

ISTAT INDICATORS for UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Keep on with the economic and social development ensuring meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising those of the future ones. This is the definition of "sustainable development" that is generally adopted in connection to the compatibility between economic growth and environmental protection.

At the Earth Summit of Rio, held in 1992, the foundations for the realization of a sustainable development policy had been laid down, and the Agenda 21 - the action plan for the 21st century - had been presented. In 2012, at the Rio+20 Conference, in the report 'The Future We Want', the commitments were renewed and the steps required in order to proceed towards a sustainable development were defined.

In September 2015 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in which the main lines of activity for the next 15 years were outlined at the global level (UN Resolution A7RES/70/1, New York September 2015). In the same year, consistently with the Agenda 2030, the Paris Climate Agreement (UN decision 1/CP.21, adoption of the Paris Agreement) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan) have been even adopted.

17 Sustainable development goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda refer to different areas of social, economic and environmental development, which need to be considered in an integrated approach, as well as the processes that may accompany and foster them in a sustainable way, including international cooperation and the political and institutional context.

As essential components, the indicators' set includes several references to people's well-being and to an equitable distribution of the benefits of development.

The 17 goals, which are also declined in 169 targets are the following:

1. *No poverty*. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. *Zero hunger*. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. *Good health and well-being*. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

4. *Quality education*. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. *Gender equality*. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. *Clear water and sanitation*. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. *Affordable and clean energy*. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. *Decent work and economic growth*. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. *Industry innovation and infrastructure*. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. *Reduced inequalities*. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. *Sustainable cities and communities*. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. *Responsible consumption and production*. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. *Climate action*. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. *Life below water*. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. *Life on land*. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. *Peace, justice and strong institutions*. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. *Partnership for the goals*. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is, therefore, the global action plan of the United Nations for the people, the planet and the prosperity, taking into account the need to support universal peace and freedom, to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, achieving a sustainable transformation of the society, the economy and the environment by 2030, also in terms of safety, well-being and justice.

Indicators classification on three levels

In order to identify a common statistical framework as a tool for monitoring and assessing progress towards the objectives of the Agenda, an *Inter Agency Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs)* was set up by UN Statistical Commission. In March 2016, on the occasion the 47th session of the

UN Statistical Commission, the IAEG-SDGs proposed a first list of more than 200 indicators. This list has been updated in March 2017 and submitted for approval of the 48th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC)¹. The current, revised set includes 244 indicators: some of them are considered relevant to more than one goal. The indicators are classified by three “Tiers” (I, II and III). To the Tier I belong 83 indicators that are based on a standard methodology and are being regularly produced at the national level (34% of the total); 67 indicators equally based on standard methodology, but not being regularly produced belong to the Tier II (27%), and 88 indicators not based on standard methodology belong to the Tier III (36%). Lastly, 3% of indicators has not been yet classified by tier, or belong to more tiers due to the heterogeneity of their components.

Goal 3, concerning *Good health and well-being*, has the largest number of indicators (27), followed by Goal 17 concerning *Partnership for the goals* (25). The goals dedicated to Energy and Climate have the fewest number of indicators (6 and 8 respectively).

Goals 3 (*Health*), 8 (*Decent work and economic growth*) and 17 have the largest number of indicators with established methodology and available data. The goal 13, related to climate change, has no first-tier indicator.

The implementation process is still in progress and involves more updating steps to ensure a thorough review of the indicators, their correct classification by the different Tiers, and the preparation of the necessary metadata. During 2017 two meetings took place, in March and November 2017, at which Italy participated: the levels of the indicators were reviewed, slight revisions were proposed and approved for some indicators. The IAEG-SDGs is considering some additional indicators and the methodologies for the TIER III indicators are being defined together with the custodianship agencies. An overall review is expected in 2020 and another in 2025.

Furthermore, the activities of the specific Working groups on Geo-spatial information, Interlinkages and Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) are continuing.

The data gap exists for all countries and requires the development of technical and scientific activities, as well as an effort in terms of knowledge sharing and dedicated investments. In addition, to enhancing the production of statistical information of the current National Statistics Systems, the 2030 Agenda also requires the use of data that are complementary to official statistics and the use of innovative technologies and methods (Data Revolution).

A report, the second, based on data available from the UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs, was circulated on July 2017² and further updates are forthcoming.

¹ Statistical Commission, Forty-eight session, 7-10 march 2017, Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.

