U.S. SDG Data Revolution Roadmap

Roundtable Report

JANUARY 2017

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THE CENTER FOR
OPEN DATA ENTERPRISE

WWW.OPENDATAENTERPRISE.ORG

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DATA

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The U.S. Government has a unique opportunity to ensure that data is collected, maintained, and utilized for the Sustainable Development Goals. To do so, the government will need an ambitious, detailed Data Roadmap and the commitment to follow it.

– Center for Open Data Enterprise

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

IN SEPTEMBER 2015, 193 member states of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), also known as the Global Goals or the 2030 Agenda. These 17 ambitious goals set a framework for action on social, economic, and environmental challenges around the world. At the same time, countries around the world, including the United States, have been taking part in the Data Revolution - a movement to use data for social good - to help achieve the Global Goals.

One year after adopting the SDGs, in an addendum to its Open Government National Action Plan, the U.S. Government committed to develop an SDG Data Revolution Roadmap that "charts the future course of efforts to fill data gaps and build capacity to use data for decision-making and innovation to advance sustainable development." The U.S. Government's SDG Data Revolution Roadmap will outline the government's commitments-to-action from 2017-2018. With a deadline of June 2017, it will be developed by the U.S. Government "through an open and inclusive process that engages the full range of citizen, non-governmental, and private sector stakeholders."

This report represents the beginning of that engagement process. On December 14, 2016, the Center for Open Data Enterprise and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data convened a Roundtable to develop recommended priorities for the U.S. Government's SDG Data Revolution Roadmap The Roundtable brought together more than 40 stakeholders from government, civil society, and the private sector with expertise in achieving and promoting sustainable development.

The Roundtable participants addressed three themes: (1) Strengthening the U.S. SDG National Reporting Platform, (2) Data for Action in the U.S., and (3) Supporting Global Efforts to achieve the SDGs through data-driven initiatives. This report presents their insights and recommendations. For each of the themes, this report summarizes background, successes and challenges so far, and proposed priorities.

U.S. SDG NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORM

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The National Reporting Platform (NRP), developed by the Office of Management and Budget, has launched successfully as an open source platform for data related to the SDGs. This report recommends increased technical capacity and support for the NRP, increased of user feedback, and applying the NRP to improve the SDG indicators and their relevance.

DATA FOR ACTION IN THE U.S.

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The U.S. has a strong basis for applying data for action: Several national programs use national and local data to achieve goals aligned with the SDGs, and they are beginning to map them to the SDGs on a national and subnational level. This report recommends further work to align existing initiatives with the SDGs at all levels of government, to educate federal staffers about the SDGs, and to implement the SDG framework across the federal government.

SUPPORTING GLOBAL EFFORTS

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Global efforts to implement and monitor the SDGs are well under way, with significant U.S. leadership. This report recommends that the U.S. support country-led local programs and data collaboratives, continue participating in global partnerships and initiatives, and develop case studies to demonstrate how the SDGs can be achieved by harnessing the data revolution.

This report was designed to serve as an initial framework the U.S. SDG Data Revolution Roadmap. We hope it will lead to additional, in-depth convenings to help shape that Roadmap and develop concrete next steps in the months ahead.

Background

THE SDGS AND THE DATA REVOLUTION

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Goals, or SDGs, are a framework of social, economic, and environmental global goals to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs were adopted by 193 member states of the United Nations in September 2015, and have become a point of reference for charting progress in countries around the world. The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals or the 2030 Agenda, address challenges that affect individuals, countries, and the world at large.

From the beginning, it's been clear that the SDGs must be closely tied to the Data Revolution - a movement, also defined and framed by the United Nations (UN), to use data for innovation and social good. The concept of the Data Revolution recognizes that we now face "an exponential increase in the volume and types of data available, creating unprecedented possibilities for informing and transforming society and protecting the environment."[1]

The Data Revolution can harness many kinds of data for use, including traditional government data, administrative and financial data, geospatial and earth observation data, citizen-generated data, and data from businesses. Rather than collecting data only as snapshots in time, as census data is collected, the Data Revolution envisions using real-time dynamic data to achieve global, national, and local goals, including the SDGs, and to measure progress in achieving them.

The UN Interagency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals (IAEG), led by the UN Statistical Commission, has identified about 240 global indicators to monitor progress toward achieving the SDGs and their targets. The IAEG categorized the indicators in three tiers: Those that have a clear methodology and data gathered to support them (Tier I), those that have an established methodology but no regular data collection (Tier II), and those that have neither a clear methodology nor regular data collection (Tier III).[2]

The SDGs have the potential to bring together diverse stakeholders around the use of data. Businesses and nonprofit organizations are integrating the SDGs into their planning and analysis, as are international non-governmental institutions like the World Economic Forum and initiatives such as the UN Global Compact. National and sub-national governments around the world are also adopting the SDGs and integrating them into their local strategies. The SDGs are global goals that are beginning to have a local impact. They are providing a common context for governments to engage with stakeholders around shared goals.

At the same UN General Assembly where the SDGs were adopted, a new organization called the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) was also launched. The Partnership brings together governments, international agencies, businesses, civil society groups, and statistics and data communities "to build an enabling environment for harnessing the data revolution for sustainable development."[3] Support for the SDGs is central to their work.

