OIOS Support to the Follow-up and Review of the SDGs: an Advisory

United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services
Inspection and Evaluation Division (OIOS-IED)

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1. Introduction

Through the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, UN Member States agreed to work towards a series of sustainable development focussed targets and goals. The primary responsibility for reviewing and reporting on progress towards these targets and goals rests largely with individual UN Member States. However, those country-level efforts will be supported by a whole ecosystem of national, regional and global institutions and processes that have significant contributions to make towards the goals. At the same time, this review and reporting ecosystem is still at an early stage of development: indicators are fluid, baselines and methodologies are still being determined, and some key institutional roles and responsibilities are still under negotiation. Individual UN Secretariat entities clearly operate within this ecosystem, but it can be challenging to understand whether and how these entities should monitor and report on their own contributions towards SDGs, particularly at this relatively early stage.

Against that background, the following document from OIOS's Inspection and Evaluation Division provides interim advice to UN Secretariat entities that are looking to measure their entity-level contributions to the SDGs.

The advice firstly provides an **overview of the current SDG follow-up and review ecosystem**, setting out the most important **principles, institutions and reporting mechanisms**. With that context in place, the advice then provides a 'menu' of **potential actions that UN entities can take to establish and/or strengthen their SDG monitoring strategies**, including the most appropriate channels for engaging with the broader SDG review effort. Annexes provide additional reference material, including a **glossary**, a list of **external resources**, and the results of **OIOS's assessment of where each UN Secretariat entity is** *most* **likely to contribute to the SDGs**.

Intended audience

While it is hoped that this document provides an easily digestible overview of value to all UN Secretariat entities, the advice is targeted more towards entities that have lower evaluation resources and capacity, and in particular towards individuals and teams that may have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) responsibilities, but are not necessarily full-time M&E professionals.
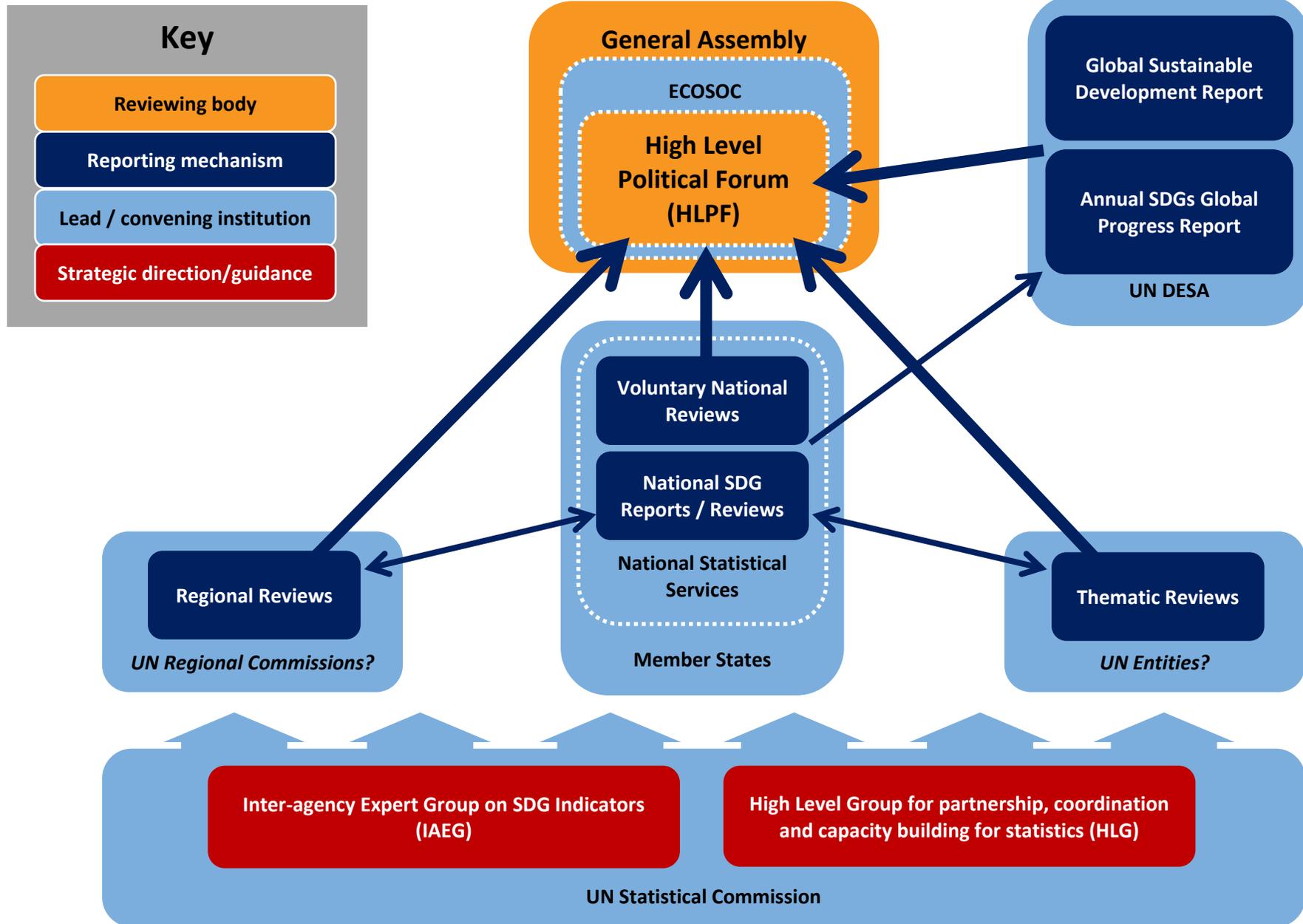
Links to further resources
The UN and many external organisations have already developed extensive tools and guidance to support the follow-up and review of the SDGs. Throughout this document, links to valuable external resources will be provided within these blue boxes.

