The report was prepared by the Secretariat of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

PARIS21 promotes the better use and production of statistics throughout the developing world. Since its establishment in 1999, PARIS21 has successfully developed a worldwide network of statisticians, policy makers, analysts, and development practitioners committed to evidence-based decision making. With the main objective to achieve national and international development goals and reduce poverty in low and middle income countries, PARIS21 facilitates statistical capacity development, advocates for the integration of reliable data in decision making, and co-ordinates donor support to statistics.

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INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

For countries meeting this September at the first High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development since the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) in 2015, the 2019 Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) should be a wake-up call.

In 2015, when 193 countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they committed to a project of unprecedented ambition to create a more prosperous, sustainable and equitable world. They rallied to a central tenet, “leave no one behind”, pledging to work together to support development by all, for all.

To “leave no-one behind”, we must first be able to count everyone. This assumes that all countries are able to collect, analyse and use the data necessary to understand who their citizens are, including the most marginalised.

Agenda 2030 calls for an unprecedented mobilisation of global capital for sustainable development. The AAAA seeks to address this, providing a new global framework for financing sustainable development by aligning all financing flows and policies with economic, social and environmental priorities.

Few of those financial resources are directed to strengthening national statistical capacity. Promoting an evidence-based approach to development and improving monitoring, as advocated for by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, will require a bigger effort, but the benefits in terms of more impactful, efficient and cost-effective development will be enormous.

PRESS 2019 is a detailed analysis of the international community’s support to statistics to date. This year’s report notes that, while the adoption of the SDG monitoring framework has driven an increase in investments in statistics to USD 689 million, this is only around half of the sum needed to make national statistics fit for purpose under Agenda 2030. As of today, we only have available data for 20% of SDG indicators.

How can we create meaningful development policies if we do not even know who our citizens are, let alone what their needs are or how those policies will impact them?

The good news is that, in global terms, USD 600 million is not much. Still, more finances alone will not be enough. As articulated by the Bern Network on Financing for Development Data, a global, multi-stakeholder alliance is needed to ensure the quality of financing for development data, including better identification of needs, improved investment proposals, better co-ordination at the country level and linked domestic and external financial support for low-capacity countries.

Agenda 2030 was created on the premise that the myriad challenges that we face—from extreme poverty to inequality to climate change—cannot be solved individually. PRESS 2019 reminds us that quality data, while it may not always grab the headlines, must underpin development policy. To get that quality data, we need to improve the basic building blocks of data systems.

A renewed global effort is needed to put national statistical systems at the centre of sustainable development, to 2030 and beyond.

Thomas Gass,
Ambassador, Assistant Director General
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC
South Cooperation
(Former) Member of the UN Secretary-General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development

This introduction represents the views of Thomas Gass and is independent of the position of the authors of the report and of PARIS21.
01. OVERVIEW
01. OVERVIEW

The Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) 2019 highlights an increase in investments to statistics, largely driven by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) monitoring framework, but notes that current levels are still only half of what they need to be to support SDG monitoring. Official development assistance (ODA) to data and statistics reached USD 689 million, representing an increase from 0.33% to 0.34% of total development support, a positive signal.

“FUNDING TO DATA AND STATISTICS INCREASED CONSIDERABLY. BUT WE STILL NEED TO ACCELERATE THE PACE.”

While the increase in funding is encouraging, global results remain insufficient and far behind the estimated target (0.7% of ODA) for the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) (PARIS21, 2019a). As of today, only 89 National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), mostly in high and upper-middle income countries, are fully funded. While considerable progress has been made in funding to statistics in the past ten years, it has not always been equitable. Improvements have been uneven across regions and domains of statistics. With the 2020 census round and the World Data Forum approaching, it is imperative for the statistical community to advocate for more and better funding to statistics.

PRESS 2019 also reveals that an increasing share of projects target gender statistics as a component. Around 11% of commitments to statistics from bilateral donors between 2015 and 2017 targeted gender data, comparing to a mere 3% in 2010-2012. Nonetheless, the development community needs to work together to sustain this trend. Currently, only 14 of the 54 gender-specific SDG indicators are produced with sufficient regularity and are based on conceptually clear and internationally established methodologies (UN Women, 2019).