1. UN, A World that Counts (2014). http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/execsum.pdf

2. United Nations, Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators. http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs

3. Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, What We Do. http://www.data4sdgs.org/what-we-do

4. Harnessing the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. https://2009–2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/09/262294.htm

5. The Open Government Partnership, Third Open Government National Plan for the United States of America (2015) https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/final_us_open_government_national_action_plan_3_0.pdf

6. The Open Government Partnership, Announcing New Open Government Initiatives as part of the Third Open Government National Action Plan for the United States of America (2016). https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/new_nap_commitments_final.pdf

7. GPSDD, Data4sdgs Toolbox. http://www.data4sdgs.org/toolbox

Among many commitments to harness the data revolution in the U.S.[4], the Obama Administration made a specific pledge both to implement the SDGs in the U.S. and to continue work to help achieve them around the world. The U.S. Government has provided $3.3 million to the GPSDD through PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

→ The U.S. Government Commitment – National Action Plan

THE UNITED STATES Government has adopted the SDGs and committed to work to achieve the SDGs within the U.S. as well as globally. That commitment began with the third U.S. National Action Plan for Open Government, released in October 2015 as part of the country's participation in the Open Government Partnership.[5]

In September 2016, the U.S. government released further, specific commitments to the SDGs through an addendum to the National Action Plan.[6] That document committed the U.S. Government to:

→ *"Engage in public consultations in taking stock of available data and identifying data gaps for achieving and measuring progress on the SDGs…*

→ *Develop an open SDG National Reporting Platform to ensure ongoing public access to relevant metadata and statistics on implementation of the SDGs…*

→ *Develop an SDG Data Revolution Roadmap for the U.S. Government through an open and inclusive process that engages the full range of citizen, non-governmental, and private sector stakeholders and charts the future course of efforts to fill data gaps and build capacity to use data for decision-making and innovation to advance sustainable development."*

→ Stakeholder Engagement and the SDG Roadmap Roundtable

TO SUPPORT THIS "open and inclusive process," the Center for Open Data Enterprise in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data co-hosted a Roundtable on December 14, 2016. The Roundtable at the Microsoft Innovation and Policy Center in Washington, DC. was designed to develop recommended priorities for the U.S. Government's SDG Data Revolution Roadmap, to be published in June 2017, which will outline the government's commitments-to-action from 2017-2018.

The Roundtable convened a diverse group of stakeholders with expertise in achieving and promoting sustainable development. In building the SDG Data Revolution Roadmap, the U.S. Government can draw on this work as a starting point and work with the guidelines that the GPSDD has developed as part of its "Data4SDGs" toolbox,[7] a set of tools, methods and resources developed by data champions from around the world.

This Roundtable convened experts from business, civil society, and the U.S. government to share learnings from current initiatives and make commitments for future work.

Roundtable Participating Organizations included:

U.S. GOVERNMENT: Agencies with responsibility for government-issued statistics, government open data, foreign aid, and science and data policy
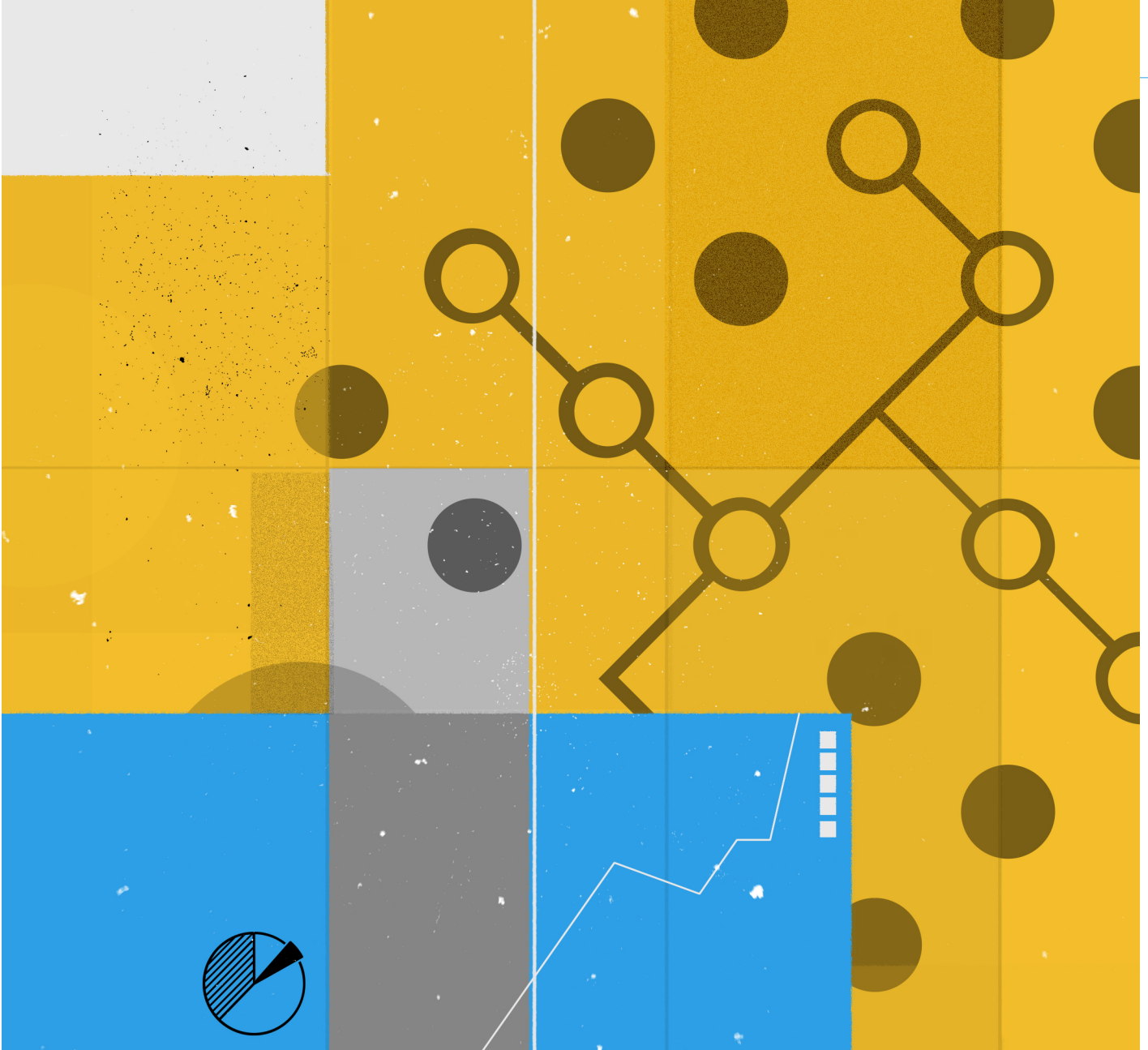
NGOS & CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS: Organizations focused on international development, health and the environment, global statistics, economic growth, and related goals

PRIVATE SECTOR: Business leaders in data and information, geospatial mapping, finance, and SDG-related sectors

A full list of participating organizations is available in Annex 1

National Reporting Platform (NRP)

BACKGROUND

THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE Development Agenda called on all United Nations member countries to report data against the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their associated 169 targets. In May 2016, the U.S. Government took stock of the government's ability to report official statistics for each of the initial indicators. The effort was led by the Office of the Chief Statistician in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which convened an Expert Group on SDG Indicators. The group determined that the U.S. has data sources for half of the SDG indicators, could develop proxy indicators for a small number, and needs to find new data sources for the rest.

