Data will be used effectively by policy-makers
	Outcome Indicator 2	
	The number of national MDG indicators in the international repository (UN CountryData)	
	Outcome Indicator 3	
	The number of hits per month for the international repository (UN CountryData)	

³ <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/150116-Indicators-and-a-Monitoring-Framework-for-SDGs-working-draft-for-consultation.pdf>.

Logframe level	Indicators	Notes, assumptions and risks
OUTPUT 1	Output Indicator 1.1	Assumption
Centralised data platform for use at the country level	The time lag between updating of national MDG data and updating of national repository	Political will exists among line ministries to use data platform. Proper incentives are identified. There is capacity to update and implement platforms
Impact Weight	Output Indicator 1.2	Risk rating
45%	The number of project countries that have established a national repository	Low risk – Cambodia, Thailand, Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, Laos, Palestine Medium risk – Ghana, Vietnam, Liberia, Morocco High risk – None Overall risk – Low
OUTPUT 2	Output Indicator 2.1	Assumptions
Improved understanding of discrepancies and better coherence of data	The number of project countries with metadata produced and disseminated that meet UNSD standards	There will be increased awareness and understanding of the importance of metadata to understand indicators. A culture of metadata is established
Impact Weight	Output indicator 2.2	Risk rating
20%	Percentage of national MDG ‘core’ indicators for which metadata are reported in the international repository (UN CountryData)	Low risk – Cambodia, Thailand, Burundi, Uganda, Laos, Ghana, Palestine, Vietnam Medium risk – Morocco, Rwanda, Vietnam High risk – Liberia. Additional risk because success partially depends on output 1. Overall risk – Medium
OUTPUT 3	Output Indicator 3.1	Assumptions
Collation and dissemination of data and metadata at the international level, including national estimates.	Percent of national MDG ‘core’ indicators with discrepancies reported in the international repository (UN CountryData)	International community is interested in national-level estimates. There are incentives for countries to report in a timely fashion to UNSD. There is buy-in from international agencies
Impact Weight	Output Indicator 3.2	RISK RATING
35%	The time lag between updating of national MDG ‘core’ indicators in the national repository and updating of the international repository (UN CountryData) for project countries	Low risk – Cambodia, Morocco, Laos, Palestine Medium risk – Burundi, Ghana, Liberia, Rwanda, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam High risk – None. Additional risk because success partially depends on output 1. Medium risk for buy-in from agencies – UNSD mitigating risk by involving agencies through Steering Committee and direct contact.
	Output Indicator 3.3	Overall risk – Low
	The number of project countries integrated into the international repository (UN CountryData)	

Source: DFID project logframe. Specific targets and inputs have been removed for space reasons. The full logframe is available in Annexe I

The project was preceded by a pilot in 2008–9. The pilot phase focused on 18 ‘core’ MDG indicators and investigated data discrepancies between national and MDG-reported data for five pilot countries (Bolivia, Cambodia, Liberia, Morocco and Tanzania). It produced a new website, *MDGLabs* (unstats.un.org/unsd/mdglabs), which is still accessible but which has been ‘frozen’ since the pilot project finished. The information gathered during the pilot phase was used to design the current project.

The current project was expanded from the original five pilot countries to Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. However, the NSO in Bolivia decided not to participate further, and Kenya and Tanzania subsequently dropped out and were replaced by Ghana and Palestine. The final total was 11 participating countries.

The main project activities and key outputs are shown in the timeline in Table 2.

In summary:

- the project has provided training and technical and material assistance to the 11 countries to support their efforts to improve or (in a few cases) develop online data repositories through which users can access MDG indicator data and metadata. In particular they have helped countries prepare metadata handbooks that follow international guidelines;
- the project has created a website called CountryData (<http://data.un.org/countryData>) linked to these data repositories where these country data and metadata are compared to the ‘official’ MDG indicators as presented in the UNSD’s website at mdgs.un.org, and where the differences between the two are analysed and explained; and
- in most cases the portal websites used were versions of UNICEF’s DevInfo website. These are linked to the central CountryData website using a technology for data and metadata transmission called SDMX. SDMX is a set of technical standards and statistical guidelines developed to facilitate the exchange of statistical data and metadata using modern information technology, with an emphasis on aggregated data (i.e. indicators and time series). It is guided by the SDMX initiative and endorsed by, among others, the UN, World Bank, IMF, and Eurostat.

The project was delivered by UNSD staff working with the NSOs of the 11 countries involved. UNSD signed MoUs with most of these offices, under which they provided payments tied to milestones, such as the creation of the metadata handbooks. The UNSD also paid the Community Systems Foundation (CSF)⁴ to add links to SDMX to the DevInfo software and engaged consultants to provide assistance to some NSOs in certain tasks.

⁴ CSF is a not-for-profit organisation with extensive experience of producing web-based software for organisations in the UN family, most notably the UNICEF DevInfo package that was used for most of the national data repositories and the UNSD’s own MDG website.

Table 2: Project activities

Key activities		Key outputs
Project meeting, Steering Committee meeting (February)	2010	
Kick-off meetings for the Asian region (March) and African region (October)		
Assessment missions in Cambodia, Kenya, Thailand		
MoU signed with Cambodia, implementation starts		
Procurement completed for implementation in Cambodia		
Development of prototype data exchange system and CountryData website		
Project meeting (February)	2011	
Assessment missions in remaining countries		
		First version of data exchange system, testing data exchange with Cambodia
Continuing development of SDMX Registry and related modules for DevInfo v6		
Design, development and testing of data exchange platform and CountryData website		
		CountryData goes live
Implementation starts in Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda		
Project meeting (February)	2012	
Kenya and Tanzania replaced by Ghana and Palestine		
Ongoing development, refinement of CountryData		
		Data exchange with nine countries; 10 repositories online
MoUs in place in seven countries		
Three national metadata workshops conducted		
Workshop on advanced XML technologies		
Training and installation missions		
Major overhaul of DevInfo		
DevInfo v7 released		
SDMX Registry redesigned		
SDMX Mapping Tool developed for the project		
Project meeting, Steering Committee meeting (February)	2013	
		Four global workshops (March, July, November), one international workshop on advanced IT technologies (October)
One UNSD–Economic and Social Commission for West Africa (ESCWA) joint international workshop		
Two national metadata workshops		
Two country study visits		
		Data exchange with all 11 countries, including customised solutions in Thailand and Morocco
Metadata exchange with seven countries		
Ongoing refinement of DevInfo SDMX Registry and Mapping Tool		

Key activities		Key outputs
Ongoing development of CountryData		
Project extended until January 2015	2014	
Project meeting, Steering Committee meeting (March)		
		CountryData and UNdata SDMX application programming interface (API) goes live
CountryData integrated with MDG Labs, new version goes live		
Final global workshop (Apr)		
Ongoing work on metadata in Ghana, Uganda, Liberia, Morocco and other countries		
Work on SDMX visualisations		

Source: UNSD presentation to October 2015 Directors Meeting. Key outputs column added by evaluation team

1.5 Evaluation approach and methodology

The project evaluation is a utilisation-focused, theory-based evaluation.

1.5.1 Utilisation focus

The philosophy of the evaluation is ‘utilisation-focused’ in the sense defined by Quinn Patton (2002): i.e. the evaluation aims to be useful to the project staff and funders, by providing a joint learning process and by producing recommendations for immediate actions that can build on project successes, as well as learning lessons for further work in this area.⁵ The key steps in the approach are shown the table below derived from Quinn Patton (2002, 2008), together with the actions the evaluation took to implement them.

⁵ The approach and methods of the evaluation are described in more detail in the Inception Report.

Table 3: Elements of utilisation-focused evaluation: main steps taken and planned in this evaluation

Quinn Patton checklist for utilisation-focused evaluation	Actions
1. Programme/organisational readiness assessment (Sept–Oct 2014)	The nature of the utilisation-focused evaluation was explained to UNSD and DFID during the initiation phase of the evaluation. UNSD and DFID themselves were identified as the primary intended users of the evaluation (in the ToR) and their readiness to participate was indicated by their acceptance of the Inception Report.
2. Evaluator readiness and capability assessment (Sept–Oct 2014)	The evaluation team's commitment to utilisation-focused evaluation was recorded in the Inception Report. The team's evaluation expert is experienced in utilisation-focused evaluation.
3. Identification of primary intended users (September 2014)	The UNSD project team and the DFID Global Statistics team funding the project were identified as the primary intended users of the evaluation (ToR, Annex A). Other direct and indirect stakeholders were listed in Section 1.1 of the Inception Report.
4. Situational analysis (inception phase, mid-September 2014)	<p>The primary users (above) are very knowledgeable about the subject of the project, but are relatively new to systematic evaluation. Opportunities to utilise the findings are supported by the prospect of a follow-on project to support SDG measurement but limited by the relatively narrow scope of both the current and possible future projects compared to the wider ambition to improve evidence use in policy-making. Budget resources for the evaluation were identified in the ToR. No significant political factors were identified.</p> <p>Important events identified were the project meeting of directors of statistics from project countries in New York in October 2014, the pre-project meetings before the Statistical Commission at the end of February 2015, and the presentation of the business case for the new project to ministers at the end of 2015.</p>
5. Identification of primary intended uses (identified in ToR, and in inception phase, mid-September 2014)	<p>The intended uses of the evaluation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide accountability for DFID funding; • to inform decisions (by UNSD, DFID and partner countries) on next steps after this project; and • to provide broader lessons from the project, in particular for designers of post-2015 indicators.
6. Focusing the evaluation	Evaluation questions and an evaluation matrix were first proposed in the initiation phase of the evaluation and then refined during discussions with the Evaluation Management Group in February and March 2015. Box 1 below shows the main evaluation questions and the intended uses. The evaluation matrix (Annex C) sets out the questions to be answered in more detail, based on an iterative process of discussion with UNSD and DFID. The suggested report structure was also shared with DFID.
7. Evaluation design (September to October 2014)	The primary users suggested methods and data sources during the evaluation design, and commented on the credibility and practicality of the evaluation matrix. Internal and external quality assurance for the evaluation provides an independent check on professional principles and standards.
8. Simulation of use	Initial findings were shared with the Evaluation Management Group during October 2014 and immediately after country visits in February 2015, to assess their usefulness.
9/10. Data collection and analysis	Data collection and analysis was discussed with primary users during the inception phase and in subsequent Skype meetings in February, March, and August 2015. Several findings were revised in the light of comments from users. Subsequent data analysis was organised to facilitate use by the primary intended users and findings, interpretation, judgements, and recommendations are distinguished in this report

11. Facilitation of use	We have worked with DFID directly on the utilisation of evaluation findings in the design of a follow-up project. We have also presented findings from the data gathered during the project and examined during the evaluation to UNSD Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) members and NSO directors at a meeting arranged by UNSD prior to the 2015 Statistical Commission.
12. Follow-up	This falls outside the time period of evaluation activities to date.

* Notes on table: steps are numbered following the checklist by Michael Quinn Patton (2002) and the observations in the right-hand column relate to tasks from that checklist. Steps 1 and 2 are omitted as they relate to activities undertaken prior to the evaluation. Step 12 is called 'meta evaluation' in the Quinn Patton framework but as the term 'meta evaluation' usually refers to something else Step 12 has been renamed 'follow-up' here.

1.5.2 Theory-based

The evaluation is theory-based in that it has developed a theory of change and systematically tested the assumptions in that theory of change. A theory of change is a way of describing the logic – explicit or implicit – which underpins a set of activities that are intended to lead to a long-term objective, and the assumptions which are being made.⁶ (Vogel, 2012). An initial theory of change was first proposed in the initiation phase of the project and then refined during discussions with the Evaluation Management Group in February and March 2015. To avoid repetition, the theory of change is presented in the discussion section (Section 3), where a discussion of the evidence regarding each assumption and link is presented.

The evaluation set out to use contribution analysis to assess the project contribution to outputs and outcomes. Contribution analysis is an approach to applying the principles of theory-based evaluation (Mayne, 2012). It assesses causal chains from beginning to end, reports on whether the intended changes occurred or not, and identifies the main contributions to such changes, including the intervention being evaluated. The approach has six main steps (Mayne 2012):

- a) setting out the cause–effect issue to be addressed;
- b) developing the postulated theory of change and risks to it, including rival explanations;
- c) gathering the existing evidence on the theory of change;
- d) assembling and assessing the contribution story, and challenges to it (if needed, the theory of change is refined and updated);
- e) seeking out additional evidence (determining what kind of additional evidence is needed to enhance the credibility of the contribution claim; gathering new evidence); and
- f) revising and strengthening the contribution story.

Steps a), b), and part of c) are shown in this report. In practice, however, only limited progress was made in terms of achieving the project's longer-term outcomes, while the responsibility for most project outputs was clear. The only contribution that had to be assessed was therefore the project's contribution to setting up the national data repositories.

1.5.3 Evaluation questions and evaluation matrix

The evaluation questions and evaluation matrix were developed in detail during the inception phase of the evaluation, based on:

- international evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (OECD-DAC, 2002);

⁶ Defined in Vogel, Isabel (2012) 'Review of the use of "Theory of Change" in international development'. [Online]. Available from: r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/mis_spc/DFID_ToC_Review_VogelV7.pdf.

- a review of the project document and logframe (DFID, undated a and b);
- the assumptions identified in the theory of change (Figure 1);
- discussions between the evaluation team and the UNSD project team;
- comments on zero and first drafts of the evaluation matrix by the DFID Data for Development team staff and the UNSD team; and
- DFID's Specialist Evaluation and Quality Assurance Services' (SEQAS') comments on the first draft evaluation matrix and list of assumptions.

The evaluation criteria and main questions addressed are summarised in Box 1.

Box 1: Evaluation criteria, main evaluation questions to be addressed in this evaluation, and relevant uses (*in italics*)

RELEVANCE

1. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to global needs and demand?

– Recommendations for how project can contribute lessons to global agenda in final months

– Improved design of any follow-on project (including gender and equity considerations)

2. Is the project likely to be able to make a useful contribution to the post-2015 agenda?

– Recommendations for how project can contribute lessons to improve post-2015 indicators and their management

3. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to the needs and demands of the selected partner countries?

– Recommendations for how any follow-on project can improve design to be more relevant and effective in partner countries.

– Lessons for choice of partner countries and of partners within countries.

EFFECTIVENESS

4. Was the project effective in achieving its **outputs**?

– Provide transparent accountability to funders and partners for planned outputs

– Lessons about intermediate outputs (e.g. software, training) and how important and effective they were in reaching main project outputs.

5. How effective has the project been in achieving its main **outcomes**, i.e. the coherence and accessibility of countries' MDG and other key national development indicators?

– Immediate recommendations for project actions to strengthen outcomes (for example communication of lessons, or further stakeholder engagement)

– Lessons for design of any follow-on project

– Lessons for other programmes intended to improve dissemination of statistics

6. What aspects of project design and implementation have made the project more or less effective in achieving the above outputs and outcomes?

– Lessons for any follow-on project regarding factors which led to successful and less successful outcomes, in particular in relation to management, governance, partnerships and communication

EFFICIENCY

7. Has the project been reasonably cost-effective?

– Lessons for any follow-on project about factors which led to greater or less cost-effectiveness

IMPACT

DFID have indicated that this evaluation should not consider impact.

SUSTAINABILITY

8. To what extent are the results of the project likely to be sustained?

– Lessons about design of any follow-on project

– Immediate recommendations regarding any changes needed to ensure that project outputs will be fully used

The evaluation matrix contains six columns:

- evaluation questions (EQs);
- proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report);
- indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report);

- balance of evidence;
- supportive evidence; and
- main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used).

Note that the structure of the first five columns represents a move from one to many, i.e. there are several bases of judgement for each evaluation question, several indicators for each basis of judgement, a mix of supporting and opposing evidence for each indicator, and several pieces of supportive evidence on each side. However, there is a one-to-one mapping as regards the indicators and the main information sources.

The full evaluation matrix, with evidence for each question, is presented in Annex C.

1.5.4 Data collection and analysis

The data collection methods were determined by the data needs and sources set out in the evaluation matrix and are discussed in detail in the Inception Report. Key data sources included:

1. Review of documentation: in particular project monitoring reports, country progress reports, and records of key decisions taken within the project. UNSD has provided us with 3,365 files, covering every aspect of the project.
2. Review of data and metadata on the UN CountryData website <http://data.un.org/countryData/> (including all the explanations for discrepancies) and the national websites, where accessible (the national data repository for Morocco is not kept online).
3. A comparison of data on the UN CountryData website and data contained in an older database MDGLabs <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdglabs> (to see if data discrepancies have been reduced).
4. Observation of the Project Partner (Heads of Dissemination) meeting for the 11 partner countries in New York in October 2013, and individual interviews, wherever possible.
5. Presentation of lessons from analysis of discrepancies and subsequent discussions with country representatives and members of the IAEG on MDG indicator measurement at a side meeting during the Statistics Commission sessions in New York on 26 February 2015.
6. Semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders, including: the members of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) and IAEG; key members of the Steering Committee, including the heads of statistics/information from UNICEF and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the African Development Bank (AfDB); the UNSD staff collating the MDGs and working on the post-2015 agenda; and DevInfo contacts working on the project.
7. Short online questionnaires.
8. Country case studies in six countries. The criteria for selection of case study countries included⁷:
 - a spread of middle and low income countries;
 - geographical representation of Africa and Asia;
 - a spread of countries starting early in the project and those joining later;
 - a spread of countries with higher and lower IT and statistical coordination experience;
 - a spread of success in explaining MDG discrepancies and obtaining health and education ministries' data;
 - a spread of countries using DevInfo and other database platforms;

⁷ The selection of countries against these criteria is discussed further in the Inception Report.

- geographical clustering to investigate regional effects (e.g. training of one country statistical office by another) and reduce case study visit costs through geographical clustering; and
- the potential for lessons.

The final country case studies were Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Ghana, Rwanda and Uganda.

All data and documents collected were systematically filed in a confidential [DropBox](#) site shared by the independent evaluation team. The strength of the evidence is systematically assessed against each evaluation question in the evaluation matrix in Annex C and is also mentioned where relevant throughout the text.

1.6 Organisation and timing of the evaluation

1.6.1 Team composition/roles and responsibilities

Matthew Powell: team leader, responsible for project management, data collection, and report. Matthew is a senior economic statistician and national accountant with over 20 years of high-level experience in developed and developing country NSOs. Since joining OPM he has worked on the design and management of programmes to improve national statistical systems (NSSs) and the capacity to monitor development goals; on evaluations of statistical capacity building programmes; on diagnostic assessments of statistical systems; and on statistical capacity building projects with NSOs and line ministries.

Hermann Haberman: statistical policy expert, responsible for soundness of statistical conclusions and recommendations. Hermann has extensive experience of statistical management at the highest levels in the USA and within the United Nations system. *He is a former Director of UNSD, a role he held for eight years.* Since then he has been Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the US Census Bureau. Prior to heading the UNSD he served as the Chief Statistician in the Executive Office of the President of the USA, where he coordinated and provided leadership to ensure the integrity, objectivity, impartiality, and confidentiality of the US Federal statistical system.

Julia Compton: responsible for developing evaluation methodology and frameworks and adherence to sound methodology. Julia is an independent evaluation professional with over 30 years of experience in international development, working within varied environments, from villages to governments. She has extensive experience of working in a national and international policy environment. Julia has been team leader and lead consultant on several large evaluations and spent five years (2004–2009) managing evaluations and evaluation teams at DFID, including two years as Deputy Head (Policy) of DFID's Evaluation Department.

Stratos Nikoloutsos: responsible for advice on SDMX. Stratos is an IT professional with extensive experience in the development of SDMX technology and tools, and particularly in supporting its development and use by Eurostat. He has also worked with OPM in providing statistical capacity building services to developing countries, in particular Barbados. Stratos is an employee of Agilis S.A., a consulting firm in Athens that specialises in statistical IT systems.

Shuang (Yo-Yo) Chen: responsible for interviews in Rwanda. Yo-Yo is a consultant in OPM's Official Statistics Portfolio. She has extensive experience in international development, specialising in statistical capacity building and policy research. Previously she worked at OECD/PARIS21 delivering technical assistance to national statistical offices across Asia and Africa.

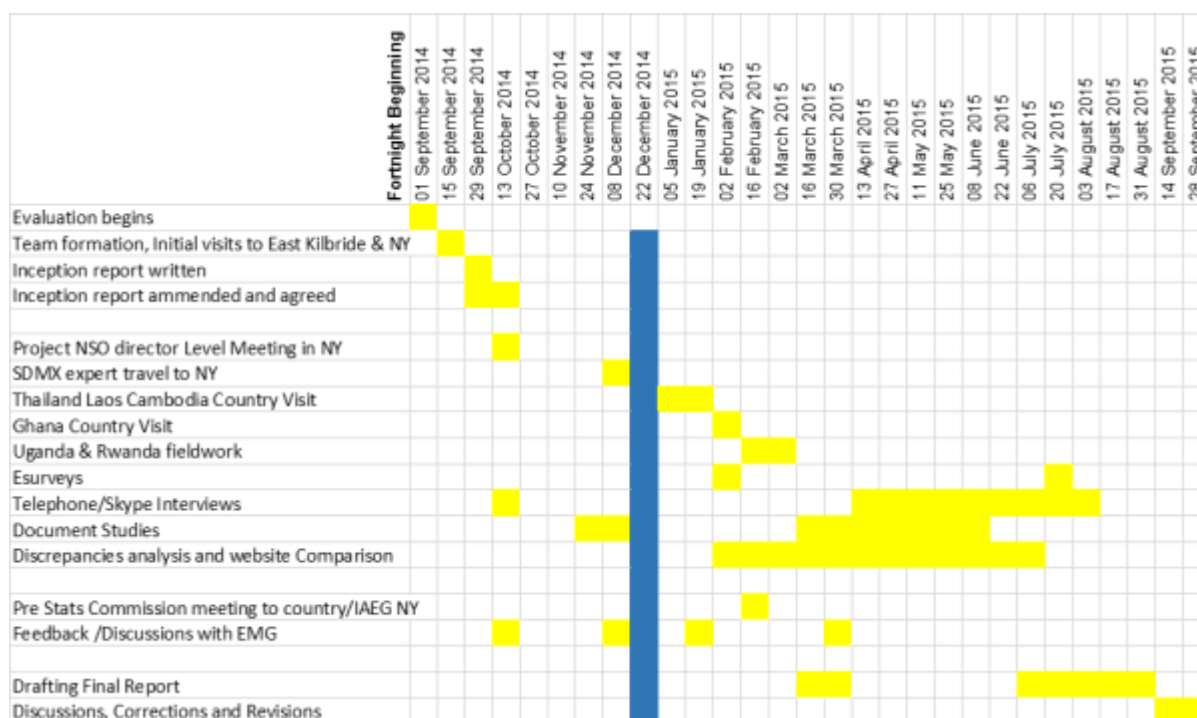
Evarist Mwesigye: responsible for interviews in Uganda. Evarist is a public management specialist based in Uganda. Evarist has over 20 years of hands-on working experience in governments in several countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. His specialities include accountability and transparency; institutional assessments; project management; capacity building and hands-on training. Evarist is a founding member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda. He served on the council of the Institute for over 10 years.

1.6.2 Evaluation timeline

Figure 1 below shows the timeline for the evaluation. Initial visits to DFID and UNSD almost immediately after the beginning of the evaluation were followed by intensive discussions to develop and agree the Inception Report. This in turn was immediately followed by a return to New York for discussions with project staff, participating countries, and some IAEG members at a meeting of the country directors from partner countries. At the meeting the initial evaluation plan was extended to include an expert in SDMX, who was engaged in November and visited UNSD in mid-December. Initial plans for country visits before Christmas were delayed until January due to the team leader’s illness, while the visit to Ghana took place at the beginning of February. Initial conclusions from the fieldwork were discussed with the evaluation management group immediately afterwards. At the same time the evaluation team began to analyse the data on discrepancies which is held on the CountryData website, and began a small eSurvey investigating the aspects of statistical quality that were important to countries and international institutions. Results from this analysis were presented to a meeting of IAEG members and NSO directors at a pre-meeting of the 2015 Statistical Commission meeting arranged by UNSD. The same meeting also provided an opportunity for further discussion of emerging findings with UNSD staff. Interviews with NSO and line ministry staff in Uganda and Rwanda were conducted in late February and early March, followed by further discussions with the Evaluation Management Group in April.

At this point the evaluation was put on hold due to an unforeseen medical crisis in the team leader’s family. There was some limited work analysing discrepancies and gathering data in May and June but drafting of the final report was not fully resumed until July.

Figure 1: Timeline for evaluation activities



1.6.3 Main limitations of, or constraints on, the evaluation

The main constraints have included:

- Although there is a project monitoring framework that contains baseline data for some specific indicators, no baseline (pre-project) information is available for many of the issues that were investigated in the evaluation. The evaluation team attempted to construct a plausible narrative of project baselines from the various data sources listed in the evaluation matrix, including project records and records of other meetings, key informant interviews and recall (Bamberger, Rugh, Church, *et al.*, 2004), and to investigate alternative hypotheses to explain observed outcomes. Nevertheless, the lack of baseline data collection placed limitations on the strength of evidence that could be assembled.
- Well-known limitations in regard to the collection of qualitative data (respondent bias, recall errors and biases, etc.) apply to our interview data. Administrative data from the project (e.g. minutes of meetings) are also open to bias and lack of completeness. We have triangulated findings insofar as possible and have clearly indicated where findings are based on limited data, as well as the direction of possible biases, where applicable.
- The main intended outcome of the project is a sustained increase in capability to maintain and develop the project outputs. The only certain way of establishing whether or not this sustained capability was actually developed will be to return to the evaluation several years after the end of the project. Because this is not possible we instead have had to make judgements based on our discussions during the country visits and past experiences with statistical capacity development.

1.7 Structure of the report

The remainder of the report consists of three sections:

Section 2: This is a discussion section, which summarises and interprets the findings.


Section 3: This provides a more detailed description of our findings, following the structure of the evaluation questions and sub-questions.

Section 4: The last section sets out lessons and recommendations.

The annexes contain: the ToR; a table presenting the number of the indicators used for the SDGs and MDGs; a filled version of the evaluation matrix; the theory of change as at the date of the inception report; reports from the case study countries (and an analysis of those reports); the report of the SDMX expert; a report on the eSurveys carried out; a document analysis showing the state of the national data repositories in the final and initial country visit reports; and the full project logframe.


1.8 Assessment of evidence

The evidence for the evaluation questions and theory of change assumptions in this report have been categorised according to the following scheme:

 **Strong** evidence of a **positive** conclusion or an assumption maintained. Evidence is considered **strong** if it is drawn from written documents or direct observations of websites triangulated and confirmed by other documents, by discussions with informants and/or responses from eSurveys. In a few cases negative evidence has also been considered as strong. In such cases the evidence is the failure to find evidence where we might expect it. Examples





include the failure of internet searches or informants interviews to identify equivalents of the international data portal and the failure of international SDMX experts to be aware of other programmes training the project countries in SDMX.

 **Strong** evidence of a **negative** evaluation or assumption not maintained.

 **Moderate** evidence of a **positive** conclusion or an assumption maintained. Evidence is considered moderate if it is drawn from a single source or represents the balance of different opinions that are quite evenly weighted

 **Moderate** evidence of a **negative** conclusion or an assumption not maintained.

As explained above, several pieces of evidence may feed into an assessment of one indicator, and several indicators into a basis of judgement. Colour coding is still applied to these more aggregate columns of the evaluation matrix, but only to indicate a simple ordering, as follows:

	Strong evidence of a positive conclusion
	Less strong evidence of a positive conclusion
	Even weaker evidence of a positive conclusion
	Strong evidence of a negative conclusion

Similar coding is applied to the assessment of the theory of change assumptions in the next chapter.

2 Analysis

2.1 Performance of the project against the main evaluation criteria

Synthesising the results across evaluation criteria, the evaluation team finds that:

- a) **Relevance** was generally high, although there are areas for improvement. The project is potentially highly relevant, both in terms of the past (to MDGs) and the future (to SDGs). However, the design of the project focused mainly on a narrow technical set of issues without making sufficient links to desired outcomes. In addition, little attention was given to gender and equity issues in the design. These are important issues to consider in any follow-on project.
- b) **Effectiveness** was high for outputs, but low for outcomes. The project was very effective in achieving its outputs on the whole. However, insufficient attention was given in design and management to links to achievement of outcomes. The project may also have been over-ambitious in its expectations of outcomes, given the time-frame and resources allocated. There are also some improvements that could be made to outputs (in particular to the main project website, CountryData) – see Section 4 for more details.
- c) Regarding **efficiency**, there is a mixed picture. The project appeared efficient in its use of financial inputs (although we did not carry out a detailed analysis). However, there were delays in start-up, and although the project managed to produce outputs in a timely manner, some of the activities that were squeezed out by time pressures (for example, an advocacy strategy) were potentially key to the achievement of outcomes. Project management structures and processes encouraged a focus on outputs, rather than outcomes. The project steering group failed to act as an effective governance structure.
- d) There are significant risks in relation to the **sustainability** of the project results, although if there is a follow-on project many of these risks can be overcome.

The evidence to support these conclusions is based on a study of the project documents (referenced in the text in Section 3), the country cases studies (presented and analysed in Annex E), the SDMX expert's report in Annex F), the eSurveys presented and summarised in Annex G, analyses of the data gathered by the project itself, presented in Section 3.2, and discussions with project staff and IAEG members.

Evidence from the analysis of project data, the esurveys, and from stakeholder discussions, also lead us to the conclusion that **differences between international and national estimates are caused largely by different choices of sources and methods** and that it is a plausible supposition that these choices are driven by the contrast between agencies' needs to produce comparable annual estimates for many countries and countries' needs to produce comparable national and sub national estimates and provide briefing and explanation for every estimate.

The table below presents a summary of the findings against each evaluation question. It is a cut down version of the full matrix provided in Annex C. Section 3 contains more narrative detail. It uses the traffic light coding described in Section 1.8 i.e.:

	Strong evidence of a positive conclusion
	Less strong evidence of a positive conclusion
	Even weaker evidence of a positive conclusion
	Strong evidence of a negative conclusion

and is followed by an assumption-by-assumption analysis of the theory of change.