Since its adoption by the UN General Assembly in 2017, the SDG monitoring framework has propelled funding to statistics substantially. Data show that about 15% of the projects committed in 2017 are associated with SDG monitoring. This amount is similar to the increase in the total amount from 2016. As SDG-related projects roll out, results can already be observed. The number of SDG indicators without defined methodology and available data has decreased from 88 (IAEG, 2017) to 34\(^1\). The number of indicators with sufficient, regularly produced data has also increased from 89 to 103 during the same period. Most recent data also show that a record high of 125 countries have a national statistical plan under implementation (DESA, 2019).

The implementation of the SDG monitoring framework also brings uncertainty. In theory, the basic building blocks of national statistical systems would allow us to track progress on most of the 232 SDG indicators (see Box 1). However, even the national statistical offices with high capacity are familiar with only about 40% of the SDG indicators. Producing statistical data for over 200 indicators puts a huge burden on countries, especially those with low and vulnerable capacity. The excessive focus on results and SDG monitoring could further weaken already struggling national statistical systems (The Bern Network, 2019).

“The adoption of the SDGs has incentivised donors to increase funding. It has also increased the risk of a further divergence between global monitoring requirements and national statistical capacity.”

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Funding data and statistics does not necessarily translate into quick and highly visible development outcomes. It is, therefore, no surprise that donors and aid agencies that are under pressure to demonstrate development results within strict time-frames often choose more visible options. This focus on measurable and rather immediate results has indeed accelerated the progress of capacity development in certain areas. After starting to monitor statistical legislation for the SDGs, for example, 31 countries improved from not having a statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS) to having such legislation in 2016-2018\(^2\). However, most statistical capacity programmes do not generate immediate outcomes and may thus become less prioritised by donors.

Although total funding to statistics has increased in past decade, it remains unclear whether funding has translated efficiently into national statistical capacity. The World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI)\(^3\) score has not increased substantially in recent years, despite considerable efforts. This could be explained by the fact that although funding has increased, it remains insufficient and imbalanced. In addition, donor funding may not always translate to national capacity as it does not align with national priorities. Of the 112 national statistical plans under implementation, only 89 are fully funded, despite the increase in funding to statistics.

With the surge of funding to statistics and the diversification of donor pools, it is possible – but challenging – to both monitor the SDGs and reach national targets. One approach to address this could include a global alliance for more and better financing for development data should work to support better identification of needs, improve investment proposals, promote better co-ordination at the country level and link domestic and external financial support for low-capacity countries. The alliance could improve the distribution, sequencing and monitoring of support for development data. It could also help to bring in new partners and ways of delivering support.

Possible co-ordination mechanisms involving a code of good practice, funding transparency and country compacts for support to statistics could be applied. Such a mechanism could help to fund a multi-year joint response to close the most urgent data gaps among the least developed countries, building on national assessment tools and investment proposals. Donors could also sign up for an international code of practice to help ensure coherence and alignment with national priorities. It could, in addition, support seeding and blend-financing for transformative data architecture and service delivery applications.

The PRESS report provides the basic foundations for improving funding to development data. In the following sections it describes in detail the methodology and key findings by recipients and providers of development co-operation.

### BOX 1. WHAT ARE DEVELOPMENT DATA? WHAT ARE THE BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS?

Development data are all data that can be used to inform development policy-making, set development targets, measure progress towards them and implement development goals. They include both official and unofficial statistics, produced by national statistical offices but also by other government agencies, development partners, private businesses, NGOs and others.

The “basic building blocks” refer to a subset of this data universe and include data produced primarily within a national statistical system. They include at a minimum civil registration and vital statistics, basic administrative data (welfare, tax, health and educational record systems), basic economic statistics (e.g. price data), census data, and data from key surveys (households, establishments and agriculture). In order to produce these data with sufficient quality, frequency and timeliness, production systems within national statistical systems need to be both adequately resourced and main-streamed.