8. U.S. National Statistics for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. http://sdg.data.gov

In tandem with this exercise, OMB developed a National Reporting Platform (NRP) for SDG indicators. A beta version of the platform was developed with input from the Department of State, the General Services Administration, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. OMB began using this National Reporting Platform to publish statistics on SDG indicators in September 2016.[8]

The platform will help determine how well the U.S. is working to achieve the SDGs, and can serve as an open source model to enable other countries to develop their own platforms and their statistical capacity. The National Reporting Platform is designed to promote data interoperability to support international reporting requirements. It launched as part of Data.gov, the U.S. Government's open data portal, which provides public access to nearly 200,000 datasets.

The current National Reporting Platform is an initial platform, at an early stage of development, that can begin to show how well different parts of the government are working toward the SDGs. The OMB is simultaneously running two versions of the NRP, one for the public (http://sdg.data.gov) and one for the technical community to preview indicator data (https://gsa.github.io/sdg-indicators). OMB and its collaborating agencies are actively seeking feedback on the NRP from both general and technical users.

SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES

➔ Successes

AN OPEN SOURCE PLATFORM FOCUSED ON TRANSPARENCY. Even at this initial stage, the National Reporting Platform incorporates several elements that are essential for long-term success. It is designed with streamlined navigation and intuitive organization, and provides metadata that makes the data source and other critical information about each dataset transparent. As an open source platform, it can be easily adapted by other data providers.

COORDINATION WITH INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS. In addition to serving the U.S. government and data providers, the NRP is designed to be a tool for the UN "custodian agencies" that are charged with reporting statistical data related to the SDGs. It is also designed to be a model that other countries can use to develop their own reporting platforms at a national level.

➔ Challenges

LACK OF SUFFICIENT RESOURCES. The National Reporting Platform does not yet have the resources, staff, or institutional leadership to make it sustainable over time. Such constraints have made it difficult to include additional site content and tools.

INSUFFICIENT/LIMITED CONNECTION WITH USERS. The NRP needs to better define and serve the needs of potential user groups, such as data journalists, programmers, policymakers, and federal agencies that can both provide and use NRP data. Within government, some agencies now see the NRP only as a compliance exercise, not as a tool they can use. The challenge is to communicate not only the value of the NRP, but the overall importance of statistics, to agencies that provide statistics in the course of their work but do not see it as central to their mission.

PROPOSED PRIORITIES & COMMITMENTS

1. **Provide technical capacity and support to build out the National Reporting Platform**

    The NRP has been launched through the efforts of a small team that has added this work to their other, full-time jobs. A dedicated support staff is needed to further develop and maintain the platform. A short-term solution could be to leverage temporary resources (e.g. fellowships) to provide extra capacity to the Office of the Chief Statistician. In the long term, the Office of the Chief Statistician should house a dedicated program management support team, including technical support, to advance the initiative. Other strategies can include:

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    PARTNER WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES. Building the NRP will be time-intensive at the beginning, and may require several designers and developers. Civil society organizations and private sector companies may have resources to contribute to this effort over the short term. A first step would be for the NRP's leadership to define and work with a public stakeholder group of users and advocates to improve the platform.

    LEVERAGE FEDERAL AGENCIES' EXISTING REPORTING EFFORTS AND COMMITMENTS. The Office of the Chief Statistician can coordinate the work of the NRP with the agencies whose data it draws on. For example, those agencies can link to the NRP and provide data in a form that fits with the platform's needs. The NRP can also analyze the needs of different agencies' internal reporting departments to make the case for the NRP as a centralized resource that can help all agencies with their statistical data.

2. **Identify and work with National Reporting Platform Users**

    The team that is building the National Reporting Platform needs a greater understanding of its users and their use cases to guide the development of the platform. Creating tools and functionality to make the data more accessible for potential users - including federal agencies, the UN statistics community, and a wide range of non-governmental actors including advocacy groups, journalists, nonprofits, and researchers - will make the platform more valuable. Strategies can include:

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    APPLY DESIGN THINKING APPROACHES TO UNDERSTAND GROUPS OF USERS THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS. The developers of the NRP and platform users can work together, using a user-centered process to co-create user personas and other tools for understanding users and their needs. This exercise will provide valuable input for improving user design, including making metadata useful and building sufficient capacity.

    GATHER ONGOING USER FEEDBACK FOR USABILITY IMPROVEMENTS. The National Reporting Platform can engage users in several ways - for example, through a feedback section on the website, roundtables with platform users, or through other means. A commitment to gathering and applying user feedback will enable the NRP to prioritize potential improvements such as data analysis and visualization, additional data sources, story maps, or improved search functionality. It will also help establish connections to potential users of the NRP.