Table 4: Summary of main findings

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
1. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to global needs and demand?	a) The extent to which the project concept was initiated in response to a clear global need and demand	Strong evidence of demand but moderate evidence that the project concept responded to the main issues	Reports to Statistical Commission and room documents. IAEG reports, discussions with IAEG members
	b) The extent to which this project is positioned to make a unique and useful contribution	Strong evidence of some unique useful contributions	Records of presentations of projects activities at multiple high-level statistical fora. Minutes of project Steering Committee, search of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) database for similar projects, project initial situation and progress reports triangulated and confirmed with in-country interviewees, interviews with UNSD and other agency statisticians
	c) Appropriate project design to achieve objectives	Strong evidence of appropriate design to achieve outputs	Project memorandum, logframe and MoUs, interviews with project funders, managers and staff, past and present
		Moderate evidence of lack of adequate planning to achieve outcomes and action to mitigate risks	
		Strong evidence of clear design – but also that partner countries were not selected in a logical way	Project memorandum and logframe and interviews with project funders, managers and staff, past and present
		Strong evidence of good indicators of immediate outputs but poor indicators for longer-term outputs	Project memorandum and draft and final log frame
	Moderate evidence that indicators for outcomes and impact were not appropriate		

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
		Strong evidence that the partners were clear about how outputs would be delivered	Interviews with past and present project managers and staff, country visits, Steering Committee minutes, interviews with Steering Committee members
		Moderate evidence that paths to outcomes were not clearly specified	
	d) Extent to which the project design adequately addresses gender and equity considerations	Strong evidence that gender and equity considerations were not explicitly addressed	Project design documents
		Moderate evidence that project procedures did not promote equity but no actual discrimination	Country visits, discussions with country office and line ministry staff
2. Is the project likely to be able to make a useful contribution to the post-2015 agenda?	a) The extent to which the project concept is relevant to the post-2015 agenda	Strong evidence of continued need	Reports of post-2015 planning discussions; interviews with members of international agencies, CountryData database
		Strong evidence of some efforts to piggyback on existing projects	Examination of future project draft documents and interviews with key stakeholders
3. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to the needs and demands of the selected partner countries?	a) Project or the project activities included in the national statistical programme of all partner countries	Strong evidence of relevance to actual partner countries	National statistical development strategies (NSDSs) and other policy documents; MoUs between project partners, statements from NSOs and policy-makers during country visits
	b) Evidence of adequate consultation of key national stakeholders during the project design and development	Strong evidence of consultation with NSOs about activities in their country and with DFID. Moderate evidence of poor consultation with other national stakeholders	MoUs, initial country visit reports and project reports triangulated with and crosschecked by interviews with country staff
4. Was the project effective in achieving its outputs ?	a) Output targets in the log frame fully achieved, and relevant assumptions in project theory of change upheld	Strong evidence that two output targets were met and one was substantially met	Project monitoring data on logframe and project reports triangulated during in-country case studies. Direct observation of data portals. Test of assumptions 1–2 in theory of change (see main text)

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
<p>4. Was the project effective in achieving its outputs?</p>		<p>Strong evidence for uniqueness and usefulness of discrepancy information. Moderate evidence that this information is not easy to access and use</p>	<p>Examination of CountryData website, especially explanations of discrepancies. Discussion of results with IAEG members and countries, discussions with IAEG members</p>
		<p>Moderate evidence that project had little involvement in promoting disaggregation of indicators (this was not included in project design or targets – see above). However, the CountryData website does allow for disaggregated data</p>	<p>Examination of CountryData website, especially explanations of discrepancies. Discussion of results</p>
<p>5. How effective has the project been in achieving its main outcomes, i.e. the coherence and accessibility of countries' MDG and other key national development indicators?</p>	<p>a) The extent to which the partner countries report more coherent and accessible MDG data and data on other key national indicators, and there is a credible contribution from the project in this achievement</p>	<p>Moderate evidence that data are more coherent</p>	<p>Examination of national data repositories, metadata handbooks and national websites. Google searches for data repositories. Project reports triangulated by discussions with in-country data suppliers. Discussions with IAEG-MDG members</p>
		<p>Strong evidence of collaboration and use of common metadata standards in producing project outputs but little evidence of either spreading to other NSS activities</p>	
		<p>Strong evidence that all project countries have included some non-MDG data in CountryData</p>	
	<p>b) Evidence of increased collaboration between NSOs and line ministries in the production and</p>	<p>Moderate evidence that data repositories are not easily found or used (but are perceived as being useful)</p>	<p>Country case study visits to key statistical contacts, in particular ministries of health and education, and</p>

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
	dissemination of selected MDG and other key national data, and credible contribution from project in regard to this	line ministries has not significantly increased	discussions with NSO staff. Discussions with in-country IAEG member offices
	c) d) and g) Evidence of improved access to metadata, better understanding by key national and international users of differences between international and country MDG estimates, and better data choices by key users, with credible contribution from the project	Strong evidence that key users' choices and use of data have not yet been changed by the project	Discussions with NSO and line ministry staff during country visits. Examination of national data repositories
	e) Reduced burden on countries in terms of data requests received from international agencies, with credible contribution from project	Strong evidence that the burden of data requests has not yet fallen significantly	Discussions with NSO and line ministry staff during country visits. eSurvey of MDG collectors in international agencies
	f) Evidence of reduced data discrepancies between reporting of national and international data for MDG indicators in project countries, and credible contribution from project	Moderate evidence that data discrepancies have only been slightly reduced	Comparison of different CountryData vintages, country visits, examination of discrepancies time series and reasons for discrepancies. Moderate evidence that data discrepancies have only been slightly reduced. Comparison of discrepancies in MDGLabs and CountryData
6. What aspects of project design and implementation have made the project more or	h) Unanticipated positive or negative outcomes with credible links to the project	Strong evidence of unanticipated positive outcomes on SDMX	Project reports triangulated by discussions during in-country visits
	a) Extent to which governance and management structures of project promote effectiveness and efficiency in achieving above outputs and outcomes	Strong evidence of effectiveness of management in achieving outputs, using a contract approach but also that the structures and	Project design documents and reports, meeting minutes

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
less effective in achieving the above outputs and outcomes?		processes were not effective in promoting outcomes. This raises wider questions about DFID's current results approach, which is currently output and contract-focused (see ICAI 2015)	
	b) Extent to which governance and management structures of project promote transparency and accountability to key stakeholders	Strong evidence for country partners; moderate for international agency partners	Project reports and meeting minutes triangulated by discussions with IAEG members and direct observation of websites
		Strong evidence that project presented appropriate information but this did not constitute a review	
	Strong evidence of sharing reports		
7. Has the project been reasonably cost-efficient?	a) Comparison of budgeted and actual costs	Strong evidence that expenditure followed budgets	Project monitoring and financial reports
	b) The extent to which project management took action to promote efficiency	Strong evidence that UNSD took action to promote efficiency	Progress and financial reports, interviews with project management and staff
8. To what extent are the results of the project likely to be sustained?	a) Extent to which the project countries NSOs/ NSSs have demonstrated commitment to sustaining relevant activities of the project	Strong evidence of commitment to maintaining activities	Country visits, discussions with NSO staff, NSDSs
	b) Existence of a strategy for project completion	Strong evidence of the existence of a strategy	New project documents, discussion with DFID and UNSD project staff
	c) Risks that current project outputs will cease to be useful in the post-2015 operating environment	Moderate evidence that outputs will still be useful after 2015	Future plans for SDMX, DevInfo, and SDG website

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
	d) Extent to which the project increased statistical capacity in partner countries	Strong evidence that capacity has increased	Country visits, discussions with NSO staff

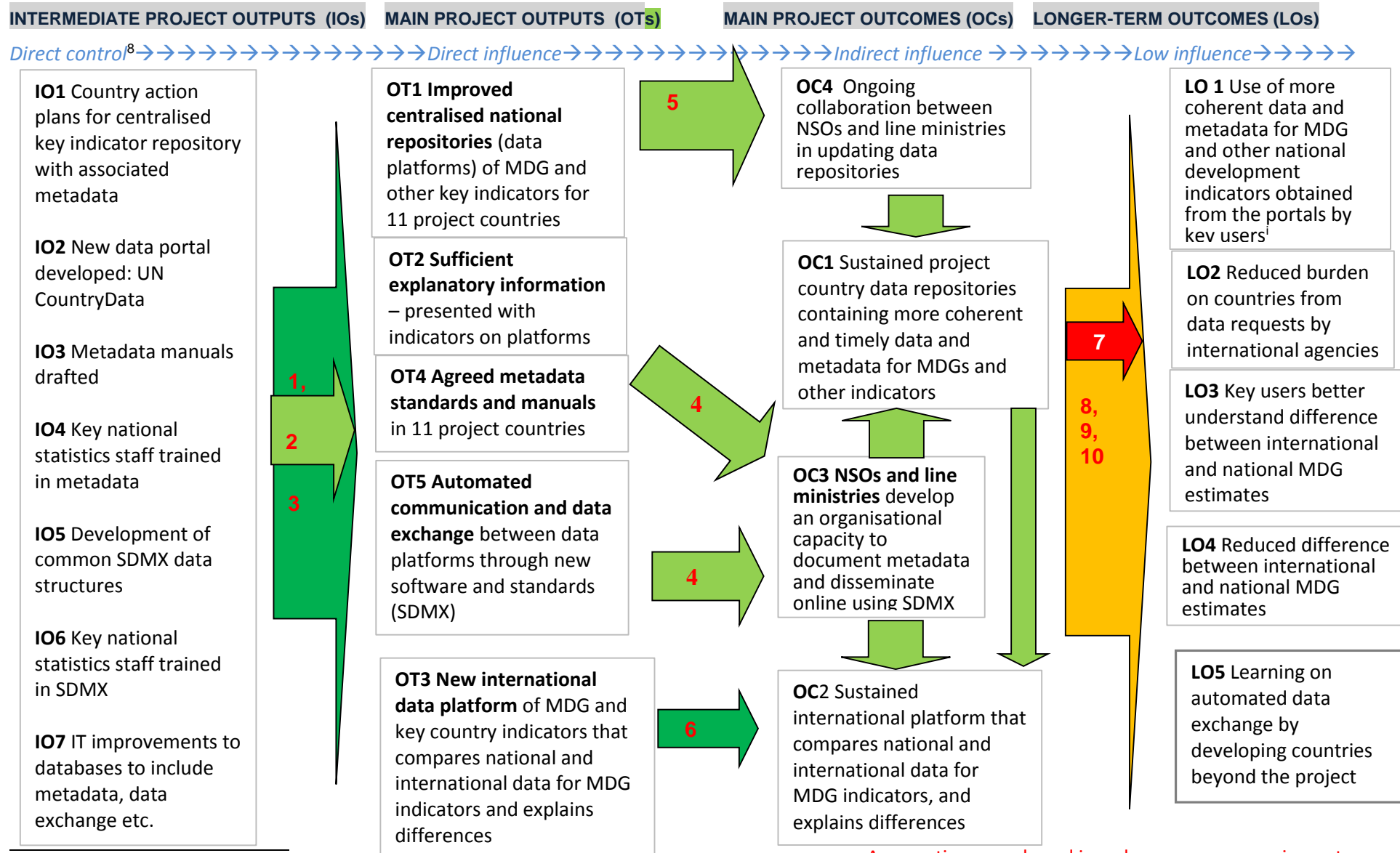
2.2 Theory of change analysis

The theory of change developed in the inception phase and subsequently modified during the main phase is shown below (see Annex D for the theory of change at the inception phase). The colour of the arrows (e.g. between inputs and outputs, outputs and outcomes) indicate the strength of the linkages, reflecting the evidence which supports each assumption. The table which follows the theory of change diagram explains each assumption and associated risks, as well as the evaluative judgement.

Notes:

- a) Assumptions and risks were taken direct from the project logframe and/or developed through iterative discussions with project and DFID staff. The list also indicates how each assumption has been tested in the evaluation (referred to as the basis for judgement). Numbers in the diagram relate to the subsequent table.
- b) A simplified question is included under each heading below to make it easier for readers to follow the logic, but please also refer to the theory of change diagram.
- c) To avoid overloading the theory of change diagram with arrows, and because linkages are complex, some linkages have been ‘lumped together’ in the diagram. However, at least one key linkage has been listed below in connection with each assumption.
- d) EQ numbers cross-reference to evaluation questions in the evaluation matrix: questions 4 and 5, on effectiveness.

Revised project theory of change and test of major assumptions



⁸ Level of project influence, following terminology of Mayne (2008).

ⁱ Defined as senior centres of government bureaucrats and nationals and internationals tasked with reporting on MDGs

Assumptions numbered in red – see accompanying notes

Test of major risks and assumptions (arrows)

Assumption	Risks	Basis of evaluative judgement	Judgement
FROM INTERMEDIATE PROJECT OUTPUTS (IO 1–7) TO MAIN PROJECT OUTPUTS (OT 1–5) [Is the provision of technical expertise, training and software sufficient to result in improved data platforms updated by NSOs using automated data and metadata transfer? With the provision of adequate metadata/explanatory information and also the creation of the international data platform,]			
1. Political will exists among NSOs and line ministries in partner countries to use project data platforms.	Partner NSOs decline to cooperate (reasons could include the presence of other statistical programmes that they consider are already adequately providing a centralised data platform, such as OpenData)	Creation of national and international data platforms by project countries – explore reasons for any problems raised and contributions made by this project vs. other projects	Assumption fully justified. The final 11 countries all participated fully and created CountryData platforms
2. No major limiting factors which impede regular and reliable update of data and metadata – or these are being addressed elsewhere.	Line ministries in partner countries refuse to cooperate or do not send data and metadata in a timely fashion; technical problems impede regular updates. Political influences block dissemination: e.g. of data that is perceived to be ‘bad’ or politically sensitive	Regularity of updates of data on platforms; presence of significant delays – explore reasons for contributions made by this project vs. other projects. Quality of metadata handbooks, data repositories, and pre-existing sources of metadata (e.g. statistical compendia) set against SDMX criteria for metadata and data	Assumption partly justified: data updating was fully successful but metadata less so
3. (IO 4,6 to OT 2,4,5): NSO staff are able to absorb training in SDMX or NSO and line ministry staff are able to absorb training in metadata preparation to a sufficient level to provide inputs for project	Partner country staff lack the in-depth knowledge and ability required to use SDMX and prepare metadata sufficiently effectively to allow the portals to be constructed and populated	Ability of NSO staff to absorb training in SDMX and use SDMX features of national repository	Assumption fully justified: Country visit staff had absorbed SDMX training in the opinion of the team’s SDMX expert
FROM MAIN PROJECT <i>OUTPUTS</i> (OT 1–5) TO MAIN PROJECT <i>OUTCOMES</i> (OC 1–4) [Will tools and procedures developed by the project last after the project finishes?]			

Assumption	Risks	Basis of evaluative judgement	Judgement
<p>4. (OT 1,2,4,5 to OC4): The training in metadata preparation, portal construction, and SDMX provided to individuals in the NSOs and line ministries generates a lasting capability in their organisations in regard to performing these tasks</p>	<p>NSOs or line ministries are unable to maintain the tools, procedures, and collaboration developed by the project either because staff lack the knowledge to do so without ongoing support from project staff, or because staff with such knowledge and skills leave and cannot be replaced, or because the processes used could only be financed from project funds, or because maintaining the tools and procedures developed by the project is not prioritised once the project has finished</p>	<p>This question can only be truly answered by a follow-up evaluation in several years' time. It is, however, possible to examine project NSOs' stated plans regarding maintaining their national data repositories and up to date metadata handbooks and continuing to use SDMX, to investigate the factors leading to the decay of previous data portals to see if they are still present, and to compare the issues addressed by the project with the prerequisites for statistical capacity developed in other evaluations and in standard frameworks, such as the DQAF</p>	<p>Partly justified: NSOs have certainly made commitments to maintain outputs but the lack of an established user community, and of a separate sustainability strategy (or time to implement it), mean that sustainability will, in our judgement, be dependent on the follow-up project</p>
<p>5. (OT1-5 to OC 1): Line ministries willing to continue to collaborate with the NSOs in updating data repositories</p>	<p>Line ministries fail to maintain collaboration because it is a low priority for them</p>	<p>This question can only be truly answered by a follow-up evaluation in several years' time. However, changes in the number of formal or informal agreements for data sharing between NSOs and line ministries and changes to the procedures required for data transfer (e.g. a relaxation of requirements for high-level agreement for individual transfers) are also relevant</p>	<p>Partly justified: Line ministries in case study countries claim they will continue collaboration but there are no additional formal agreements</p>
<p>6. (OT3 to OC2): International data platform is maintained after the project finishes</p>	<p>International data platform is not maintained</p>	<p>Whether there are convincing and realistic plans to maintain the international data platform without DFID continuing project funding</p>	<p>Justified: Platform will be maintained with DFID project funding</p>
<p><i>FROM MAIN PROJECT OUTCOMES (OC 1–4) TO LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES (LO 1–6)</i> [Are these changes to the practises of NSOs and line ministries sufficient to induce data users to change their behaviour and affect the behaviour of data users not immediately involved in the project?]</p>			
<p>7. (OC1/OC2 to LO1): Key users will actually use the data platforms supported by the project (UN CountryData and national data repositories)</p>	<p>Key users may not be aware of the existence of the data platforms; other data websites may be much more easily accessible or easier to use; or the data platforms may not be the most trusted information source</p>	<p>Selected users are aware of and are able to locate and open project-promoted data platforms, and actually use them for their work</p>	<p>Not justified: Key users do not yet use the data platforms</p>

Assumption	Risks	Basis of evaluative judgement	Judgement
<p>8 (OC1 to LO2): ^{PM} International agencies are prepared to use the data portal for their information needs [and not continue with parallel requests for information]. (^{LF} Buy-in from international agencies)</p>	<p>International agencies do not change their behaviour and continue to demand data for MDG reporting in parallel reporting lines. The data portal does not meet the needs of international agencies: i.e. data are not consistent with their definitions /methods. International agencies use other country/regional data portals</p>	<p>Changes in numbers (or estimates) of MDG data requests made by international agencies (WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO), and changes to the number collecting data directly from project-promoted data platforms rather than sending requests to the authorities</p>	<p>Moderate justification: Some international agencies claim the use the data platforms but there has been very little actual change</p>
<p>9. (OC2 to LO3): The ability to compare indicators, data and metadata through project-supported data platforms will lead to national and international users having a better understanding of the differences between international and country estimates of MDG and other key indicators</p>	<p>Other pressures (such as time and the influence of donors and international agencies) mean that users do not make a careful comparison of indicators and data, even if they are aware of and able to use the data platform (covered in earlier assumptions)</p>	<p>This assumption is something that can only be fully tested when many national and international users have examined the data and metadata provided through project-supported data platforms. However, it is also possible to examine stories that provide evidence of a better understanding among national and international users gained during the construction of these platforms, and to demonstrate the potential usefulness of the data gathered</p>	<p>Moderate justification: Some insights from discrepancies data but these insights have not been circulated to data users, especially data users in countries</p>
<p>10. (OC2 to LO4): The ability to compare indicators, data and metadata through project-supported data platforms will lead the statisticians who produce international and country estimates of MDG and other key indicators to change their estimates so as to reduce the differences between them</p>	<p>Agencies and countries continue to produce different estimates despite being fully aware of the information presented on the data platforms because of differences in their needs which cause them to rely on different data sources and methodologies</p>	<p>Actual changes to the differences between estimates and information about the reasons for those differences</p>	<p>Moderate justification: Some evidence of change by country statisticians but very limited</p>

3 Evaluation findings

This section presents answers to the evaluation questions set out in Table 4 above, using the bases of judgement agreed in the evaluation matrix (see Annexes C and I)

3.1 Relevance

EQ1 Is the concept and design of the project relevant to global needs and demand?

a) The extent to which the project concept was *initiated* in response to a clear global need and demand

Finding: There is strong evidence of a demand from NSOs for measures to address the publication by international agencies of data that differ from national estimates. However, it is less clear how this was translated into demand for the specific measures adopted by the project.

Evidence:

The need to improve procedures for collection of MDG estimates was clearly expressed in successive reports to the annual UN Statistical Commission, the apex body for global statistics.

One of the earliest examples was a room paper presented to the 2005 Statistical Commission by South Africa.⁹ This document points out discrepancies between international and national estimates: for example, life expectancy estimates produced in the UN Human Development Report on South Africa and the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA's) 'State of the World Population' are much lower than the official estimates published by Statistics South Africa. The room paper recommended that:

- UN agencies should adhere to official sources of statistics;
- should UN agencies desire to deviate from official sources, then an account of such a preference should be stated, consistent with best practice;
- countries should organise their statistics systems for better management of results and to counter misinformation;
- a system of accreditation should be put in place in order to distinguish information peddlers from those with good practices;
- coherent peer review systems for statistical agencies should be considered in order for members to have a level of confidence in the systems; and
- a Friends of the Chair (FoC) team should work out modalities to deal with the matters raised and report on the progress in the next commission.

One year later, the report by the FoC group on MDG indicators¹⁰ noted that '*It appears from case studies of several of the countries represented...that there are more data available in the countries than is suggested by the MDG database. The annexes also show some substantial differences between data held by countries and that reported by international agencies.*' The FoC report also suggested that 'improvements are needed to the modalities that the international agencies use to

⁹ Room paper for the UN Statistical Commission. Prepared by Pali Lehohla, Statistician General, Statistics South Africa Thirty-sixth session, 1–4 March 2005.

¹⁰ 'Report of the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goals indicators', Statistical Commission Thirty-seventh session, 7–10 March 2006 Item 3 (k).

consult with NSSs to verify estimated figures.’ Similar concerns were also raised in MDG indicator reports to subsequent commissions by the IAEG.

These initial expressions of need and demand came from the countries – not from the international agencies. However, agencies were represented on the IAEG, and so they may be said to have at least acquiesced in the suggestion that there was a problem. For example the 10th IAEG meeting was attended by ‘21 representatives of national statistical offices from 14 countries and 45 experts from agencies, regional commissions and donor agencies’.¹¹

There is a bit of a leap, however, from the identification of the problem as stated above, and the conception of the project. The project deals with some issues in point 3 of the South Africa room paper referred to above, but other issues remain. The project memorandum does not discuss where demand for the actual measures adopted came from or how that demand was articulated.

b) The extent to which this project was positioned to make a unique and useful contribution

Finding: strong evidence that the project made several unique and useful contributions and was complementary to other statistical capacity building efforts, especially as regards DevInfo.

Evidence:

The project’s distinguishing features were:

- the creation of an international data platform and other systems to collect data on the differences between national and international estimates for MDG indicators, and analyses for the reasons for those discrepancies;
- training statistical office and line ministry staff to use SDMX, a technology that will be vital to international efforts to improve data and metadata transfer in the future; and
- improving data portals disseminating countries’ own time series data for MDG indicators and metadata for those indicators.

The creation of the international platform was a unique contribution: no other project has produced anything remotely similar. Although it is impossible to absolutely prove a negative statement the evidence for this is very strong:

- The project has been discussed in many statistical gatherings, including the UN Statistics Commission (the apex body for global statistics) without any delegate or attendee claiming that similar work was being done elsewhere.
- The final project meeting in February 2015 was attended by statisticians from all the major international organisations providing MDG indicators, but none reported any other study or source of evidence on this issue.¹²
- A search of the IATI database¹³ revealed no similar projects or programmes with this objective.
- Country case studies provided no claims regarding, or hints of, similar programmes.

¹¹ ‘Indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals Report of the Secretary-General/Statistical Commission’, Thirty-eighth session 27 February–2 March 2007. Item 3 (k) of the provisional agenda.

¹² ‘United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DfID) Project on Improving the Collation, Availability and Dissemination of National Development Indicators, including MDGs’, Thursday 26th February, 5–7pm, Conference Room E (CB) United Nations, New York.

¹³ <http://www.aidtransparency.net/>.

The project's provision of training in SDMX to developing country statistics offices and development of SDMX procedures for transferring data from developing countries was almost unique. Again the evidence for this is very strong. The SDMX community is still quite small and cohesive so it is possible to identify activities quite easily by, for example, attendance at conferences. The UNSD project made presentations to several gatherings of SDMX experts: for example the seventh international meeting of SDMX experts in Seoul (2014). Although the presentations and reports of these meetings refer to some efforts to engage middle income countries in using SDMX for transmission of national accounts data, none of them have actually reached the stage of data transmission, none of them proposed working with such relatively statistically unsophisticated countries as Burundi or Laos, and none of them involved transmission of MDG data.

There is also evidence that the project made a useful contribution in supporting national data portals, and that this was appropriately complementary with other programmes, in particular UNICEF's DevInfo programme. Nine out of the 11 project countries implemented their data portals using DevInfo (Source: presentations by NSO directors to October 2014 project meeting , triangulated by direct observation of websites) and the DFID/UNSD project provided funds for UNICEF's DevInfo implementation partner, the CSF, to incorporate SDMX data transfer into DevInfo. UNICEF has been a member of the project Steering Committee, and the project also made formal agreements to cooperate with UNICEF. For the two project countries not using DevInfo as their national data repository (Thailand and Morocco), the project provided direct assistance to their existing IT systems that they had found difficult to obtain from other sources.

The project's work on national data repositories was not unique – other programmes have also provided assistance with the development of data portals in some of the partner countries – but it **contained unique elements**, such as the emphasis on SDMX and metadata creation (see Section 2.2). The project was directly responsible for improvements in the coherence and documentation of the data in the repositories in all the partner countries.

c) Appropriate project design to achieve objectives

The main source of information about the initial project design is the project memorandum.¹⁴ More details are provided in the revised logframe, workplans and budgets, and the various MoUs with partner countries. The following sub-sections assess the project design against a number of sub-criteria.

i) Evidence of a clear and logical theory of change linking outputs to outcomes and impacts

Finding: The project predated the adoption of theories of change as a standard project planning tool by DFID but the project design provides a clear theory of how the outputs will be achieved. However, there is very little explicit discussion of a theory of how these outputs were supposed to achieve wider understanding or coherence, let alone better policy. One of the most important omissions is any identification of key data users or discussion of their needs.

Evidence:

The original project design predated the widespread adoption of theories of change by DFID projects and the term theory of change is not used in the project memorandum. However, the project logframe sets out the expected logic model. It specifies:

¹⁴ 'Improving the collation, availability and dissemination of mdg data project: first phase implementation' (Aries code: 1133965-101).

'Better evidence informed policy making' as the project **goal**;

'Improved access to more coherent MDG and other key national development indicators' as the project **purpose**; and

'improved understanding of discrepancies and better coherence of data', *'... centralised data platforms'*, and *'collation and dissemination of data and metadata at the international level'* as **outputs**.

Assumptions include: *'Data will be used effectively by policy makers'* (against the purpose); *'Increased awareness and understanding of the importance of metadata to understand indicators. Culture of metadata established'* (against the understanding and coherence output); and *'Buy-in from international agencies'* (against the collation and dissemination output).

There is clearly some ambiguity regarding whether 'improved understanding and better coherence' is an outcome or an output. The logframe indicators and the assumption that the logframe provides for this output suggest that 'understanding and coherence' is identified with the metadata reports which the project intends to help statisticians produce.¹⁵ However, metadata about individual data series implies only a very narrow 'understanding' and there is no automatic link between the generation of such metadata and 'better coherence'.

We regard the ambiguity in relation to 'understanding', and its connection to 'coherence', as crucial. The project design contains the following assumptions: that collecting metadata and inputting it into the international data portal and/or the project data repositories will automatically cause some people or groups of people to study this metadata in order to generate 'understanding of discrepancies'; that this 'understanding' will cause these people to produce more coherent data; and that this more coherent data and/or their own 'understanding of discrepancies' will cause policy-makers to produce better evidence-informed policy. This is a very high tower to build on top of a very small base – something that is partially acknowledged in the assumptions column of the logframe. One of the most glaring omissions is any discussion of the data users who would be expected to access the national or international data repositories.

The project risk matrix sets out the following critical risks and (*in italics*) mitigation measures:

'Insufficient will from international agencies to cooperate with UNSD: resources need to be assigned for advocacy among agencies, include agencies in management of project.'

Insufficient will in country to support the NSO; resistance by line ministries and other data producers to the NSO's coordination role: advocacy among data producers, engagement of regional coordinator, involvement in workshops'.

The main mitigation strategy proposed is 'advocacy', which will be described in an 'advocacy strategy'. However, it is not made clear what sort of advocacy would be needed or to whom it would be directed. The few references to the advocacy strategy in the project memorandum imply that advocacy is aimed mainly at achieving outputs (cooperation in the construction of the national and international data repositories/portals) as opposed to increasing the chance that the information in the data repositories/portals results in more coherent data or better policy. It does not appear that an advocacy strategy was in fact developed.

¹⁵ 'Metadata report produced and disseminated to meet UNSD standards', and 'Percentage of MDG indicators at national level for which metadata is reported in the national repository'.

ii) Implementing body, structure, staffing and country partners clear and linked to project logic

Finding: There is strong evidence that the project design (implementing body, structure and staffing) is clear and linked to the logic of the project. However, no clear rationale was provided for the choice of countries and partners.

Evidence:

The project memorandum is admirably clear in specifying the project's implementing body, structure, staffing, and country partners, and also gives some indications of how these were chosen. The choice of the UNSD as implementing body was determined by the fact that the initial requests from the statistical community were made at the UN Statistics Commission to the UNSD, and by that organisation's existing role in compiling MDG indicators. Meanwhile, the structure and staffing of the project shown in the project budgets is clearly linked to the tasks necessary to produce the national and international data portals and metadata documents.

We have been unable to find any written rationale for the choice of country partners. Five of the countries came from the design project, in which country selection criteria were not very clearly specified – apart from being 'selected by the design team'¹⁶, 'representative of each region' and with consideration to countries where assessment of MDG data had already been completed. Evidence from the country case studies suggests that the choice of country partners was not purely opportunistic. Country partners say they were approached by UNSD rather than vice versa, and this is further evidenced by the reference in the January–June 2012 report to DFID¹⁷: *'Following the exit from the project of initial countries Kenya and Tanzania, DFID selected Ghana and Palestine as replacements'*. The reference to representativeness in the design project suggests an intention to use the project as a test or trial, but there is no evidence in the project structure or design of any specific procedures that were being tested, or criteria for testing them.

iii) Logframe indicators adequately linked to objectives

Finding: Output indicators in the logframe are clear but the link to outcomes is weak. This weakness is reflected in a lack of useable indicators for longer-term outcomes, as well as some output indicators being mis-specified as outcome indicators.

Evidence:

Two versions of the logframe have been examined: the original version provided in the project memorandum and the last version finalised in February 2014 (Table 1 and Annex I). The latter has been updated to reflect changing DFID guidance on logframes but it contains the same three outputs as the original.

Indicators for Outputs 1 and 3, centralised data platforms at the country level and collation and dissemination of data at the international level (the international data repository), are direct indicators of the contents of these websites and are clearly closely linked to the outputs.

Indicators for the second output, 'Improved understanding of discrepancies and better coherence of data', are entirely concerned with metadata production and, as already mentioned, this appears

¹⁶ 'Project memorandum: Improving the Collation, Availability and Dissemination of MDG Data – Design Project', supplied to the evaluation by DFID.

¹⁷ 'Improving the Availability, Collation and Dissemination of National Development Indicators, including Millennium Development Goals Data' Project – Full Phase Progress Report – January to June 2012'.

to confuse outputs (under the control of the project) with outcomes (desirable changes, e.g. in behaviour, partly outside project control) .

The final logframe gives the project outcome as '*Improved access to more coherent MDG and other key national development indicators*', i.e. the original project purpose, and provided three indicators:

- The number of health and education line ministries submitting national MDG indicators to the national repository at least once per year.
- The number of national MDG indicators contained in the 'international repository' (CountryData website).
- The number of hits per month to the international repository.

The first two indicators are reasonable measures for immediate outputs. However, since they report on actions taken *while the project is still actively involved in promoting and developing them*, they are not very good indicators of national commitment and likely sustainability, or use by key users. It would have been informative to have added indicators relating to the number of downloads from the national data repositories, as well as the international data repository. Hits alone, however, could not have revealed who was using the repositories – which makes it difficult to assess the repositories' influence on the project's ultimate goal of making policy-making more evidence-informed. The logframe does attempt to measure 'evidence informedness' using changes to a scoring system on countries' 'use of statistics' produced by the OECD's Paris21 centre, but this has not worked well to date – as only a single estimate has been produced.

iv) Project partners shared an understanding of outputs, outcomes, and responsibilities

Finding: MoUs were clear and partners had a shared understanding, but this was focused on outputs, not outcomes.

Evidence:

All project countries had MoUs that clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of UNSD and the country NSOs in delivering the project outputs. The country directors for each partner country provided evidence of their understanding of these responsibilities in their presentations at project meetings observed by the evaluation team¹⁸ and in bilateral discussions.

Responsibility for ensuring that the project was focused on meeting its purpose and longer-term outcomes was less clear. Meetings with UNSD staff during the evaluation indicated that they felt strongly that their principal responsibility was for delivering the project outputs. NSO staff consulted in the country visits also saw the delivery of changes to data users' behaviour as outside their area of responsibility.

Project outputs and immediate outcomes were also the principal preoccupation of DFID's annual project reviews. Limited consideration was given in DFID reports about whether or not anyone was using the outputs produced. 'Insufficient will by policy makers to use improved statistics in their decision-making' was logged as a risk, but the 2012 annual review assessment of the risk level simply stated that 'No evidence has been produced by UNSD to suggest any of these risks are hindering progress towards the project outputs/outcomes'.

¹⁸ e.g. the UNSD–DFID Project on National Development Indicators: Country Director's Meeting, New York 15–17 October.

v) Extent to which the project design adequately addresses gender and equity considerations

Finding: The project took no specific steps to address gender and equity considerations. The assumption was that any steps leading to improved collation and availability of MDG indicators would promote more equitable policy.

Evidence:

There are no specific mentions of gender or equity considerations in the project memorandum or other project documents.

EQ2: Is the project likely to be able to make a useful contribution to the post-2015 agenda?

a) The extent to which the project concept is relevant to the post-2015 agenda

Findings: The collection of SDG indicators will require countries and agencies to produce many more data series, and many of those will lack an established methodology. The project's own data show that the proportion of data showing discrepancies has not fallen over the years, suggesting that there will be many more occasions when agency and country statistical estimates will diverge. There are also greater ambitions for national ownership of MDG indicators. **The evaluation team concludes that the project concept is relevant to the post-2015 era**, although the project design will need to be revisited, as described elsewhere in this report.

Evidence:

In September 2015 a summit of heads of state adopted the SDGs.

Following more than a year of inclusive and intensive deliberations, a set of 17 SDGs and 169 accompanying targets was proposed by the Open Working Group on the SDGs in mid-2014. Despite the intensive ongoing debate about the indicators for these goals a consensus is beginning to emerge. For instance the expert group meeting on the indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda, which took place on 25–26 February 2015, New York adopted the following main points:

- 1) It is necessary to define an architecture for an integrated monitoring framework that would include global indicators and different levels of regional, national and thematic monitoring.
- 2) The global level monitoring framework should be limited to a small number of indicators.
- 3) Such indicators should be selected on the basis of an agreed set of criteria.
- 4) The initial proposal for indicators will be refined by the Commission in 2016.
- 5) A mechanism, such as an Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, should be established.
- 6) It is necessary to ensure national ownership of indicators (including of the estimation process).
- 7) It is necessary to ensure disaggregation of indicators and to include a human rights dimension to the indicator framework (following the 'no-one left behind' principle).
- 8) It is necessary to further strengthen national statistical capacity, including by mobilising the necessary resources.

9) It is important to draw from existing integrated statistical frameworks.

It is important to build on the experience and lessons learnt from the MDGs.

The points most relevant to this evaluation are 1, 6, and 7. These are further explained in the Secretary General's Sustainable Development Solutions Network's (SDSN's) report on indicators for the SDGs.¹⁹ The report does not contain many details about what the 'integrated architecture' should look like but it does state:

*'National monitoring is the most important level of monitoring and will rely on nationally defined sets of indicators. National ownership at all levels of the SDG framework is critical, and national monitoring must respond to national priorities and needs. The SG's report calls for "a culture of shared responsibility," which must be particularly strong at the national level, "building on existing national and local mechanisms and processes, with broad, multi-stakeholder participation."'*⁶ Countries can thus define the nature, specification, timing, data collection methods, and disaggregation to suit their national needs and priorities'.

It also states:

'NSOs must be actively involved in the development of global and national indicator frameworks, through the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators that will be convened by the UN Statistical Commission. The SDGs will be goals for the world – applicable to all countries, as well as multiple, diverse actors.'

The proposals on disaggregation, which are prompted by concerns that the SDGs should 'leave no-one behind', and that targets should only be considered achieved if they have been met for all relevant income and social groups, are much more specific. They recommend that relevant SDG indicators be disaggregated according to:

- sex and gender;
- age;
- income quintiles/deciles;
- disability;
- ethnicity and indigenous status;
- economic activity;
- location or spatial disaggregation (e.g. by metropolitan areas, urban/rural, or districts); and
- migrant status.

Disaggregation according to these dimensions would be relevant for about 40% of the 100 Global Monitoring Indicators proposed by SDSN (see Annex B for the distribution of indicators to goals).

EQ3. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to the needs and demands of the selected partner countries?

Finding: The project concept and design is relevant to the project countries that were finally selected: it responds to issues identified in national statistical strategies, NSOs were consulted on design and feel it is relevant.

Evidence:

¹⁹ <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/150116-Indicators-and-a-Monitoring-Framework-for-SDGs-working-draft-for-consultation.pdf>.