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\(^2\) SDG indicator 17.18.2: Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

\(^3\) One might argue that the measurement of the SCI could favour statistical outputs and production over other aspects. Nevertheless, its universal coverage for decades allows for the evaluation of the efficiency of statistical support provided to a country. A new measurement, the Statistical Performance Index, has been developed by the World Bank to take a broader perspective on capacity.
02. METHODOLOGY
02. METHODOLOGY

The Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) exercise is conducted annually to report on trends in support to statistics. The current report updates the results from PRESS 2019 for the years 2006-2017, with data from the Credit Report System (CRS) and a PARIS21 survey for 2019. To ensure comparability over time, the methodology is applied retrospectively for all years. This section reviews the methodology.\(^5\)

The PRESS methodology uses a text-mining technique to identify statistics projects in the CRS database that are not currently labelled as ‘support to statistics’. This approach avoids counting projects from Development Assistance Committee members twice, since CRS is the only data source used by them.

The aim of PRESS is to provide a full picture of international support to statistics. To this end, the report draws on three distinct data sources. The first is the Office for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) CRS (see Box 2), which records data from OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and some non-DAC donors and provides a comprehensive account of official development assistance.

Donors report specific codes for the sector targeted by their aid activity – statistical capacity building (SCB) is designated by the sector code 16062. However, when SCB is a component of a larger project, it is not identified by this code, which causes the CRS figures to underestimate actual levels of support for international aid. PARIS21 seeks to reduce this downward bias by searching project descriptions in the CRS for terms indicating a component of SCB; this comprises the second data source. The methodology for this new source is presented in Box 2.

Third, the PARIS21 Secretariat supplements these data with an online questionnaire, which is completed by a global network of respondents. The questionnaire covers a subset of the variables collected in the CRS, as well as some additional variables specific to SCB. Responding to the questionnaire is voluntary and offers an opportunity for actors to share information about their statistical activities. Respondents are from countries that do not report to the CRS, as well as from multilateral institutions with large portfolios of statistical projects who have requested to report directly to the PARIS21 Secretariat.

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\(^4\) PRESS exclusively reports on years in which data from both the CRS and the PRESS questionnaire are available to facilitate comparisons over time. Use of the CRS, which reports 2017 commitments in January 2019, results in a two-year time-lag in PRESS reporting. The current issue, published in 2019, therefore reports on commitments to statistics up to 2017.

\(^5\) The methodology used to compile PRESS data is described in the 2009 PRESS methodology report at www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/PRESS2009-methodology.pdf.
BOX 2. IDENTIFYING COMMITMENTS TO STATISTICS IN THE CRS

The Creditor Reporting System (CRS) is the official source of information on aid commitments from OECD member countries, as well as several multilateral organisations. Established in 1967, the CRS aid activity database has become the internationally recognised source of data on the geographical and sectoral breakdown of aid, widely used by governments, organisations and researchers active in the field of development. PRESS draws on the official development assistance portion of the database, which includes both geographic and sectoral information on projects, to identify aid targeting statistics. The CRS also includes data on other official flows and export credits.

To find statistics components within project descriptions in the CRS database, users can apply two filters: 1) a set of 150 keyword sequences (and their permutations) in three languages; and 2) 20 sector codes to control for context. More than 90% of project descriptions are in English, French and Spanish, so these languages have been selected as filters.

Keyword sequences indicating a statistics component are identified in a three-stage process. First, project descriptions are split by language; commonly used words such as ‘the’, ‘is’, and ‘at’ are ignored; and the remaining words are reduced to their word stem. Second, for each language, word sequences (such as ‘statist capac’ for statistical capacity) are identified as being related to statistics if they are at least four times more likely to appear in projects labelled as ‘support to statistics’ (designated by purpose code 16062) than in those not labelled as such. Third, word sequences are verified manually by analysing the corresponding sentences.

Limiting the analysis to 20 sector codes allows further context-specific control. For instance, projects in the mineral prospection and exploration sector use geospatial data from field surveys, but do not contribute to a country’s statistical capacity. The analysis therefore only considers sector codes that are frequently reported together with sector code 16062 for statistics.