3.   **Use the National Reporting Platform as a tool for improving the SDG indicators and their relevance.**

The SDG indicators will be refined over time by the UN Statistical Division, and should be developed in ways that meet the needs of participating countries, including the U.S. By organizing work on the SDGs, the NRP leadership can help articulate issues around using the indicators in the U.S. They should help ensure that the SDG indicators are relevant to the U.S. at the national and subnational level.
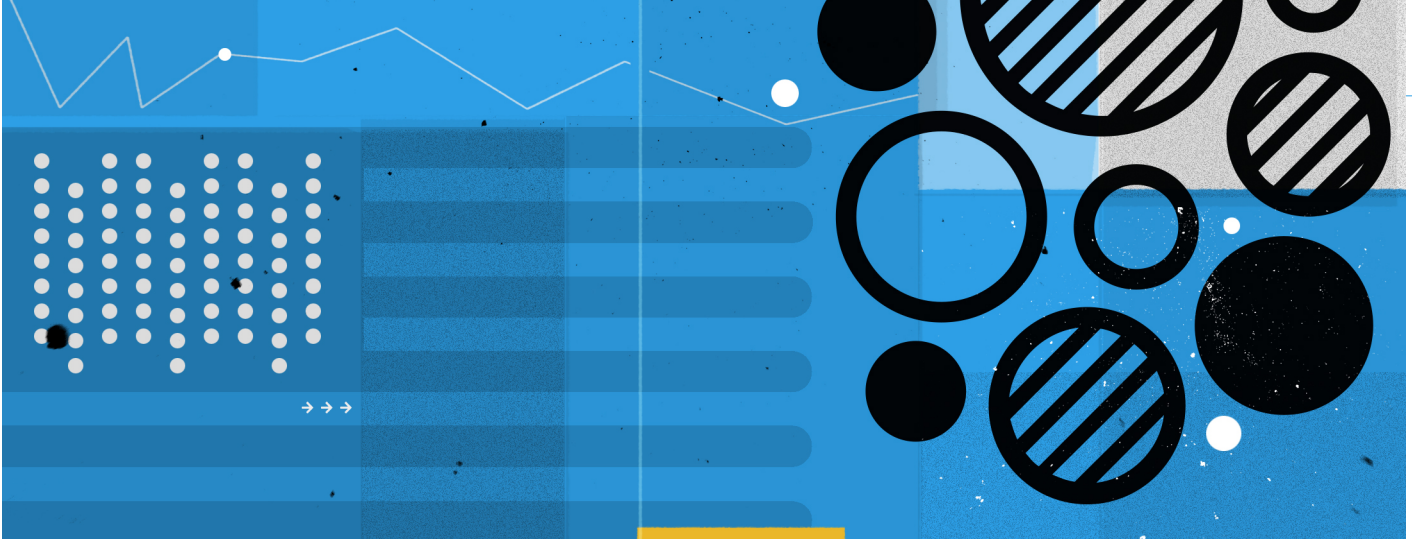
Data for Action in the U.S.

BACKGROUND

N THE U.S., a wide range of programs have used national and local data for years to help reach goals that align with the SDGs. Many programs have also explored the value of open data at the city as well as the state and national levels. Aligning these programs with the SDGs can help them succeed and help programs learn from each other by providing a common frame of reference and data comparability. Several longstanding programs, such as Measure of America and Bread for the World, are now framing their work in the context of the SDGs.

A number of programs and organizations are now working to apply the SDGs at a city level. In the U.S., for example, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), has developed a U.S. Cities SDG Index[9] that ranks the 124 largest U.S. cities by 46 indicators. The Index has identified data gaps in several areas, especially around energy use, climate, and gender equality, and found that even the highest-performing cities are only about halfway to achieving the SDGs. The SDSN is also leading a Sustainable Cities Initiative, now being piloted in San Jose, CA; Baltimore, MD and New York, NY, which are aligning their current data-driven plans with the SDGs.

Efforts like these have demonstrated several points about the use of data within the U.S. to achieve the SDGs. First, the SDGs are clearly relevant and can be localized to different cities. Second, using the SDGs as a framework will require filling major data gaps, particularly in smaller cities. And third, the SDGs can be used most effectively in cities if they build on existing strategies rather than being used to supplant them.

SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES

➜ Successes

SUCCESS IN BRINGING TOGETHER MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS AND DATA SOURCES. A number of U.S. data initiatives have successfully brought together government, civil society, and other organizations in multi-stakeholder collaborations. The Indiana Wellness Council, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has taken a multi-stakeholder approach involving the local Chamber of Commerce and health officials, while the Human Development Index in Sonoma County has connected to an existing structure of health

9. US Cities SDG Index Consultation. http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/us-cities-sdg-index-consultation

action networks and funders with many stakeholders. Initiatives like these ensure that data will be accessible and usable for policy-makers as well as statisticians and data scientists. They also make it possible to combine government data with data from businesses and other sources for a fuller picture of social, economic, and environmental issues.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL DATA PROGRAMS. Some of the most successful data-driven initiatives have been able to apply data strategies for action across a geographical area. On a regional level, for example, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in California identifies regional needs for housing, transportation, land use, and other issues. Across the U.S., the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, a project of the Urban Institute, uses administrative data to produce actionable data at a neighborhood scale in 36 cities. (Examples include permitting data, crime data, and records of 311 calls.) And internationally, Vision Zero is an ambitious program to eliminate traffic deaths. Countries around the world and communities in the U.S. are working to implement this initiative's strategies with local, comparable data.

GROWING COMMITMENT TO DATA-DRIVEN PROGRAMS IN U.S. CITIES. A growing number of U.S. cities are now using data to improve city operations, public services, and public safety in ways that align with the SDGs. They are developing and drawing on available, reliable, and accurate data at the city level, often in combination with federal data that is locally relevant. National programs like What Works Cities are providing resources and assistance to grow these programs. The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership has also become embedded in the cities where it operates and uses datasets from city agencies, making it possible to see when changes in metrics make a difference to neighborhoods.

DEMONSTRATED IMPACT FROM PUBLICIZING DATA, FINDINGS, AND RANKINGS. Several programs have used data to spur action by evaluating cities and states on their performance. In recent years, for example, Gallup has partnered with Healthways to create 60 indicators of wellbeing and conduct surveys related to those indicators, while Measure of America has studied the issue of "disconnected youth" both nationally and on the city level. The state governments of Alabama and Oklahoma began projects to improve their metrics on the Gallup/Healthways survey, and the city of Phoenix launched a series of summits when Measure of America showed a high rate of youth disconnection in that city.

→ Challenges

LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE SDGS AND HOW THEY RELATE TO DOMESTIC INITIATIVES. While several programs have demonstrated the value of applying data and indicators in the U.S., work to connect these measures to the SDGs is only beginning. It is still a challenge to align existing datasets to the SDGs at the federal, state, and local level. Many senior legislators and executive staffers are unaware of the SDGs and their value. This lack of awareness makes it difficult to track and report on progress against the SDGs in the U.S., or to use the SDGs as a framework to help compare and coordinate efforts in different U.S. cities and states.