The project design phase included country missions and consultations with five selected case study countries: Tanzania, Cambodia, Liberia, Morocco and Bolivia. However, there must be some doubts about the relevance of the project to all of the countries originally selected for participation as two, Tanzania and Kenya, were replaced because they were inactive. Evidence regarding the relevance of the project to the needs and demands of the countries that stayed in the project is available from several sources:

1. The survey of partner country opinions carried out by the project team for the mid-term evaluation.²⁰ Partner country NSOs were asked to state whether they agreed with the statements: 'The project is relevant to my organisation/ NSS' and 'The project's objectives are consistent with my organisation/ NSS priority needs'. Replies were received from all 11 countries, except Uganda, and all of them 'strongly agreed', apart from Palestine which merely 'agreed'.
2. Interviews during country case studies. Every NSO indicated that the project had been relevant to their needs and these comments were echoed by senior officials in the ministries of finance and planning. NSOs were also asked about their involvement in the development of project activities and in every case agreed that they had participated in all the decisions concerning their countries. Laos, Uganda, and Ghana specifically claimed to have integrated the project activities into their annual workplans and budgets.
3. Direct examination of NSDSs. We have examined the NSDSs of Burundi, Cambodia, Ghana, Laos, Rwanda, Uganda, and Vietnam. All of these documents highlight the issue of the coherence of the estimates provided by different bodies within the country, and task the NSO with a coordinating function, both in terms of presenting estimates and in collecting metadata. This project directly addresses those needs.

3.2 Effectiveness

EQ4: Was the project effective in achieving its outputs?

a) Output targets in the logframe fully achieved and relevant assumptions in theory of change upheld

Findings: There is strong evidence that the project fully achieved its two principal outputs – improved national data repositories and an international website with comparisons of country and international data and explanations for differences. However, the project has fallen slightly short on the percentage of core indicators with metadata. The assumptions in the theory of change linking project activities with these outputs were upheld for the partner countries.

Evidence:

The table below shows the status of the logframe indicators as at January 2015. During country visits interviewees confirmed that the project reports provide an accurate description of progress in their country.

The most important of the three outputs, the creation of the centralised data platforms (given 45% weighting in the project logframe), appears to have been fully delivered. For collation and dissemination at the international level (35% weighting) the targets for numbers of countries covered, the time lag between the national and international data repositories, and the percentage of 'core' indicators with discrepancies reported in the international repository have all been exceeded. For improved understanding of discrepancies, which is listed as the least important

²⁰ 'UNSD/DFID Project on Improving the Collation, Availability and Dissemination of National Development Indicators, Including MDGs Mid-Term Evaluation Summary Results' (UNSD/DFID document).

objective (20% importance), 10 countries (as against a target of 10) have provided metadata to UN standards, although metadata has been provided for only 87% of the 'core' MDG indicators, as against the target of 91%.

Table 5: Logframe indicators and progress, with traffic lights added by evaluation team

		Baseline 2010	Milestone			
			Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Target Mar 2015
Centralised data platform for use at the country level (weighted at 45% of the total importance of the three outcomes in project logframe)						
The time lag (months) between updating of national MDG data and updating of national repository	Actual		2	6	4	2
	Planned	NA	0	6	4	3
The number of project countries that have established a national repository	Actual		1	8	10	10
	Planned	0	0	5	9	10
Improved understanding of discrepancies and better coherence of data (weighted at 20% of the total importance of the three outcomes in project logframe)						
The number of project countries with metadata produced and disseminated that meet UNSD standards	Actual		1	3	7	10
	Planned	0	1	5	9	10
Percentage of national MDG 'core' indicators for which metadata are reported in the international repository	Actual		9	18	30	87
	Planned	0	0	36	73	91
Collation and dissemination of data and metadata at international level, including national estimates (weighted at 35% of the total importance of the three outcomes in project logframe)						
Percent of national MDG 'core' indicators with discrepancies reported in the international repository	Actual	0	9	30	83	95
	Planned		9	36	73	91
The time lag between updating of national MDG 'core' indicators in the national repository and updating of the international repository for project countries	Actual		NA	NA	0	0.5
	Planned	NA	NA	NA	3	1
The number of project countries integrated into the international repository (UN CountryData)	Actual		1	5	11	11
	Planned	NA	0	5	8	10

Source: Project progress reports verified by direct observation, e.g. of CountryData. Dark green signifies output fully met (within a range of 'nearly' to 'exceeded'). Please note that although these were defined as outputs, many are not fully under the control of project staff so are more correctly considered as indicators of short-term outcomes.

Contribution of the project

The previous sections show that the project was active in supporting national data portals and training national staff, as well as producing an international data portal (CountryData). However, this project operated in a wider context of many other statistical capacity building projects. For example, the DevInfo platform used for most of the national repositories was already present in most countries before the project began. How important, then, were the project's contributions?

The table below sets out the position at the beginning and end of the project. It can be seen that the project made a major contribution to national MDG data portals, not only in countries where it was more or less the only player but also working in complementarity to other initiatives. While all project partner countries already had some sort of data portal at the beginning of the project, the project helped support many useful contributions, which varied by country – from translating into the national language in Cambodia to helping portals go 'online'. In every case the project has improved the quantity and quality of metadata included in the portals, helped install DevInfo7 and helped clean the data in the portals.

Table 6: Changes in national data portals over the project period, with the contribution of the project and other interventions

	State of portal at beginning of project	State of portal at end of project	Main project contribution	Additional project contributions	Main relevant contribution of other programmes
Burundi	Present but offline, 451 indicators, 'good metadata'	Online, rationalised indicator set (412 indicators) updated data and metadata	In all countries the UNSD team: reviewed the indicators in the database, identifying problems such as inconsistency; held workshops with NSOs and line ministries; provided the latest versions of DevInfo, together with an SDMX module; commissioned and paid for a metadata handbook; provided training; and helped develop an updating schedule. Note that some of the portals initially placed 'online' by UNICEF with little involvement from the NSO were shifted to country-controlled servers	Financial support for connectivity and translation of metadata from French to English	UNICEF funding and technical assistance for DevInfo
Cambodia	Present but often out of date, inconsistent and in English only	Khmer and English versions, reduced time lags, more metadata, data consistency improved		Funded translation	Sida twining project organised NSO/line ministry committees
Ghana	Present but 1000 indicators, poor metadata, many inconsistencies	New database with reduced time lags, more metadata, and fewer inconsistencies		Ghana Statistical Development Program funded by the World Bank's Statistics for Results Trust Fund has worked on a statistical compendium and funded some line ministry statistical work	
Laos	Present but offline	New database with fewer indicators, more metadata, and fewer inconsistencies		Purchased two new servers and supporting software licences	UN Development Programme (UNDP) funding and technical assistance for the data portal development
Liberia	Present but offline and often out of date	New database with fewer indicators, more metadata, and fewer inconsistencies		UNICEF and UNDP assistance to set up portal; World Bank help to put website back online	
Morocco	Present but offline	Present but still offline		UNFPA	
Palestine	Present but no metadata	New database with metadata		Provided a consultant to compile metadata handbook	UNICEF has provided help for DevInfoRwanda: e.g. New Delhi training. A DFID/World Bank Basket Fund has supported implementation of the NSDS
Rwanda	Present but slow	New database, more data, more metadata, and fewer inconsistencies		Ongoing Thai government development of the National Information Centre	
Thailand	Present	Repository now has an SDMX registry and metadata have been improved		Paid for temporary host for the portal and for consultant to help	Stats Norway, AfDB assistance on data dissemination and support of the NSDS through a basket fund

				with clean-up, metadata, and coordination	
Uganda	Present	New database, more data, more metadata, and fewer inconsistencies (but still some duplications)			
Vietnam	Present	New database, more data, more metadata			

Source: Based on the project's own initial and final country visit reports (see Annex H for more details), triangulated with country visits and interviews.

Assumptions in the theory of change upheld

Three of the assumptions in the theory of change are relevant to the delivery of the intermediate outputs. They are:

1. Political will exists among [NSO and] line ministries [in partner countries] to use [project] data platforms.
2. No major limiting factors which impede regular and reliable update of data and metadata – or these are being addressed elsewhere.
3. NSO staff are able to absorb training in SDMX or NSO and line ministry staff are able to absorb training in metadata preparation to a sufficient level to provide inputs for project.

In our judgement assumptions one to three have been completely upheld. Political will among the final partner countries is indicated by the 10 countries that created national data platforms and the 11 countries who have supplied data to the CountryData platform, though the failure of two initial country partners – Kenya and Tanzania – to respond to draft MoUs shows that this will is not present in all countries. The ability of staff to absorb training in SDMX has been verified indirectly by their submission of data and metadata to CountryData using SDMX and directly by the observations by, and discussions with, the evaluation team's SDMX expert, and regular updating of data has proved possible.

b) Key intermediate project outputs achieved (IO1–IO7).

Findings: We judge that there is strong evidence that the project effectively delivered its logframe output indicators and intermediate outputs in all areas except for a very slight shortfall in the proportion of core MDG indicators with metadata. The explanations of discrepancies found were useful and truthful, although the fact that the metadata collected applies only to series as a whole makes it difficult to trace the origin of each individual estimate. The project has taken no specific measures to promote gender and equity considerations but has resulted in wider dissemination of disaggregated data.

Evidence:

Eq.4 b i) Recorded outputs

The list of intermediate outputs stated in the theory of change is shown in the table below. All were fully achieved except for the development of metadata handbooks, which was partly achieved.

Table 7: Project progress against intermediate outputs in theory of change

IO stated in theory of change	Progress and evidence
IO1 Country action plans for centralised key indicator repository with associated metadata	See Table 3
IO2 New data portal developed: UN CountryData	See Table 3
IO3 Agreed metadata standards and manuals	All countries except Liberia (due to the Ebola outbreak) have either produced handbooks or submitted metadata from their databases to CountryData
IO4 Key national statistics staff trained in metadata	Training schedules, curricula, materials, and attendance lists provide evidence that training has taken place
IO5 Development of common SDMX data structures	The common SDMX data structures were provided by UNSD and examined by the evaluation team's SDMX expert
IO6 Key national statistics staff trained in SDMX	Training schedules, curricula, materials, and attendance lists provide evidence that training has taken place. Trainees' competence in SDMX was also verified by the evaluation team's SDMX expert during the country visits (see Annex F)
IO7 IT improvements to databases to include metadata, data	See Table 3

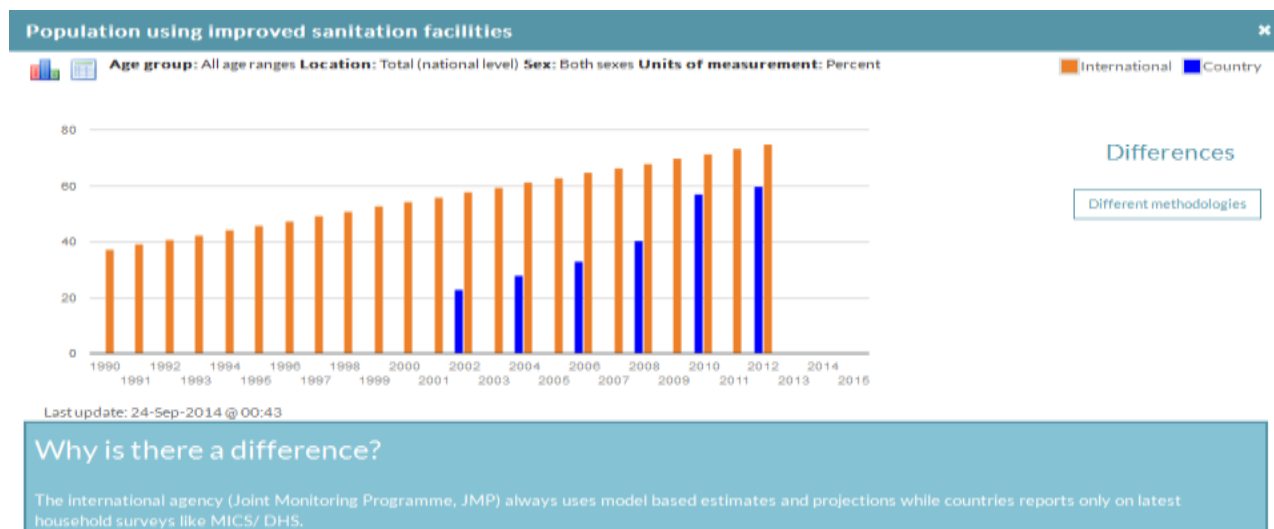
Source: Evaluation team

Eq.4 b ii) Explanations of discrepancies accurate and useful

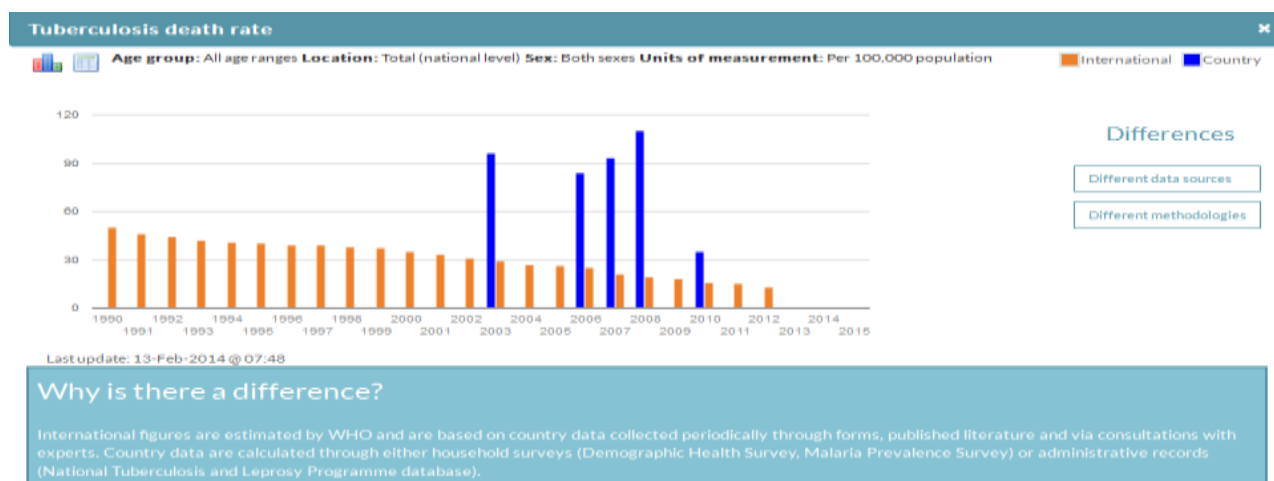
The CountryData website developed by this project provides a unique international resource to demonstrate and explain discrepancies between country and international data. Figure 2 shows two examples of pages from CountryData. Figure 2(a) shows that in 2002 international data reported that nearly 60% of Vietnamese had access to improved sanitation, but country estimates based on surveys gave the figure of just over 20%. Figure 2(b) shows that international data reported that deaths from tuberculosis were only 19 per 100,000 and falling steadily, while the country had an estimate of 110 per 100,000, with a sharp rise in recent years. Both discrepancies are clearly significant.

Figure 2: Examples from the CountryData website showing the differences between national and international estimates

Vietnam sanitation



Uganda deaths from tuberculosis



Source: CountryData website: <http://data.un.org/countryData/Data/Show/UGA>. Downloaded 19 August 2015

Given that reporting on the MDGs is based on the international data, the scrutiny and comparison with national data is useful in itself. However, Figure 2 also shows the project’s written explanation of the discrepancies between country and international data, and (on the right of the screen) a short categorisation of the main reason(s) for any discrepancy. The categories given are either: different definitions of indicators, different age groups, data source types (for example, survey, administrative or modelling) or different (specific) data sources (such as different surveys). More detailed explanations are given beneath each chart. These are as follows:

- For use of population using improved sanitation facilities in Vietnam – ‘The international agency (Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) always uses model-based estimates and projections while countries report only on latest household surveys like MICS/ DHS’.
- For deaths from tuberculosis in Uganda – ‘International figures are estimated by WHO and are based on country data collected periodically through forms, published literature and via consultations with experts. Country data are calculated through either household surveys

(Demographic Health Survey, Malaria Prevalence Survey) or administrative records (National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme database)'.

For sanitation the website of the WHO/UNICEF water and sanitation joint monitoring programme²¹ easily confirms the methodology for the international estimates but the data on mdgs.un.org are very slightly different from those on CountryData. For example, CountryData gives the estimate for 2012 as 74.9% while mdgs.un.org gives 73% (both downloaded 10 September 2015). Meanwhile CountryData gives the national estimates as follows:

2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
23.1	27.9	33.1	40.2	57.2	60

Looking just at data easily available online; the most recent Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) available on the General Statistics Office of Vietnam's website gives an estimate of 73.8% for households with modern sanitation in 2011.²² The Demographic and Health (DHS) survey report for 2002 gives an estimate of 24.7% for the proportion of households with their own flush toilet,²³ and the 2014 Statistical Handbook of Vietnam (also downloaded from the General Statistics Office website) gives the 'percentage of households using a toilet' as:

2006	2008	2010	2012
59.1	65	75.7	77.4

However, for tuberculosis deaths the international series in CountryData exactly matches that on the MDG website and the WHO website, which also confirms that 'Estimates of TB and TB-MDR Burden are produced by WHO in consultation with countries'.

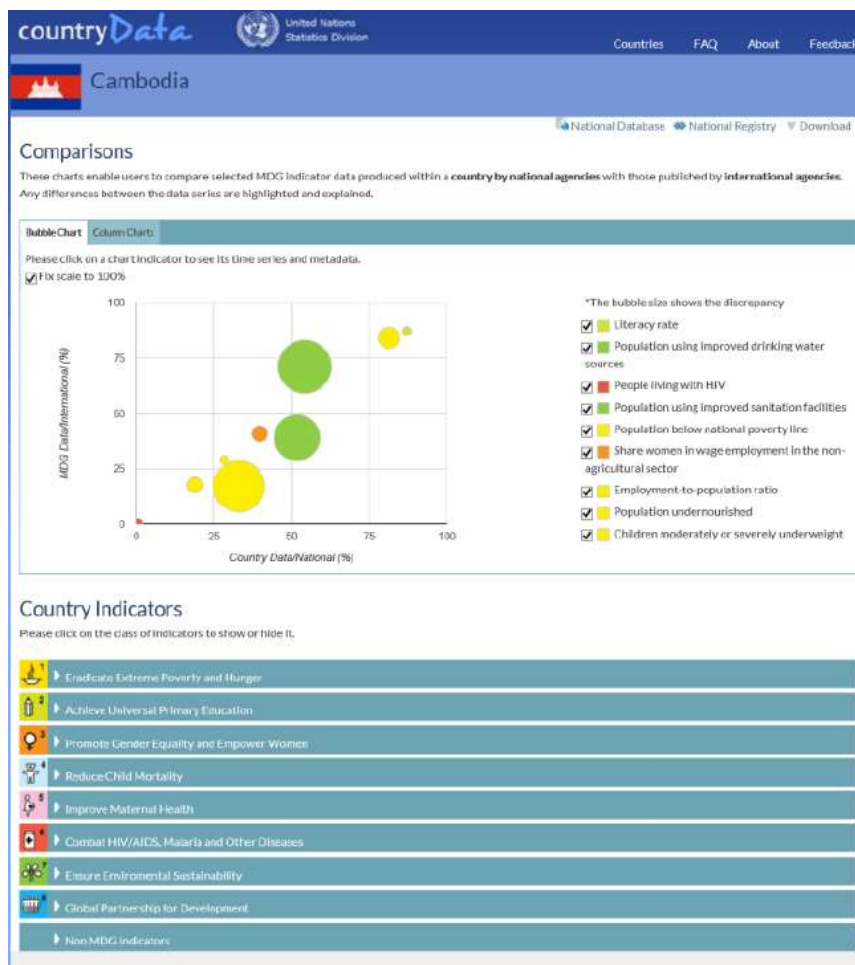
In the judgement of the evaluation team the charts and associated information on discrepancies are useful and truthful, but limited. It is not, for instance, always possible to tell from the explanations exactly where survey country data for a particular year comes from, whether they conform to a published source, or what changes countries have made to data if they do not conform to such a source. There is also very little metadata relating to individual years. Similarly, to say that international estimates are collected 'periodically through forms, published literature and via consultations with experts' may be true but it is not always informative. Initially there was also a problem finding the data series on the website as the standard method of accessing data is via country pages, where series are organised alphabetically by indicator title.

²¹ <http://www.wssinfo.org/>.

²² Table WS.6 of 'Vietnam Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011' report, downloaded from www.gso.gov.vn.

²³ Vietnam DHS 2002. Downloaded from http://dhsprogram.com/Publications/Publication-Search.cfm?ctry_id=56&c=Vietnam&Country=Vietnam&cn=Vietnam.

Figure 3: Screenshot of part of CountryData page for Cambodia



Users had to know the exact title of the series they were interested in and examining the same series for different countries required them to visit each country page individually. Potential users in international organisations confirmed our impression that the data were difficult to access. However, many of these problems were addressed during the course of the evaluation.

Eq.4 b iii) Gender and equity considerations incorporated into outputs, in particular promoting disaggregated data

There is no evidence that the project had any involvement in promoting disaggregation of indicators, nor was such work included in the project design or targets. However, the CountryData website does allow for disaggregated data. Each indicator series has a unique code but data for each series code for each country may appear in the database several times with different values for data provider, sex, location (urban or rural), and age group. The table below presents the number of indicator series and separates those which are disaggregated by gender. Out of 589 series 123, or about 20%, are disaggregated in the country estimates, but only 8% are disaggregated in the international estimates (note that it is not possible to disaggregate many indicators by sex: e.g. women with anaemia). The proportion of series that are disaggregated rises slightly to 23% (81 out of 350) in the country estimates for MDG indicators only. CountryData therefore makes available to the user more disaggregated data than they would get from simply using the internationally available estimates.

Table 8: Disaggregation of CountryData (international data repository) by sex

	MDG indicators			Other* indicators		
		Disaggregated in data of			Disaggregated in data of	
		Country	International		Country	International
Burundi	44	8	3	15	4	1
Cambodia	32	6	2	142	21	2
Ghana	25	6	5	8	4	1
Lao PDR	47	8	3	17	1	0
Liberia	14	2	2	3	2	1
Morocco	11	5	1	1	0	0
Rwanda	38	15	6	5	0	0
Palestine	29	10	4	2	1	0
Thailand	38	3	3	10	4	4
Uganda	40	13	6	10	3	2
Vietnam	32	5	1	26	2	1
	350	81	36	239	42	12

Data are produced for 589 Series Code*Country Pairs (350+239). For example Burundi produces data for 59 series (44 MDG and 15 others) but 170 lines in the CountryData website database because many of the 59 are disaggregated and there are country and international estimates. Of the 44 MDG series for Burundi eight are disaggregated in the country's data and three are disaggregated in the international data.

*Other indicators are indicators held on CountryData that are not in the official list of MDG indicators on mdgs.un.org e.g. Land and Property Conflicts. Series code AG_LND_CFICT.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of CountryData downloaded 05 August 2015

The procedures for delivering the project made no special attempt to reflect gender and equity considerations but neither did they discriminate negatively. Evidence from the country case studies (Annex E) suggests that staff selected for training, for example, reflected the gender balance in the composition of statisticians in NSOs, as well as the composition of the (often very small) statistical units in line ministries.

EQ5: How effective has the project been in achieving its main outcomes, i.e. the coherence and accessibility of countries' MDG and other key national development indicators?

Finding: We found moderate evidence that the project made the MDG data more coherent and accessible through its improvements to the national data repositories, and strong evidence that many non-MDG indicators were distributed through CountryData. There is some evidence of a reduction in the size of discrepancies **but no evidence that discrepancies are being eliminated** or will be eliminated, or that the burden on statistics offices has been reduced. Furthermore, **key users use of data have not yet been directly affected by the project outputs**. It will, in our judgement, require further work on promoting and explaining the project outputs, either among key users themselves or among those preparing analyses for key users, before changes in key user behaviour or any reduction in the burden on statistics offices can be expected.

Evidence:

Evaluating the project's outcomes is slightly different to assessing the outputs. The contribution claim for outcomes can be broken down into two parts:

1. That there was an increase in organisational (as opposed to individual) capacity within countries to document metadata and use SDMX to sustain the national repositories, and that an international organisational capacity to maintain the international data portal has been created due to the project.
2. That key users are using more coherent data and understand the differences between the data from different sources better, that the burden of data requests on countries has reduced, and that discrepancies between national and international estimates have reduced because of the improvements made to the national repositories and the creation of the international data portal.

The first of these claims is so closely related to sustainability that we deal with it in the sustainability section, Section 2.3. We examine the second under the evaluation matrix headings below.

a) The extent to which the partner countries report more coherent and accessible MDG data and data on other key national indicators, and the extent to which there is a credible contribution from the project

Eq.5 i) Coherence: Country estimates for MDG indicators are obtainable from many sources, including ministries of health and education as well as NSOs. Estimates are supplied online, as paper publications, and in written responses and emails. A few paper publications were archived but most were not, and revisions or changes to estimates distributed on line or in ad hoc communications are completely untraceable. Any comparison of the change in the coherence of alternative national estimates during the lifetime of the project must therefore rely on changes to the coherence of the national data repositories themselves. Successive vintages of the data collected from the repositories by the project demonstrated that they became more coherent, with less duplication, and that project assistance and workshops were largely responsible for these changes.

Evidence gathered in interviews during the country visits also suggests that some of the respondents believe that the NSSs in their countries are becoming more coordinated.

Eq.5 a ii) Metadata standards: The metadata handbooks for the project were produced jointly by institutions across the NSS in each country. The metadata they contained was produced to common -mdg specific- formats and these were reinforced by the standardisation required by SDMX. However, this standardisation did not spread to other metadata products produced outside the project (such as statistical compendia), nor was there any attempt by the project to achieve such wider coordination on standards which the project managers felt to be outside the scope of the project aims.

Eq.5 a iii) Non-MDG indicators: National data repositories contain many non-MDG indicators. These are either extra disaggregations of MDG indicators or extra indicators from national plans and monitoring systems. As the table below shows almost all the non-MDG indicators in CountryData are country supplied.

Table 9: Origin and type of indicators uploaded to CountryData site as at August 2015

	Country supplied		Internationally supplied	
	MDG indicators	Other	MDG indicators	Other
Burundi	44	15	37	5
Cambodia	32	142	28	4
Ghana	25	8	25	1
Lao PDR	47	17	45	2
Liberia	14	3	13	2
Morocco	11	1	11	1
Rwanda	38	5	35	2
State of Palestine	29	2	28	1
Thailand	38	10	36	6
Uganda	40	10	38	4
Viet Nam	32	26	30	4
	350	239	326	32

N.B. Data are produced for the 589 series country combinations. Note: all pairs for which international data are available also have country data, but 24 pairs for which country data are available have no international data.

Eq.5 a iv) User perception: IAEG members and data users in partner countries who were presented with charts from CountryData all agreed that they appeared useful. However, none had made a detailed examination of the website and most were viewing it for the first time. CountryData does not work well as a Google search term because it produces many different websites that refer to data from one or more countries. Unless searching from a computer that has already used the CountryData website several times the project's CountryData website does not appear high in search rankings. IAEG members and data users in country case studies both complained of the difficulty of finding information on national data repositories.

b) Evidence of increased collaboration between NSOs and line ministries in the production and dissemination of selected MDG and other key national data, and credible contribution from project

The most important visible sign of a system of collaboration and coordination across an NSS is a system of formal agreements between the different institutions specifying timetables and quality standards for data transfer. Although all the NSOs and line ministries interviewed were asked if they did, none yet has such a system and none reported the development of such a system during the project (see Annex E). Nor did any NSOs or line ministries report changes in data transmission mechanisms, such as a shift from email to SDMX for data transmission²⁴ or a relaxation in the level of clearance required (such as a relaxation of a requirement for high-level approval for each data

²⁴ SDMX data transmission was trialed in Cambodia but could not be maintained

transfer outside the ministry). Several countries did report that cooperation between line ministries and NSOs were improving, but they often attributed the improvement to projects other than the UNSD project. For example: cooperation between the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and the Ministry of Education has improved because the education management information system (EMIS) is being funded by the Ghana Statistical Development Programme (GSDP); cooperation in Cambodia has been improved because of Statistics Sweden's support to, and the annual report on, the NSS; and coordination in Rwanda and Uganda has been supported through the implementation of the NSDSs, backed by basket funds for statistical capacity development.

c) d) and g) Evidence of improved access to metadata, better understanding by key national and international users of differences between international and country MDG estimates, and better data choices by key users, with credible contribution from the project

As mentioned above, key users were not defined in the project documentation. For the purposes of this evaluation, 'key users' have been defined as senior central government officials and both national and international officials tasked with reporting on MDGs. The evaluation has attempted to investigate use of the national and international data repositories by these key users through;

- interviews with senior staff of the ministries of finance and planning in the case study countries (Annex E);
- interviews with line ministry statisticians in case study countries (Annex E);
- interviews with agency staff and DFID statisticians in case study countries (Annex E);
- email surveys of international agency staff responsible for collecting and publishing MDGs (Annex G);
- a meeting with staff of UN agencies responsible for publishing MDGs to present findings from the CountryData website; and
- telephone discussions with staff of agencies responsible for collecting and publishing MDGs.

The most important finding from interviews was that none of the senior ministry of planning or finance staff or line ministry statisticians had ever used the CountryData website. Nor did they make much use of the national data repositories, though they were aware of the existence of these repositories. Their preferred method of obtaining data was to send emails or letters to NSOs or line ministries to ask for it. All of them professed satisfaction with the data they received from their NSOs and line ministries. This may well be because, as key users, they receive faster responses to their enquiries.

International agencies and donor staff in-country said that they also used direct enquiries when seeking data for work or negotiations with the government. However, agency headquarters staff said that they did use national data repositories and websites for triangulation with other sources.

NSO staff had almost no information about who was using their data portals. However, the Data Services section of the GSS has maintained a log of written and email enquiries. The table below presents a summary of this log.

Table 10: GSS Data Service Section's log of written and email requests 2011–14

	Academic/research	Planning/project work	Blank	TOTAL
Ghana	135	120*	2	257
Other Africa	5	1		6
UK	13	1	2	16
USA	10	2		12

Other OECD	17			17
Other	5			5
Missing	6			6
TOTAL	191	124	4	319

Source: Compiled by evaluation team from GSS data as at January 2015

*Of these 32 are requests from government or other public bodies.

The majority of these enquiries were for academic or research work. Only about 10% of enquiries were for data for policy or planning work by government ministries or other public bodies.

It is also instructive to consider the findings on outcomes and impact of the 2009 global evaluation of DevInfo itself, which tend to confirm our own investigations.

'Interviews conducted at country and regional levels suggest that DevInfo has not been mainstreamed as a data monitoring or display tool in most NSOs, UNICEF offices and UN offices..... Appreciation of DevInfo by policy makers is dependent on the existence of a mature and active national data collection and processing system clearly linked to national policy making and planning with clear and engaged national ownership.... The immediate users of DevInfo are technical staff, most of whom are in NSOs or similar institutions that manage the DevInfo database or produce the ultimate outputs.'

Source: Global evaluation of DevInfo. UNICEF Evaluation Office, July 2009, page 37

e) Evidence of reduced burden on countries in terms of data requests received from international agencies

The evaluation has investigated the impact of the development of national and international data repositories on the data requests received by countries by:

- interviewing NSO and line ministry staff in case study countries about the burden of requests received;
- email surveys of international agency staff responsible for collecting and publishing MDGs covering collection methods; and
- telephone conversations with international agency staff responsible for collecting and publishing MDGs.

No NSO or line ministry staff in any country reported any changes in data collection practices by international agencies that have reduced the burden of data collection, with the sole exception of the Uganda NSO. (See Annex E). However, some international agencies reported in the eSurvey that electronic means of communication were becoming more important for them (Annex G). International agency staff also reported interest in using SDMX technology to collect data in future and NSO staff in Asia reported an Asian Development Bank (ADB) initiative to begin collecting economic indicators using SDMX.