² <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/>

International initiatives for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

An important step to the implementation of 2030 Agenda was the establishment of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB), of which Italy is a member. To this has been tasked of ensuring strategic leadership in monitoring and statistical reporting of the whole process. The HLG had worked on the creation of a Global Action Plan for the data on sustainable development, on which the UN Regional Commissions will develop the Road Maps. It is the “Cape Town Global Action Plan”³ for sustainable development data presented at the UN Word data forum (January 2017) in South Africa⁴ and approved by the UN Statistical Commission. This document provides a global vision for the planning and implementation of actions for the implementation of the 2030 agenda with a concrete list of actions aimed at strengthening the statistical capabilities of the countries and the National statistical systems to identify new strategies, develop the statistical production of quality and strengthen partnership and cooperation. The resolution of the General Assembly in July 2017⁵ formally adopted the Cape Town Global Action Plan, recognizing the importance of the national statistical systems of the countries and the coordinating role of the National Statistical Institutes. During the ninth meeting of the High Level Group for Partnership Cooperation and Capacity Building, held in Palestine from 7 to 9 November, the Cape Town Global Action Plan was discussed. A plan that describes the measures necessary to modernize and strengthen the statistical systems, with particular regard to the construction of the infrastructure and to the development of statistical capacity at national and global level. On the basis of the Plan the UN regional commissions are working on the Road Map in June 2017.

At European level, the 2030 Agenda stimulated the launch of several initiatives. The Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has set up a Steering group within the Conference of European Statistician (CES), working on a road map for the development of European statistics on the SDGs. This road map, focusing on the role of coordination of the National statistical offices (NSOs), aims to specify a strategy for the creation of a monitoring system of the SDGs, and will guide the CES members towards the achievement of the objectives set in the Declaration adopted on June 2015⁶. The first edition of the Road Map on Statistics for SDGs (Roadmap on Statistics for Sustainable Development Indicators) was discussed and approved during the Plenary Session of the Conference of European Statistician in June 2017⁷.

The European Commission, on November 22nd 2016, adopted three communications that outline the steps to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda⁸. The first report clarifies how the action priorities of the Commission can and should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development objectives and how the Commission intends to implement the principles of

³ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/Cape-Town-Global-Action-Plan/>

⁴ <http://undataforum.org/>

⁵ <https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/313>

⁶ <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CES-declaration-on-national-statistical-offices.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47510>

⁸ COM(2016) 739 final, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-next-steps-sustainable-europe-20161122_en.pdf

sustainable development and to give them further strength in its political action. The other two communications⁹ concern the Commission's cooperation policies reviewed in the light of the sustainable development objectives.

On 20 June 2017, the Council adopted the conclusions on the "A sustainable European future: The EU's response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"¹⁰ urging the Commission to carry out regular monitoring of the SDGs at European level.

NSOs and SDGs indicators

Eurostat is supporting the process to develop and implement the global framework, contributing to the definition of the set of indicators, implementing an analysis of the SDG information demand and the recognition of existing statistical information. The indicators were assessed on the basis of their relevance to the European context and to the domain of official statistics.

In the first case Eurostat evaluated whether each indicator captures phenomena that are relevant to the EU member states. Several SDGs indicators, in fact, are meant to measure phenomena that are typical of different geographical contexts and levels of wealth: 20% of indicators were considered "not relevant for the European context".

In the second case, it is needed to identify what indicators are relevant to official statistics. To do this, indicators that are not subject to statistical methods or approaches (eg. those referring to the existence of legal frameworks/provisions related to specific issues). It represents 26% of the indicators.

Starting from this work, in November 2017, Eurostat released an initial analysis of the situation of the European Union compared to the objectives of the Agenda 2030, analyzing the 100 selected indicators¹¹. These are aimed at monitoring the progress of the SDGs in Europe, taking into account European policies, such as Europe 2020, of the 10 priorities expressed by the Commission, of issues related to the circular economy. The indicators the indicators are generically linked to the Goals and do not reproduce the UN-IAEG list; many of these are used to monitor more than one Goal. This set of indicators, however, remains open to subsequent changes and will be used to produce further reports. The theme of Indicators on sustainable development has also been included in the extension of the European Statistical Program.