LIMITED LOCAL CAPACITY FOR DATA-DRIVEN INITIATIVES. While a growing number of cities are working to build and apply their data resources, there is limited local, federal, or philanthropic support for those efforts. More resources will be needed to collect and apply data on SDG-related government programs. The cost of data collection and management can be a particular challenge for local governments, and especially for rural communities. While private sector companies can help, they may be reluctant to take on

additional costs without some financial return for the effort. State governments can act as coordinators through organizations such as NASCIO (the National Association of State CIOs), but are not likely to provide operational help or funding to city data programs.

PROPOSED PRIORITIES & COMMITMENTS

1. Align existing data-driven initiatives with the SDGs at all levels of government

While a large amount of local, state, and federal data is being gathered, little is aligned to the SDGs. Local governments may not see the value of aligning data with the SDGs, and have no funding or other incentives to do so. The lack of alignment makes it difficult to compare datasets and limits the ability to track, and hence achieve, the SDGs. A top priority is to create incentives for data programs to align with the SDGs. Steps can include the following:

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SUPPORT CONTINUED WORK BY THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK. The SDSN's work in U.S. cities is an effective, direct effort to connect U.S. city data-driven programs with the SDGs. The Sustainable Cities Initiative can grow after initial work in its three pilot cities, and the U.S. Cities SDG Index can be applied now as a tool to identify and fill data gaps.

PROVIDE FUNDING INCENTIVES TO CITIES AND STATES TO ALIGN DATA WITH THE SDGS. The federal government could create a competition, for example, with a pool of money funded by government, businesses, or philanthropy. Federal grants to cities and states for data programs could also include a requirement to report in the context of the SDGs.

DEFINE AND PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF LOCAL ALIGNMENT WITH THE SDGS. By mapping existing measures to the SDGs, cities can develop shared frameworks for understanding and acting on common issues. The focus should be on opportunities to generate, share, and apply data, rather than using data as a metric of success or failure.

ENGAGE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN SUPPORTING THE ALIGNMENT EFFORT. These can include the National Council of Mayors, National Council of State Legislators, grant managers in the federal government, grantees (state associations), and NASCIO. A valuable first step would be to create an inventory of organizations and programs that are now working to align the SDGs with local goals.

2. Educate federal staffers about the SDGs

In general, senior legislative and executive branch staff lack an understanding of the SDGs and their relevance to priorities they care about. As a result, there is a lack of public awareness and support for the SDGs at the federal level that impacts the state and local levels as well. One solution can be to develop a program to explain and promote the value of the SDGs to government officials. This can include:

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MAPPING SDGS TO SPECIFIC CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET LINE ITEMS

MAPPING SDGS TO RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS/OFFICES and programmatic initiatives, beginning with those that are priorities for the incoming administration

INSERTING AN SDG "CURRICULUM" into orientation materials for incoming political appointees and legislators

An education and awareness initiative could including partnering with nonprofits (e.g. the Mercatus Institute, Partnership for Public Service, National Academy for Public Administration), academia, and businesses that are using the SDGs. Resources within government could include incoming transition teams, Congressional leaders, and the Congressional Transparency Caucus.

3. Implement the SDG framework across the federal government

The SDG framework is not tied to monitoring and decision-making at the federal level. This is a missed opportunity to use the SDGs to help coordinated work between federal agencies, and between federal, state, and local programs. Possible solutions include the following.

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PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO FEDERAL AGENCIES ON ALIGNING THEIR DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT WITH THE SDGS. This could be in the form of a guidance memo from the Office of Management and Budget or other directive. Any such guidance should emphasize the value of using the SDGs as a common framework for existing data collection, rather than presenting it as an additional data requirement. For example, in areas such as health where the government may now track hundreds of metrics, a focus on the key indicators developed through the SDGs could help agencies prioritize their work.

COORDINATE EXISTING FEDERAL DATA PORTALS WITH THE SDGS. Data.gov, the central U.S. portal for open government data, is contributing to the SDG framework through the National Reporting Platform. Data.gov's datasets span a wide range of topics relevant to the SDGs, and mapping those datasets to the SDGs can be an important starting point for federal data as a whole. In addition, Performance.gov, which gives the public access to data on the performance of U.S. Government agencies, can be used to provide information on agency performance against relevant SDGs. The Partnership for Resilience and Preparedness (PREP), managed by the federal government and the World Resources Institute, provides a platform for climate data, which is relevant to several SDGs.

ESTABLISH THE SDGS AS A CROSS-AGENCY PRIORITY (CAP) GOAL. By establishing the SDGs as a CAP goal, the federal government can emphasize the importance of the SDGs for all federal departments and agencies. CAP goals are also tracked on Performance.gov, giving them a platform for public accountability.