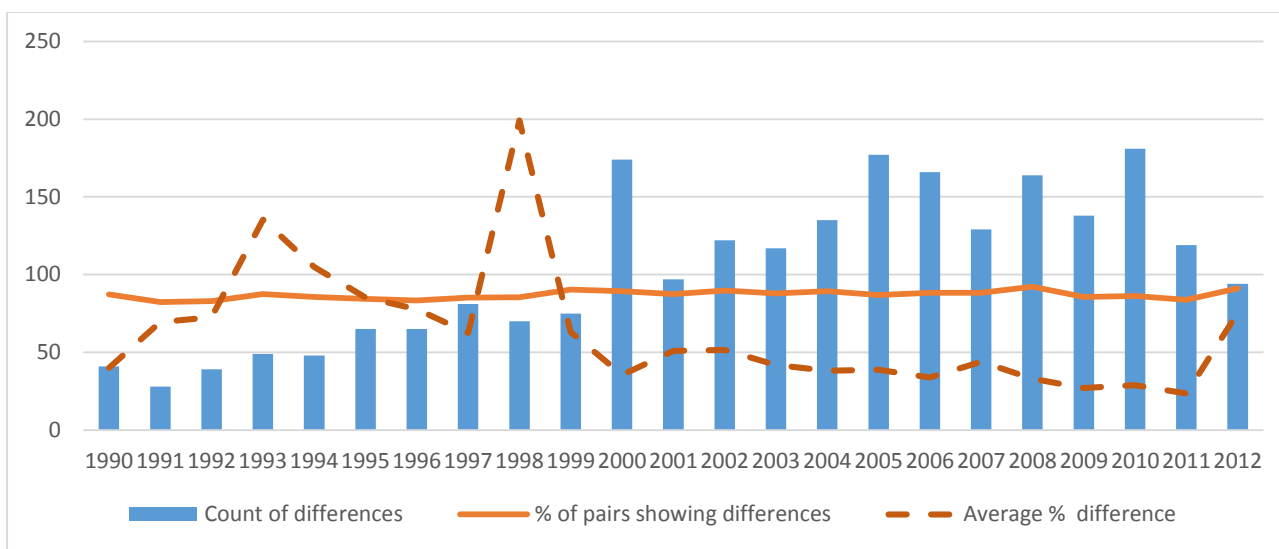
f) Evidence of reduced data discrepancies between reporting of national and international data for MDG indicators in project countries, and credible contribution from project

Tracking discrepancies between national and international estimates of data series is more complicated than it appears at first sight. Although it is in theory possible to have both a national and an international estimate for each time series in each country in each year, very few of these

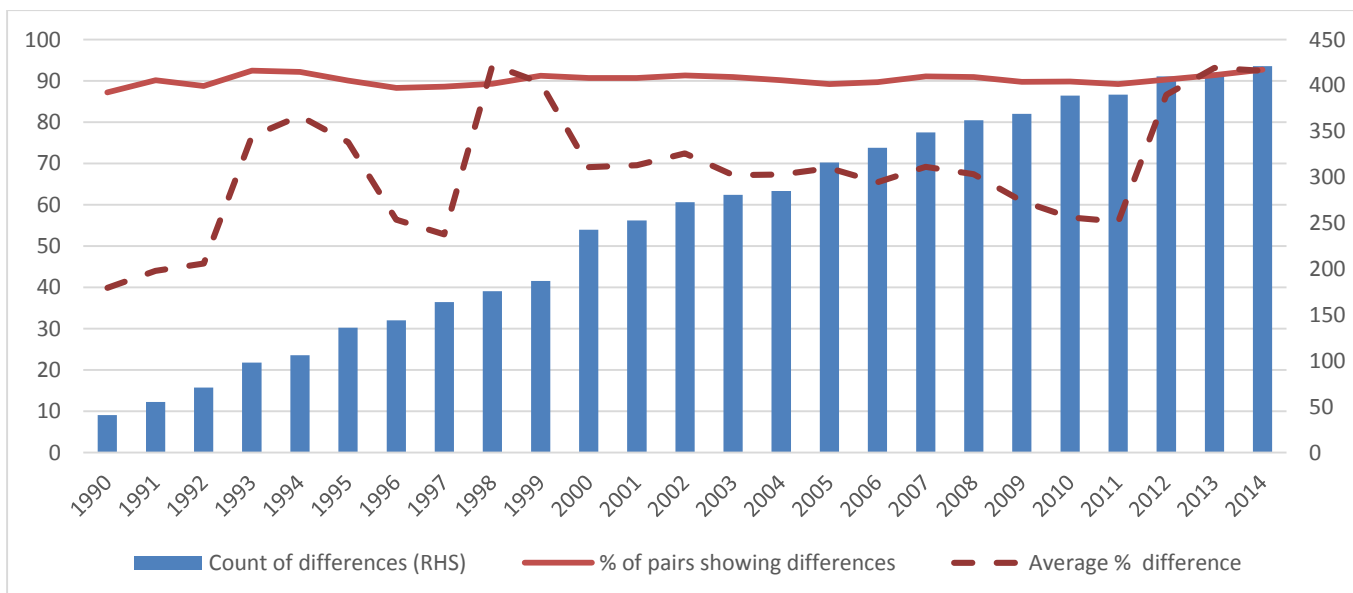
year/series/country pairs actually have both estimates in the dataset. The figures below show the number of discrepancies for the project countries in the CountryData database. The solid line shows the percentage of possible discrepancies where there is actually a difference between national and international estimates, and the dotted line shows the average size of these discrepancies as a proportion of the country's estimate. The first figure only shows pairs where estimates were available in the same year for country and international sources. For the second the comparison is between the most recent international data point and the most recent country estimate available.

Figure 4: Trends in numbers of data series and frequency and magnitude of discrepancies for 11 project countries, 1990–2014

Differences between estimates for the same years



Differences between most recent estimates



Source: Evaluation team analysis of CountryData website <http://data.un.org/countryData/> Downloaded 04 August 2015

Figure 4 shows that:

- the number of differences has risen, albeit with spikes in years with many censuses or surveys. This number is mainly shown to illustrate the trend of an increase in the number of indicators. This increase is likely to become even greater with the SDGs;
- the proportion of data series pairs with discrepancies has stayed broadly the same since the 1990s, at around 90%; and
- the average discrepancy between country and international estimates fell from around the turn of the century onwards, from about 50% in 2000 to about 25% in 2011; it then jumped again in 2012 as more data became available for tuberculosis and malaria incidence rates, for which there are very large proportional differences between international and country estimates.

CountryData therefore provides little evidence that the project has reduced discrepancies, though it might in any case be unrealistic to expect the project to have made much impact on discrepancies to date, given that the full version of CountryData only came on line in 2014.

Another source of information on discrepancies is a comparison of data downloaded from CountryData with data from the MDGLabs database created during the earlier design project. MDGLabs contains far more countries than CountryData but far fewer series, and international vs national data matching was only done for a sub-section of them. Furthermore, some of the series in MDGLabs cannot be directly matched to CountryData because CountryData only contains estimates for male and female or urban and rural separately for codes, whereas MDGLabs only has whole economy estimates. The result is that there are only 218 series for which it is possible to compare discrepancies in MDGLabs and CountryData directly. Of these series 43 show discrepancies and of these 43 series 20 show only smaller discrepancies in the CountryData dataset, eight show only larger discrepancies, and 11 show smaller discrepancies in some years and larger ones in others. The average decrease in discrepancy is an enormous 2,148% but this is highly influenced by three outlier series: tuberculosis prevalence in Cambodia, and internet usage in Cambodia and Vietnam. In all three the discrepancy in MDGLabs was reduced in CountryData by the National estimate moving towards the international estimate. Excluding these series the average fall in discrepancies is 11%.

Table 11: Comparison of discrepancies in MDGLabs and CountryData

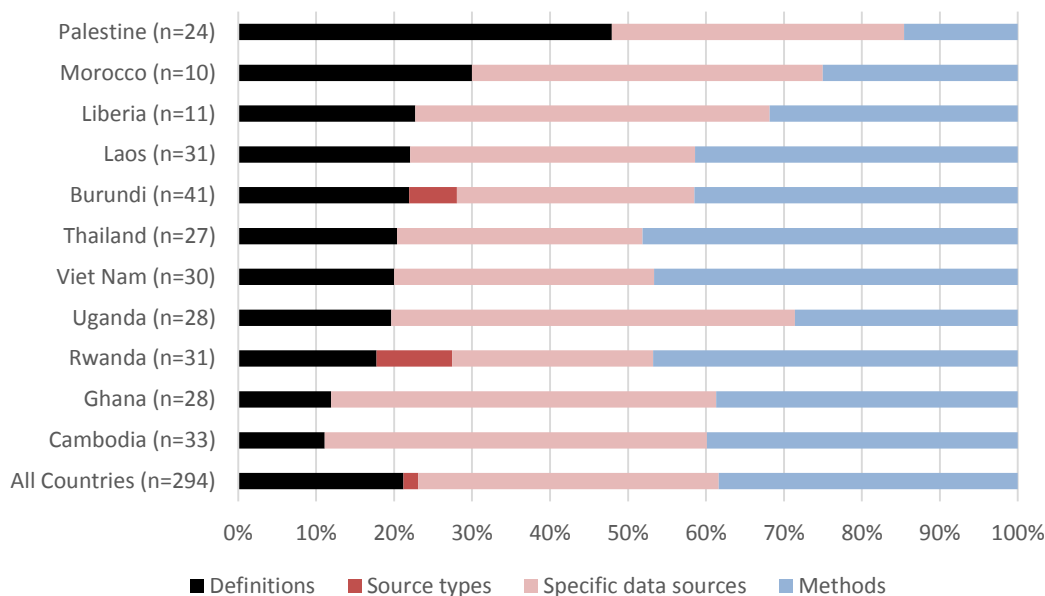
	Differences in MDGLabs	Changes in differences between MDGLabs and CountryData		
		Only falls	Only rises	A mix
Cambodia	10	6	2	1
Laos	0	0	0	0
Liberia	6	4	0	2
Morocco	6	2	2	1
Palestine	9	2	2	3
Thailand	0	0	0	0
Uganda	7	3	1	3
Vietnam	5	3	1	1
	43	20	8	11

It seems clear that the data discrepancies in CountryData are lower than those in MDGLabs. However, this may represent corrections to the data sent to UNSD as much as changes in the estimates made by the countries and agencies.

One further way of looking at the plausibility of the claim that the project reduced or can reduce discrepancies is to examine the reasons why the discrepancies are actually there in the first place. Fortunately the CountryData project has managed to locate explanations for the vast majority (on

average 95%) of discrepancies investigated. As the chart below shows, the main categories of explanation are different specific data sources and different methods. Different indicator definitions are less important.²⁵

Figure 5: Main categories of explanations provided for discrepancies, as percent of indicator pairs by country



Source: Constructed by evaluation team based on data from CountryData website, downloaded 05 August 2015, filtered for MDG indicators only. Note 'different age groups' were treated as different definitions. Where there were two or three explanations for a particular discrepancy (a minority of cases) the explanations were divided equally and counted as one-half or one-third each.

The explanations for discrepancies identified in Figure 5 give some indication that knowledge of discrepancies might not be enough in itself to lead to a reduction in discrepancies in future. The requirements of UN agencies responsible for publishing MDGs differ from those of national authorities in several ways: in particular, the need on the part of UN agencies to have estimates available for every country in every year and to have confidence that estimates are comparable among countries is an important consideration in their choice of methodologies; this is a consideration that is not important for countries. Conversely, some of these agencies' methods, especially those involving modelling, require global data that countries would find it difficult to collect and gather. These different requirements lead to different choices about data sources.

h) Unanticipated positive or negative outcomes with credible links to the project

There were several unanticipated positive outcomes of the project. These include: the establishment of an SDMX exchange with Mexico, Jordan, Yemen, and Egypt; training provided to the western Asian countries; automation of the procedure for the production of Morocco's statistical yearbook; and facilitation of project countries' participation in the ADB's efforts to gather economic data using SDMX. Evidence for these outcomes was provided by the project reports triangulated by discussions with NSOs.

²⁵ However, a look at the raw data set suggests that the categorisation of reasons has not always been conducted in a systematic manner, so it would be worth revisiting this (in the meantime the data in Figure 4 should be treated with caution).

3.3 Efficiency

EQ6: What aspects of project design and implementation have made the project more or less effective and efficient at achieving the above outputs and outcomes?

Findings: There is strong evidence that the management structures were effective in achieving outputs, using a contract modality, but weak evidence that the structures and processes were effective in promoting outcomes. This raises wider questions about DFID's results approach, which is currently output- and contract-focused. There is also strong evidence that structures promoted accountability and transparency to partner country NSOs and DFID but accountability to other in country and international stakeholders was weaker.

Evidence:

a) Are governance and management structures and processes effective in promoting and monitoring project objectives?

There is no single agreed definition for the distinction between project governance and management, but Governance is normally seen as the structures that have been put in place “to ensure that the [program] is run in such a way that it achieves its objectives in an effective and transparent manner” while management is normally concerned “with the day to day operation of the program, within the context of the strategies, policies, processes, and procedures that have been established by the governing body” (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2007²⁶).

The project memorandum describes the governance and management of the project jointly under the heading of management arrangements (Box 2).

Box 2: Management and governance arrangements specified in project memorandum

‘Management Arrangements:

This is a joint project between DFID and UNSD.

Within DFID, the project is implemented through the Global Statistics Partnership Department and managed through a management committee comprised of statisticians, advisers from UNCD and an IT expert. A statistical adviser in GSPD will be the project officer.

At UNSD, there will be a steering committee comprised of chief statisticians of selected international and regional agencies (World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the UN regional commissions) who will assist UNSD on the decisions taken throughout the project.

UNSD is responsible for implementation of the project, working together with partner governments.”

Source: Project memorandum

The structures shown in

Box 2 were supplemented by contractual arrangements, such as the targets set in the project logframe, which were regularly reviewed by the DFID project officer, and MoUs signed between UNSD and partner governments.

For delivering project outputs, the arrangements have generally been effective. Roles are clear and specified in contracts; progress reports were full, comprehensive and timely; and regular checks

²⁶ An Independent assessment of the World Bank's Involvement IN Global and Regional Partnership Programmes pp 47-48

were made by DFID. Furthermore, the DFID annual reports were effective in identifying the slow start to implementation in 2010 (see next section) and in stimulating measures to get back on track. However, the same arrangements have been less effective in maintaining a focus on the project's long-term outcomes. More specifically, the failure of the project to produce planned strategies for advocacy and sustainability was not noted. The DFID reviews generally focused on concrete outputs and immediate outcomes, following the DFID reporting template, rather than the more nebulous, but important, links between outputs and long-term outcomes.

Despite the language of partnership, the project appears to have operated largely in a contract or payment-by-results mode, with UNSD staff working hard to deliver output targets, and DFID, as project funder, regularly checking on their progress.²⁷ This was replicated in countries, where the MoUs operated like contracts, with payments conditional on countries reaching milestones. This mode is suitable for a focus on short-term outputs, but less suitable for making long-term behavioural changes that would require genuine buy-in across other parts of UNSD (e.g. the MDG group) as well as in other international agencies.

The project Steering Committee could have acted as a governance body, but in practice acted more as an information-sharing group. The Committee had no formal ToR and interviews with Steering Committee members and project staff revealed that no-one felt that the Steering Committee had responsibility to make decisions about the project. The Committee met only four times (Feb 2010, Oct 2010²⁸, 2013 and 2014), and suffered from major turnover in representation, both of institutions and of individuals representing them (see Table 12) – in fact, each meeting started with an 'introduction to the project', presumably because there were so many new people attending. Although some action points were raised at the end of each meeting, there was no follow-up in the succeeding meeting or any record in the minutes of any actions taken on points raised in previous meetings. For example, various entities raised questions about duplication, overlap or coordination of activities with the UNSD-DFID project, and there were action points for follow-up between meetings but there was no record in subsequent meetings of actions taken as a result.

Table 12: Participation in project Steering Committee: Organisations and representatives

Feb 2010	Feb 2013	Feb 2014
UNSD: 3	UNSD: 4 (all different from 2010)	UNSD: 5 (4 the same as 2013)
	DFID: 2	DFID: 1 (same as 2013)
World Bank: 2	World Bank: 1 (different from 2010)	World Bank: 1 (same as 2013)
	AfDB: 2	AfDB: 1 (same as 2013)
	Eurostat: 1	
UNICEF: 1		UNICEF: 2 (different from 2010)
UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA): 1	UNECA: 1 (different from 2010)	UNECA: 1 (same as 2013)
		UNDP: 1
UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) : 1		
	Food and Agriculture Organisation: 1	

²⁷ See 'DFID's approach to delivering impact', by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, 2015, for a discussion of the limitations of contract mode approaches.

²⁸ The Feb 2011 Steering comm. meeting took place as an adjunct to a Data Manager's meeting in October 2010

UN Economic and Social Commission for Asian and the Pacific (UNESCAP): 1	UNESCAP: 1 (different from 2010)	
		UN ESCWA: 1

Source: Evaluation team analysis of Steering Committee minutes

b) Extent to which governance and management structures of project promote transparency and accountability to key stakeholders

Discussions during country case studies confirmed that NSOs were represented – in fact they were decisive – in determining the project’s activities at country level. This is also evidenced by the project’s willingness to accommodate Morocco’s request for assistance with its statistical yearbook, Rwanda’s desire for a consultant to assist with the creation of the metadata handbook, and Thailand’s wish to work with StatXchange. Line ministries had less say and sometimes only became aware of the project when invited to meetings. International agencies’ views were represented through the project Steering Committee but this connection was much weaker (see previous section). The project was also presented to members of the Statistics Commission and the IAEG for MDGs directly.

UNSD held regular meetings to update country partners on progress and involve them in planning. DFID monitoring reports on the project are publicly available via Development Tracker but were not directly shared with project partners.

EQ7: Has the project been reasonably cost-efficient?

Findings: There is strong evidence that expenditure followed budgets and that the project management took action to promote cost efficiency. It is, however, notable that there was some slippage in the delivery of outputs, which has implications for the achievement of longer-term outcomes.

Evidence:

- a) Extent to which costs and timeframes compare with those planned
 - i) Costs

Table 13 shows the evolution of project costs over the lifetime of the budget. It shows that expenditure broadly matched predicted expenditure against the main budget lines. The project as a whole delivered a slight underspend, with UNSD returning some funds to DFID at the close.

Table 13: Evolution of cost structure during project

	DFID project memorandum (£)	Converted to \$*	First budget revision (June 2010 \$)	Final budget revision (April 2014 \$)
Staffing costs (NY)	1,772,000	2,539,378	2,621,500	2,456,544
Mission and travel costs	459,100	657,917	720,000	702,335
Workshops and training	590,000	845,504	540,000	789,934
Monitoring and Evaluation	100,000	143,306		
Consultants and IT	800,000	1,146,446	2,160,000	1,355,864
Overheads at 5%	186,055	266,628	338,200	275,635

Programme costs at 10%	372,110	533,255	637,970	558,031
	4,279,265	6,132,433	7,017,670	6,138,343

* Conversion uses a rate of 1.4330579 \$ to the £. This rate was taken from the accounts for the design project provided with the project documentation. Effective exchange rates would depend on transaction dates. Rates during the project lifetime varied from 1.43 to 1.65. N.B. lines in individual budgets have been aggregated by evaluation team to allow comparisons over time.

The most important variations from planned spending were the overspend on workshops and training and the underspend on consultants and IT.

ii) Timeframes

Table 14 gives some of the key planned and actual dates for various milestones. It presents a picture of a project which (as is very common) started a bit late, and did not allow quite enough time for start-up activities (such as recruitment and initial linkages with countries). Staff then worked very hard later to meet its initial deadlines and output targets, in the process squeezing out some of the key activities for achieving long-run outcomes (e.g. an advocacy plan). The table also highlights the staff time required for further development of the website and associated tools after the initial launch – a need which does not appear to have been recognised in the original project design.

Table 14: Timeliness of project activities: planned and actual

Activities/milestones	Planned in project memorandum	Actual
Preparation and making initial links with countries and stakeholders		
Submission of project documentation	July 2009	Project only signed in December 2009
Recruitment of personnel (UN project officer and two regional coordinators)	July–Aug 2009	Staff fully in place February 2011
Initial visits to seven of project countries (those not covered in the previous pilot): Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda	Sept–Dec 2009	Cambodia March 2010, Thailand December 2010, others 2011. Final 'first mission' to Ghana in August 2012
Meetings and communication with agencies involved in data dissemination and regional commissions (UNECA and UNESCAP)	July–Dec 2009	Project Steering Committee first meeting in 2010. Side events to 2010 and 2011 Statistics Commission and 2011 IAEG meetings.
Stage 1: Design and development		
Design and development, including development of country action plans (training, etc.)	Jan–Jun 2010	Country action plans took the form of MoUs signed between October 2010 and January 2013.
Development of advocacy plan for key data users	Jan–Jun 2010	Advocacy plan not developed
Development of prototypes for CountryData website	Jan–Dec 2010	Prototype developed 2010
Stage 2: Implementation		

Activities/milestones	Planned in project memorandum	Actual
Implementation of country action plans.	June 2010–January 2013	Implementation of country action plans began in Cambodia in 2010 and was still continuing in Ghana in the final quarter of 2014
Experimental launch of CountryData	Jan 2011 – Jun 2012	Experimental launch of CountryData in 2011
Online roll-out of repository	July 2012–June 2013	Work on development of tools and websites continued throughout 2013. New version of CountryData launched in June 2014
Stage 3: Sustainable Use		
Roll-out repository for all countries and encourage international agencies to use repository	July 2012–June 2013	New version of CountryData including all countries by June 2014. CountryData continues to be presented at Statistics Commission side meetings
Ensure sustainability of changes introduced in earlier stages	January 2013–June 2013	There were no other specific sustainability phase activities

Source: Project memorandum and project reports, summarised and traffic lights added by evaluation team. Dark green: as scheduled; light green: slight delay; amber: delayed one year or more (activities within the category may vary); red: planned but did not take place

b) The extent to which the project management took action to promote efficiency

The main measures that the project took to promote cost efficiency were replacing some regional meetings with global meetings, reducing use of Africa's high-cost accommodation and internal air travel, and managing without a project administrative assistant in New York. However, much greater savings were achieved as a result of the decisions to minimise expenditure on consultants by delivering outputs through MoUs with the NSOs and an IT development contract with CSF.²⁹

It is also worth looking briefly at costs. The main unit cost that can be compared with other international organizations is the management fee of 10% which is higher than normal management fees for the World Bank or IMF but lower than that for some other UN organizations. On the other hand short-term consultancy rates were very low, at \$275 a day or about £190 at our exchange rate.

3.4 Sustainability

EQ8: To what extent are the results of the project likely to be sustained?

Findings: As with any project it is only really possible to assess sustainability years after completion. NSOs have certainly made commitments to maintain outputs. However, the lack of an established user community for the project's outputs, and of a separate sustainability strategy or time to implement it, mean that sustainability will, in our judgement, be dependent on the launch of a follow-up project.

Evidence:

²⁹ CSF is a not-for-profit organisation with extensive experience of producing web-based software for organisations in the UN family, most notably the UNICEF DevInfo package that was used for most of the national data repositories and the UNSD's own MDG website.

a) Extent to which the project countries' NSO/ NSS have demonstrated commitment to sustaining relevant activities of the project.

The project countries have demonstrated commitment to sustaining the national data portals by tasking staff and units with the maintenance of the repositories. The evaluation team also heard expressions of support from key users even when they did not use the data repositories themselves.

However, the lack of a powerful community of direct users for the national data repositories must, in the judgement of the evaluation team, raise doubts about long-term sustainability. It has been our experience that the most commonly sustained regular outputs of NSOs have been those for which there is a powerful and established group of regular users, such as consumer price indices. Other outputs may be published many months or years in arrears, even if there are units full of statisticians whose job it is to produce them and a clear commitment from the NSO. The project's initial assessment of the state of the national DevInfo data repositories (Annex H) is also worrying in that it showed that some of the repositories were not being maintained despite the, sometimes substantial, training and assistance which had created these repositories in the first place.

b) Existence of a strategy for project completion

The main strategy for project completion is the proposed follow-on project for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs now being prepared by UNSD and DFID. It is planned that this project will continue working with Ghana, Liberia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Palestine, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, and extend the project to another 11 countries identified as DFID priority countries.

c) Risks that current project outputs will cease to be useful in the post-2015 operating environment

The evidence presented in Section 2.1 suggests that the project concept will remain relevant. The main risk to the usefulness of the project outputs is therefore that either DevInfo or SDMX are superseded by other systems. Neither appears likely. The sponsors for the SDMX initiative include the Bank for International Settlements, Eurostat, the European Central Bank, the IMF, the OECD, the World Bank and the United Nations. Since 2009 the Statistical Commission has recognised SDMX as the preferred standard for exchanging data and metadata. Meanwhile the Global DevInfo Initiative remains by far the most prominent global initiative developing national data repositories.

d) Extent to which the project increased statistical capacity in partner countries

Annexes E and F provide evidence that all of the countries examined have staff in place who are able to maintain their data portals, gather metadata, and transmit it to CountryData using SDMX. Interviews with staff in these – and other – offices suggest that these staff will stay in place and that funding for them is available from regular budgets. The fact that NSDSs cover NSO responsibility for the collation and coordination of indicators across the NSS is also grounds for cautious optimism. However, the project itself did not seek to address any factors in NSO management and human resource procedures to ensure that the capabilities it developed spread to the rest of the NSO beyond the individuals that took part in its training sessions, or to ensure that these capabilities did not decay over time.

4 Recommendations

This section contains ten short and medium term recommendations aimed at a variety of audiences. The four **short term** recommendations (1-4) are focused on a limited number of practical actions that UNSD can take in the post-project period to move the agenda forward. These recommendations were shared with UNSD early in the evaluation process and some have already been acted on

The next four medium **term** recommendations (5-8) reflect lessons of the UNSD/DFID project which, in the judgment of the evaluation team, are of relevance to the design of the projects and programs to support SDG monitoring currently being prepared and in particular to the design of a follow-on UNSD/DFID project that DFID is contemplating. Some of these recommendations are also relevant to the design of other statistical projects. The final two medium term recommendations (9-10) address the wider context of the role of international organisations in the international statistical system. The changes advocated cannot be implemented by UNSD and DFID Statisticians alone. Instead we are recommending that UNSD and DFID statisticians attempt to influence the international statistical community, especially the UN Statistical Commission and the International Agencies producing statistics, and suggesting how they might do this.

Each **recommendation** about *what* should be done is accompanied by a **justification** explaining *why* it should be done and by **suggestions** about *how* to take the recommendation forward. Suggestions are numbered according to the recommendation they apply to.

4.1 Short Term Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Pending longer-term decisions on the future of the *CountryData* website, small but critical improvements should be made to make it easier for users to examine indicators by MDG goal within a country or across all countries.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD Because of the Utilisation focus approach adopted these recommendations were discussed with UNSD as they arose during the course of the evaluation. The first 'quick fix' has already been handled through the adoption of a revised country page and work on the second is in hand.

Justification: The evaluation team recognises that it is likely that the *CountryData* website will not be retained in its present form for the long term, given the likelihood that the data will be integrated into a new SDG website. However, pending these developments, we find *CountryData* to be a potentially useful resource, but improvements are urgently needed to make it more user friendly. Suggestions for 'quick fixes' include:

Suggestion 1.1: Place codes at the beginning of the title for each series designed so that all the series associated with a particular Millennium Development Goal appear next to one another. For instance all the indicators for goal 1 could have "1-" inserted before their title, all those associated with goal 2 could have "2-" etc. Indicators that are relevant for more than one goal should be repeated. This simple step would make it much easier for users to find the series they want within a country page without changing the basic structure of the country pages.

Suggestion 1.2: Add a facility for downloading all the data for all countries at once, rather than only allowing data downloads on a country by country basis. Many users will want to look at data on a subject by subject rather than a country by country basis. If the previous suggestion is adopted they will be able to do this by downloading the whole dataset for all countries and sorting it by series name. Prominent text to explain how to do this should be added to the front page of the

website until such time as it becomes possible to create a set of screens organised on a subject by subject basis to go alongside the organisation by country.

Recommendation 2: The discrepancies data already gathered in the project should be further investigated and disseminated as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD Approximate time-frame: mid 2016

Justification: The unique nature of the data collected in the UNSD-DFID project makes it an extremely valuable resource for investigating the pattern of discrepancies between national and international estimates, and the reasons underlying these discrepancies. Although the 11 project countries are not a statistically representative sample, they do represent a range of middle income and low income countries and fragile states. Even the preliminary examination of the data in section 2.2.2 of this report has already produced novel and useful insights, in particular that different choices about data sources and methodology play a larger role than different definitions in explaining data discrepancies. However, further investigation would be helpful not only for the design of a future projects but also for understanding how best to focus future support to SDG measurement. We recommend that UNSD give priority to seeking resources for this work. Dissemination of existing analyses is a particularly high priority. Some specific suggestions for consideration are:

Suggestion 2.1: Exploring discrepancies in greater depth, for example by type of indicator and country and investigating countries, subjects, or measurements that are particularly associated with particular types of discrepancy.

Suggestion 2.2: Identifying specific countries and indicators with major discrepancies in trends between national and international measurements, and investigating these in more depth.

Suggestion 2.3 Further discussion with both agencies and partner countries about the reasons for discrepancies; in particular attempts to understand whether each would still stand by their respective methods after the discrepancies were illuminated and if not why not.

Suggestion 2.4 Dissemination of findings and recommendations through presentations to the Inter Agency Expert groups, preparation and circulation of briefing notes, and workshops with national and international data users.

Recommendation 3: UNSD should encourage the partner countries to provide prominent links from their national data repositories to CountryData and its successors to demonstrate their awareness of the alternative international estimates to users.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD Approximate time-frame: early 2016

Justification: National data repositories should alert users to the existence of both national and international estimates and explain the legitimate reasons for discrepancies. This will reassure users who are aware of estimates other than those from the NSO that the NSO is itself aware of these alternative estimates and has used any information they can gain from them in producing its own estimates.

Suggestion 3.1. UNSD should provide text to users following the initial link to the CountryData website giving them guidance about why National and International estimates may differ legitimately and where it may be appropriate to use one rather than the other.

Recommendation 4: UNSD should seek new funding to continue and expand capacity development on metadata documentation and data transfer systems.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD Approximate time-frame: by mid-2016

Justification: The current project has demonstrated success in training a diverse group of NSOs in creating metadata, and specifically in using SDMX which provides a standardized machine-readable infrastructure for storing data time series and metadata. Strong demand has been expressed both from project and non-project countries for further support in this area.

The capability for storing and handling time series is an increasingly important part of core NSO capabilities. National Statistical Offices have been moving away from traditional paper survey reports towards publishing time series and full survey microdata sets online, and maintaining separate methodological publications containing metadata about those series, also online. Procedures for storing, processing and disseminating time series and metadata are therefore becoming a core capability for NSOs.

We believe there is a strong case for providing assistance to increase NSO capacity to create Metadata and use data transfer systems (SDMX), and recommend that UNSD seek financial support for this. If the principle of demand-led selection of partner countries is followed, it would make sense for support to this area to be decoupled from the specific issue of data discrepancies and other more long-term intensive support to statistical capacity building in partner countries, and run it as a stand-alone SDMX and data exchange project open to all countries.

4.2 Medium Term Recommendations (MTR)

Recommendation 5: We recommend that all statistical projects should develop an explicit and realistic theory of change (ToC) including assumptions and risks, consult stakeholders on this ToC as part of the project design phase, and review the links between outputs, outcomes and impacts on an annual basis.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD and DFID Statisticians Approximate time-frame: for all new projects

Justification: This recommendation may appear obvious, but we repeat it here because;

- o Links between statistics project activities and improved human welfare are real but more complex than their equivalents in other areas of development so producing useful theories of change and meaningful indicators is particularly difficult. Impacts and even outcomes reach beyond the mere production of data which is the easiest element of the system to specify and monitor. Consider two outcomes that have been suggested for the SDG measurement project; “Improved capacity of project countries to support SDG monitoring” and “Increased availability of SDG Indicators at National and International levels”, raise many questions. What do we mean by capacity: Is it a property of individuals, organisations or societies; how do we recognise it when we see it?
- o The history of the project reinforces the importance of the steps recommended. The UNSD/DFID project was developed prior to the DFID requirement that all projects needed a ToC and UNSD still does not require a ToC for non DFID projects. The project had a log frame which described the key expected linkages but did not explore the assumptions and risks in any detail. As a result, the evaluation team had to reconstruct a theory of change for the project. The consultative process of developing the theory of change highlighted several areas where overly optimistic assumptions had been made in project design. For example,

although changes in the ways that ‘key users’ were going to use data, and the convergence in the estimates made by international organisations and NSOs were important objectives of the original project, they had received very little attention in designing the project activities. Rather there was an assumption that presenting data and metadata in new or redesigned websites would, in itself, bring about the desired changes in behaviour. It is unlikely that this assumption would have survived if a theory of change had been developed in a consultative manner during the design phase of the project.

Annual reviews of the project were competently conducted according to the DFID annual project review template. However, it was possible to complete the current template without including a review of the linkages and assumptions between project outputs and the expected outcomes and impacts, meaning that opportunities were missed to pick up on these issues. We can see the way that changes to DFID practice affected the attention paid to outcomes by comparing the Workbook with the entries for the Dec 2010 annual review, which contains a space for “Purpose Assumptions” and a request for “evidence that the likely achievement of the Purpose can be attributed to progress made in delivering the Outputs”, with the word file containing the Feb 2014 annual review³⁰. This document does not mention assumptions at all and only deals briefly with risks.

We therefore make the following suggestions.

Suggestion 5.1 : future projects should adopt a more realistic attitude to the amount of change to outcomes that can be expected in a three or four year project. Improvements to capacity in statistics offices that produce changes visible to data users usually take several years and it is unrealistic to expect major external changes in data use resulting from improved capacity in such a short period.

Suggestion 5.2: Exploring and explaining the desired outcomes should be given special attention when developing the ToC. Project designs should include a page or so of text unpacking the short outcome statements in the ToR. This text should including precise definitions of key concepts like “capacity” and “support” or refer to the standard definitions found in the development literature. If indicators should be “available” the design should say who they should be available to and when. Note that what we are suggesting is an unpacking or explanation not a blueprint or template. Project designers must also avoid the trap of expecting all partner countries improve capacity or increase availability by the same amount or in the same way.

Suggestion 5.3: In choosing indicators for outcomes project designers should consider using process indicators as well as direct measures. The current project, for example, might have used the creation of the planned “Advocacy plan for key data users” as a milestone in monitoring user engagement and developed its longer term milestones as part of that plan.

Suggestion 5.4: Annual reviews of statistical projects should always report on what has been learned about the assumptions and risks in the ToC and the links between outputs, outcomes, and impacts as well as on the delivery of outputs, a recommendation also made recently by the

³⁰ The completed forms were contained in files titles “UNSD-DFID Project - Annual Review February 2014 - UNSD Comments.doc” and “UNSD-DFID Project - Annual Review Dec 2010 - FINAL.xls”

Independent Commission for Aid Impact (see ICAI 2015³¹). Project managers should expect to learn throughout the history of the project and not be afraid of recommending changes to activities and outputs if it becomes apparent that these will promote the project outcomes. Such learning will almost always require discussions with data users as well as data producers (see sections below).

Recommendation 6: We recommend that statistical projects should clearly identify expected data users as part of the project design phase. If improved decision making or policy formation is part of the justification for the project, design documents should describe how it is believed targeted data users obtain and use data at the moment and how their behaviour is expected to change as a result of the project. Use of the project's outputs should be monitored as a logframe indicator.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD and DFID Statisticians Approximate time-frame: for all new projects

Justification: The UNSD/DFID project memorandum made many references to 'key users', but they were never clearly identified. The project assumed that developing data repositories and metadata would improve policies designed by 'key users' but the memorandum did not discuss users of data repositories and metadata or how they are used.

Suggestion 6.1: We suggest that the design for the UNSD/DFID project begins by identifying the policy and opinion formers whose behaviour it is hoped that the SDG data would influence. DFID could begin this process through email consultations with DFID advisors in key countries. Once individuals have been identified in each project country, a selection should be interviewed to study the way that they actually obtain and use data. Indications from the evaluation suggest that most will delegate work with data, and possibly all analytical work, to assistants and advisors. One of the most important aims of this enquiry should be to identify these assistants and advisors and target them as key users.