Starting from the 2018 round of reporting, reporters will be allowed to assign more than one purpose code for each project, as well as the budget allocation to each purpose. This will allow a more precise estimate of total support to statistics. PARIS21 is also working with DAC members to modify and improve the CRS purpose code definitions for statistical development.
03. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM PRESS 2019
03. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM PRESS 2019

1. The 2019 PRESS updates figures on aid to statistics for 2006-2017. This update is based on newly available data from an annual donor survey and the 2019 CRS round.

2. Support to statistics increased substantially in 2017. In 2017, developing countries received commitments to statistical development of about USD 689 million (see Figure 2). This marks an 11% increase from 2016 and led to an increase in the share of official development assistance dedicated to statistics, from 0.30% in 2015 to 0.34% in 2017. This share is expected to increase with more projects being reported in the next round.

It is important to stress that the current level of commitments remain insufficient to meet the needs of recipient countries and to implement the Cape Town Global Action Plan. With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda and emergence of philanthropic donors, more contributions are expected in the next few years.

While international support has remained stable in recent years, some visible fluctuations can be observed. The increase in this year can be explained by the adoption of the SDG indicator framework. Indeed, 15% of this year’s projects can be linked to support to SDG monitoring. It is important to monitor the effect of global SDG monitoring, not only on funding, but also on national statistical capacity.

Figure 2. Global commitments to statistics: total amount by data source

![Figure 2: Global commitments to statistics: total amount by data source](Link to Figure Data: PRESS 2019)
3. The reported alignment of commitments to national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS) remains at a high level (see Box 3 and Figure 3). However, many respondents still choose “do not know” when asked whether the projects were aligned with an NSDS. This could be explained by the fact that statistical bodies are often located in different entities of the executive (e.g., national planning secretariats, aid and co-operation agencies) and are not always involved in current statistical discussions. With more projects containing statistical components, it has become increasingly difficult for a single reporter in a donor organisation to identify how projects align in different sectors.

Figure 3. Alignment of projects with national strategies for the development of statistics

Box 3. Donor Coordination Through National Strategy For the Development of Statistics?

A National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), which establishes priority statistical programs and activities, is a valuable coordination mechanism that informs how national statistical systems are to be financed. As it responds to national data demands arising from major policies such as the national development plan, it provides for a robust framework for investment in data and statistics. Through a consultative process with different actors, the NSDS, together with sectoral statistical plans, aims to be a multi-donor focal point for funding statistics, with counterpart domestic funding. This is largely due to strong government ownership in the development of the NSDS which serves as basis for donor funding.

The SDG indicator 17.18.2 shows that, as of February 2019, 129 countries reported to the SDG survey that they are currently implementing an NSDS. However, only 89 countries indicated that their plan is fully funded. 13 countries have improved from not having an NSDS under implementation and fully funded to having one in past 2 years. Global support need to accelerate for sub-Saharan Africa, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and the least developed countries (LDCs), where half of plans are not funded. Only 10% of fragile states have fully funded and implemented NSDSs and only two out of nine small island developing states have fully funded NSDSs.

For details of the status of NSDSs in specific countries, see the most recent PARIS21 publication, NSDS Progress Report, at www.paris21.org/nsds-status.
4. Multilateral, country-specific assistance remains the most common way for donors to channel support to countries. In terms of total commitments, multilateral donors have provided the most support since 2009 (see Figure 4). In 2012-2017, the share of country-specific aid remained stable over the 55%. Unallocated commitments usually support regional programmes, such as the World Bank’s regional surveys about harmonising and modernising living conditions; the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) multi-regional technical assistance; and the Food and Agriculture Organization’s AGRIS (Agricultural Information Management Standards) surveys, funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

Figure 4. Allocation of aid to statistics

![Figure 4](Link to Figure Data: PRESS 2019_Figure Data)

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1 In this context, multilateral support refers to support coming from multilateral institutions; country-specific assistance refers to projects for which there is a single country recipient.

2 The interested reader is referred to Open Data Watch’s Inventory of Financial Instruments, which provides further information about options for channelling aid funds: https://opendatawatch.com/monitoring-reporting/2016-aid-for-statistics-inventory-of-financial-instruments/.
5. Demographic and social statistics has been the preferred statistical area for support (35% of total commitments in 2017) thanks to strong commitments for the 2020 census round. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of aid to statistics across areas of statistical development. The share of aid to strategic and managerial issues with official statistics at the national and international levels remained stable mainly consists of capacity building projects to monitor the SDGs.