2. SDG Follow-up and Review Principles

After defining the main SDG goals and targets, the 2030 Agenda text establishes the overarching approach to the '**follow-up and review**' of the Agenda's implementation. The Agenda firstly identifies a set of [core principles for the review of the SDGs](#) (para 74): understanding the practical implications of these principles is a prerequisite for any organisation looking to engage with the SDG review process. The following table summarises these principles and their major implications for UN Secretariat entities.

Follow-up and Review Principle	Implications for UN Secretariat entities
Voluntary and country-led	**Member States** – *not* UN entities – will lead the review and reporting of SDG progress
Open, inclusive, participatory, transparent	Review and reporting processes should involve all people, including **the poorest and most vulnerable**.
Rigorous, high-quality data	Where UN entities undertake M&E that is parallel to the main, country-led processes, this needs to be **based on data that meets the same, rigorous standards** as applied by Member States
Long-term orientation	Follow-up and review needs to look *beyond* recording immediate results, also focusing on **identifying gaps, challenges and means for improving the delivery of the 2030 Agenda**
People-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights, focus on poorest and most vulnerable, leave no-one behind	Review strategies have to be sensitive to all groups: at a minimum, all data should be **disaggregated** accordingly, but review **approaches** should also be **inclusive and sensitive** to each groups' needs
Universal, integrated, interrelated nature of the SDGs	Even where a UN entity's work is closely aligned to a specific SDG or target, progress and contributions should also be considered against the wider set of SDGs, and sustainable development more broadly
Build on existing platforms and processes	Where UN entities are undertaking SDG-focussed M&E, they should **harmonize efforts with other entities, use existing monitoring systems where possible (particularly national systems), and avoid creating additional reporting burdens**
Will require enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries	UN entities will play a **leading role** in supporting the development of Member State national statistical service and other capacities
Follow-up and review will benefit from UN and multilateral support	Emphasizes the **supporting** (rather than **leading**) role of the UN

3. The SDG Follow-up and Review Ecosystem

Key

- Reviewing body
- Reporting mechanism
- Lead / convening institution
- Strategic direction/guidance

General Assembly

ECOSOC

High Level Political Forum (HLPF)

Global Sustainable Development Report

Annual SDGs Global Progress Report

UN DESA

Voluntary National Reviews

National SDG Reports / Reviews

National Statistical Services

Member States

Regional Reviews

UN Regional Commissions?

Thematic Reviews

UN Entities?

Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG)

High Level Group for partnership, coordination and capacity building for statistics (HLG)

UN Statistical Commission

4. Overview of SDG reporting processes

The High Level Political Forum

Based on these follow-up and review principles, SDG progress will be assessed annually by the [High Level Political Forum](#) (HLPF), a new platform that will meet under the auspices of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) every year, and every fourth year under the **General Assembly**. The HLPF annual reviews will be informed by several inputs, the most important of which is likely to be **national-level reporting**.

National reviews

Crucially, the primary responsibility for national-level review now rests squarely with the **UN Member States** themselves, with SDG-related data to be gathered and reported through each country's **national statistical system**. This represents a major shift from the MDG approach, whereby monitoring and reporting was often led by the UN, rather than individual countries. Despite the shift in responsibilities, the UN may continue to have a central **supporting role** within country-level SDG follow-up and review processes. Indeed, the 2030 Agenda acknowledges that – in order to generate and collate the necessary quality of data – many countries will require substantial **statistical capacity building support** from the UN.

Countries may periodically present a **voluntary national review** of their SDG progress to the HLPF, leading to a formal report and short presentation to the forum. However, individual countries are only likely to provide one or two voluntary national reviews for the HLPF over the course of the 2030 Agenda's implementation, so countries are also encouraged to review progress more regularly through their own national statistical offices and reporting processes.

> **[Voluntary National Reviews 2016](#)**
> 22 countries delivered the first 'batch' of voluntary national reviews in 2016.

Regional and thematic reviews

While national reports are expected to represent the most substantial inputs to the HLPF and the broader SDG follow-up and review effort, **regional reviews and thematic reviews** will also feed in to the HLPF. The UN involvement in both regional and thematic reviews is likely to be more direct and substantial than at the national level.