Once these key users have been identified they should be engaged more intensively and on a continuous basis to:

1. Track the extent to which data availability is actually being improved for them
2. Gather evidence about the use of improved data in policy formation
3. Seek advice about steps to improve data availability

Note that this will require an active involvement from this target group and they will have to be incentivised in some way to make this effort. Rather than resort to financial incentives we would suggest that the NSOs attempt to provide them with training in use of statistics for analysis and advocacy, enhanced briefing, and other data services in the hope that this will provide them with career advantages. The project could also provide support in this area, perhaps drawing on existing Royal Statistical Society Short courses as models. Initial focus should be on the use of the small area and small group statistics that should become available under the "leave no one behind" agenda. This data, and even the prospect of this data, will present an excellent

³¹ "annual reviews should include an assessment of the assumptions and risks set out in the logframe and theory of change" ICAI (2015) DFID's Approach to Delivering Impact. Available from: <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/ICAI-report-DFIDs-approach-to-Delivering-Impact.pdf> (accessed 14 August 2015).

opportunity to engage with users as it will be both novel and much more salient to domestic political debate than current indicators.

Suggestion 6.2 We also suggest an attempt to engage with non key users by;

- Recording and tracking current enquiries (as the Ghana Statistical Service is already doing) and identifying users of National Data Repositories through standard web surveys.
- Using Google analytics to look at searches for data and identify patterns.

Recommendation 7: We support the Governance Structure that has been proposed for the new UNSD/DFID SDG indicator dissemination project but suggest an explicit identification of responsibilities for governance as opposed to management and some steps that might provide incentives for all participants to take an active role.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD and DFID Statisticians Approximate time-frame: for all new projects

Justification: The steering group for the DFID/UNSD project was not able to perform an effective role as a governance body; it acted mainly as a mechanism for information sharing. Instead DFID itself was providing governance for the project while UNSD operated as a contractor. A more active role for a wider group like the steering committee, could have been very valuable, but would have required a significantly greater investment of time from the participants.

Suggestion 7.1: We would support the Governance Structure that has been proposed for the new UNSD/DFID SDG indicator dissemination project i.e;

- **An Advisory Group of 18** drawn from agencies and countries in the Interagency and Expert Group for SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG) , and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for post-2015 monitoring (HLG) plus UNSD and DFID. This will provide advice and recommendations and help coordination with related projects by other international agencies.
- **A Steering Group** including UNSD and DFID other UN and other contributing donors to hold the implementing agency (UNSD) accountable to the donor (DFID) and make decisions where the donor needs to be involved.
- An annual Project **Meeting**. for project countries in the margins of United Nations Statistical Commission.

But suggest that it is the new steering group that is fulfilling the governance functions described in section 3.3 of this report and that this should be recognised explicitly in the project memorandum.

Suggestion 7.2 We suggest that the Advisory Group's activities are structured to provide incentives for the participants, particularly those from international agencies, to play an active role. Advisory group meetings should concentrate on statistical and technical issues around the discrepancies actually discovered which are likely to be of much greater interest than details of project administration for which the group will not have direct responsibility.

Suggestion 7.3 we also suggest that the project's designers consider making grants to fund work on metadata preparation by some International Agencies similar to the grants the project will make

to NSOs. Although this suggestion will require more analysis and discussion with agencies to clarify its possible costs and benefits, we believe even a small financial link might raise the profile and priority of metadata work within the agencies and so provide valuable leverage.

Recommendation 8: We recommend that Statistical capacity building activities allow some self-selection of participants and use both global and regional approaches to training.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD and DFID Statisticians Approximate time-frame: for any new project requiring development of SDMX skills

Justification: This recommendation follows findings from many previous statistical capacity-building projects (See for example DFID/SIDA Thematic Report on Statistical Capacity Building OECD 2009). Capacity building depends on the existing conditions in NSOs, requires strong buy-in, and cannot be forced on unwilling partners. It is therefore necessary to allow some self-selection, and it is desirable for a project to be flexible about what countries it will work with.

Experience from the current UNSD/DFID project showed that all countries were able to benefit from the global SDMX workshops despite the different levels of sophistication of the statistical offices and that global workshops could be no more expensive to run than regional ones³².

Suggestion 8.1 We would suggest using global workshops for introducing new skills or processes and then providing more continued support to integrate the new technology through regional approaches. These can be organised either through organising hub NSOs and building in funding for others in the region to visit, or by working through regional commissions and training centres.³³

Recommendation 9: UNSD and DFID Statisticians should try to influence the international statistical community, and in particular the international agencies producing statistics, to establish and promulgate a principle that it is legitimate for estimates of identical statistical concepts to differ when they have been produced for different purposes.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD and DFID Statisticians Approximate time-frame: begin in 2016

Justification: The evaluation highlighted the fact that international agencies are *producers* as well as compilers of statistics: for example several agencies re-analyse survey data, make adjustments to data received from countries and develop their own model based indicators. This project showed that agencies choices of methodologies and data sources frequently differ from those used by countries. One reason for these differences is that they have had to give a higher priority to data sources and methods that can be used by a small but highly skilled team to produce annual estimates for many countries in the same way, but have faced less pressure to produce sub national estimates or provide lengthy defences for each number they produce for each country. Alternative sources and methods, or even alternative analyses of the same raw survey data, will always produce alternative estimates.

This evaluation is being written at a moment when the new SDGs are being agreed and initial plans are being made for development of indicators. This will dramatically increase the challenge of data collection, analysis and presentation for reporting against the agreed indicators. At the same time,

³² Global workshops included Technologies for Data Exchange Bangkok, 18-22 March 2013, Advanced XML Technologies for Statistical Applications Bangkok, 14-18 October 2013SDMX for Development Indicators Nairobi (UNON) Dates: 25 - 29 November 2013, and Building Better Dissemination Systems Hotel Cambodian, Phnom Penh Dates: 21 – 25 April 2014

³³ See Cambodia and Laos Country Visits

the development of ‘big data’ presents many challenges to official statistics (High Level Task Team, 2013³⁴) and increases the number of possible data sources, either directly for SDG indicators or as inputs into their calculations. Instances of differences between the estimates of development indicators did not decrease over the life of this project and we do not expect them to be eliminated in the future; rather they will increase as more international indicators are developed.

Discussions during the country visits suggested that many in country analysts were able to accept the existence of alternative estimates and select different estimates for different tasks. However the evaluation also demonstrated the potential for different estimates to cause tension between NSIs and International Agencies. There is also a danger that some users faced with apparently conflicting estimates, will conclude that one of the parties producing the estimates must be wrong and that this will undermine trust in and use of data.

Suggestion 9.1 We suggest that *UNSD and DFID Statisticians* encourage data producers to present country and international figures together as legitimate alternative estimates rather than contradictory truths and to present information on the uncertainty inherent in any estimate, perhaps along the lines proposed in Government Statistical Service, 2014³⁵. They should also be encouraged to present revisions and revisions studies. Data producers’ commentaries should discuss alternative estimates as well as those produced by the publisher of any report or dataset.

This suggestion should be seen as part of the obligation to ensure that national statistical offices and other national organisations for official statistics are “duly involved” in sources and methods for data collection included under Principal 5 of the *Principles Governing International Statistical Activities* (UN Statistics Commission 2006)³⁶. The same document says that NSOs should be “systematically involved” in the development of international statistical programmes” (Principal 8), and “empowered to take the lead” (Principal 10).

Suggestion 9.2 We suggest that *UNSD and DFID Statisticians* encourage data producers to publish the constraints they face when choosing data sources and methodologies (For example, the need of international organisations to produce comparable estimates every year for every country) and explain how these constraints have affected their choices. This should be seen as part of the obligation to make “decisions about statistical work programmes publicly available” included under Principle 3 of the *Principles Governing International Statistical Activities*³⁷.

Suggestion 9.3 We suggest that *UNSD and DFID Statisticians* attempt to get a statement that it is legitimate for estimates of identical statistical concepts to differ when they have been produced for different purposes and the adoption of recommendations on 9.1 and 9.2 discussed by the Statistics Commission.

Suggestion 9.4 We suggest that *DFID Statisticians* attempt to influence international agencies producing SDG indicators, and in particular the Statistical Commission, to adopt 9.1 - 9.3 by embedding the suggestions within a joined up UK approach as part of the “strategy for its [DFID’s]

³⁴ High Level Task Team (2013) *What does Big Data mean for official statistics?* Informal Task Team for the - High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics, Available from: <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/download/attachments/77170614/Big%20Data%20HLG%20Final%20Published%20Version.docx?version=1&modificationDate=1370507520046&api=v2> (accessed 14 August 2015).

³⁵ Government Statistical Service (2014) *Communicating uncertainty and change: Guidance for official statistics producers*. UK Government Statistical Service, Available from: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Communicating-uncertainty-and-change-v1.pdf>.

³⁶ http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/statorg/Principles_stat_activities/principles_stat_activities.htm

³⁷ ECOSOC Resolution 2006/6 also calls for greater transparency and better metadata from international organisations

engagement with the multilateral system as a whole” which recommended by the recent ICAI report on working with multilateral agencies³⁸.

The approach should be;

- *Joined up across DFID.* Many international agencies producing data receive substantial DFID support for their statistical activities this does not always come through statistics budget lines. For example, support for Educational Management Information Systems, and Health Management Information Systems often comes from Education or Health Budgets. Aligning all parts of DFID behind **9.1 - 9.3** would provide a powerful financial lever.
- *Joined up across the UK National Statistical System.* SDG indicators are now required for all countries, developed as well as developing so the UK’s own National Statistical System will also face the possibility of international agency estimates that differ from their own. In the past some developed countries have simply insisted that international agencies accept their estimates without question. Attempting to meet the needs of all NSSs by promoting suggestions **9.1 - 9.3** could address the UK’s own national interests while also showing international leadership and promoting a development agenda.

Recommendation 10: UNSD and DFID Statisticians should take steps to encourage greater methodological transparency among international agencies producing statistics.

Recommendation directed to: UNSD and DFID Statisticians Approximate time-frame: begin in 2016

Justification: All statisticians would advocate transparency in theory but sometimes struggle to prioritise it (see Statistical Commission 2008³⁹). The following suggestions address some gaps in current practise uncovered in some instances in the evaluation.

Suggestion 10.1 We suggest that *UNSD and DFID Statisticians* encourage International Agencies to provide metadata on the specific methods used for individual estimates as well as general methodology. For example, where models are used, the responsible agency should be encouraged to make available the model coefficients, the data and methodology for model estimation, and the values and sources of the input data used to calculate each estimate produced in each country in each year. Note that all this data must already be available to the agency to produce its estimates.

Suggestion 10.2 We suggest that *UNSD and DFID Statisticians* encourage International Agencies to see the precise data sources used in each country – i.e. not just “Ministry of Health” but which office within the Ministry and when the data was sent – as part of a statistical methodology that should be made public rather than as information about a survey respondent that must be kept private.

Suggestion 10.3 We suggest that UNSD and DFID statisticians incorporate 10.1 and 10.2 into all aspects of their work touching on the definitions and standards used for metadata and standards for official statistics.

³⁸ ICAI (2015) *How DFID works with multilateral agencies to achieve impact* Available from: <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/ICAI-report-How-DFID-works-with-multilateral-agencies-to-achieve-impact.pdf> (accessed 14 August 2015).

³⁹ Implementation of principles governing international statistical activities Statistical Commission Thirty-ninth session 26-29 February 2008 Item 4 (p) of the provisional agenda*

Suggestion 10.4 We suggest that UNSD and DFID statisticians pursue these proposals using the influencing strategies in **9.3** and **9.4**.

Annex A ToR

Consultancy for evaluation of the UNSD-DFID Project on "Improving the collation, availability and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs"

A. Why do the evaluation?

1. Evaluation topic

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in the United Nations HQ, New York with the financial support of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) is finalizing the activities relating to the project "Improving the collation, availability and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs", hereafter known as "the project".

Within the context of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines, an external evaluation should be carried out to assess the impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries and against the expected objectives in terms of both outputs and outcomes. It is against this backdrop that DFID and DESA seek the services of a consultant to conduct an external assessment of the project's impact

2. Background and rationale

The overall objective of the project is to improve the collation, availability and dissemination of data for monitoring national development indicators (including MDG indicators) in 11 selected developing countries⁴⁰. By establishing a channel for data dissemination at the country level and between country and international levels, the project will allow greater data access to national indicators. The specific objectives of the project are the following:

- a.) Reduce discrepancies between national and international data on development indicators;
- b.) Improve the coherence among statistics produced in the selected countries, by ensuring a stronger coordination and collaboration among national data producers and by promoting the use of standard definitions, methodologies, data exchange formats and data transfers;
- c.) Reduce burden on countries in terms of data requests received from international agencies.

Details of the expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and project activities are contained in the enclosed project document. A list of references to literature underpinning the project rationale is provided at the annex of this document.

A logframe has been maintained during the project to monitor progress against the targets chosen at the project's inception. This log frame has been the basis of assessing whether the project is on track by both the executor (UNSD) and sponsor (DFID).

As detailed in the project logframe:

1. The intended impact of the project is better evidence informed policy making.
2. The intended outcome of the project is improved access to more coherent MDG and other key national development indicators.

⁴⁰ Burundi, Cambodia, Ghana, Lao PDR, Liberia, Morocco, State of Palestine, Rwanda, Thailand, Uganda and Vietnam.

3. The outputs attributable to the project's support are:
- A centralised data platform for use at country level.
 - Improved understanding of discrepancies and better coherence of data.
 - Collation and dissemination of data and metadata at the international level, including national estimates.

3. Evaluation objective

The objectives of the evaluation are: (i) to assess how well the project improved the collation, availability and dissemination of data for monitoring national development indicators (including the MDG indicators) among the 11 project countries; (ii) to assess the relevance of the program in the context of the evolving statistical capacity development agenda, (iii) to provide guidance on how the programme could be strengthened and improved in the future; and (iv) to assess the governance and management of the project.

4. Users of the evaluation

The results of the evaluation will be used by UNSD and DFID to plan further projects and to understand where to use resources and plan activities more effectively to improve the area of official statistical dissemination.

B. What are we evaluating?

5. Evaluation questions

The evaluation will be based on available documentation and discussions involving key stakeholders. The evaluators' assessment shall address at a minimum, the questions noted below. Where appropriate, illustrations of good (or bad) practice/outcomes should be provided either in the body of the evaluation report or in an annex.

Relevance

- What relevance does the project have to the existing strategies and programmes of the countries National Statistics Office/ National Statistical System (NSS)?
- What relevance does the project have in the context of the evolving statistical capacity development agenda?
- What are the comparative advantages of the project compared to other global statistical programs and initiatives?
- Should any of the projects objectives be reformulated, added or dropped?

Effectiveness

- How effective has the project been in improving the quality and accessibility of MDG and other key national development indicators among the project countries?
- To what extent has the project led to increased collaboration between data users and producers in the project countries?

Efficiency

- How do actual costs compare with benchmarks from similar projects or activities? Are there obvious cases of inefficiency or wasted resources?
- Were the project outputs and outcomes, as described in the project logframe, achieved in the most cost-effective way?

- What would be the implications of scaling the project up or down in terms of costs, cost effectiveness or efficiency?
- Was the correct balance maintained between statistical capacity building and information technology capacity building in the project?

Impact

- To what extent has the project led to better evidence informed policy making?
- Were the project outputs and outcomes, as described in the project logframe, achieved?
- To what extent has the project increased statistical capacity in countries?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the outputs and outcomes of the project, as described in the project logframe, sustainable?
- To what extent have the project countries NSO/ NSS demonstrated commitment/ownership of the project (e.g., commitment of staff, resources, etc.)

Governance and management of the project

- To what extent does the governance structure of the project contribute to achieving the project objectives?
- Legitimacy: To what extent do the governance and management structures permit and facilitate the effective participation and voice of the different categories of stakeholders?
- Accountability: Is accountability clearly defined, accepted, and exercised along the chain of command and control?
- Transparency: To what extent the program's decision-making, reporting, and evaluation processes are open and freely available to the general public?
- Efficiency: To what extent the governance and management structures enhance efficiency or cost-effectiveness in the allocation and use of the program's resources?
- How could the governance and management better contribute to achieving the project objectives?

6. Target group(s)

Most project activities were aimed and completed with the National Statistical Office and key data providers of national development indicators in the National Statistical System, i.e. Government ministries responsible for education and health. Other key groups are users of development indicators, like the Government ministries responsible for planning and finance) and international agencies located within the project country as well as at Headquarters and regionally.

C. Organization. Methodology and outputs

7. Evaluation design

The Evaluation Team will produce an Inception Report which will describe the evaluation methodology in detail, including a delivery timetable. The methodology should include but not be limited to:

- Personal interviews with UNSD program staff responsible for managing and delivering the program

- Personal interviews with DFID staff responsible for managing the program
- Interviews and/or survey questionnaires of Country/Organisation focal points. Interviews may include telephone, email, video conference communications and personal interviews.
- Case Study visits to Cambodia, Burundi, Liberia, Morocco or Ghana to assess the quality and effectiveness of the support provided and its effects/impacts (Country selection to be discussed with the UNSD program team). The case studies should illustrate examples of both good and bad practice/outcomes.
- Where appropriate, illustrations of good (or bad) practice/outcomes should be presented.
- Quantitative methods where feasible.
- Any additional sources of information or procedures to obtain views and feedback on the program that the reviewer feels to be necessary in order to accomplish the tasks set forth in these Terms of Reference.

8. Outputs

1. An inception report, including a communications plan and delivery timescales, will be produced in Summer 2014 during the inception phase of the project.

2. An evaluation report written in English and not exceeding 60 pages, excluding annexes. An executive summary will provide an overview of the report, highlighting the main findings, conclusions, recommendations and any overall lessons.

The evaluation report will have the following elements:

- Introduction: brief statement on the background of the project and purpose of the evaluation exercise.
- Discussion of the impact of the project; successes and/or failures and their causes with reference to the project log-frame, other input and outputs metrics and evidence gathered from the evaluation.
- Any lessons learned to enable future statistical capacity building programs to be more effective
- Conclusions and recommendations on how the programme could be strengthened and improved in the future.

A draft report will be produced in Autumn 2014 prior to the final evaluation report and will provide an opportunity to incorporate comments from UNSD program team and DFID. The final report will be produced during the second half of 2014. The UNSD program team will approve both the Evaluation Team's inception and final report.

9. Data sources and procedures

The quantitative information collected for the log frame together with other qualitative information found in project documentation or collected from participants should be used to evaluate the project. The original MDGLabs website (unstats.un.org/unsd/mdglabs) can be used as a baseline for the status of discrepancies at the start of the project and the new website application CountryData (data.un.org/countryData/) as they stand now.

D. How will the evaluation be managed?

10. Evaluation activities and schedule

While the tender process will primarily be conducted, agreed and contracted by DFID, the selected Evaluation Team will report to the UNSD program team on day-to-day matters related to the evaluation.

The evaluation will be conducted over a 2 or 3 month period during summer and autumn 2014. The fee will be payable in one lump-sum on receipt of a satisfactory evaluation report.

11. Skills and qualifications

It is expected that the successful consultancy firm or research institute will have the following experience and qualifications:

- Significant international consultancy experience analyzing country specific statistical capacity building issues
- In-depth understanding of the evolving statistical capacity development agenda
- In-depth understanding of national and international data on development indicators
- Proven ability to provide strategic advice.
- Demonstrated experience in managing complex consultancy assignments involving multiple stakeholders.
- Excellent communication, research and report writing skills.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality results within strict deadlines.

12. Administrative and logistical support

The Evaluation Team will be responsible for organizing and booking its trips, and scheduling its meetings during field visits. The UNSD program team will provide a list of persons and institutions to visit for each country / organization. Additional meetings can be added by the Evaluation Team. The UNSD program team will introduce the Evaluation Team to Country/Organization focal points. The rest of the logistics will be supported and sorted by the Evaluation Team directly.

13. Budget

The budget for the evaluation is £100,000.

14. Duty of Care

The Supplier is responsible for the safety and well-being of their Personnel (as defined in Section 2 of the Contract) and Third Parties affected by their activities under this contract, including appropriate security arrangements. They will also be responsible for the provision of suitable security arrangements for their domestic and business property.

DFID will share available information with the Supplier on security status and developments in-country where appropriate.

Annex B Indicator numbers for SDGs and MDGs

SDGs		MDGs	
Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	6	Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	9
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable	10	Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	3
Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	17	Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	3
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all	7	Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	3
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	8	Goal 5: Improve maternal health	6
Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	4	Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	10
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all	4	Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	10
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	4	Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	16
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	6		
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	2		
Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	4		
Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	5		
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	4		
Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	2		
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	4		
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	7		
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	6		
	100		60

Source: 'Indicators and a Monitoring Framework for Sustainable Development Goals', SDSN, February 2015; and official list of MDG indicators, mdgs.un.org

Annex C Evaluation matrix

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
RELEVANCE					
1. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to global needs and demand?	a) The extent to which the project concept was initiated in response to a clear global need and demand	Evidence that project concept responded to genuine demand from international stakeholders. Records of a problem/ demand analysis supporting the rationale for the project	Strong evidence of demand but moderate evidence that the project concept responded to the main issues	The concept responded to genuine demand directly expressed by countries and endorsed in IAEG reports	Reports to Statistical Commission, room documents for statistical commission, IAEG reports, discussions with IAEG members
				The countries expressed a desire for immediate changes to international agency procedures that were not directly reflected in the project objectives	
	b) The extent to which this project is positioned to make a unique and useful contribution	Evidence that the project builds on and does not duplicate other programmes in this area	Strong evidence of some unique useful contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique in developing an international data portal directly comparing national estimates with those of international organisations, and collecting reasons for the differences 	Records of presentations of projects activities at multiple high-level statistical fora. Minutes of project Steering Committee, search of IATI database for similar projects, project initial situation and progress reports triangulated and confirmed with in-country interviewees, interviews with UNSD and other managers, UNICEF, World Bank
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique in its strong link to MDG indicators: assistance and training in metadata compilation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique in the time and place it was provided: assistance with developing national data repositories 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost unique: training in SDMX 					
				All these contributions were useful. Note also the steps to achieve complementarity with other projects working on portals, especially UNICEF	

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
1. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to global needs and demands?	c) Appropriate project design to achieve objectives	i) Existence of a clear and logical theory of how project outputs would be achieved and how they would contribute to project outcomes, and what activities would be needed for this to happen (also known as theory of change)	Strong evidence of design to achieve outputs	Project MoUs contained clear steps to develop national data repositories and metadata and build the CountryData website	Project memorandum, logframe and MoUs interviews with project funders, managers and staff, past and present
			Moderate evidence of lack of adequate planning to achieve outcomes and action to mitigate risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project lacked an explicit theory of change (predated DFID requirement) Design showed awareness of risks that project activities would not achieve objectives, but mitigation (advocacy and sustainability plans) not thought through Project documents were unclear about links between outputs and outcomes – in particular extent to which changes in discrepancies between national and international estimates and improved understanding by key users would be achieved by the project Key users were not defined 	
		ii) Evidence that project design (implementing body, structure, staffing and choice of countries and partners) is clear and linked to the logic of the project	Strong evidence of clear design – but also that partner countries were not selected in a logical way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing body, structure, staffing, and country partners are clearly described in the project design 	Project memorandum and logframe and interviews with project funders, managers and staff, past and present
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to the project logic for the implementing body, structure, and staffing clear No clear justification for the choice of partner countries other than that five were in the previous design project 	

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
<p>1. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to global needs and demand?</p>	<p>c) Appropriate project design to achieve objectives</p>	<p>Output and outcome indicators in logframe are adequately linked to objectives of project</p>	<p>Strong evidence of good indicators of immediate outputs but poor indicators for longer-term outputs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output indicators for Outputs 1 and 3, both concerning data platforms, are direct indicators of the contents of the websites constituting these platforms and so are closely linked to the outputs 	<p>Project memorandum and draft and final logframe</p>
			<p>Moderate evidence that indicators for outcomes and impact were not appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output indicators for Output 2, 'Improved understanding of discrepancies and better coherence of data' entirely concerned with metadata production, which is only one step towards achieving this output 	
			<p>Strong evidence that the partners were clear about how outputs would be delivered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome indicators are very similar to the output indicators in that they deal directly with the website • Impact indicator is relevant but was only obtainable once 	
		<p>Project partners share a clear understanding of expected project outputs and outcomes and their respective responsibilities under the project to achieve these</p>	<p>Moderate evidence that paths to outcomes were not clearly specified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project MoUs clearly specified the roles of the UNSD and the partner countries 	<p>Interviews with past and present project managers and staff, country visits, Steering Committee minutes, interviews with Steering Committee members</p>
			<p>Moderate evidence that paths to outcomes were not clearly specified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of longer-term outcomes and purposes and the responsibility for delivering them was less clear 	

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
1. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to global needs and demand	d) Extent to which the project design adequately addresses gender and equity considerations	The project design addresses issues of disaggregation of data	Strong evidence that gender and equity considerations were not explicitly addressed	Gender and equity considerations were partially addressed through the incorporation of gender and equity considerations in the choice of MDG indicators. However, we found little evidence that the project put effort into this area. Disaggregation of indicators was not operationalised for the majority of indicators and project countries	Project design documents
	d) Extent to which the project design adequately addresses gender and equity considerations	Project-related policies and procedures address gender and equity	Moderate evidence that project procedures did not promote equity, but no actual discrimination	Staff selected for training and other project activities reflected the gender balance in the units from which they were drawn	Country visits, discussions with country office and line ministry staff
2. Is the project likely to be able to make a useful contribution to the post-2015 agenda?	a) The extent to which the project concept is relevant to the post-2015 agenda	Evidence of demand from key stakeholders, in particular those involved in the post-2015 agenda. International analysis of issues to address	Strong evidence of continued need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the SDGs will require more data series Evidence from CountryData suggests that the proportion of discrepancies between national and international estimates will not shrink SDG plans envisage greater national ownership of estimates 	Reports of post-2015 planning discussions; interviews with members of international agencies, CountryData database
		Evidence that the project has adequately considered potential future alternative project approaches (e.g. piggybacking on other programmes)	Strong evidence of some efforts to piggyback on existing projects	The project seeks to mainstream its activities by incorporating CountryData into the main SDG website	Examination of future project draft documents and interviews with key stakeholders

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
<p>3. Is the concept and design of the project relevant to the needs and demands of the selected partner countries?</p>	<p>a) Project or the project activities included in the national statistical programmes of all partner countries</p>	<p>Project or the project activities are included in or aligned with the NSDSs (or other national statistical policy documents) of all partner countries</p>	<p>Strong evidence of relevance to actual partner countries</p>	<p>Project country NSDSs and other plans all stress the importance of strengthening the NSO's coordination and dissemination role. However, countries are self-selecting in the sense that not all the original countries remained in the project</p>	<p>NSDSs and other policy documents; MoUs between project partners, statements from NSOs and policy-makers during country visits</p>
	<p>b) Evidence of adequate consultation of key national stakeholders during the project design and development</p>	<p>Evidence of consultation with key stakeholders in partner countries, including responsiveness to country concerns about design and implementation</p>	<p>Strong evidence of consultation with NSOs about activities in their country and with DFID. Moderate evidence of poor consultation with other national stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All partner countries (except Rwanda) had MoUs compiled in consultation with NSOs • However, stakeholders in line ministries often only became aware of the project at a late stage when activities were already underway • Several instances of the project providing tailored assistance at the request of national stakeholders. E.g. in Thailand and Morocco the project customised the approach to SDMX for their national systems • National stakeholders other than NSOs were unaware of project activities until invited to training and metadata workshops 	<p>MoUs, initial country visit reports and project reports triangulated and crosschecked by interviews with country staff</p>

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
EFFECTIVENESS					
4. Was the project effective in achieving its outputs ?	a) Output targets in the logframe fully achieved, and relevant assumptions in project theory of change upheld	Recorded outputs, triangulated. Assumptions 1 and 2 in theory of change investigated (see main text)	Strong evidence that two output targets were met and one was substantially met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important output, the creation of the centralised data platforms, has been fully delivered 	Project monitoring data on logframe and project reports triangulated during in country case studies. Direct observation of data portals, test of assumptions 1–2 in theory of change (see main text)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second most important, collation and dissemination at international level delivered the target for countries covered and timeliness, with only a small shortfall in % of 'core' indicators with discrepancies reported 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for third 'output' substantially met. Nine out of 10 countries targeted provided metadata to UN standards and metadata was provided for 60% of the 'core' MDG indicators (target of 90%) 	
	b) Key intermediate project outputs achieved (IO1–IO7).	Recorded outputs and spot checks on these	Strong evidence of delivery of outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section 3.2 of main text for details 	Project monitoring data on log frame and project reports triangulated during in country case studies. Direct observation of data portals
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project made substantial improvements to National data repositories (IO7) although in some countries these also received substantial support from other projects. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metadata handbooks (IO3) are available on CountryData for all but three countries. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training (IO4 and IO6) has been carried out • SDMX data structures (IO5) in place. 					
	Explanations of discrepancies accurate and useful	Strong evidence for uniqueness and usefulness of discrepancy information.but	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrepancy information on CountryData is useful because no alternatives are available. 	Examination of CountryData website, especially s explanations of discrepancies. Discussion of results with IAEG members and	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some international agencies complain national data repositories still hard to use • Difficult to access because of the 		

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
4. Was the project effective in achieving its outputs?	b) Key intermediate project outputs achieved (IO1–IO7).	Explanations of discrepancies accurate and useful	Moderate evidence that it is not easy to access and use	decision to order data series alphabetically	countries, discussions with IAEG members
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Categorisation of reasons for discrepancies not always consistent 	
		Gender and equity considerations incorporated into outputs and promotion of disaggregated data: whether metadata systems and manuals and CountryData website allow for/promote disaggregated data	Moderate evidence that project had little involvement in promoting disaggregation of indicators (this was not included in project design or targets – see above). However, the CountryData website does allow for disaggregated data	The CountryData website allows countries to upload data that are more disaggregated by gender than is required for the MDGs and several countries (especially Cambodia) do this. However, this is not attributable to any encouragement from the project	Examination of CountryData website, especially explanations of discrepancies. Discussion of results
5. How effective has the project been in achieving its main outcomes , i.e. the coherence and accessibility of countries' MDG and other key national	a) The extent to which the partner countries report more coherent and accessible MDG data and data on other key national indicators, and the extent to which there is a credible	Coherence of MDGs reported by different country institutions (within countries); availability of metadata (a contributing factor to coherence)	Moderate evidence that data is more coherent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data on National Data repositories is more coherent with less duplication. Project assistance and workshops have been largely responsible for this •Insufficient information on other discrepancies in country. Some anecdotal interview information that they have diminished, but impossible to confirm (no past records) 	Examination of national data repositories, metadata handbooks and national websites. Google searches for data repositories. Project reports triangulated by discussions with in-country data suppliers.