ENLIST BUSINESSES AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN ACHIEVING THE SDGS IN THE U.S. Businesses around the world are already incorporating the SDGs into their planning, and civil society organizations support data-driven programs that align well with the SDGs. By enlisting their help through convenings and partnerships, the U.S. Government can help ensure the progress of U.S. programs to achieve the SDGs and measure progress against them.
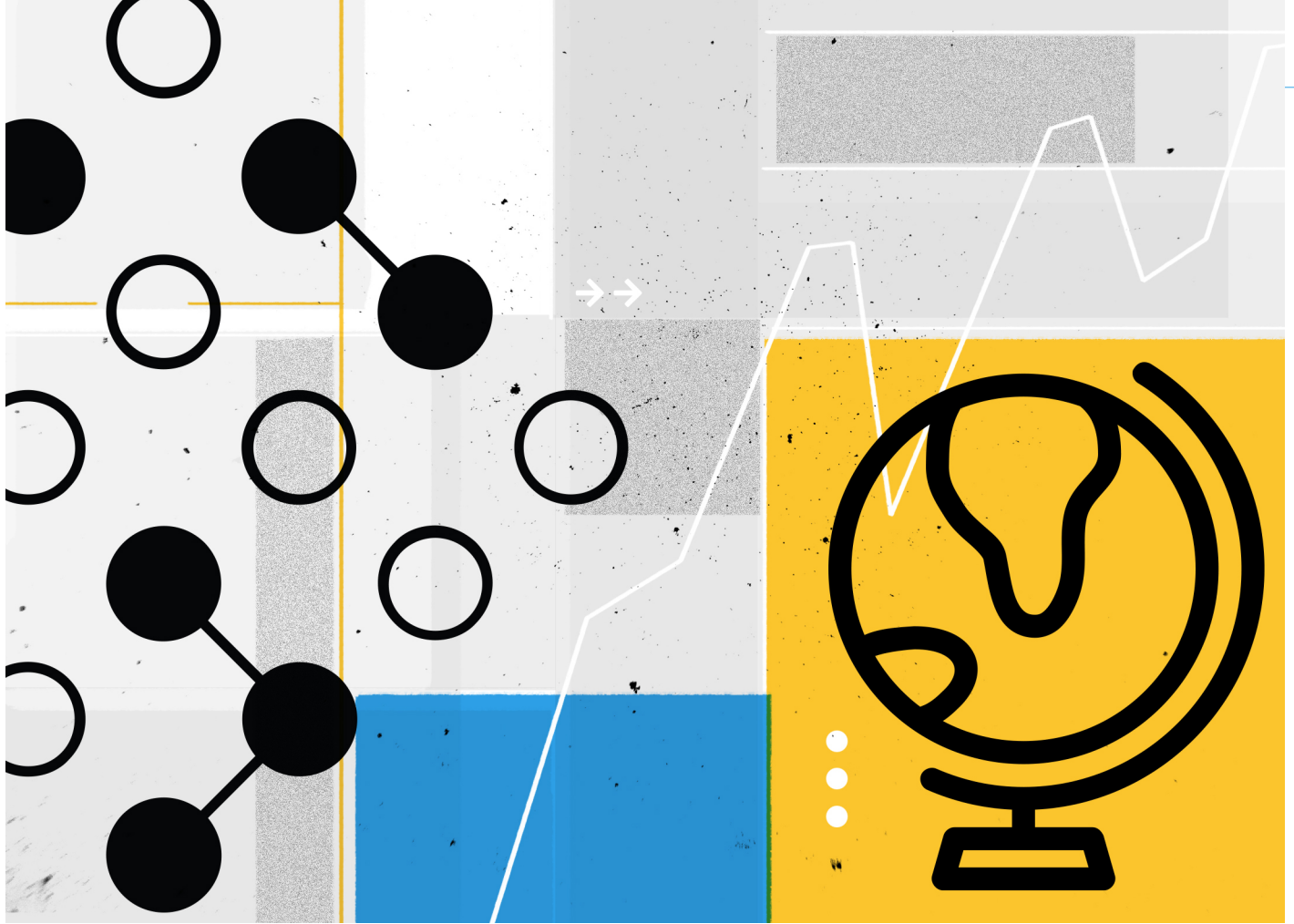
Supporting Global Efforts

BACKGROUND

AS A LONG-TIME PROPONENT of global sustainable development, the U.S. is now increasing its focus on using data to achieve the SDGs abroad. The U.S. can work with other countries to help build out their data infrastructure and share global learned lessons. In addition, better quality data can help U.S. international development programs be more efficient and targeted. Furthermore, the U.S. can learn strategies from other countries to improve data management and utilization around major global trends.

At every level, evidence-informed decision-making is essential to making the right investments. It can improve national and local government performance: Governments can use data to set measurable goals and timelines, align budgets with these needs, and assess the impact of programs. Citizens can use data both to hold their governments accountable and to make important life decisions. Businesses can apply data for innovation, efficiency, and entrepreneurship.

The U.S. can help other countries develop data for all these purposes. The U.S. government has supported statistics and data development in other countries for many years. The U.S. also supports other countries' work on the SDGs through a variety of

10. GPSDD Data Collaboratives.
http://www.data4sdgs.org/data-collabratives

international and localized efforts. Several of these have been early successes that can be a model for future work.

As one core commitment, the U.S. supports the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD), which now has 180 partners and has become a major network for work on the SDGs. The Global Partnership aims to broaden the collection, analysis, use, and release of data to achieve and measure the Global Goals. The U.S. is also a founding member of the Open Government Partnership, which brings together countries and international groups for programs that include a focus on data and the SDGs.

SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES

→ Successes

COUNTRY-LEVEL EFFORTS. Each country has different challenges and opportunities for achieving the SDGs. Programs led by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, USAID, and the U.S. Census Bureau (through its International Programs Center for Technical Assistance) all provide technical assistance and capacity building for national statistical offices. The GPSDD has now worked to develop Data Roadmaps in Colombia, Kenya, the Philippines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania. Other efforts bring donors and civil society together around data-driven projects. PEPFAR and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) have launched a Data Lab in Tanzania that can serve as a model for other countries.

Many successful country-level programs begin with high-level champions for data resources on the national and subnational level. These data champions can help show how data can be linked to concrete programs and tangible results, taking an approach that begins with community priorities rather than donor priorities. They can also help establish multi-stakeholder governance structures to encourage collaboration between different levels of government or across sectors. A National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) can be an effective tool for organizing this work.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES. On a technical level, programs are successful when they make data available and accessible to all types of users rather than only those with advanced technical skills. These kinds of programs encourage citizen and business input, making it possible to use open data to drive development. Business and civil society engagement, specifically on technical initiatives, has helped improve and accelerate data-driven efforts in many countries. Official Data Compacts between governments, donors, and other stakeholders can provide a context for this work.

SECTORAL AND THEMATIC INITIATIVES. Sectoral approaches to data effectively bring together stakeholders and resources to address longstanding global problems. Examples include GODAN (Global Open Data on Agriculture and Nutrition), the Open Contracting Partnership, the Health Data Collaborative, and Data2X around gender data. A full list of data collaboratives can be found on the Global Data Partnership website.[10]

ACTIVE DEVELOPER COMMUNITIES. These communities utilize data for a range of purposes, including providing information on services, building IT skills, and mapping areas hit by disasters. Examples include OpenStreetMap, Humanitarian OpenStreetMap, and the Youth Mappers who work with USAID and other organizations.