For example, it is likely that the UN's various regional commissions will convene regional reviews, and it is likely that thematic reviews will be supported or even led by UN system intergovernmental bodies and/or the most thematically appropriate UN entities.

> **[Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development](#)**
> An early example of a regional forum established to support the SDG follow-up and review process.

Global reporting

In addition to the national, regional and thematic reviews, the HLPF's assessments will also take into consideration the UN Secretary General's annual **SDGs Global Progress Report**, which will present a consolidated overview and analysis of global progress against the SDGs. The **Global Sustainable Development Report** – which is focussed on strengthening the science-policy interface – will be another important input to the HLPF, and will be produced every four years, with the next edition due in 2019.

> **[SDGs Global Progress Report 2016](#)**
>
> **[Global Sustainable Development Report 2016](#)**

SDG Indicators

Across all these reports, global progress towards the SDG's **17 goals and 169 targets** will largely be monitored through a series of **241 global indicators**. Development of these indicators and their associated measurement methodologies is being led by the [Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators](#) (IAEG), a body bringing together representatives from national statistical systems, with the engagement of academia, and multilateral agencies including UN entities. Many of the indicators and their underlying methodologies are still under development, however virtually all indicators have been allocated a '**custodian agency**', whose responsibilities include methodological development: in many instances UN Secretariat entities are the custodian agency.

> **[Official list of SDG indicators](#)**
>
> **[SDG indicator development status](#)**
> Including custodian agencies; Nov 2016

Additional monitoring

While measurement of the global indicators will be at the heart of SDG monitoring, assessing progress against these indicators does not preclude the development of **other forms of M&E and progress reporting**. Indeed, the very high-level nature of the main SDG indicators will clearly not be appropriate when it comes to developing a detailed, nuanced understanding of – for example – the contribution of sub-national policies to specific SDG targets. Countries and non-governmental entities are therefore encouraged to develop and measure their *own* indicators and methods to better measure their own contexts (although bearing in mind the need to ensure high quality, rigorous, comparable data). At the same time, it is also important to note that – when it comes to national reporting – Member States are not *obliged* to take into account any data generated through mechanisms that are additional or parallel to their own national statistical services.

> **[Laying the foundation to measure SDG4](#)**
> This UNESCO-led strategy provides one strong example of how SDG measurement can be broadened beyond the main global indicators

5. Developing an entity-level SDG M&E strategy

The Follow-up and Review Principles and the broader reporting structures have been developed to ensure strong country ownership of the SDG review process. But even though primary responsibility for review has shifted to Member States, there are still clear opportunities for UN entities to both **support the SDG review process** and – in parallel with the global reporting structures – **to measure their *own* contributions** to the 2030 Agenda. The following section identifies a 'menu' of potential actions and opportunities for UN entities that are developing their own SDG M&E strategy.

5.1 Identifying the most relevant SDGs

A first step for any UN entity should be to **identify the precise SDG goals and targets that are most relevant to their work**. This is a vital precursor for the development of an entity's **monitoring strategy**, but is also necessary for understanding whether and how an entity can **support the broader, global SDG review effort**.

To support this process, OIOS-IED undertook a **light-touch mapping exercise** that considered each UN Secretariat entity's mandate, strategic objectives and operational workplans, in turn identifying where each entity is most likely to contribute to the SDGs: the results of this mapping exercise are presented in Annex A. The maps will not represent a perfect reflection of each organization's work, but they should at least serve as a useful **starting point for entities to identify their strategic linkages with the SDGs, and for developing SDG-focussed M&E processes**.
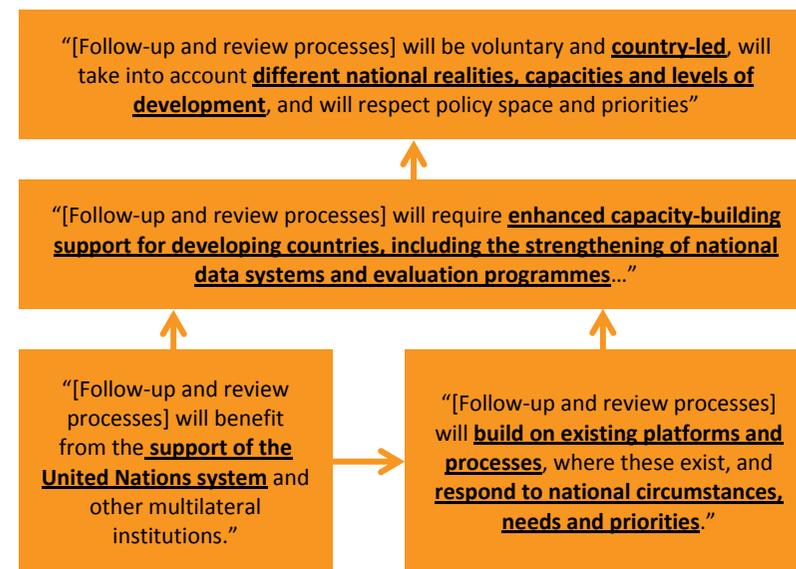
OIOS encourages each entity to consider and take ownership of their SDG 'map', amending and maintaining details where appropriate. It is hoped that the maps will consequently be a useful resource for entities as they increase their engagement with the SDGs and – potentially – as they seek to gain synergies in monitoring and reporting with other entities that are working towards the same goals and targets.