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
development indicators?	contribution from the project in this achievement	Adoption of common metadata standards for MDGs by different institutions within partner countries	Strong evidence of collaboration and use of common metadata standards in producing project outputs but little evidence of either spreading to other NSS activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions in partner countries have collaborated on production of metadata handbooks in joint meetings organised by the project 	Discussions with IAEG-MDG members
		Number and type of <i>non-MDG</i> indicators published through UNSD CountryData website (and by which countries)	Strong evidence : all project countries have included some non-MDG data in CountryData	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National data repositories contain many non-MDG indicators (see main text). These are either extra disaggregations of MDG indicators or indicators from national plans and budgets It is not possible to compare these with other data sites in-country as the latter present only single reports and not indicator series 	
		User perceptions of accessibility and usefulness of UNSD CountryData website and corresponding national data platforms	Moderate evidence that data repositories are not easily found or used (but are perceived as being useful)	Users presented with charts from CountryData agree that they appear useful but none had made a detailed examination of the website and it is not easy to access. Users complained about the difficulty of finding data on all the portals	
	b) Evidence of increased collaboration between NSOs and line ministries	Existence of formal or informal agreements and changes in the operational production of data between NSO	Moderate evidence that collaboration between NSOs and line ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No countries reported changes in data transmission mechanisms between ministries, departments and agencies (e.g. from email to SDMX) or the creation of new data transfer agreements 	Country case study visits to key statistical contacts, in particular ministries of health and education, and discussions with NSO

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
	<p>in the production and dissemination of selected MDG and other key national data, and credible contribution from project in this</p>	<p>and line ministries: evidence to include data exchange templates, NSO meetings with line ministries, focal points. Alternative explanations for any changes will be investigated</p>	<p>has not significantly increased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some countries reported strong statistical collaboration, and others reported increased collaboration mechanisms but in every case there were other large initiatives involved in promoting this integration (e.g. national statistical basket funds in Rwanda and Uganda, Swedish support in Cambodia) 	<p>staff. Discussions with in-country IAEG member offices</p>
	<p>c) d) and g) Evidence of improved access to metadata, better understanding by key national and international users of differences between international and country MDG estimates, and better data choices by key users, with credible contribution from the project</p>	<p>These three sub-questions were all dealt with together as they are closely related. The evaluation explored data sources used by key users (see main text) and their use of CountryData and national data repositories</p>	<p>Strong evidence that key users' choices and use of data have not yet been changed by the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key data users in countries – especially in ministries of finance and planning – reported that they rarely used national data portals and had not used CountryData. They also report strong trust in the NSOs and a preference for the data that they or line ministries supply, rather than that of international agencies IAEG members reported limited use of national data portals and were not familiar with the data on CountryData 	<p>Discussions with NSO and line ministry staff during country visits. Examination of national data repositories</p>

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
	e) Reduced burden on countries in terms of data requests received from international agencies, with credible contribution from project	Changes in numbers (or estimates) of data requests received from WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO and identification of which channels they came through.	Strong evidence that the burden of data requests has not yet fallen significantly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff in partner countries reported no fall in the burden of data requests, except for Uganda which reported a fall In the eSurvey, only one staff member in a IAEG-MDG agency reported an increase in the importance of collection from authorities' websites and reduction in the importance of visits from their offices 	Discussions with NSO and line ministry staff during country visits. eSurvey of MDG collectors in international agencies
	f) Evidence of reduced data discrepancies between reporting of national and international data for MDG indicators in project countries, and credible contribution from project		Moderate evidence that data discrepancies have only been slightly reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CountryData series show that neither the proportion of data pairs with discrepancies nor the average discrepancy reduced during the lifetime of the project. However, CountryData only went fully live in 2014, so it is very early for it to have an effect eSurvey evidence and discussions with IAEG members indicated some occasions when dialogue between agencies and countries has reduced discrepancies but these discussions were not prompted by the project CountryData discrepancies data do provide information that could be useful to those seeking to investigate and reduce discrepancies: for example, by showing that differences in sources and methods are a major cause of discrepancies 	Comparison of different CountryData vintages, country visits, examination of discrepancies in time series and reasons for discrepancies. Comparison of discrepancies in CountryData and MDGLabs

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some examples of reduction in discrepancies due to the project: for example, data on mobile telephone use in Rwanda • Discrepancies in CountryData are fewer and smaller than those in MDGLabs, the earlier international Data repository 	
	h) Unanticipated positive or negative outcomes with credible links to the project	Magnitude and importance of positive or negative outcomes: to be determined based on nature of outcomes identified	Strong evidence of unanticipated positive outcomes on SDMX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for use of SDMX for purposes other than reporting to CountryData. E.g. ESCWA training and use of SDMX for national systems in Thailand 	Project reports triangulated by discussions during country visits
EFFICIENCY					
6. What aspects of project design and implementation have made the project more or less effective in achieving the above outputs and outcomes?	a) Extent to which governance and management structures of project promote effectiveness and efficiency in achieving above outputs and outcomes	Key governance and management structures and processes are effective in promoting and monitoring project objectives	Strong evidence of effectiveness of management in achieving outputs, using a contract approach, but also that the structures and processes were not effective in promoting outcomes. This raises wider questions about DFID's results approach, which	<p>The project outputs were delivered, which provides strong evidence that the project structures were effective in delivering them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was confusion in the project memorandum between governance and management (see main report). The DFID project officer had a strong quasi-management role: contractually specifying targets and regularly checking on performance via progress reports. Country MoUs also operated like management contracts 	Project design documents and reports

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
			is currently output- and contract-focused (see ICAI 2015).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Steering Committee had no formal ToR. It met only three times (2010, 2013 and 2014), suffered from turnover and there is no record in the minutes of any actions taken on points raised in previous meetings. Interviews with Steering Committee members and project staff revealed that no-one felt that the Steering Committee had responsibility to make decisions about the project • Project management was less effective in maintaining a focus on the project's long-term outcomes. E.g. the lack of sustainability and advocacy strategies envisaged in the project memorandum was not noted, nor was the impact of delays in developing and populating the data repositories on time available to implement such strategies 	
	b) Extent to which governance and management structures of project promote transparency and accountability to key stakeholders	Key stakeholders' views effectively represented in major project decisions	Strong evidence for country partners; moderate for international agency partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Partner country NSOs' views were effectively represented in major project decisions within their countries 	Project reports and meeting minutes triangulated by discussions with IAEG members and direct observation of websites
		Project has been reviewed by Statistical Commission and IAEG	Strong evidence that project presented appropriate information but this did not constitute a review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The project was presented to members of the Statistics Commission and the IAEG for MDGs directly as well as through the Steering Committee but they perceived this largely as information sharing 	

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
		Progress and monitoring reports and reports on key decisions shared with project partners and publicly available	Strong evidence of sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNSD held regular meetings to update country partners on progress and involve them in planning. DFID monitoring reports are publicly available via Development Tracker but were not directly shared with project partners 	
7. Has the project been reasonably cost-efficient?	a) Comparison of budgeted and actual costs	Extent to which costs and timeframes compare with those planned	Strong evidence that expenditure followed budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total costs and spending within major cost categories followed original plans and budgets closely. A small underspend was returned to DFID 	Project monitoring and financial reports
		Reasons for differences and obvious areas of inefficiency, if any		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large sub-categories of spending for in-country consultants and IT consultants were underspent due to the decisions to work through MoUs with NSOs and piggyback on DevInfo and use the CSF Funds saved were transferred to extra spending for workshops and training 	
	b) The extent to which project management took action to promote efficiency	Critical analysis of actions identified by project management	Strong evidence that UNSD took action to promote efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional meetings were replaced with global meetings for efficiency reasons. Savings were significant but less than the savings from decisions to use MoUs and DevInfo, which were taken to promote partnership rather than for efficiency reasons 	Progress and financial reports, interviews with project management and staff
SUSTAINABILITY					
8. To what extent are the results of the project likely to be sustained?	a) Extent to which the project countries NSOs/ NSSs have demonstrated commitment to sustaining relevant activities of the project	Reflected in NSO annual work programme, staff allocated	Strong evidence of commitment to maintaining activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme countries are committed to maintaining national data repositories. These are built in to work plans, budgets and statistical plans 	Country visits, discussions with NSO staff, NSDSs

Evaluation question (EQ)	Proposed bases of judgement (from Inception Report)	Indicators or other means of verification (from Inception Report)	Balance of evidence	Supportive evidence	Main information sources (updated from Inception Report to reflect sources used)
	b) Existence of a strategy for project completion	Existence of a strategy for project completion (including with each partner country)	Strong evidence of the existence of a strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main strategy for project completion is the planned follow-on project now being prepared by UNSD and DFID 	New project documents, discussion with DFID and UNSD project staff
	c) Risks that current project outputs will cease to be useful in the post-2015 operating environment	Plans for CountryData website, statistical registries, metadata manuals, data compendiums	Moderate evidence that outputs will still be useful after 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main risk to the usefulness of the project outputs would be either DevInfo or SDMX being superseded by other systems or CountryData closing down without replacement. The probability of any of these events taking place is low 	Future plans for SDMX, DevInfo, and SDG website
	d) Extent to which the project increased statistical capacity in partner countries	Skills in data dissemination in more user-friendly and informative formats (time series), production of metadata, SDMX programming	Strong evidence that capacity has increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSO country staff have learned skills, e.g. in using SDMX. They have applied these in developing metadata handbooks and uploading data internationally, and are now capable of mapping new data series 	Country visits, discussions with NSO staff

Annex D Theory of change as at initiation report

Assumptions

1. **Assumption** (IO 1–7 to OT 1–2):^{LF} Political will exists among [NSO and] line ministries [in partner countries] to use [project] data platforms.
2. **Assumption** (IO 1–7 to OT 1–4): No major limiting factors which impede regular and reliable update of data – or these are being addressed elsewhere. (^{LF} Incentives for countries to report in a timely fashion to UNSD.)
3. **Assumption** (OT1 to OC1): Project countries use the data platforms promoted by the project to report their MDG and other key national indicators (either directly or as an intermediate source).
4. **Assumption** (OT1–3 to OC2): Line ministries agree to collaborate closely with NSO in data production and dissemination, rather than reporting in parallel systems.
5. **Assumption** (OT4 to OC3): Including sufficient metadata (explanatory information) in MDG format on project-supported data platforms will result in improved understanding of discrepancies between international and country MDG estimates, both by key national users (particularly NSO directors and ministry MDG focal points) and international users (particularly MDG reporting group and agencies responsible for reporting MDG indicators). NSOs/line ministries report metadata to a suitable standard. International organisations report metadata.
6. **Assumption** (OC1/OC3 to LO1): Key users *access* and *use* the data platforms supported by the project (UN CountryData and national data repositories).
7. **Assumption** (OC2/LO1 to LO2):^{PM} International agencies are prepared to use the data portal for their information needs [and not continue with parallel requests for information] (^{LF} Buy-in from international agencies.)
8. **Assumption** (OC3 to LO3): Key partner country users (especially statisticians in NSOs and line ministries) will make decisions resulting in reduced data discrepancies, once they have had a chance to understand and discuss the issues raised by the metadata.
9. **Assumption** (OC3 to LO4): The ability to compare indicators, data and metadata through project-supported data platforms will lead to key national and international users making a more informed choice of indicators and data to use in their studies and reporting.

Annex E Case study countries

Analysis of case studies

The following table presents a synthesis and analysis of the material gathered in the visits.

<p>Project management</p>	<p>All NSOs said the project was well aligned with their existing plans and were consulted on activities in their country. Most had seen the project's progress reports but one (Uganda) had not.</p> <p>However, awareness of the project outside the NSO was limited and even within the NSO staff and advisers who had not participated directly in project activities were unsure about the projects activities and objectives. The Ministry of Education IT centre in Thailand thought the project was purely an NSO initiative.</p>
<p>Coordination and reporting</p>	<p>Respondents in all countries, both inside and outside the NSO, felt that data coordination across the NSS was improving but attributed this to other statistical coordination mechanisms going on in each country rather than to the project. In Ghana funding of education statistics through statistics funds rather than education funds had helped cooperation.</p> <p>Several countries were using online data transmission for HMIS and/or EMIS systems but data transmission across the NSS was still entirely by email or paper except in Thailand.</p> <p>Only Uganda (and to a lesser extent Rwanda) had noticed any reduction in the burden of international reporting.</p>
<p>Data use</p>	<p>None of the respondents suggested that the project had yet made a difference to the way policy-makers use data. However, several policy-makers were confident that it had been useful, though none of them used data portals directly.</p> <p>Both policy-makers and international organisations prefer collecting data by correspondence to collecting it from a website. International organisations prefer to obtain microdata and calculate indicators themselves where possible.</p> <p>Many respondents were aware of instances where international estimates differed from national estimates. However, few of the policy analysts felt that this was a serious problem for them.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>NSOs in all countries felt confident of their ability to maintain and develop their national data repositories and most referred to resources they could draw on for assistance.</p>

Case Study: Cambodia

Project history in country

Cambodia's National Institute of Statistics (NIS) has been involved with the UNSD-DFID project since the pilot stage, which started in 2008, and was the first country to start implementation of the main stage. Following an assessment mission in April 2010 an MoU was signed in October 2010 to run to April 2012. UNSD missions took place in December 2010, December 2011, and July 2011, and November 2012. In January 2013 a second 12-month MoU was signed to continue the activities of the first phase, which included improving the central repository (CamInfo) and translating it into Khmer. Data transfer to UNSD continued after the end of this second MoU.

The NIS was the testing ground for the software that was rolled out to all project countries. In November 2012 Cambodia became the first project country to run DevInfo7 software, including the expanded SDMX tools and Registry. An upgraded CamInfo online was launched and promoted through a wide-ranging national stakeholders workshop in June 2014.

Consultation on project management

The project is well aligned with the Statistical Master Plan and other projects such as the Sida support to international capacity building. The NIS was regularly consulted about activities in the country and received reports about them. These reports were an accurate representation of the activities taking place in Cambodia.

The Ministries of Health and Education first heard about the project when approached by the NIS to supply staff for workshops. Other donor projects have only limited awareness of it, with current and former Sida advisers unsure of the details regarding progress.

Changes to intra-country coordination and international reporting

Data transmission across the NSS is predominantly carried out by emailing of spreadsheets. Coordination across the system has been strengthened in recent years by the development of the Statistics Advisory Council, chaired by the Ministry of Planning, and the annual report on the NSS.

The Ministries of Health and Education transmit data to the WHO, UNICEF, and UNESCO using the traditional channels of emails requesting data. They have seen no reductions in the number of requests. Every year or so the Ministry of Health asks the WHO to change figures which appear to be in error.

Changes to data use

Key data users and statisticians in Cambodia make very little use of CamInfo or CountryData themselves (no interviewees had used it) but were very supportive of the NIS and the project, and glad that it was there. Both the current and former Director General said the Ministry of Planning was particularly insistent that the project had been valuable and should be extended. However, neither used CamInfo themselves, preferring instead to make direct enquiries with the NIS.

The Ministry of Planning prepare an annual report on MDG performance, traditionally with technical assistance funded by the UNDP office, but in recent years entirely by themselves. The report is created by requiring each Ministry Department or Agency to report on the MDG indicators for their areas.

Sustainability and capacity development

The NIS currently has three people who are capable of inserting a new data structure definition (DSD) into CamInfo and performing the required mappings. Moreover, the NSO has plans to train more staff on this in the future. An estimation of the time required for updating the DSD or inserting a new one is two to three days, depending on the changes to the DSD. Normally, if the data are already in the CamInfo database the required time is a few hours. If new data need to be inserted, then two or three days may be required, considering also the need for coordination within the NSO in order to understand and map the data correctly.

Persons met

Name	Organisation	Title/responsibility
Mr Russell Schneider	Sida	Chief Technical Adviser
Mr Chanh Lay	NIS	Deputy Director General, Economic Statistics
Mr Panhara Oukchay	NIS	Deputy Director, ICT
Mr Po Mao	NIS	SDMX expert responsible for metadata
Mr Bony Som	NIS	SDMX expert responsible for data
Mr Theng Pagnathun	Department of Planning	Director General
Mr Poch Sovandy	Department of Planning	Deputy Director
Ms Khol Khamarary	Head of Statistics, Ministry of Health	Head of Office
Mr Khlok Vira	Statistics Section Ministry of Education	Head of Office
Mr Buth Sakhan	Statistics Section Ministry of Education	Vice Chief
Mr S.V. Samphors	Statistics Section Ministry of Education	Statistician
Mr V.Y. Sathya	Statistics Section Ministry of Education	Statistician
Mr Pong Pitin	Statistics Section Ministry of Education	Statistician
Mr A.N. Lay	Statistics Section Ministry of Education	Vice Chief
Ms Sok Lang	UNDP office	Responsible for UNDP input to National MDG report

Case study: Laos

Project history in country

The Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) was invited to join the project in 2010. An assessment mission carried out in July 2011 was followed by an MoU in August 2012 and another mission in November 2012. The MoU was renewed in February 2014. Laos undertook a study tour to Cambodia and Thailand in November 2012. A Lao version of the metadata handbook was published in December 2012 and a draft English language version in November 2013. There was a final mission to Laos in March 2014.

Consultation on project management

The LSB had plans to improve data dissemination before the UNSD-DFID project. These were laid out in the 2010–20 NSDS but, due to lack of infrastructure, Laos was only able to implement them with the help of the project. This was why they welcomed the approach from UNSD in 2010.

The LSB were regularly consulted about activities in the country and received reports about them. These reports were an accurate representation of the activities taking place in Laos. The LSB provides support to the education ministry in order to implement their LaoEduInfo system (in a UNICEF project). They have also assisted the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in relation to implementing their MAInfo system.

Changes to intra-country coordination and international reporting

The collection of data across the NSS is still being made via Excel sheets, Word documents or by phone, and the data from these are entered manually by the LSB staff into the offline version of LaolInfo.

The committees set up to collect metadata for the system have also been useful in arranging other statistical coordination, such as in relation to LSB's assistance to LaoEduInfo (Madam Phonsaly Souksavath).

Transmission of MDG data to the WHO, UNICEF, and UNESCO still use the traditional channels of emails requesting data. Laos has seen no reductions in the number of requests. Responsibility for providing national MDG estimates remains with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who contact MDAs directly for data.

Changes to data use

There have not yet been many changes to the way users access data in Laos. The National Economic Research Institute of the Ministry of Planning, for example, still collects data by writing to MDAs and routing their requests through the cabinet offices of the various ministries. Although they sometimes look at online data they fear that it will not be up to date and so prefer to use the official system. They were not aware of the CountryData website.

Sustainability and capacity development

The LSB currently has three people actively involved in the SDMX-related activities and one who is being trained internally on SDMX and the LaolInfo system. Six people from the IT and the data services department received support from the external consultant, who initially set up DevInfo v6.0 in an offline mode, and 10 people received training on use of the system. Currently, two people from the LSB are capable of performing mappings between LaolInfo and SDMX. Their only source of external advice on SDMX and data mapping is the UNSD project. However, not all ministries are yet able to provide metadata.

The LSB is beginning a World Bank project to upgrade and modernise its IT infrastructure, which they hope will ensure the sustainability of the project's achievements.

Persons met

Name	Organisation	Title/responsibility
Ms Phonsaly Phimpan	LSB	Deputy Director General
Ms Kham khounhevan	LSB	Statistician, Social Statistics
Mr Vilaysook Sisoulath	LSB	Senior Statistician, Social Statistics Division
Mr Sivisay Thepboury	LSB	Senior Statistician, Social Statistics Division
Dr Leusary Phadouangdeth	Ministry of Health	Acting Chief Statistician Head of HMIS
Mr Phanthanome Didaraung	Ministry of Education	
Manola Maimanisone	Ministry of Education	Head of Statistics
Ms Syamphone Sengsulayan	Ministry of Education	Statistician, EMIS System
Ms Amphipinae Seri	National Economic Research Institute	

Case study: Thailand

Project history in country

The NSO of Thailand was approached to take part in the project at an ESCAP meeting in 2010. An assessment in December 2010 was followed by an MoU in October 2011. The project was referred to in Thailand as the Key National Development Indicator (KNDI) project. The project was significantly delayed by the Bangkok floods in 2011 and did not officially start until January 2012. A technical mission in May 2012 to introduce SDMX to NSO staff was followed by another mission in November 2012.

Unlike most of the project countries Thailand already had a project to develop an electronic data exchange system, referred to as StatXchange. The UNSD-DFID project focused upon developing systems to use SDMX with StatXchange and facilitating the NSO's efforts to formulate the set of KNDI, together with ministries, departments and agencies, and to develop templates for collecting metadata. By the end of the KNDI project data and metadata had been gathered for 89 of the 209 KNDis.

Consultation on project management

The KNDI project is well aligned with Thailand's Statistical Master Plan and the UNSD were willing to adapt the project to suit Thailand's particular needs. The NSO were regularly consulted about activities in the country and received reports about them. These reports were an accurate representation of the activities taking place in Thailand.

The Ministry of Education IT centre and the International Health Policy Programme viewed the project as an NSO initiative rather than as a separate project.

Changes to intra-country coordination and international reporting

Data integration within Thailand is improving at all levels. The EMIS and HMIS systems, for example, now make extensive use of online data entry and data transfer between facilities and headquarters. However, the development of independent systems for each ministry can hamper national integration and not all ministries currently send data to StatXchange via DSD.

Changes to data use

NSO staff were not yet aware of changes to use of data by policy-makers through the development of the information system. The Ministry of Education IT centre and the International Health Policy Programme were aware of StatXchange but not yet of CountryData or the UNSD programme. They have noticed improvements in some areas of statistics. For example, data from health facilities appears to be improving.

Sustainability and capacity development

Ongoing support for the StatXchange system is secured by the Statistical Master Plan. Technically, the staff of the NSO are now capable of:

- updating their StatXchange installation should any change occur in the MDGs DSD;
- adding new DSDs into StatXchange and mapping them in order to server other data consumers (beyond the UNSD);
- disseminating data and metadata according to SDMX, beyond the StatXchange system, by an SDMX-RI installation (to be used for other indicators beyond MDGs); and

- designing new, simple, DSDs for their dissemination needs.

Two staff are currently working on SDMX dissemination activities and four have been trained on SDMX to a level necessary to design SDMX DSDs.

Persons met

Name	Organisation	Title
Oosanee Chaiyanont	NSO	Director, Government Strategic Information Centre
Nampung Chirdchuepong		Director of Information Analysis
Mr Wichit Piyawattanakul	NSO	SDMX expert
Ms. Korkeaw	NSO	SDMX Expert
Dr Walaiporn Patcharanarumol	International Health Policy Programme	Senior Researcher
Ms Kanjana Tisayatikom	International Health Policy Programme	Senior Researcher
Mr Arkhom San Asilapin	EMIS Section, Ministry of Education	Researcher

Case study: Uganda

Project history in country

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) was approached by UNSD to take part in the project in 2010. An initial assessment mission visited UBOS in April 2011 and an MoU was signed in August 2011. Implementation commenced in October 2011 with the formation of the MDG Sub-Committee. The project, expected to end in October 2012, was later extended for a period of one year commencing in April 2013 and was then expected to end in March 2014. Hence an extension of the MoU between UNSD and UBOS was signed on 29 March 2013. UNSD missions took place in March 2012, November 2012, May 2013, August 2013, and February 2014.

Like most countries Uganda chose to implement its national data registry using DevInfo. An external firm was procured to host the UgandaInfo database for one year, metadata training was held from 05 to 09 August 2013, and UgandaInfo 7.0: was launched nationally on 25 October 2013.

Consultation on project management

UBOS only heard of the project when they were approached by UNSD. At that time UBOS was already working with Norway on the development of a database of indicators and other donors had shown interest in assisting UBOS but they chose the UNSD project because it was wide ranging than the earlier efforts.

Although UBOS provides input to the progress reports it has not received progress and monitoring progress reports on the project from the international agencies. However, UBOS has shared its achievements with stakeholders outside Uganda, especially in those areas where Uganda is ahead of other countries: e.g. metadata and coordination of data.

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) heard about the project through UBOS but neither MOES nor the Office of the Prime Minister staff are clear what training has been funded by the UNSD project as they attend multiple training sessions at UBOS. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOPPED) had not heard of the UNSD project even though their staff had received training and assisted in preparation of the metadata handbook.

Changes to intra-country coordination and international reporting

UBOS must still write to ministries to get indicator data as is required by Government of Uganda procedures. The letters are followed up by telephone calls. The provision of data has improved in recent years due to the existence of several committees, on which UBOS and line ministries are represented, but this improvement in communication was stated as not being a direct outcome of the UNSD project.

There are still no formal agreements between UBOS and the Ministries of Health and Education about data exchange but guidelines and regulations are being drafted as part of the Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD).

MOES sends data to UBOS on request, through formal letters. The request is usually in writing and utilises a template that has been developed by UBOS. The data are normally sent in a soft form. Some of the data are also shared informally through a committee that includes membership of both MOES and UBOS. Interaction with UBOS keeps changing and is improving over time because information flow is becoming easier, through improved technology.

UBOS staff claim that there has been a reduction in the number of requests from international agencies and that 'International data collections no longer rely on filling in paper questionnaires because the data is available on the UBOS platform'. UNSD is partly responsible for this as it has assisted in the development of the platform.

Changes to data use

Policy-makers in Uganda have a strong demand for data with the Office of the Prime Minister, MOFPED, and National Planning Authority all maintaining lists of key indicators. However, these lists differ from those in the PNSD and data are often collected directly from ministries, departments and agencies which are required to provide data as part of their budgeting process, rather than through UBOS. However, the Office of the Prime Minister has sometimes used UgandaInfo and claims to validate MDA data against UBOS data.

OPM noted that there have been occasions when indicators from MDAs differed from those of UBOS. An example is maternal mortality. The indicators differed because of the variances in the periods of computation. Furthermore, sometimes the indicators used by the sectors differ from those of UBOS. Efforts are being made to harmonise indicators through formation of a national partnership forum – a UBOS initiative. Additionally MOFPED, the Office of the Prime Minister, the National Planning Authority and UBOS are working together to harmonise the indicators.

Poverty levels reported by the IMF have differed from those reported by the Government of Uganda. The discrepancy occurred because the IMF had not taken into account details of some of the key indicators, like personal characteristics, standard of living, personal expenditure on airtime etc. The Government of Uganda provided the IMF with the additional details on the omitted key indicators.

As in most countries data provided by the NSO on school enrolment differed from that given by MOES. UBOS relies on household surveys whereas MOES uses annual school census. MOFPED recognises that the data sources are different and opts to use the data that it feels are more suited to its needs.

The indications are that the level of awareness of the reasons for differences between estimates is quite high among key data users.

Sustainability and capacity development

UBOS staff are confident that the results of the project are going to be sustained ‘given that capacity has been built to manage the database’. The institutions involved in data collection and dissemination have put up resources in their annual budgets to sustain the project initiatives.

Staff from the UBOS Directorate of Coordination and IT department are responsible for maintaining the national data repository. They are assisted by the MDG Committee. The staff work on the repository on a part-time basis but it is part of their regular work schedule. Additionally, the operation of the repository has been included in the five-year UBOS strategic plan so the repository will continue to be funded through the resources of UBOS as part of the implementation of this strategic plan. As a result of the training UBOS staff are able to configure UgandaInfo and map indicators into SDMX to publish them on the CountryData portal. In case of problems they can call on DevInfo support, which is based in India.

However, there are some worries due to staff turnover. UBOS has enquired regarding whether UNICEF could help support IT and substantive staff. The UNICEF representative agreed to address this issue with management, potentially as a “One UN” joint effort among the UN bodies in Uganda.

Persons met

Uganda	Organisation	Title
Michael Ssozi	Statistician	MOES
Edson Tusiime	Statistician	MOES
Timothy Lubanga	Assistant Commissioner for Monitoring and Evaluation	Office of the Prime Minister
Dominic Kibuga	IT Officer	UBOS
Norah Madaya, Thomas Raturu	Director, Coordination Division	UBOS
Obadia Turinawe	Research Assistant	MOFPED – Directorate of Economics Affairs – Macro Economic Policy Department

Case study: Rwanda

Project history in country

The NIS was approached to take part in the project in 2010. An assessment mission in October 2011 was followed by a technical mission in March 2012, introducing an early version of the DevInfo SDMX registry to the NIS. The version has since been vastly improved as a result of that mission. UNSD visited the NIS again in May 2013 to conduct a workshop on metadata, install a local DevInfo adaptation, and provide training in DevInfo SDMX tools. A further mission in January 2014 provided training in SDMX, resolved some remaining issues with the DevInfoRwanda indicators and held discussions with the wider NSS.

Rwanda was unusual in three respects. First the NIS decided not to enter into an MoU but nevertheless participated in the training provided in country missions and attended international workshops. Secondly they requested the project fund an international consultant, Ms Meklit Abdella Seido, to work in Kigali from February to May 2014 to help NIS compile a metadata handbook on MDG and EDPRS indicators, revamp the DevInfoRwanda database, and provide training on metadata compilation for development indicators. Finally, the NIS also maintained a Prognoz developed data portal repository alongside DevInfoRwanda.

Consultation on project management

The project is well aligned with the NIS plans, as shown in NSDS1 (finishing in July 2014), and again in NSDS2. During the project the NIS was regularly consulted about activities in the country and received reports about activities undertaken in the country. These reports were an accurate representation of the activities taking place in Rwanda.

There was much less consultation with line ministries. The Ministry of Education heard about the project during a workshop organised by UNESCO UIS 'maybe in 2012' and were often unaware of exactly which project was supporting the training they received.

Changes to intra-country coordination and international reporting

The official statistics are overlooked by the NIS. Some organisations, such as the Ministry of Education EMIS section, receive a 'visa' from the NIS to collect particular data. Before 2009 there were some discrepancies in education data but in 2010 the NIS organised and promulgated a standard classification.

HIV estimates are sent to the WHO UNAIDS report using a fillable pdf form.

The differences between the national net and gross enrolment rates published by the country and by UNESCO are 'not a big problem, unless we need to do international comparison'.

"We sent them comments when we found issues like this. We also received a letter from UNESCO saying that UIS data are to be used in all UN organisations so we are not obliged to report numbers to other UN agencies."

Changes to data use

Rwanda has a strong statistical culture. Organisations such as the Government Command Centre in the Prime Minister's office get data directly from the NIS and trust that the NIS has taken care of any reconciliation needed, even if they see different numbers reported by international organisations. In ministries where there are already management information systems, the Government Command Centre pulls data directly from there. In ministries where management information systems are not available, the system allows them to upload data in Excel.

Because of the strong relationships with, and trust in, the NIS none of the interviewees use DevInfoRwanda or CountryData to obtain data. Interestingly, however, the education statisticians have used the data visualisation tools in DevInfoRwanda.

Sustainability and capacity development

The fact that the NIS's efforts during the lifetime of the project were not supported by an MoU suggests that their sustainability should be quite high. IT staff managing the data portal took part in three training workshops, sharing best practices in data dissemination (Ethiopia), improving dissemination of report indicators (Cambodia), and SDMX (Kenya 4). They also received training in DevInfo administration from the consultant supplied by the project and in SDMX from UNSD staff. As a result of this training they are confident regarding their ability to manage a DevInfo database, to share and exchange indicator data and metadata through SDMX, to map from the NIS database to UNSD code (including mapping new indicators as they arise), and to publish MDG indicators in the CountryData website.

There have also been some benefits in regard to more general dissemination skills, such as infographics, which staff have used in their entries to the biannual NIS infographic competition.

Persons met

Name	Organisation	Title
Mr Eric Remera	Acting Director, HIV Epidemiological Surveys and Research	Rwanda Biomedical Center, HIV division.
Ruben Muhayiteto	Data Portals Management Officer	NIS
Mrs. Nyampundu Benita	EMIS and Education Statistics Expert	Ministry of Education
Chantal Uwineza, Mr Prosper Irakoze	Director General, ICT – Office of the Prime Minister	Office of the Prime Minister

Case study: Ghana

Project history in country

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) was selected for inclusion after Kenya and Tanzania were dropped. DFID have been a strong supporter of the GSS for many years and are one of the chief contributors to the \$75 million World Bank managed Ghana Statistical Development Programme (GSDP) to strengthen the NSS (part of the Statistics for Results Facility). UNSD project staff previously worked with the GSS on merchandise trade statistics. The GSS agreed to join the project in spring 2102, an assessment mission took place in August and an MoU was signed in January 2013. This was followed by a metadata workshop, which included the Ministries of Health, Education, and Food and Agriculture, and the National Development Planning Commission and Bank of Ghana, in February 2013. Initial progress was delayed by the pressures of work on the 2010 Census and household surveys (MICS 2011 GLSS6) and lack of statistical knowledge on the part of the line ministry staff attending workshops. In June 2014 there was a further mission to discuss implementation, followed by a final workshop and mission to finalise the metadata handbook and compile indicator data, in September/October 2014. Further indicator data were uploaded to CountryData in 2015.

Like most countries Ghana decided to base their national data repository on their existing DevInfo data portal (GhanaInfo). One particular challenge faced by Ghana was changes to district-level boundaries, which made it difficult to present a consistent set over time or to use the portal's mapping facilities. The project assisted in developing a database with the new boundaries, hosted at ghanainfo.gov.gh/ghanainfo.

Consultation on project management

The project is well aligned with GSS plans. The GSS already had an ambition to deal with data discrepancies across the statistical system, which was reflected in the GSDP, and it also wished to reduce the burden on it by developing methods to send data automatically to international agencies from GhanaInfo. The work programme was developed in initial stakeholders' meetings, which included the former head of IT, and extra items were added at the GSS's request. Subsequently, GSS has seen project reports on Ghana activities but not those for the project as a whole.

There was much less consultation with line ministries. For the Ministry of Education EMIS unit the invitation from the GSS to participate in the October workshop was the first time they had heard of the project.

Changes to intra-country coordination and international reporting

Several data users think that coordination across the NSS appears to be improving even though this is not yet reflected in changes to outputs. However, others think that it is unchanged.

Data transmission is still almost entirely through paper or email files but there is some electronic data transmission within health: clinics now enter data directly into the district HMIS databases.

Under the GSDP since 2009 the GSS has been working with nine key MDAs to improve statistical coordination, with the support of a basket fund supplied by international donors. One of the activities of the project was to develop a statistical compendium. Interestingly the Ministry of Education statisticians involved in the project had not heard of this compendium.

The GSDP funds the EMIS as well as some other activities across the NSS. It also supports Sectoral Working Groups coordinated by the GSS. There is also a multi-donor support group that meets on data issues.

Coordination problems within sectors can be as important as those across sectors. The main health data collection (district HMIS) only covers the Ghana Health Service and omits the other 18 agencies within the Ministry of Health, as well as military hospitals, university hospitals, NGO health services and the private sector. Data transmission within the sector is not covered by any protocols or agreements, instead the statistics unit often has to organise funded meetings and to request attendees to bring their data with them. Many users find it necessary to contract consultants just to collect data.

Changes to data use

The project does not yet appear to have made an impact on the way data is used in Ghana.

National planning is organised through a core central planning group with members from the Policy Planning Budgeting Monitoring and Evaluation (PPBME), divisions of all MDAs and some NGO and private sector bodies all organised by sector. Each sector is responsible for reporting data on its own MDG indicators and also for specifying what other national development indicators to use. Budget preparation is organised through the PPBME, which also supplies the output data used in budget preparation and monitoring. There are only limited attempts to validate the data supplied.

Ministry of Finance and National Development Planning Commission staff make some use of GhanaInfo but do not find it very friendly. Meanwhile statistics and monitoring and evaluation professionals among donor partners tend to use the raw survey data, with which they are often familiar, especially as they play a role in funding it.

Although the GSS has no information on who is using GhanaInfo the Data Services unit's register of enquiries suggests that it might be predominantly academic and research users – often students completing assignments. According to the unit staff much of the data sought could, in principle, be obtained from the GSS website or GhanaInfo but users prefer to talk to an individual.

GSS Data Services log of written and email requests (January 2015)

	Academic/research	Planning/project work	Blank	
Ghana	135	120	2	257
Other Africa	5	1		6
UK	13	1	2	16
USA	10	2		12
Other OECD	17			17
Other	5			5
Missing	6			6
	191	124	4	319

Of these enquiries at most 14 came from international organisations within or outside Ghana while 31 of the 120 planning/project work enquiries within Ghana were from government bodies.

Users were not aware of the existence of the CountryData website but thought it looked useful when it was shown to them.

Interestingly, few users found discrepancies between international and Ghana government data to be a serious problem as they were able to rely on the government data alone for most of their work and they thought the two sources are rarely different enough to have an impact on policy. The only area where discrepancies were mentioned as a serious problem was in reporting to DFID head office.

Sustainability and capacity development

Several of the prerequisites for sustainability of project outputs appear to be in place. Maintaining the national registry is a core responsibility of the Data Services unit and the GSS expect that the GSDP will provide funding for at least the next four years. Neither GSS nor the Education ministry see any need to fund more off-site meetings or workshops to maintain the data repository as 'any changes to the indicators will only require a page or so of work to document'.