11. Millennium Challenge Corporation, Factsheet: MCC and PEPFAR Partner to Invest in Data Collaboratives for Local Impact. https://www.mcc.gov/initiatives/initiative/mcc-pepfar-partnership

→ Challenges

LACK OF COORDINATION. A lack of coordination among global players and between national and subnational levels within countries leads to duplication of programs, overwhelmed local staff, or projects focused on conflicting goals. Data programs may end up being driven by donors who may not have a full understanding of country needs. A disconnect between the policy and technical communities can result in data programs that don't meet users' needs.

INSUFFICIENT LOCAL TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO DEVELOP AND/OR MAINTAIN INITIATIVES. Many countries lack the financial and technical support to build data capacity, especially at the subnational level, and potential data users may also be hindered by a lack of resources and poor data literacy.

INSTITUTIONAL OBSTACLES. In many countries, there are no clear incentives to develop data policies, build capacity, and open up government data, nor penalties for failing to do so. On the contrary, politicians may be concerned about what opening the data would reveal, and see a benefit in keeping government data hidden. An overriding challenge is to persuade key stakeholders that the value of improved data resources will outweigh the cost and effort of producing them. Subnational data champions and committed stakeholders are needed to develop a sense of ownership over data initiatives.

PROPOSED PRIORITIES & COMMITMENTS

1. Support country-led initiatives and data collaboratives for local impact

The U.S. can take several approaches to help individual countries achieve the SDGs through data initiatives.

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ESTABLISH DATA COMPACTS. These compacts, building on a model developed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, are formal agreements between host governments and donors to align and harmonize data investments for real time dynamic data. Data Compacts can be designed to align with priorities identified in the SDG Data Roadmaps, National Statistical Development Strategies, and/or national or subnational data plans organized around sectors or the SDGs.

SUPPORT COUNTRY-LEVEL DATA LABS. These labs can follow the model established in Tanzania through a partnership between PEPFAR and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.[11] Data Labs bring together data scientists and public-private partnerships to build capacity and use data for decision-making and to drive action locally and nationally. They can catalyze, champion, and demonstrate effective uses of data for sustainable development.

SUPPORT OPEN DATA POLICIES AND PROGRAMS. Working with the Open Government Partnership and other international collaborations, the U.S. can help support national open data policies and programs to make more and better data available for public use at all levels of government.

2. **Continue participating in global partnerships and initiatives**

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12. U.S. Department of State, Harnessing the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development: U.S. Government Commitments and Collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247419.htm#sthash.2YM214yn.dpuf

CONTINUE SUPPORT FOR THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The GPSDD is mobilizing a range of data producers and users, including governments, companies, civil society, data scientists, and international organizations, to harness the Data Revolution to achieve and measure the Global Goals. As a member of the GPSDD, the United States should continue its commitment to the Partnership and its work, including the development of SDG Data Roadmaps in participating countries.

DEVELOP AND COORDINATE CHANNELS FOR EXCHANGE BETWEEN NATIONAL STATISTICAL ORGANIZATIONS (NSOs) TO IMPROVE AND PROMOTE BEST PRACTICES IN DATA COLLECTION AND USE. Through the International Programs Center for Technical Assistance (IPCTA), the U.S. Census Bureau has assisted in the collection, processing, analysis, dissemination, and use of statistics with counterpart governments in over 100 countries to increase the quality of information about country capacity and needs.[12] The U.S. has an opportunity to expand and formalize these efforts and coordinate them with similar work being done by the Millennium Challenge Corporation and USAID, to provide technical assistance and training to build the capacity of NSOs around the world.

DEVELOP SECTOR-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES TO CREATE DATA RESOURCES THAT BENEFIT ALL COUNTRIES. The success of GODAN, the Open Contracting Partnership, and similar initiatives around health and gender data have demonstrated the value of international efforts around specific kinds of data and sectoral goals. Additional initiatives around other key sectors relevant to the SDGs, such as climate change, can have a similar positive impact.

3. **Develop a set of case studies to demonstrate how international data efforts can achieve specific SDGs.**

Case studies can play a critical role in demonstrating the value of data for the SDGs to donors, national and subnational governments, and civil society. The U.S. can help develop and publicize positive examples of how data can be applied to achieving SDGs and the impact it can have.

Cross-Cutting Themes

In developing the U.S. Data Roadmap for Sustainable Development over the next several months, stakeholders may want to consider a number of overarching recommendations that emerged in the Roundtable.

CONNECT GOALS AND DATA ACROSS LOCAL AND NATIONAL BOUNDARIES

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LOCALIZE THE SDGS FOR THE GREATEST RELEVANCE AND IMPACT. Each SDG is not equally relevant to all cities or countries, and the SDGs may have different implications depending on the local environment. Governments at every level will need to customize their approaches to defining goals and developing programs to achieve them.

ENSURE GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS. The SDG framework can be utilized by city governments as well as at a national level. It is important to identify opportunities at all levels and potential connections between city, state, and national-level data to share learned lessons and data for consistency and quality.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS CAN HELP ACHIEVE THE SDGS. New partnerships and initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, can play a critical role in helping coordinate initiatives that connect subnational and national governments. The U.S. should support these types of efforts as a key stakeholder.

BUILD DATA RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY

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ENGAGE WITH BUSINESSES, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND ACADEMIA TO IMPROVE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE, COLLECTION, COMPLETENESS, AND QUALITY. In addition to providing much-needed resources for data management, non-governmental partners can help fill data gaps in key areas. There is clear value in using sources beyond government data for the SDGs, assuming the data is carefully vetted before it is combined with conventional government data sources.

ADDRESS BANDWIDTH CONSTRAINTS BY LEVERAGING EXISTING EXPERTISE, RESOURCES, MODELS AND BEST PRACTICES. National statistical organizations, city and state governments, and other institutions responsible for data management have limited capacity to take on new data projects. Adding measurement of the SDGs could be seen as a burden by many government agencies. For initiatives related to the SDGs to succeed, it will be important to leverage existing resources, avoid duplication of effort, and add new resources where necessary.