5.2 Supporting the formal SDG review process

Once an entity has confirmed the goals and targets that are most relevant to their mandate and work, they will be in a stronger position to **identify where and how they can add most value to the global SDG follow-up and review effort**. The 2030 Agenda places particular emphasis on the UN system's potential role in statistical capacity development, but routes also exist for contributing directly to formal review mechanisms.

Contributing to national statistical capacity development

The shift in review responsibilities to Member States has been accompanied by a major emphasis on **the need for stronger national statistical capacities**. Four of the core **SDG Follow-up and Review Principles** are intimately linked here, and should closely inform the role of UN entities:

"[Follow-up and review processes] will be voluntary and **country-led**, will take into account **different national realities, capacities and levels of development**, and will respect policy space and priorities"

"[Follow-up and review processes] will require **enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programmes**…"

"[Follow-up and review processes] will benefit from the **support of the United Nations system** and other multilateral institutions."

"[Follow-up and review processes] will **build on existing platforms and processes**, where these exist, and **respond to national circumstances, needs and priorities**."

If an individual UN entity has expertise relating to a specific target, data set, and/or indicator measurement methodology, they should **review whether and how they can contribute to global, regional and/or national statistical capacity building efforts**. As part of this review process, it is **essential** that the following institutions are consulted:

- The appropriate SDG indicator **custodian agencies**, so as to understand the current indicator status, including the latest methodological developments

- The **DESA Statistics Division** and the **High Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics**, to ensure any activity is aligned to global capacity development efforts

- Where specific **national capacity development opportunities** have been identified, any direct interventions should be developed in coordination with the relevant **UN Country Team**

- Where specific **regional capacity development opportunities** have been identified, any direct interventions should be developed in coordination with the relevant **UN Regional Commission**

Some countries have already identified specific data gaps or statistical capacity requirements. For example, [Uganda's 2016 Voluntary National Review](#) for the HLPF provides a detailed overview of what SDGs and indicators are relevant to the national context, along with data gaps and broad statistical capacity requirements. If a UN entity plans to provide capacity building support, it will be worthwhile checking whether any initial capacity analyses have been undertaken at national or regional levels.

Contributing to formal reporting mechanisms

Contributions to the formal SDG follow-up and review process need not be restricted to capacity development support. Individual UN entities can also feasibly provide inputs to any of the **formal HLPF reporting mechanisms**, however some mechanisms will be more straightforward to engage with than others. Key considerations for engaging with the main reporting mechanisms are listed below.

- **National reports and Voluntary National Reviews:** these will be led by Member States and their national statistical services. Member States are encouraged (but not obliged) to seek inputs from non-governmental actors, which may include UN entities. Where UN entities are given the opportunity to provide direct inputs, these should be delivered in close consultation with – and ideally *through* – the **UN Country Team**.

> **UNDG Country Reporting Guidance**
> Detailed guidelines for UN Country Teams that are supporting national SDG reporting efforts

- **Regional reviews:** It is likely (though not yet confirmed) that these reviews will be convened by **UN Regional Commissions**, which could faciliate the involvement of individual UN entities. The regional reviews may potentially be closely informed by relevant national reports, so it follows that if a UN entity has contributed to a national report, those contributions could have some influence on the corresponding regional review.

- **Thematic reviews:** These represent perhaps the **clearest opportunity** for UN entities to contribute directly to the formal SDG follow-up and review mechanisms. It is likely (though not yet confirmed) that thematic reviews will be supported by UN system intergovernmental bodies and/or the most thematically appropriate UN entities.

It is also important to note that **the HLPF's annual assessments will not encompass all SDGs, rather the focus will be on a limited set of SDGs and themes, changing from year to year**. Consequently, all national, regional and thematic reviews should be aligned with the HLPF's annual agenda. To facilitate this, [the HLPF's thematic 'agenda' has been fixed up to and including 2019](#).

5.3   Aligning M&E systems with the SDGs

While there are opportunities to provide inputs to the formal HLPF reporting mechanisms, one common concern is **whether UN entities should even attempt to monitor and report their contributions to the SDGs**: the 169 global targets refer to very high-level outcomes that most UN entities will have limited if any direct influence over.

However, if an organisation has *any* kind of engagement with the SDGs, then – as with any other activity – there will be value in monitoring and evaluating that engagement. At the very least M&E will be of immediate value to the organisation itself: it will **help the organisation understand where and how it contributes to the SDGs (accountability)**, which in turn will **help to inform their own strategic planning (learning)**. Moreover, it would be relatively straightforward to integrate such a purely internally-focused, business-as-usual approach within the organisation's existing M&E structures.