Three staff – Angela Macdodu, Jaqueline Anum, and Yaw Misefa – have received training in SDMX and mapping between GhanaInfo and CountryData and are now capable of mapping any new indicators to SDMX. Mr Eric Dodum also received training in SDMX but left the GSS in June 2014. Encouragingly, Mr Ernest Enyan, who was also working on GhanaInfo, has been able to take over Mr Dodum's responsibilities, with some *ad hoc* advice from UNSD.

Slightly discouragingly, he was unable to login to the system as an administrator to demonstrate his skills as the central GSS IT section have changed the configuration of the server.

Persons met

Name	Organisation	Title
Lynne Henderson	DFID	Statistics Adviser
Jaqueline Anum	GSS	Head of IT
Clemens Gross	UNICEF	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Kwaku Adjei-Fosu	National Development Planning Commission	Deputy Director
Eva Esabella Mendes	Chief Economic Officer, Head of Budget Reform Unit	Ministry of Finance
Sylveter Gyamfi		

Angela Otchi		
Samual Okang Edward Dogbey Salman Sulemana	EMIS Coordinator	Ministry of Education
Dr Reginald Odai	HMIS coordinator	Ministry of Health

Annex F SDMX expert's report

F.1 Background

In the course of the project UNSD decided to utilise SDMX in order to collect MDG indicators. SDMX is an internationally accepted standard for statistical data and metadata exchange. The standard is akin to a framework, which provides a standardised and machine-readable infrastructure for agreeing on the data to be exchanged, the structure of the transmitted data, and any reference metadata relevant to that exchange. The objective of this annex is to assess the SDMX readiness and capacity of the developing countries involved in this project. The annex will mainly attempt to address the following two questions:

- What tasks using SDMX can we expect the staff the project has trained in SDMX to be able to perform?
- What SDMX modules have proven suitable for implementation in the developing countries in the project?

F.2 Consultations

F.2.1 UNSD offices

The SDMX expert visited **UNSD** on 09 December 2014 for UNSD to present the timeline and outcome of the project, as well as the technical details for its implementation. UNSD said that they only had a soft mandate to impose any changes or make proposals to those countries. It is worth mentioning that most of those countries are not receiving a lot of financing for modernising activities and they also have low IT capacity. Of course, this sample of countries was supposed to be representative across the developing countries that UNSD is working with, and spans countries with minimum IT infrastructure and low IT staff capacity to those that are more advanced and better manned with IT staff. The level of integration in the IT statistical systems is, of course, low in all cases, compared to Europe (which is actively working with SDMX).

From a technical point of view the project started by utilising the DevInfo platform, which allowed an easy set-up of the required dissemination infrastructure for data providers and was already installed in many statistical offices. In the course of the project DevInfo was updated to support SDMX. In addition, the data exchange mechanism was designed to use the SDMX Registry subscription/notification scheme, thus allowing the UNSD central collection system to be able to pull data from the local countries' dissemination infrastructures when their data become available. For the purpose of collecting the indicators in SDMX, the UNSD started from the MDG DSD and mapped DevInfo indicators to that DSD. Then, in order to cover additional country codes (for the existing dimensions of the DSD), the UNSD created an extension of that DSD.

During the first steps of the project data were collected statically from the participating countries. The infrastructure for the participating countries was DevInfo for nine countries, while two of them used custom solutions. In the course of the project, many countries migrated to the latest DevInfo version, i.e. 7. Thus, they were technically capable of providing their data and metadata in SDMX. The two countries that did not have DevInfo installed used XML technics (XSLFO/XSLT) to transform and publish their data according to the SDMX standard. The UNSD carried out training and capacity building sessions, in order to assist the countries in regard to understanding the SDMX, as well as its XML technical aspects. In addition, the UNSD demonstrated Eurostat's SDMX-RI platform in order to illustrate how a data provider can enable any dissemination infrastructure to become SDMX compliant.

F.2.2 Selected case study countries

In January 2014 the SDMX expert visited Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. These countries represent a range of statistical and IT sophistication and income, with Thailand as the most sophisticated and Laos the least developed. The group is interesting when looking at scaling up, for several reasons. Cambodia was the earliest country to participate in the project and Thailand worked with the project to build an SDMX application for its own database and is now using SDMX for the transfer of other (GDP) data.

In the following sections the interviews with the statistical offices of these three countries are presented, in order to draw some conclusions regarding the impact that the UNSD-DFID project had on their infrastructure and technical capacity, and to assess the level of SDMX readiness they have achieved. The findings were as follows:

Cambodia – Discussions with: Mr Po Mao (po_mao@yahoo.com), responsible for metadata; Mr Bony Som (bony_som@yahoo.com), responsible for data; and Mr Pahhara Oukchay, the deputy director general of the NSO responsible for inserting the SDMX structures in the DevInfo Registry and performing the mappings. The following points were established:

- Starting with DevInfo 6 infrastructure, Cambodia has helped in the process of developing the registry and mapping tools that would work with DevInfo 6 and then became part of DevInfo 7.
- Cambodia is now committed to, and capable of, using SDMX, should data consumers require it (beyond UNSD, which already uses it). The Cambodian NSO has attended training sessions on various relevant topics throughout the project, such as on SDMX⁴² and on MDG DSDs,⁴³ etc.
- Their capacity includes being able:
 - to add updated DSDs to their CamInfo infrastructure;
 - to add new DSDs for potential new data consumers; and
 - to disseminate data via other SDMX, tools like Eurostat's SDMX-RI.
- Three people are now capable of inserting a new DSD into CamInfo and of performing the required mappings, and the NSO has plans to train more staff on this subject in the future.
- The time required for updating the DSD or inserting a new one is estimated at two to three days, depending on the changes on the DSD. Normally, if the data are already in the CamInfo database the required time can be a few hours. However, if new data need to be inserted then two or three days may be required, considering also coordination within the NSO in order to understand and map the data correctly.
- Cambodia is following an open data policy, thus exposing data via SDMX seems like a future-proof approach. Despite the fact that now only UNSD is an SDMX data consumer for Cambodia, there are ongoing activities in the wider South East Asia area, i.e. the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States, in order to develop the capacity to exchange their data and metadata using SDMX. When it comes to the SDMX-related activities within the ASEAN countries, no project is running yet; only some discussions on the intention to use SDMX have been carried out during various ASEAN meetings. In addition, there is an EU–ASEAN project which is SDMX related.
- The UNSD-DFID project has impacted the Cambodian NSO plans significantly, in a positive way. The Cambodian NSO had in its plans to open their data and make them available to a wide audience, but could not make a decision regarding how to do it. The UNSD-DFID project

⁴² SDMX is an initiative to foster standards for the exchange of statistical information. It includes technical specifications for implementing data and metadata exchange using XML.

⁴³ The DSD is the main structural metadata artefact, which is responsible for describing the structure of SDMX dataset messages.

helped them find a way to disseminate data in a standard way (using SDMX) and focus on how to implement their open data policy, in order to allow them to widen their audience and reduce the burden of having to respond to data requests manually.

- Currently, following UNSD's advice, the Cambodian NSO is experimenting with Eurostat's SDMX Reference Infrastructure⁴⁴ (SDMX-RI) components that make it possible to disseminate their CamInfo database via SDMX web services. This has not gone public yet, but it is in an experimental stage, using the MDGs DSD.

Laos – Meetings with the LSB: Mr Vilaysook Sisoulath, Mr Ole Sonevilay and Mr Sivisay Thepbour. All are currently involved with SDMX activities (Ms Kham Khounhuen is currently being trained internally on SDMX, as well as on the LaoInfo system).

- There are plans to increase SDMX trained staff in the future.
- LSB has received support from an external DevInfo consultant, to initially set-up the DevInfo v6.0 in an offline mode. Six people were involved, coming from the IT and the data services department.
- Following relevant training in Kenya the LSB staff have inserted the MDG DSD and performed the required mappings. The latest mapping was completed around six months ago.
- Currently, two people from the LSB are capable of performing mappings.
- When in need of assistance, the LSB staff communicates with UNSD (Mr Ian Rutherford).
- The LSB maintain their own server in the Science, Technology and Environment Agency (STEA) data centre. In addition, they maintain a database server in-house for the offline DevInfo version, while the online version runs on the server of the data centre. Since internet connectivity is something of an issue in LSB (not everyone has access to the internet), they can upload data only from specific computers.
- In their future plans they intend to train the data service people in order to use the LaoInfo system for updating data/metadata and performing mappings. In addition, the LSB intends to provide assistance to the ministries on how to use LaoInfo.
- The LSB has already provided support to the Education ministry in order to implement their LaoEduInfo system (in a UNICEF project). They have also assisted the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in regard to implementing their MAInfo system; the latter is still offline, though.

Thailand – NSO contacts, Mr Wichit Piyawattanakul (wichit.p@nso.go.th, pwitchit29@gmail.com) and korkeaw@nso.go.th, korkeaw@gmail.com.

- The Thailand NSO already used SDMX before the UNSD-DFID project, but only partially. The objectives of the NSO in participating in the UNSD-DFID project was to maintain existing data exchange infrastructure, while being compatible with international standards.
- Their infrastructure is a proprietary implementation, namely StatXchange, which features web services and XML (not exactly SDMX-ML45) for data exchange. On that system, the UNSD helped them to utilise XML transformations in order to match the requirements of the SDMX data exchange required by the project. Currently, there is one XSLT⁴⁶ for producing 50 indicators.
- Data are provided to UNSD in SDMX 2.0 compact format, according to the MDG DSD.

⁴⁴ SDMX-RI is Eurostat's reference architecture and a set of re-usable software components for disseminating data and metadata according to SDMX (see [here](#) for further details).

⁴⁵ SDMX-ML is the XML format of the SDMX standard.

⁴⁶ XSLT is a language for transforming XML documents into other XML documents, or other formats such as HTML for web pages, plain text or into XSL Formatting Objects, which may subsequently be converted to other formats, such as PDF PostScript and PNG (see also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XSLT>).

- As regards the reference metadata, they are informally collected from data providers and then sent to UN by email.
- The new StatXchange system will get SDMX data from an SDMX-RI (.NET version) installation. Thus, it will allow UN to obtain data via the SDMX-RI Web Service. However, not all data are there (this process is ongoing). The system has already installed the MDG DSD and has mappings for almost half of the 50 indicators. The objective is to provide all official statistics via SDMX-RI in the future.
- UNSD has already provided on-site training three times in the course of the project and the NSO has participated in six off-site trainings.
- When it comes to the impact of the UNSD-DFID project on the NSO plans, the project proved that although the latter was aware of the UN system, they lacked information on how to implement such a data exchange. A major advantage was becoming familiar with international data exchange in a standard manner that would enable the NSO to connect to other international organisations. Another advantage observed was the reduction of data reporting, especially when it comes to the UN's requirements.
- They have also reported that SDMX has come up in ASEAN meetings. In addition, the ADB has informed the NSO about national accounts data exchange using SDMX. Thailand participated in the Expert Group meeting on SDMX in Korea (October 2014).
- Currently, there are:
 - two people working on SDMX; and
 - four people from the NSO staff that have been trained in designing DSDs according to SDMX specifications.

More people are being trained in order to assist in extending the SDMX-RI installation to expose more statistical data, beyond the MDG indicators.

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F.3 Conclusions

The UNSD-DFID project has achieved, among other things, the objective of getting data on the MDG key indicators in a timely manner. In addition, most data were accompanied by reference metadata that would enable data consumers to understand better why there are discrepancies between the nationally and internationally produced indicators. Of course, the technical solution alone is unable to remedy the problem of discrepancies, but it can certainly assist in understanding their root causes.

The three countries involved in the project and in this assessment reported that beyond the technical assistance in infrastructure and capacity building they have received, they gained something that might at first glance not seem so important, but which is: the capacity to provide data and metadata in an internationally accepted and commonly used manner. This is really important in the sense that data providers no longer need to expend effort satisfying technical requirements when disseminating data to different consumers. The data and metadata can now be available for anyone capable of consuming SDMX. Nowadays, this is becoming more and more the case for many international and national organisations. The momentum of the standard is also backed by a lot of off-the-shelf, as well as open source, solutions for consuming and producing data and metadata according to SDMX, without necessarily having to implement a new IT system.

All three countries seem to agree that the main asset they have gained from the UNSD-DFID project was to discover in what way they can disseminate their data and metadata to a wider audience of consumers in a standardised manner. Cambodia and Thailand have chosen SDMX as their next dissemination standard and are moving towards that direction by adopting the SDMX-RI,

while Laos was positive about the project's approach, but would like some follow-up actions, in terms of training or similar projects, in order not to lose the momentum. The specific questions raised in the introduction to this annex are summarised in the following sub-sections.

F.3.1 'What tasks using SDMX can we expect the staff the project has trained in SDMX to be able to perform?'

F.3.1.1 Cambodia

The Cambodian NSO is now capable of:

- updating their DevInfo installation should any change occur in the MDGs DSD;
- adding new DSDs into DevInfo and mapping them in order to serve other data consumers (beyond UNSD); and
- disseminating data and metadata according to SDMX, beyond the DevInfo system, by an SDMX-RI installation (still experimental).

Currently, two people are capable of the above, but more will be trained in the near future.

F.3.1.2 Laos

The LSB is now capable of updating their DevInfo installation should any change occur in the MDGs DSD.

Currently, two people are capable of the above, but one more was undergoing a training process at the time of the interview, and more will be trained in the future.

F.3.1.3 Thailand

The Thailand NSO is now capable of:

- updating their StatXchange installation should any change occur in the MDGs DSD;
- adding new DSDs into StatXchange and mapping them in order to serve other data consumers (beyond the UNSD);
- disseminating data and metadata according to SDMX, beyond the StatXchange system, by an SDMX-RI installation (to be used for other indicators beyond MDGs); and
- designing new, simple, DSDs for their dissemination needs.

Currently, two people are already working on SDMX dissemination activities (as described above) and two have been trained on SDMX in order to design SDMX DSDs.

F.3.2 'What SDMX modules have proven suitable for implementation in the developing countries in the project?'

F.3.2.1 Cambodia

The NSO has been using the DevInfo system since its earlier versions, but now they are using DevInfo 6.0 for offline mappings and DevInfo 7.0 for disseminating MDGs, according to the UNSD requirements.

They have also experimented with using the SDMX-RI set of software components in order to disseminate some of the MDGs according to SDMX.

F.3.2.2 Laos

The LSB has been using DevInfo 6.0 for the internal management of their data and DevInfo 7.0 for disseminating to the UNSD.

F.3.2.3 Thailand

The NSO has been using their own IT system, namely the StatXchange, for which they have used simple XSLTs in order to disseminate data to UNSD. Their future objective is to use the SDMX-RI as part of their dissemination system (future version of the StatXchange) in order to disseminate data and metadata to SDMX consumers

Annex G eSurveys

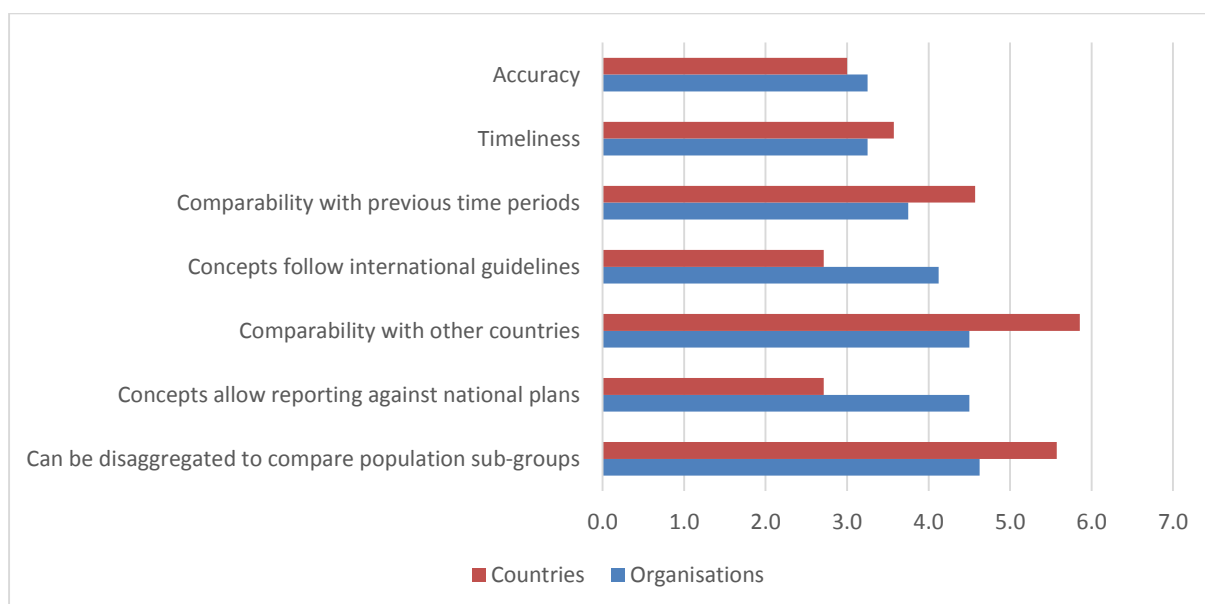
The evaluation team carried out two eSurveys, one to investigate the aspects of statistical quality that are important to international organisations and NSOs, and one to look at the ways in which international organisations gather data. The major findings were that:

- respondents expect that granularity or the ability to disaggregate estimates will be more important for SDG measurement;
- email or paper questionnaires remain the most important method of collecting data but electronic data collection has become more important;
- agencies would use automatic data collection if it was available;
- agencies rarely publish estimates with no adjustment at all and prefer to calculate them from microdata. They believe that most discrepancies come from different definitions used being by national authorities; and
- agencies report the changes that they make to national authorities' data.

Aspects of statistical quality

The eSurvey on statistical quality was sent out to 69 invitees to the final project workshop in February 2015 (of whom about a third actually attended the meeting). Only 16 invitees responded, so the results should be interpreted with great caution, and certainly cannot claim to be representative.

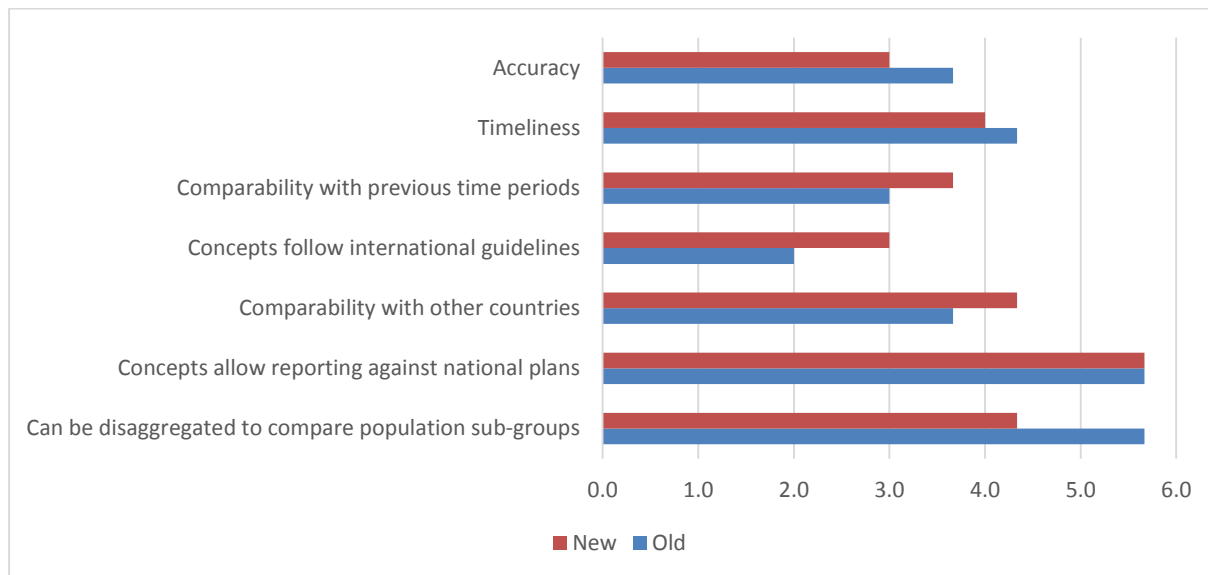
Average responses to the question, *'Please rank these aspects of the quality of statistical estimates in order of their current importance for your work from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)'*



Opinions among international agencies were more diverse than those among countries so averaging the rankings produced both lower scores for the qualities most important to the countries and higher scores for the qualities least important to them. Accuracy was the most important quality for the international agencies but only the third most important for the countries, who prioritised the ability to report against national plans and follow international guidelines. When asked whether or not they expected the introduction of the SDGs to change these rankings a third

of respondents said it would and two-thirds that it would not. International agencies were far less likely to expect change, with only a quarter saying that it would make any difference.

Respondents who said that they expected the introduction of the SDGs to change the importance of the different aspects of statistical quality mentioned were asked to repeat the ranking and their old and new rankings were compared.



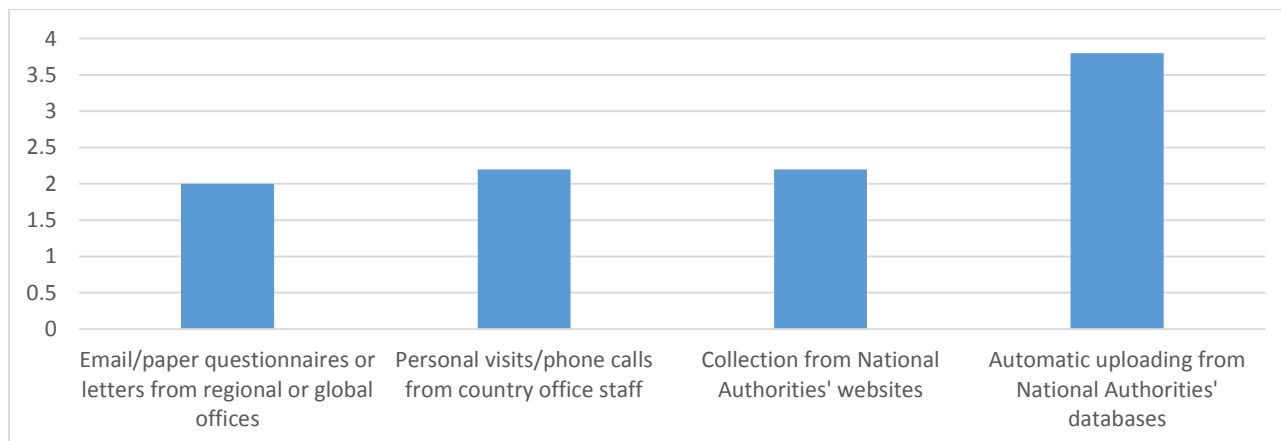
As we might expect the results show a marked increase in the importance of granularity or the ability to disaggregate estimates.

Data gathering methods of international organisations

The eSurvey on international agencies' data gathering practices was sent to 36 individuals in 18 organisations named as contacts on the MDG website. Responses were received from just under 40% of the organisations and again cannot be said to be representative.

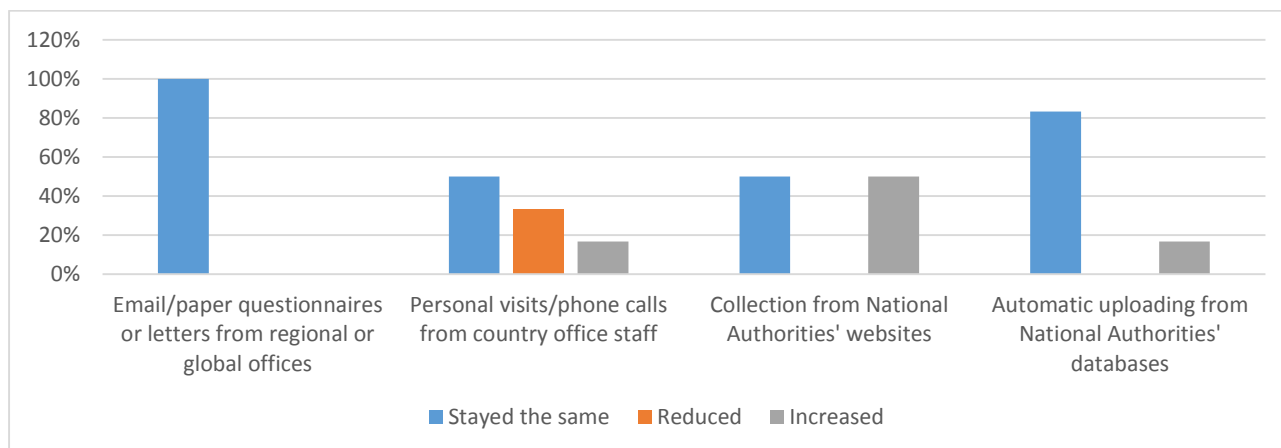
Data collection

Average responses to the question, 'Please rank the following methods of data collection in order of their importance in your organisation's procedures for collecting MDG indicators? (from 1, most important to 4, least important)'



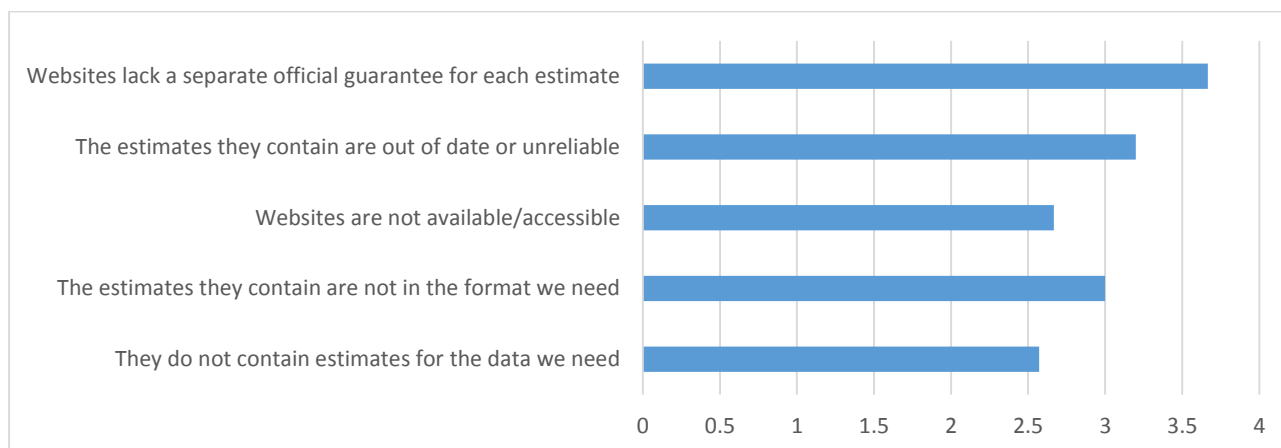
All agencies indicated that email or paper questionnaires were their most important method of collecting data and that this had not changed during the lifetime of the project. Interestingly, however, some respondents suggested that there had been a slight reduction in personal visits and phone calls from country office staff and that electronic data collection had become more important.

Proportion of respondents stating that the importance of each method had reduced, increased or stayed the same over the past three years

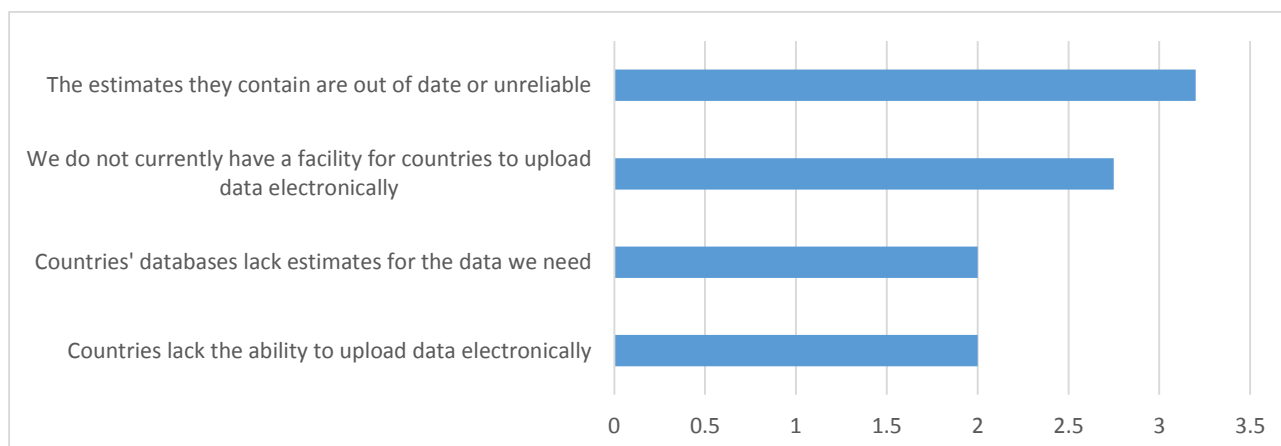


When asked about why they do not make more use of national authorities' websites and databases they suggested that the main reasons are simple unavailability of the data they need rather than difficulties in using the data that are available.

Average of responses to the question: 'Please rank the following concerns that might deter you from collecting more of your estimates from national authorities' websites? (from 1, most important to 5, least important)'



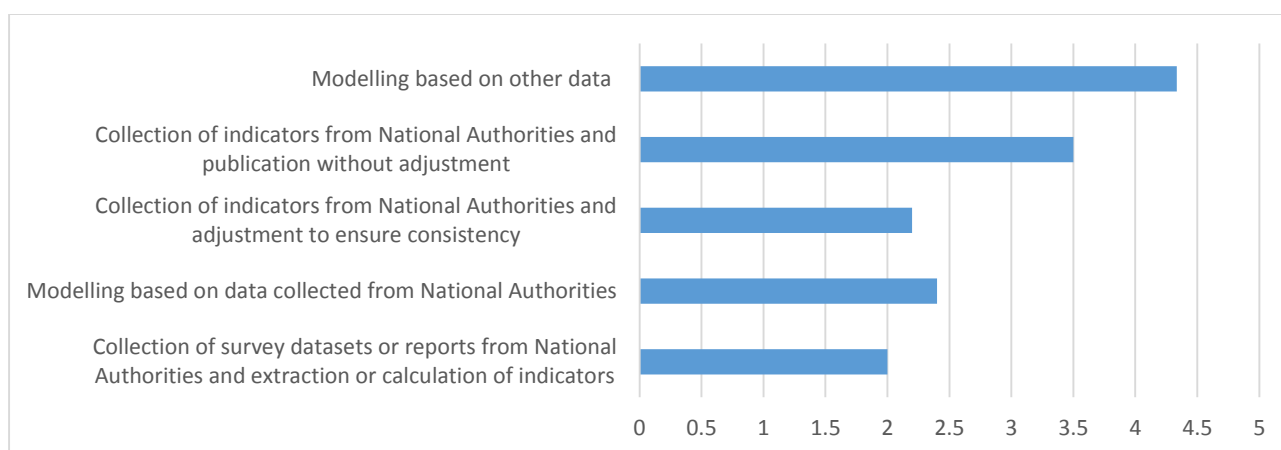
Average of responses to the question: *‘Please rank the following concerns that might deter you from uploading more of your estimates from national authorities’ databases? (from 1, most important to 4, least important)’*



Data use

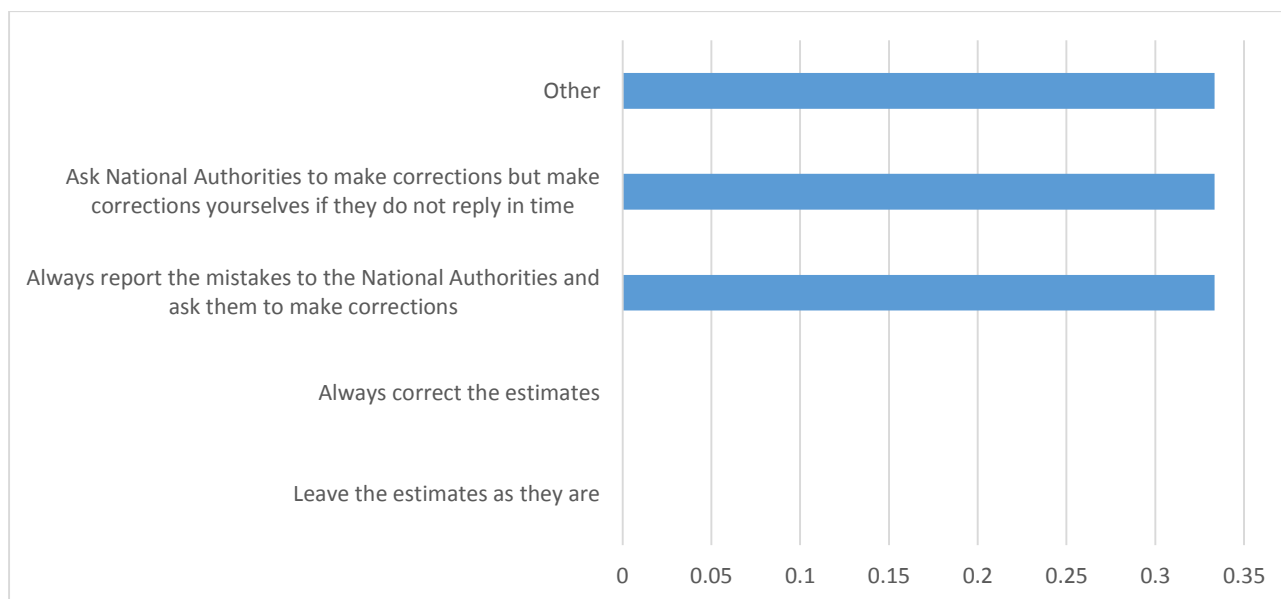
When questioned about their methods for using data to produce MDG indicators the most commonly used approach is for the international organisation to take survey datasets and calculate the indicators itself, while the second most common method is for them to use the national authorities’ estimates as an input into model building.