APPLY MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES AND PERSPECTIVES. Implementing the SDGs requires people with technical backgrounds, policymakers, and citizens to work together. For the U.S. National Reporting Platform, for example, it will be essential to connect the data scientists building the platform with the policy teams that must use their data.

STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL AWARENESS, LEADERSHIP AND CAPABILITIES

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IDENTIFY AND ENCOURAGE DATA CHAMPIONS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. Dedicated individuals who understand data needs and the SDG framework are critical in conceptualizing, socializing, and implementing these programs.

INSTITUTIONALIZE DATA INITIATIVES FOR THE SDGS AND MAKE THEM SUSTAINABLE. While data champions can initiate work on the SDGs, institutional programs are needed to sustain it. Often, government data initiatives may lose momentum in the transition from one mayor to the next, or one national administration to the next. City, state, and national commitments to using the SDGs need to be institutionalized in order to be durable. Governments at all levels can also provide initiatives, including funding, recognition, and career advancement, for utilizing the SDG framework and reporting results.

ENSURE BUY-IN AND ALIGNMENT WITH CURRENT POLICIES. Strategies are needed to persuade policymakers that the SDGs are a critical tool to achieve policy goals. Both in the U.S. and other countries, it will be valuable to find areas of commonality between the SDGs and ongoing data initiatives for health, education, nutrition, energy, and other areas. This process can also help prioritize SDG-driven initiatives based on policy considerations, data availability, and other factors.

13. Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://sustainable development.un.org/post2015/transforming ourworld

Conclusion

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The Sustainable Development Goals offer an unprecedented opportunity to address pressing global challenges from an evidence-based perspective. The Data Revolution, in turn, can provide knowledge, insight, and tools for progress that have never before been available. The U.S. Government has a unique leadership opportunity to help ensure that data is collected, maintained, and utilized to help achieve these Global Goals both at home and abroad.

To do so, the U.S. Government will need an ambitious, detailed Data Roadmap and the commitment to follow it. We hope that this report is a useful beginning to develop that Roadmap over the next several months. The stakes are high. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development captures the urgency and scope of the challenge:

> "The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today's younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations. We have mapped the road to sustainable development; it will be for all of us to ensure that the journey is successful and its gains irreversible." [13]

U.S. SDG DATA REVOLUTION ROADMAP
Rountable Participating Organizations
DECEMBER 2016

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ACCENTURE is a global professional services company that works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders.

AIDDATA is a research and innovation lab at the College of William & Mary that seeks to improve development outcomes by making development finance data more accessible and actionable.

THE BALTIMORE NEIGHBORHOOD INDICATORS ALLIANCE-JACOB FRANCE INSTITUTE (BNIA-JFI) at the University of Baltimore is a nonprofit organization whose core mission is to provide open access to meaningful, reliable, and actionable data about, and for, the City of Baltimore and its communities.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD is a collective Christian voice urging the nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad.

THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT is an independent, nonprofit policy research organization that is dedicated to reducing global poverty and inequality and to making globalization work for the poor.

THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (CIPE) strengthens democracy around the globe through private enterprise and market-oriented reform.

THE CENTER FOR OPEN DATA ENTERPRISE is an independent nonprofit organization that develops smarter open data strategies for governments, businesses, and other nonprofits by focusing on data users.

COLLABORATEUP advises businesses, governments, and nonprofits on how to work together to solve big problems.

DEVELOPMENT GATEWAY is an international nonprofit organization that provides Web-based platforms to make aid and development efforts more effective around the world.

ESRI pursues mapping and spatial analysis for understanding our world with visionary products and services that define the science of geographic information systems (GIS).

FOUNDATION CENTER is a leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide.

GALLUP delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems.

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DATA is a multi-stakeholder network of more than 150 data champions working to galvanize political commitments, align strategic priorities, foster collaboration, spur innovations, build capacity and enhance trust in the booming data ecosystems of the 21st century.

THE IBM CENTER FOR THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT connects research to practice, applying scholarship to real world issues and decisions for government.

KPMG is a global network of professional firms providing audit, tax and advisory services.

THE MASTERCARD CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH invests in research & programs that advance equitable economic growth and connects academics, practitioners, governments and businesses to catalyze change.

MEASURE OF AMERICA's mission is to provide easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being and opportunity in America and to stimulate fact-based dialogue about the issues we all care about.

MICROSOFT develops, manufactures, licenses, supports and sells computer software, services, devices and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION (MCC) is a United States Government agency whose mission is to reduce global poverty through the promotion of sustainable economic growth.

OPEN DATA WATCH provides information and assistance to guide investments and planning of open data systems in developing countries and their partner agencies and reports on their progress.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY is a research and teaching institution located in Stanford, California.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK (SDSN) mobilizes scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector in support of sustainable development problem solving at local, national, and global scales. The SDSN works closely with United Nations agencies, multilateral financing institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE's mission is to shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere.

THE U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA)'s mission is to deliver the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to government and the American people.

THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential.

THE VOLCKER ALLIANCE is a nonprofit organization launched to address the challenge of effective execution of public policies and to help rebuild public trust in government.

THE WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC) is the President's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials.

THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET's mission is to serve the President of the United States in implementing his vision across the Executive Branch.

THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY's mission is to provide the President and his senior staff with accurate, relevant, and timely scientific and technical advice on all matters of consequence; to ensure that the policies of the Executive Branch are informed by sound science; and to ensure that the scientific and technical work of the Executive Branch is properly coordinated so as to provide the greatest benefit to society.

THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION is a nonpartisan, private charitable foundation that advances ideas and supports institutions to promote a better world.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE is a global research organization that works closely with leaders to turn big ideas into action to sustain our natural resources—the foundation of economic opportunity and human well-being.

U.S. SDG Data Revolution Roadmap

Roundtable Report

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THE CENTER FOR
OPEN DATA ENTERPRISE

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DATA

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