However, if the results generated by an organisation's M&E are to have **broader value** – whereby results can **potentially feed in to the global SDG follow-up and review effort** – the approach needs to be fully aligned with the core **[SDG Follow-up and Review Principles](#)**. Five of these principles will be particularly relevant when it comes to developing an organisation's M&E systems and processes. Moreover, these five principles can and should be translated into **tangible actions**. The following section provides examples of actions that could strengthen alignment with the principles.

Building on existing systems and processes

> "[Follow-up and review processes] will **build on existing platforms and processes**, where these exist, and respond to national circumstances, needs and priorities. They will evolve over time, taking into account emerging issues and the development of new methodologies, and will **minimize the reporting burden on national administrations**."

- UN entities should use **existing systems** to facilitate SDG reporting and analysis. For example, the review of an entity's engagement with the SDGs could become a **standing agenda item** within appropriate meetings of the relevant **governing bodies**. Similarly, the entity's **annual reports and/or flagship publication** could dedicate a section to SDG reporting. In both instances, the aim would be to mainstream SDG monitoring within **existing, familiar, and high-profile platforms**. Indeed, a recent General Assembly resolution calls on UN entities "*to mainstream the SDGs in their strategic planning documents and their work at all levels*", and "*to reflect their contribution to the implementation of [the 2030 Agenda] in their strategic plans and similar planning documentation*".

  > **Critical Milestones: Follow-up and Review**
  > Paragraphs 46-55 discuss how functional commissions and intergovernmental bodies could engage with the formal SDG process.

  > **QCPR Resolution A/RES/71/243**
  > From December 2016, provides arguably the most detailed outline to date of how UN entities should formally approach mainstreaming and monitoring of the SDGs.

- While an entity's own systems can be used, efforts should also be made to **minimise duplication** across different entities by **identifying others that are working towards the same goals and targets** (including indicator custodian agencies), and investigate the potential for **joint M&E**. The **OIOS mapping exercise** (Annex A) provides a starting point for entities that are looking to identify potential crossovers with other institutions. **Direct consultation with UNEG** is also advisable, as they will have an overview of significant SDG-related M&E activities that are active and planned across the UN system.

  > **UN Evaluation Group (UNEG)**

- Clearly, efforts to minimise duplication also include **any engagements with individual Member States**. If any kind of M&E work with individual countries is planned, this **should always be coordinated through the relevant UN Country Team** (or **UN Regional Commission** if work is at a regional level).

Grounding M&E within the broader SDG context

> "[Follow-up and review processes] will track progress in implementing the **universal Goals and targets**, including the means of implementation, in all countries in a manner which respects their **universal, integrated and interrelated nature and the three dimensions of sustainable development**."

- Even where an entity's work is closely aligned to a limited number (or even just one) of the SDG targets, M&E should always **aim to identify how the work relates to the broader SDGs and the wider sustainable development agenda**. Again, **joint M&E** with other entities could support and deepen such analysis.

- UN entities could increase the potential value of their M&E by **aligning their annual evaluation work-plans with the HLPF's annual thematic agenda**. This would increase the likelihood that M&E findings can feed into the formal HLPF process, and hence **contribute to high-level, cross-cutting analysis of the SDGs**.

Developing rigorous, high-quality data

> "[Follow-up and review processes] will be **rigorous and based on evidence**, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is **high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location** and other characteristics relevant in national contexts."

- If M&E outputs are to contribute to the broader SDG monitoring effort, the underlying **monitoring methodologies, indicators and data need to be as rigorous as those applied at the global level**. Ensuring that appropriate data standards are met is **likely to be a resource intensive process**, so – as far as possible – it will be important to **pool resources and work alongside other entities**.

- If entities intend to develop alternative indicators, they should firstly **consult with the IAEG** and relevant SDG indicator **custodian agencies** so as to ensure that any proposed work is complementary to – and not duplicating – global efforts. For example, detailed monitoring frameworks have already been developed for individual SDGs. The above noted UNESCO-led framework for SDG4 provides one strong example. Clearly, **aligning with existing work would be the most efficient approach**, but even where no detailed work has yet been undertaken, entities **should avoid working in isolation** and should seek to **develop partnerships with relevant entities both within and outside the UN system.**

- Entities should ensure that the **data they gather adheres to the global SDG disaggregation approaches**. For example, this could be achieved by ensuring age-

disaggregated data uses age groupings that are consistent with those being applied across other SDG indicators. However, **global SDG disaggregation standards are still a work-in-progress**, so entities should again consult with the **IAEG** and relevant indicator **custodian agencies** to confirm current developments.

- Regardless of the approach taken, UN entities should not collect SDG-focused data at the national level or conduct other country-level SDG statistical **activity without first consulting the National Statistical Office, ideally via the UNCT**.