Average of responses to the question: *‘Please rank the following methods in order of their importance in your organisation’s procedures for producing estimates of MDG indicators? (from 1, most important to 5, least important)’*

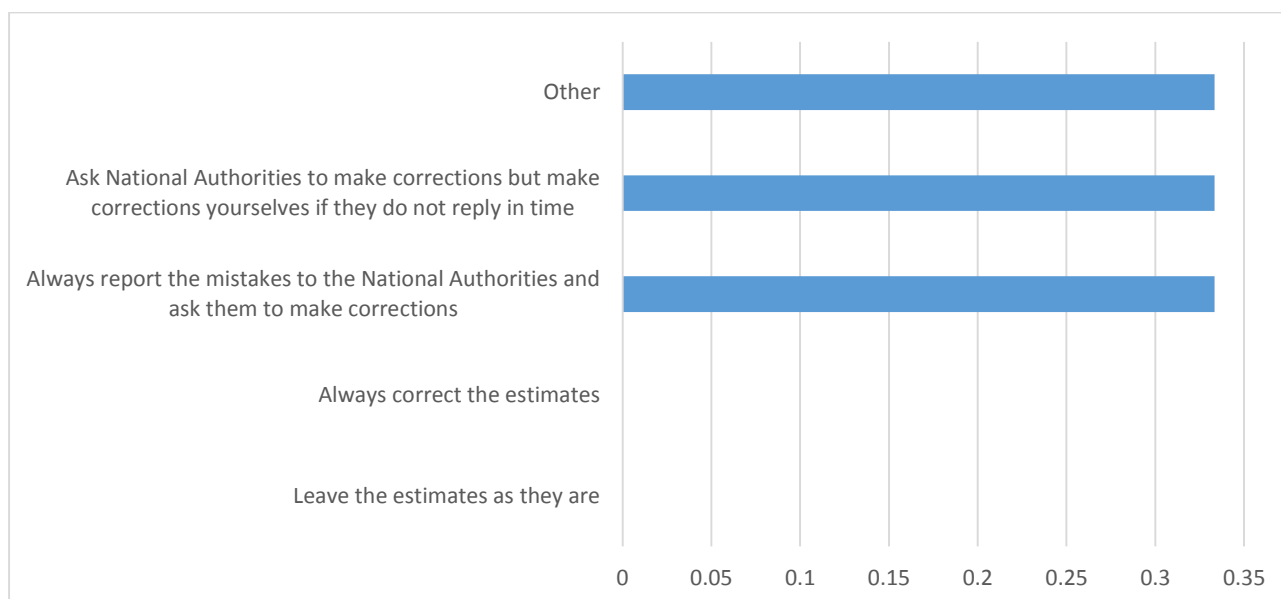


If agencies detect mistakes during this process they report them to the national authorities but also ask them for explanations. National authorities are usually alerted to the corrections or adjustments made.

Proportion choosing various answers to the question ‘If you detect mistakes in data supplied by national authorities do you...’



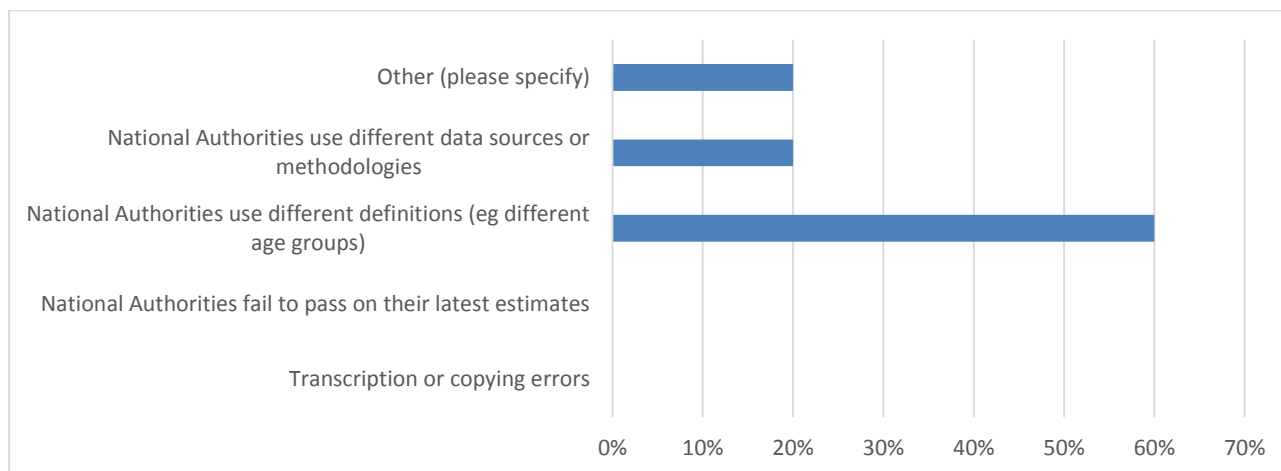
Proportion choosing various answers to the question ‘Do you alert national authorities about corrections or adjustments you make to their estimates?’



Discrepancies

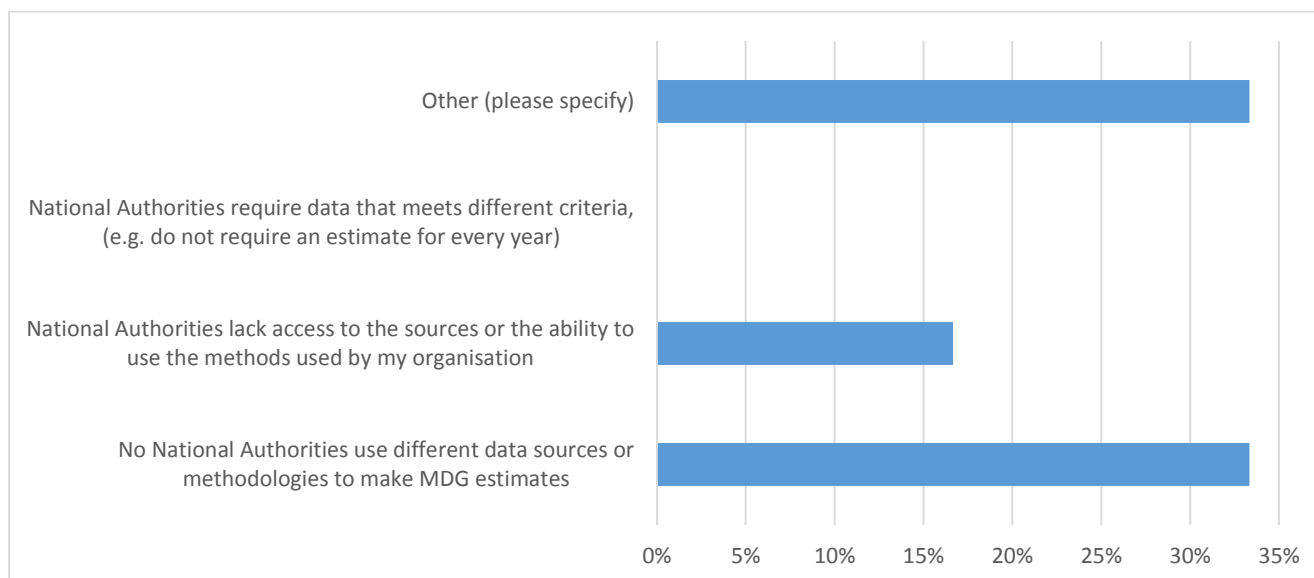
Over 80% of respondents remembered a time when MDG data published by their organisation differed from those published by an international agency. Most thought that the principal reason for these differences was that countries used different definitions.

Proportion choosing various answers to the question ‘What do you think is the most common reason national authorities publish MDG estimates that differ from those published by your agency?’



The idea that national authorities might choose to use different methods is also rejected in answers to the question about reasons for differences.

Proportion choosing various answers to the question: ‘Why do you think national authorities might choose data sources or methodologies to make MDG estimates that differ from those used by your organisation?’



The Other category here included the suggestion that ‘Countries prefer to use their national data (including population estimates) and education structures that are directly relevant to them’, and that ‘Most use the same data sources, but may not make any adjustments to definitions or may just report the latest survey data instead of a modelled estimate based on a time series of data’.

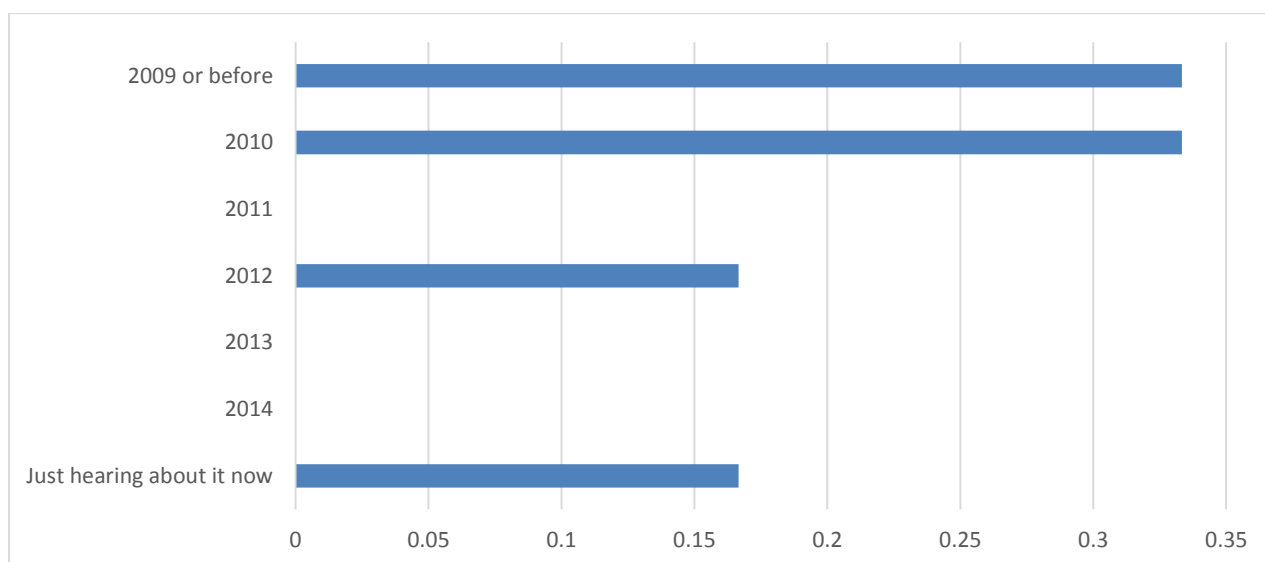
Three-quarters of respondents said that these discrepancies had caused a problem. These included:

- ‘Typical problems are complaints from countries that the values are different (even where our indicators are based on data the country submitted). There can also be misunderstandings about the methods of calculation of some indicators or the latest years for which data are available. There are generally more recent data available nationally than internationally.’

- ‘The government in question refuse to use our numbers and insisted that our agencies use their numbers’.
- ‘In several instances we had governments requesting an explanation or complaining about the published data. In virtually all instances this led to a dialogue about definitions used, improvement in data collection and the unearthing of more survey data – that were useful to our time series. In most countries definitions differ from survey to survey – and between censuses and surveys. We have made great progress in water and sanitation with CSOs [civil society organisations] to harmonise questionnaires and definitions across surveys and censuses. Yet many times, new survey design team come up with their own questions which usually compromises comparability over time and between surveys.’

The final question in the survey was about awareness of the project.

Proportion choosing various answers to the question: ‘When did you first hear of the UNSD/DFID project on “Improving the collation, availability and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs”?’



Annex H Document analysis of the state of national repositories

Selections from initial and final project visit reports

	Remarks in initial visit report	Corresponding remarks in most recent visit report
<p>Burundi</p>	<p>UNICEF continues to fund improvements to BurundiInfoThere are 451 indicators.... 10,900 datapoints... updated on a quarterly basis ...no release calendar ...appears that many of indicators already have good metadata,</p> <p>no web presenceupdated manually, mostly from hard copy.</p> <p>MDAs such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Justice are not using DevInfo and have shown no interest in its use.</p>	<p>In 2011 ...updated BurundiInfo with new data and developed metadata for most of the 412 indicators. ...accessible online for the first time in its history via the DevInfo Support Group website.</p> <p>The central BurundiInfo database has been updated ...This has been achieved through exchange of data by e-mail.</p> <p>...IT infrastructure and internet connectivity of ISTEERU were improved in view to facilitate users' access to the database...</p> <p>The launch of the online version of BurundiInfo (covered by UNICEF funds) was held in July 2012. ...ISTEERU has not yet solved its problems regarding electricity supply.</p>
<p>Cambodia</p>	<p>...collecting a set of broad-based statistical indicators is challenging. CamInfo team already has in place protocols and experience for collecting such indicators.</p> <p>The main issues with CamInfo ... not up to date; line ministry data are still shared via hardcopy; standardized data templates are not available; staff within the NIS and line ministries require further training on its use; connectivity is weak ... difficult to access CamInfo online ... number of indicators held on CamInfo can be overwhelmingly for users, and some find the interface difficult to use.</p> <p>The Ministry of Planning view CamInfo as a UNICEF project and no-one is really using it. ...Commune Database is uploaded into CamInfo, but as CamInfo is often out of date, people do not access the Commune Database via CamInfo... CAMInfo is in need of some software (e.g. antivirus)...</p>	<p>Nov 2014 Mission</p> <p>...user interface and database content .. translated into ... Khmer language.</p> <p>...consistency of the data, as well as time lag to publication ...substantially improved.</p> <p>General Directorate of Planning ...still issues data requests directly to Line Ministries, [but] it always confirms ...with the NIS.data requests are issued because the CamInfo database does not always have the latest data.</p>

<p>Ghana</p>	<p>3 staff are responsible for maintaining the database and training other staff in DevInfo technology. ...established, and is maintained, with support from UNICEF.</p> <p>...around 1,000 time series available ...staff manually enter data from line ministry reports ...no update schedule. UNICEF believes the database is not up to date and Ghanainfo is not used by the UNICEF office. ...Metadata has been a challenge. It is often unavailable or, when available, it is usually either the definition only, or the format is incompatible with DevInfo metadata fields. This applies to both GSS and other agencies' data... Redistricting has been another challenge. ...doubts about continued UNICEF funding for Ghanainfo hosting...[Ministry of Health] introduced to Ghanainfo but they don't use it now.. MoE do not use Ghanainfo.</p>	<p>Following the last technical mission, GSS decided to create a new Ghanainfo database to contain the indicators presented in the metadata handbook – at present the data at national and regional levels. The recent changes to district level boundaries have meant it is difficult to present a consistent set over time. The plan during the mission was to the new version on UNICEF DevInfo Support Group hosted website (DevInfo.org) rather than the local website (ghanainfo.gov.gh). However, during the workshop it was decided that the new database would replace the existing database on the local website. This was accomplished by the end of the workshop and the new database can be found at ghanainfo.gov.gh/ghanainfo.</p>
<p>Laos</p>	<p>Laoinfo ... maintained by the DoS and populated with data from various agencies ...one of the two statistical indicator database ...other being DECIDEInfo.</p> <p>...Over 100 indicators are published annually. The database is not online; ...Data entry process is inefficient: overlapping data points are entered separately into each of the three databases.</p> <p>...UNDP has committed US \$1.3 million, over 3 years, to Laoinfo development....</p> <p>The Laoinfo team informed us that detailed metadata is available for the MDG database in Laoinfo, but upon investigation this metadata is just a copy of the international metadata and is not country specific.</p>	<p>Laoinfo MDG database contains almost 90 indicators of which around 48 relate to the international MDG set. In general, the database is clean with little duplication. Some minor issues related to labelling and indicator construction were fed back to the LSB.</p> <p>Laoinfo is organized into a number of databases. The databases are created and updated by the research and analysis team of the LSB. The Science, Technology and Environment Agency (STEA) currently manage the hosting of these databases online as well as the LSB website. The project allowed for two new servers and supporting software licenses to be purchased.</p>

<p>Liberia</p>	<p>LiberialInfo was established in 2004 ... received significant DevInfo training with support from UNICEF and UNDP. ...269 indicators on the desktop version of LiberialInfo, ...Updates from line ministries are typically received in hard copy format.</p> <p>LiberialInfo is currently viewed as being out of date and is rarely used within LISGIS itself, across line ministries, or by the general public. ...LISGIS plans to make LiberialInfo available online, which will raise awareness and use. ...LISGIS HQ staff will deliver a series of training on use of LiberialInfo ...LISGIS do not require external support from UNICEF or DevInfo to implement this training programme. ...no metadata available on LiberialInfo, the only metadata produced by LISGIS are available on NADA for surveys and for the IMF GDDS programme. ...currently no formal calendar of updates...</p> <p>UNICEF continue to support LiberialInfo UNDP currently fund 4 IT professionals across LISGIS,In the past, ECOWAS provided funding for ...StatBase... not been updated or used for a number of years.</p>	<p>The current version of LiberialInfo contains 265 indicators of which around 33 relate to the international MDG set. This database is the main source of national development indicators that LISGIS maintain.</p> <p>Following the metadata workshop (last mission) in February 2013, LISGIS sought funding and assistance from the World Bank to put their website back online. This was completed towards the end of last year. More recently, LISGIS used a consultant to update LiberialInfo</p> <p>Unfortunately many of the issues highlighted with the database in that [Feb 2013] workshop remain; like non-standard and duplicate indicator titles, wrong disaggregation labels and mismatched or non-standard units and no reference metadata. There is also a problem with the concatenation of some of the subgroups. Unfortunately, this issue with subgroup structure is very difficult to reverse and LISGIS should seriously consider creating a new database.</p> <p>UNICEF are working with LISGIS in order to promote LiberialInfo among users...</p>
<p>Morocco</p>	<p>Mr. Aziz Farzane then described MarocInfo, Morocco's implementation of DevInfo. Data collection and maintenance has been supported by UNFPA since 2007. Nevertheless, the database has not been published until now. The current version has been finalized, with data for some indicators up to 2010. DS were working with DevInfo on customizing the interface and publishing the database online; UNICEF support was expected for this activity. Mr. Farzane described the difficulties in agreeing on non-MDG indicators, especially meta-data. There was no meta-data handbook, although DS were working on it, and would welcome any assistance on the part of UNSD...</p>	

<p>Palestine</p>	<p>PallInfo is the PCBS central repository for national indicators. It contains 35 MDG indicators and is updated annually. It was initially funded by UNICEF in 2006 but since the second year it has been funded by PCBS. 2 people were initially trained on PallInfo but they conducted training with other PCBS staff and now 12 staff are proficient in use of PallInfo. PCBS has conducted training on PallInfo across the National Statistics System (NSS) ...PallInfo is updated annually – PCBS staff from the different subject area departments submit data in Excel and data are copied in to Data Entry Spreadsheets and imported into the database.</p> <p>Metadata are not yet available on PallInfo but PCBS confirmed that they could be easily added. They see the target audience for PallInfo as being for PCBS, line ministries and UN agencies.</p>	
<p>Rwanda</p>	<p>RwandaInfo is a multipurpose data repository able to store any type of data in its final form and allows users to create customised tabulations, graphs and thematic maps. The database is a collection of about 256 indicators from those needed to monitor the EDPRS and MDG targets. The database is currently accessible through the NISR website, but it is very slow to use. ...around 14 staff work on the database at any one time ... updated every time new data is received from a survey/census or line ministry source. This is usually done manually where data is read in from hard copy or electronic reports.</p> <p>Prognoz is a multipurpose data repository able to store any type of data in its final form ...being tested on the 256 indicators from those needed to monitor the EDPRS and MDG targets.</p>	<p>...quantity and quality of data and metadata in the DevInfoRwanda database has significantly improved, DevInfoRwandahas been expanded beyond MDG indicators.</p> <p>project funded an international consultant, ... stationed in Kigali between February – May 2014. The consultant helped NISR compile a metadata handbook on MDG and EDPRS indicators; revamp the DevInfoRwanda database; and provided training on metadata compilation for development indicators.</p> <p>UNICEF has also provided support for the database and related activities, and arranged advanced DevInfo training in New Delhi for NISR staff members.</p> <p>The Prognoz database and its API continue to be used for tables and visualizations placed on the Web site.</p>

<p>Thailand</p>	<p>The NIC has set up an advanced system (StatXchange) for data sharing and exchange among the various agencies of the National Statistical System. ...Each server exposes a set of web services which can be queried for data specific to the ministry where the server is placed. The data are then sent in the SDMX format (StatXML). At each line ministry, NIC developed software that maps data from the ministry's internal databases to StatXML, and provided training to line ministry staff involved. ...The NIC maintains a Web site that serves as an entry point to the system.</p> <p>...now that the technological issues have been solved, the focus is shifting to resolving data and meta-data issues, such as agreement on a core set of indicators and coordination of data compilation. ...80% of line ministry staff involved have a positive view of StatXchange, few line ministry staff actually use it.</p>	
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<p>Uganda</p>	<p>UgandaInfo... The database is a collection of about 300 indicators related to a number of different development programs (i.e. MDGs, NDP, BFP and JAF) ... managed and maintained within the Directorate of Macro-economic statistics which updates the database annually from July – September using certified hard copies of statistical reports provided by the MDAs and then disseminates the updated database by CD in November.</p> <p>Within UBOS, there is a distinct lack of awareness about what data UgandaInfo contains ...still a culture among users to prefer hard copies to electronic information; ...it's no longer funded by UNICEF or has any recognition with another donor/international organization; and there are concerns it is awkward to operate as it is a generic data repository ...only references to UgandaInfo on the UBOS website are within the SSPS of UBOS and the Ministry of Water and Environment. ...only residual technical support given by the UNICEF Statistics and Monitoring Specialist.</p> <p>...The Ugandan CountrySTAT website was launched online in April 2010.</p> <p>Also in development are the projects funded by Statistics Norway and the African Development Bank (AfDB) focused (similar to DFID-UNSD project) on the dissemination and reporting of MDG indicators.</p>	<p>Feb 2014</p> <p>...JOLIS Intercom was procured to host the UgandaInfo database for one year. A new site www.ugandadata.org/ugandainfo was developed and the UgandaInfo 7.0 database was migrated to the new site. The site is linked to the UBOS main website at www.ubos.org.</p> <p>...clean up and update was conducted from 5th to 24th October, 2013 for 18 out of 300 indicators. Data and metadata for 18 indicators was compiled and entered into the current database at www.ugandadata.org/ugandainfo. In addition, some guidelines/protocols on how to update the database were drafted to guide future processes</p> <p>The UgandaInfo database has [still] got multiple indicator and source duplications that cannot enable mapping of the required indicators to the UNSD Data structure, and subsequent publishing to CountryData site.</p>
<p>Vietnam</p>	<p>GSO currently uses only DevInfo or customized SQL server database software to store and disseminate development indicators. VietInfo is clearly the central repository for development indicators ...GSO and main ministries (Health and Education) currently use spreadsheets to exchange data, there is room for improvement in how these are prepared and processed by the recipient. There is also the process of updating the online version of the database, which could be more frequent.</p>	<p>Thanks to assistance of UNSD's expert, DevInfo 7 (DI 7) package was installed; SDMX registry enabled so as to allow automated sharing of the core development indicators with UNSD. ...also connected with the official website of GSO Vietnam...</p> <p>...list of 66 indicators, including 47 MDG indicators. ...updated to year 2012, while definitions, classifications, methodologies of each indicator are reviewed and added then updated to VietInfo.</p>

Annex I UNSD/DFID project – full logframe

PROJECT NAME		Improving the availability and dissemination of national development indicators, including MDGs.						
IMPACT	Impact Indicator 1		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	
Better evidence informed policy making	score for use of evidence in policy-making process (Global figure)*	Planned	52.9	n/a	60	n/a	70	PARIS21 Secretariat will apply this system to maximum number of countries in summer 2011 to widen the baseline sample, currently 31 as of November 2010 Source: PARIS21 Scoring System on Use of Statistics. An updated score will be published every two years i.e. 2012 and 2014.
		Actual		n/a	TBC			
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: Indicator to be measured by computing a simple average of scores across all countries reviewed. PARIS21 Secretariat will apply this system to maximum number of countries in summer 2011 to widen the baseline sample, currently 31 as of November 2010 Source: PARIS21 Scoring System on Use of Statistics. An updated score will be published every two years i.e. 2012 and 2014.</p>								
OUTCOME	Outcome Indicator 1		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	Assumptions
Improved access to more coherent MDG and other key national development indicators	The number of health and education line ministries submitting national MDG indicators to the national repository at least once per year	Planned	n/a	0 (Appropriate data platform identified for all countries)	5	10	18	Data will be used effectively by policy-makers
		Actual		2	7 (Health and Education ministries in Cambodia, Thailand and Palestine. Ministry of Education in Uganda)	14 (In the following countries both line ministries submit data – Burundi, Liberia, Palestine, Rwanda, Thailand, Uganda In both Cambodia and Laos one line ministry submits data. No line ministries submit data in Ghana, Morocco and Vietnam)		
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: National MDG indicators are those disseminated by the country from the internationally defined set, which consists of 103 distinct indicators (see http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Metadata.aspx). Source: UNSD annual survey of country's online national repositories.</p>								
	Outcome Indicator 2		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	
	The number of national MDG indicators in the international repository (UN CountryData)	Planned	n/a	0 (Appropriate data platform identified for all countries)	90 (5 countries uploading 18 indicators)**	144 (8 countries uploading 18 indicators)**	180 (10 countries uploading 18 indicators)**	
		Actual		13 (published by Cambodia as part of their core list of 42 national development indicators)	119 (13 - Cambodia; 44 - Burundi; 20 - Rwanda; 7 - Uganda; 35 - Laos)	256 (46 - Burundi; 26 - Cambodia; 10 - Ghana; 33 - Laos; 17 - Liberia; 12 - Morocco; 28 - Palestine; 32 - Rwanda; 23 - Thailand; 19 - Uganda; 10 - Vietnam)		
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: National MDG indicators are those disseminated by the country from the internationally defined set, which consists of 103 distinct indicators (see http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Metadata.aspx), and the calculation for this output indicator will be based only on the indicators from this list submitted to the international repository. In addition, countries are able to submit further, non-MDG, indicators which reflect specific development issues at the national level. Source: UNSD routine survey of the international repository (UN CountryData).</p>								
	Outcome Indicator 3		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	
	The number of hits per month to the international repository (UN CountryData)	Planned	n/a	0	5	250	300	
		Actual		n/a	112	400		
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: Hits are the number of visits to the website each month. Source: UNSD Routine Website Monitoring</p>								
INPUTS (£)	DFID (£)		Govt (£)	Other (£)		Total (£)	DFID SHARE (%)	
	4 million					4 million	100%	
INPUTS (HR)	DFID (FTEs)							
	0.2 A2							
*The target will								

OUTPUT 1	Output Indicator 1.1		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	Assumption
Centralised data platform for use at the country level	The time lag between updating of national MDG data and updating of national repository	Planned	NA - (Repository does not exist)	0 - (Appropriate data platform identified for all countries)	6 months	4 months	3 months	Political will exists among line ministries to use data platform.
		Actual		2 months	6 months*	4 months		Proper incentives identified. Capacity to update and implement platforms.
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: National MDG indicators are those disseminated by the country from the internationally defined set, which consists of 103 distinct indicators (see http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Metadata.aspx), and the time lag to be defined as the average time from when these national MDG indicators become available publicly at the country level to when the national repository is updated.</p> <p>Source: UNSD annual survey of country's online national repositories compared with 'Release Calendar' information submitted by countries in their metadata.</p>								
Impact Weighting	Output Indicator 1.2		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	Risk rating
45%	The number of project countries that have established a national repository	Planned	0	0 (Appropriate data platform identified for all countries)	5	9	10	Low risk - Cambodia, Thailand, , Burundi.
		Actual		1	8 (Cambodia, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Palestine, Lao PDR, Ghana and Vietnam)	10 (Cambodia, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Palestine, Lao PDR, Ghana, Thailand, Liberia and Vietnam)		Overall risk – Low
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: The national repository will be a centralised data platform containing the core set of indicators (including national MDG indicators with associated metadata) agreed by the country and will be available to users through the NSO website.</p> <p>Source: UNSD annual survey of country's online national repositories.</p>								
OUTPUT 2	Output Indicator 2.1		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	Assumptions
Improved understanding of discrepancies and better coherence of data	The number of project countries with metadata produced and disseminated to meet UNSD standards	Planned	0	1	5	9	10	Increased awareness and understanding of the importance of metadata to understand indicators. Culture of metadata established
		Actual		1	3 (Cambodia, Uganda and Burundi)	7 (Cambodia, Palestine, Burundi, Ghana, Uganda, Laos and Thailand)		
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: Metadata reporting standards will follow those set by the MDGs. If there is information available for the definition, methodology and process of obtaining data then the standard is considered 'met'.</p> <p>Source: Metadata submitted by countries to UNSD for processing onto the international repository (UN CountryData)</p>								
Impact Weighting	Output indicator 2.2		Baseline 2011	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	Risk rating
20%	Percentage of national MDG 'core' indicators for which metadata are reported in the international repository (UN CountryData)	Planned	0	0% (Appropriate data platform identified for all countries)	36% (4 countries reporting out of 11)**	73% (8 countries reporting out of 11)**	91% (10 countries reporting out of 11)**	Low risk – Cambodia, Thailand, Burundi, Uganda, Laos, Ghana, Palestine, Medium risk – Overall risk – Medium
		Actual		9% (1 country reporting out of 11)	18%	30%		
		Definition / Source						
<p>Definition: National MDG 'core' indicators are those disseminated by the country from the core (18) set chosen for inclusion in MDGlabs – the prototype website developed during the pilot phase of the project, see unstats.un.org/unsd/mdglabs. Metadata reporting standards will follow those set by the MDGs – if there is information for the definition, methodology and process of obtaining data then metadata are considered 'reported'. The calculation for this output indicator will be based only on the indicators from this list available and submitted to the international repository (UN CountryData), as follows:</p> $\sum_{N=Total\ countries} M_i \times \frac{1}{N} \text{ where } M_i = \frac{\text{"core" indicators with "reported" metadata}}{\text{"core" indicators submitted}} \text{ for each country, } i.$ <p>Source: UNSD routine survey of the international repository (UN CountryData).</p>								

OUTPUT 3	Output Indicator 3.1		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	Assumptions
Collation and dissemination of data and metadata at the international level, including national estimates.	Percent of national MDG 'core' indicators with discrepancies reported on the international repository (UN CountryData)	Planned	0	9% (1 country reporting out of 11)	36% (4 countries reporting out of 11)**	73% (8 countries reporting out of 11)**	91% (10 countries reporting out of 11)**	International community interested in national level estimates. Incentives for countries to report in a timely fashion to UNSD. Buy in from international agencies.
		Actual		9% (1 country reporting out of 11)	30% (100% of core indicators for Cambodia (6 of 6), 73% for Burundi (8 of 11), 43% for Rwanda (3 of 7), 67% for Uganda (2 of 3), 46% for Laos (6 of 13))	83% (100% of core indicators for Burundi (14 of 14), 100% for Cambodia (12 of 12), 100% for Ghana (3 of 3), 85% for Laos (11 of 13), 89% for Liberia (8 of 9), 82% for Morocco (9 of 11), 100% for Palestine (9 of 9), 82% for Rwanda (9 of 11), 80% for Thailand (8 of 10), 60% for Uganda (3 of 5), 33% for Vietnam (1 of 3))		
		<p>Definition / Source</p> <p>Definition: National MDG 'core' indicators are those disseminated by the country from the core (18) set chosen for inclusion in MDGlabs – the prototype website developed during the pilot phase of the project, see unstats.un.org/unsd/mdglabs. Discrepancy reporting will follow those set by MDGlabs – if there is a text commentary and classification of the reason for the discrepancy (or lack of) then the discrepancy is considered 'reported'. The calculation for this output indicator will be based only on the indicators from this list available and submitted to the international repository (UN CountryData), as follows:</p> $\sum_{N=Total\ countries} D_i \times \frac{1}{N} \text{ where } D_i = \frac{\text{"core" indicators with "reported" discrepancy}}{\text{"core" indicators submitted}} \text{ for each country, } i.$ <p>N.B. The 2010 (initial baseline) and 2011 figures were revised following the launch of the full specification international repository (UN CountryData). Discrepancies will be migrated to this new site from MDGlabs as countries are integrated into UN CountryData. The revised targets reflect the longer time frame and more involved process required to integrate countries into UN CountryData, and ties in with output indicator 2.2 which measures the metadata necessary to report on discrepancies (a feature not available in MDGlabs).</p> <p>Source: UNSD routine survey of the international repository (UN CountryData).</p>						
IMPACT WEIGHTING	Output Indicator 3.2		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	RISK RATING
(%) 35%	The time lag between updating of national MDG 'core' indicators in the national repository and updating of the international repository (UN CountryData) for project countries	Planned	NA - (repository does not exist)	NA - (Appropriate data platform identified for all countries)	NA - (Portal established in UNSD)	3 months	1 month	Low risk – Cambodia, Morocco, Laos, Palestine.
Actual			N/A	Portal established in UNSD	Less than 1 month		Medium risk for buy in from agencies – UNSD mitigating	
<p>Definition / Source</p> <p>Definition: National MDG 'core' indicators are those disseminated by the country from the core (18) set chosen for inclusion in MDGlabs – the prototype website developed during the pilot phase of the project, see unstats.un.org/unsd/mdglabs. The calculation for this output indicator will be based only on the indicators from this list available and submitted to the international repository (UN CountryData).</p> <p>Source: UNSD routine survey of the international repository (UN CountryData) compared with UNSD annual survey of country's online national repositories.</p>								
	Output Indicator 3.3		Baseline 2010	Milestone – December 2011	Milestone – December 2012	Milestone – December 2013	Target – January 2015	
	The number of project countries integrated into the international repository (UN CountryData).	Planned	0	0 (Appropriate data platform identified for all countries)	5	8	10	
Actual				1	5 (Cambodia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Laos)	11 (All project countries)		
<p>Definition / Source</p> <p>Definition: A project country is considered integrated into the international repository if automated exchange exists between the international and national repository.</p> <p>Source: UNSD routine survey of the international repository (UN CountryData).</p>								

* Note that this is a high-level impact measure – project activities are related to this impact but the project score is not based upon changes in this measure.