In this context, the NSOs play a crucial role. Firstly, because of their methodological and technical know-how, but also as reference points for data production at national level and coordinators of

⁹ COM(2016) 240 final, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-proposal-new-consensus-development-20161122_en.pdf e JOIN(2016) 52 final, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/joint-communication-renewed-partnership-acp-20161122_en.pdf

¹⁰ A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Council conclusions (20 June 2017), Brussels. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10370-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/8461633/KS-04-17-780-EN-N.pdf/f7694981-6190-46fb-99d6-d092ce04083f>

national initiatives in the study and experimentation of alternative data sources as well. Several NSOs, including Italy's Istat, take part in the HLG-PCCB for statistics and of IEAG-SDGs for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are active in the production of the necessary statistical information.

Istat and SDGs indicators: a challenge and an opportunity for the Sistan

Reconciling the level of ambition of the SDGs targets and indicators defined at the global level with the specific experiences of the countries is certainly a challenge for statistics, but also an opportunity for the National statistical system and for the Country.

To satisfy the global and national information demand together, Istat continues to strengthen and develop statistical measures that allow the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, considering their interrelation, the factors that may condition their achievement, the potential synergies among statistical indicators SDGs and statistical indicators for specific policies.

The Law 322/1989, the 2030 Agenda and the European Economic Commission, entrusted to Istat a dual coordination role: on one hand, Istat coordinates the provision of official statistics produced by the various institutional agencies participating in the National Statistical System (Sistan); on the other hand, the international community assigns to the NSOs responsibility for coordinating the national production of the SDG indicators.

The Global Action Plan is, in fact, a strategic document useful also for the National Statistical System, because it traces the strategic lines to strengthen the production capacity of the statistical authorities and of the national systems and defines the set of concrete actions that can enable them to pursue them.

Istat is conducting the analysis of the indicators of the Inter Agency Expert Group on SDGs with an inter-institutional approach, inside and outside the boundaries of Sistan, in order to make possible the definition of a methodologically consistent mapping, integrated and shared, and an assessment of the overall SDG indicators.

The Istat Road map plans to continue with the definition and implementation of the indicators envisaged by the 2030 Agenda, in the development of the necessary indicators, but not yet available, promoting the follow-up, the sharing of information, the necessary and profitable synergies, also with the agencies custodianships, and to proceed accordingly in the integrated analysis and in the diffusion of these.

Istat presents an update and an extension of the set of indicators for measuring sustainable development and monitoring its objectives (SDGs), released in December 2016 and in May 2017. In this third release, **109** SDGs indicators are covered out of the **201** available. For **69** indicators

already disseminated in May 2016, data have been updated or new breakdowns have been added. For 72% of the indicators, territorial disaggregations are also available.

74 indicators are identical to those internationally defined, 78 are similar or partial (i.e. where not all data are available, or where available data do not exactly meet the specifications required). In 49 cases, indicators have been integrated with additional "national context" indicators, to provide information that is deemed useful for understanding and monitoring the target: the concept of sustainable development (People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership, Peace) of the 2030 agenda can not, in fact, do without specific progress in the living conditions of people in their own Country.

The Good health and well-being Goal has the highest number of available indicators (17 out of 31), together with the Decent work and economic growth Goal (11 out of 20). The Indicators of Sustainable and Equitable Well-being used included in the SDGs set are 30.

The SDG indicators made available also constitute the necessary input to the definition of the Italian Strategy for sustainable development¹², where the crucial role of Sistan in the production of measures is recognized, and to the analytical and proactive work of associations¹³ and civil society.

The statistical indicators have, in fact, been elaborated thanks to the synergistic actions developed in Sistan with various institutions including ISPRA, MAATM, MAECI, MIUR, GSE, INGV, ISS and others.

The purpose of present and future activities is to provide a framework of enriched statistical information for the measurement of sustainable development, extending the set of SDGs indicators available and ensuring the disaggregations useful for monitoring progress in compliance with the fundamental principle "no one left behind", and also the thematic and methodological investments.

In the next editions (in 2018 and 2019) the updating and expansion of the indicators made available will continue, together with an integrated analysis also useful for reporting and monitoring.

¹² Presentata al Consiglio dei Ministri a ottobre 2017:
http://www.minambiente.it/sites/default/files/archivio_immagini/Galletti/Comunicati/snsvs_ottobre2017.pdf

¹³ Vedi il Rapporto Asvis 2017: http://asvis.it/public/asvis/files/Rapporto_ASviS_2017/REPORT_ASviS_2017_WEB.pdf