Long-term, learning focused evaluation

> "[Follow-up and review processes] will maintain a **longer-term orientation**, identify **achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors** and support countries in making informed policy choices. They will help to mobilize the necessary means of implementation and partnerships, support the identification of **solutions and best practices** and promote the coordination and effectiveness of the international development system."

- Learning-focused evaluation goes beyond the quantitative measurement of results and indicators, aiming to identify **qualitative findings around what has gone well, what hasn't gone so well, and how to improve approaches**. While such analysis needs to be based on robust, evidence-based analysis, it does not *necessarily* require the kind of rigorous quantitative methodologies that underpin the global SDG indicators. As such, this principle offers a potentially less daunting 'entry point' for entities that are looking to contribute to the global SDG follow-up and review effort.

- To ensure that learning is captured across all work-streams, entities should consider making analysis of SDG contributions and related lessons a **mandatory element** for all of their evaluations. For example, the assessment of SDG contributions and the identification of relevant lessons could be introduced as a **mandatory, consistent requirement within all TORs for external evaluations**. Indeed, UNEG's Norms and Standards for evaluation (revised in 2016) now state that UN evaluations should routinely "promote and contribute to [the 2030 Agenda]".

Leaving no one behind

> "[Follow-up and review processes] will be **people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights** and have a particular focus on the **poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind**."

- When considering evaluation workplans, entities should **consider prioritising / placing more weight on any evaluations that are likely to have the greatest focus on vulnerable groups**.

- M&E approaches should – at the minimum – **adhere to UNEG's Ethical Guidelines**, which include direction on the involvement of vulnerable groups within evaluation processes. UN entities could improve adherence to these guidelines through **inclusion of a mandatory, standing clause within all of their evaluation TORs**.

Annex A: UN Secretariat SDG Contribution Maps

The ultimate responsibility for follow-up and review of the SDGs rests with national governments. However, UN Secretariat entities will often contribute to and support those national efforts. For example, UN entities may be engaged in the development of national statistical systems and monitoring capacities, or they may have a service delivery or analytical role that directly contributes to specific SDG targets or indicators. Consequently – and while a core principle of the SDGs is the cross-cutting and interdependent nature of the goals – the work of individual UN entities will invariably be more closely related to some SDGs than others.

To build an understanding around the role of UN entities and the relevance of the SDGs to their work, it is important to identify where and how individual entities will potentially support and contribute to the SDGs. In turn, this understanding could **support each organization's strategic planning**, could **inform their own approaches to monitoring and reporting**, and could help to **identify linkages and crossovers between the SDG-focussed work of individual entities**.

Against that background, OIOS undertook a light-touch, desk-based assessment that considered each entity's mandate, strategic objectives and operational workplans, in turn identifying where each entity is *most* likely to contribute to the SDGs.

Next steps

As above, these maps were developed through a limited, desk-based assessment by OIOS. It is likely that entities will challenge and amend these maps based on their intimate knowledge of their own strategic priorities and operational workplans. In their current form the maps will therefore not represent a perfect reflection of each organization's work, but they should at least serve as a useful reference for entities that are beginning to identify strategic linkages with the SDGs, and/or are embarking on the development of their own SDG-focussed M&E processes[1]. **OIOS encourages each entity to consider and take ownership of their SDG contribution map**, amending and maintaining details where appropriate. It is hoped that the maps will consequently be a useful resource for entities as they increase their engagement with the SDGs and – potentially – as they seek to gain synergies with other entities that are working towards the same goals and targets.

Key

The maps identify two levels of contribution for each entity:

	The entity's mandate, strategy and/or day-to-day operations are **highly relevant** to the goal/target, and it is **likely** that their work will support or contribute to SDG delivery at a national and/or global level.
	The entity's mandate, strategy and/or day-to-day operations are **partly relevant** to the goal/target, and it is **feasible** that their work will support or contribute to SDG delivery at a national and/or global level.

While the maps are primarily based on OIOS's assessment, some entities have independently undertaken a similar exercise, identifying and mapping their own potential contributions. The maps therefore make a distinction between contributions that OIOS have **identified on behalf of entities**, and contributions that entities have **identified themselves**:

		Potential contribution identified through **OIOS's assessment**
		Potential contribution identified through the **entity's own assessment**

The maps also group entities according to their broad operational approach, in turn enabling for easier comparison of potential linkages and/or crossover between functionally similar organisations. OIOS's standard categorizations are applied (as also applied within the biennial OIOS scorecards/dashboards), namely **Peace & Security**, **Human rights & humanitarian**, **Regional cooperation**, **Norm setting & development**, and **Management & support**.

[**UN Secretariat SDG Contribution Maps**]

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[1] The maps should also be useful to OIOS as well, providing a high-level overview of how each of its UN Secretariat 'clients' engages with Agenda 2030, and where there are potential crossovers between the work of separate entities.

Methodology

The contribution maps were developed through a review of each entity's web-based materials, with the objective being to develop a broad understanding of each entity's mandate, operational approach, and interactions with UN Member States. For each entity, the following materials were reviewed, in order of priority, and as available:

1. Any work the entity had already undertaken on SDG mapping (where an entity had already mapped their potential SDG contributions, those maps were directly transferred into the OIOS maps)

2. Mandate and strategic objective/s

3. Results framework/s and work-plan/s

Once a general understanding of each entity's mandate and operational model had been established, it was then possible to identify the individual **SDG targets** that an entity would make either a 'likely' or 'feasible' contribution to. As above, '**likely**' contributions are those that are **highly relevant** to an entity's mandate, strategy and/or day-to-day operations, whereas '**feasible**' contributions are only **partly relevant**. Given the light-touch nature of the assessment, the classification is necessarily broad, but also sufficient to develop an initial understanding of each entity's potential engagement with the SDGs, and to allow for comparison across entities. A degree of benchmarking/validation of OIOS's assessments was possible through comparison of the OIOS assessments/maps with those assessments/maps that had already been produced independently by individual entities.

While the assessment focussed on developing target-level maps, **goal-level maps** were also produced. If an entity contributes to at least one of an SDG's underlying targets, then the entity logically contributes to that SDG. Equally, if an entity does *not* contribute to any of an SDG's underlying targets, then the entity does *not* contribute to that SDG. Consequently, the goal-level maps were automatically generated from the target-level maps.

Analysis at the level of SDG **indicators** was not judged to be appropriate for this light-touch assessment: identifying such contributions would require a far more in-depth review of each entity's operations than was possible within the scope of this work.

References

The mapping exercise was primarily based on a review of each entity's web-based material, with the most important pages / portals listed below (all accessed December 2016):

DESA	www.un.org/development/desa/en/about/desa-divisions.html
DFS	www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/633
DGACM	www.un.org/depts/DGACM
DM	www.un.org/en/hq/dm
DPA / PBSO	Strategic Plan 2016 -2019 (www.un.org/undpa/sites/www.un.org.undpa/files/DPA%20Strategic%20Plan%202016-2019.pdf)
DPI	www.un.org/en/sections/department-public-information/about-dpi/index.html
DPKO	www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dpko
DSS	trip.dss.un.org/dssweb/aboutus/history.aspx
ECA	www.uneca.org/pages/overview
ECE	www.unece.org/index.php?id=41155
ECLAC	www.cepal.org/en/node/37170
EOSG	www.un.org/sg/en/sg_role.shtml
ESCAP	www.unescap.org/2030-agenda
ESCWA	www.unescwa.org/publications/arab-sustainable-development-report-2015
ITC	www.intracen.org/itc/goals/Global-Goals-for-Sustainable-Development
OCHA	www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/humanitarian-aid-age-sdgs-today%E2%80%99s-challenges-tomorrow%E2%80%99s-solutions
OHCHR	www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/MDG/Pages/The2030Agenda.aspx
OHRLLS	unohrlls.org/post2015
OLA	legal.un.org/ola/mission.aspx
OOSA	www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/benefits-of-space/benefits.html
OSAA	www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/peace/sdgs.shtml
UN Women	www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-1-no-poverty
UNCTAD	unctad.org/en/Pages/About%20UNCTAD/UNCTAD-and-the-Global-Goals.aspx
UNEP	Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021 (wedocs.unep.org/rest/bitstreams/11369/retrieve)
UN-HABITAT	unhabitat.org/un-habitat-for-the-sustainable-development-goals
UNHCR	www.unhcr.org/uk/what-we-do.html
UNODA	www.un.org/disarmament/update/side-event-achieving-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-role-of-the-office-for-disarmament-affairs-regional-centres-for-peace-and-disarmament
UNODC	www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/sustainable-development-goals/sdgs-index.html
UNOG	www.unog.ch
UNON	www.unon.org
UNOV	www.unvienna.org
UNRWA	Medium Term Strategy 2016-2021 (www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/mts_2016_2021.pdf)

Annex B: Glossary

Institutions

- **High Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics (HLG):** Established by the UN Statistical Commission, this group is primarily comprised of representatives from national statistical offices. The group will provide strategic leadership on building statistical capacities for the monitoring of SDGs, identifying resources, partnerships and distinct interventions for national, regional and global capacity development.

- **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF):** Convened by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and bringing together representatives from all UN Member States, this forum has the central role in the SDG Follow-up and Review process. The forum meets annually to review progress, with assessments based on several reporting mechanisms, including Voluntary National Reviews, National Progress Reports, Regional Reviews, Thematic Reviews, the annual SDGs Global Progress Report, and the periodic Global Sustainable Development Report.

- **Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG):** Established by the UN Statistical Commission, this group has the responsibility of developing and maintaining oversight of the global SDG indicator framework, including the underlying measurement methodologies.

- **National Statistical Services:** The great majority of Member States will have a national statistical service (typically centred around a National Statistical Office), which has responsibility for overseeing the collection and analysis of national socio-economic data. In order to ensure country ownership and minimise additional reporting burdens, it is highly likely that country-level monitoring of SDG indicators will be led by each Member States' national statistical service.

- **SDG Indicator Custodian Agency:** Given the large number of global indicators and the detailed work required to develop robust measurement methodologies, the IAEG has allocated each indicator a Custodian Agency to lead methodological development. Many of these Custodian Agencies are UN entities.

Reporting mechanisms

- **Global Sustainable Development Report:** Led by independent scientists but with major contributions from across the UN system, this report (to be produced every four years) provides a substantive, scientific 'assessment of assessments' of the current state-of-play with regards to global sustainable development.

- **National Progress Reports / Reviews:** Member States are encouraged to undertake their own SDG-focused national progress reviews, although such reviews are not mandatory, and the appropriate frequency of these reviews has not been defined. Such national progress reviews are distinct from (although will clearly feed into) HLPF Voluntary National Reviews.

- **Regional Review:** SDG regional reviews are likely to be convened by UN Regional Commissions and will draw on relevant national reports, potentially focusing on transboundary issues.

- **SDGs Global Progress Report:** Prepared by the Secretary General, this annual report provides a high-level but accessible and concise summary of progress against each SDG. The report draws on data from across all other SDG reporting mechanisms.

- **Thematic Review:** Thematic reviews will be used to undertake detailed studies on cross-cutting issues, distinct themes, and/or individual SDGs. It is very likely that individual UN entities will support at least some thematic reviews.

- **Voluntary National Reviews:** Countries may periodically present a voluntary national review of their SDG progress to the HLPF. However, these voluntary national reviews are likely to be infrequent: it is estimated that an individual country will at most present to the HLPF only twice during the 2030 Agenda implementation period. As such, countries are also encouraged to review progress through more regular National Progress Reports.

Monitoring systems and processes

- **Follow-up and Review Principles:** The 2030 Agenda established nine core 'Follow-up and Review' principles, with these principles providing the building blocks for review of progress towards the SDGs. Arguably the most significant principle shifts the primary review responsibility to Member States (for the MDGs, responsibility for review often rested with the UN system).

- **Independent monitoring:** While the 2030 Agenda text emphasizes country ownership of follow-up and review, non-governmental entities can also measure and report on progress towards the SDGs, on the assumption that any such monitoring is based on high quality, rigorous data. At the same time, it is also important to note that – when it comes to national reporting – Member States are not *obliged* to take into account any data generated through mechanisms that are additional or parallel to their own national statistical services.

Annex C: References and Resources

A number of reports, tools and web platforms have already been developed to support the follow-up and review of the SDGs. The following resources have been identified by OIOS as being particularly important or useful for UN entities that are developing their own approaches to assessing linkages with and potential contributions to the SDGs.

Main references

The following list compiles the main references that guide the **formal** SDG follow-up and review processes (including, for example, UN resolutions and official guidance):

- **2030 Agenda**: Including the main SDG declaration, and the principles and broad approach for follow-up and review (paragraphs 72-91).

- **High Level Political Forum**: Comprehensive site compiling documentation relating to past, current and future HLPF sessions, including Voluntary National Reviews, annual HLPF thematic agendas up until 2019, and the main UN resolutions relating to the 2030 Agenda.

- **Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators**: Comprehensive site compiling minutes and reports from IAEG meetings, also including the official list of SDG indicators, their development status, and their custodian agencies.

- **UNDG Country Reporting Guidance**: Detailed guidance for UN Country Teams that are supporting national SDG reporting efforts.

- **Critical Milestones: Follow-up and Review**: From January 2016, an outline of the early thinking on how follow-up and review could be implemented, including the role of the UN System (see in particular the discussion within paragraphs 46-55 on the potential role of functional commissions and intergovernmental bodies).

- **QCPR Resolution A/RES/71/243**: From December 2016, provides arguably the most detailed outline to date of how UN entities should formally approach mainstreaming and monitoring of the SDGs.

Other resources

Considerable SDG-focused work is already being undertaken by organisations and initiatives that are *external* to the UN System and are independent from the formal follow-up and review processes. The following resources provide a valuable 'external' perspective on the SDGs, including monitoring tools and approaches that – while designed for non-UN entities – could nevertheless be informative for UN entities that are looking to strengthen their own assessment approaches:

- **IISD SDG Knowledge Hub**: Perhaps the main external, 'non-UN' portal for news, events, policy briefs and analysis relating to the SDGs.

- **SDG Compass**: Partly supported by the UN Global Compact, this business-focused site compiles a large range of tried-and-tested monitoring tools that can be applied by companies looking to monitor their support for the SDGs: many of the tools will also be relevant for individual UN entities. The site also includes a database of alternative / parallel indicators that could be used to demonstrate contributions to the SDGs.

- **Navigating the SDGs**: Authored by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), this goal-by-goal guide provides advice and ideas for businesses that are looking to understand their potential role in supporting the SDGs. It offers valuable insight into how *companies* are already thinking about the SDGs. The guide is also a relatively accessible, easy-to-digest starting point for individuals that are completely new to the SDGs.