Support to environmental and multi-sectoral statistics has fallen back to a lower level, from 14% in 2016 to 8% in 2017. General statistical items and data collection and dissemination methodology accounted for the second largest share by statistical area (22%). While the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is the most prominent donor in demographic and social statistics, Eurostat and IMF lead in commitments to economic statistics.

Figure 5. Areas of aid to statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Demographic and social Statistics</th>
<th>Environment and multi-domain statistics</th>
<th>Economic Statistics</th>
<th>Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics at national and international level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Areas of aid to statistics

BOX 4. HOW COULD SECTORAL FINANCING WORK?

Countries and national plans take charge and, while benefiting from the interest of donors in certain sectors, use National Strategies for the Development of Statistics and sectoral statistical plans as an organising framework to set priorities and establish needed budgets, including domestic and external financing needs.

Donors and agencies host multi-donor trust funds focused on a specific sector, such as education, gender, nutrition or agriculture, and work together through existing sectoral data coalitions to ensure that their contributions benefit the full national data ecosystem while prioritising the sector(s) of their interest.

Partners share the innovative approaches to data production used in sectoral statistical capacity building programmes that could benefit other sectors, such as new technologies and alternative data sources.

A map of all sectoral data funds, with better information on goals and progress, helps donors and country recipients do better planning, moving beyond the present dearth of data on financial support for sectoral statistics in which donor support is often buried in larger projects.

* The purpose of a commitment is reported according to the statistical categories based on the “classification of activities in the domain of SDG, adjusted for the reporting of donor and recipient activities”, developed by the inter-agency task team that defined PRESS methodology. This classification is largely based on the Classification of Statistical Activities used in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe’s Database of International Statistical Activities, and, since 2009, on the list of subject matter domains in the Content-oriented Guidelines produced by the SEMIX (Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange) initiative. For more details, see the Methodological Annex.
6. Africa received the largest share of statistical support with 50% (see Figure 6) in 2015-2017, continuing the trend of recent years. The share of total statistical support committed to Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 8% to 10%; this was driven by several commitments to national censuses in the region. The share of commitments received by the Asia and Pacific region increased in 2017. PARIS21 is working closely with regional donors to draw a better and complete picture of financing for statistics to Asia. A further 13% was committed to global projects and programmes that were not region-specific.

Figure 6. Commitment in 2017 by geographical region
7. Support to statistics becomes less concentrated on top recipient countries. Donor contributions do not always translate into national capacity owing to a lack of alignment between donors and country priorities. Nevertheless, three patterns of support to statistics have generated better outcomes over the period 2006-2017. First, the statistical capacity of countries increases, on average, by 14 points when receiving over USD 10 per capita for statistical support in that period (PARIS21, 2019c). Above a threshold of support, improvements in statistical capacity are more likely. Second, benefits were evident when the funding was not only sufficient, but also consistent. Countries that have been among the top 25 recipients for at least 5 of the last 10 years show greater progress in statistical capacity than countries that have received sporadic support. Third, the distribution of spending that favors low statistical capacity countries remains important.

The PRESS 2019 reveals a trend towards these improved patterns. Funding is becoming less concentrated at the top. The share of top 5 recipients decreased in 2 consecutive years. Consistent funding has been observed, 15 of this year’s top 25 recipients have been on the list at least three times in the past 12 years. When a country graduates from the International Development Association, the commitment it receives indeed decreases. For example, recipients such as India and Azerbaijan have received far fewer grants since their graduation. Countries under the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development tend to receive more loans than grants.

Figure 7. Top five recipients of country-specific aid

![Figure 7. Top five recipients of country-specific aid](Link to Figure Data: PRESS 2019_Figure Data)
8. Countries with the lowest statistical capacity continue to receive the most support. Comparing country commitments to the World Bank’s statistical capacity indicator (SCI)\(^\text{10}\) can shed some light on the links between the volume of statistical support provided and country progress. A correlation between these two variables may not show the whole picture, since support to statistics also depends on countries’ funding needs. There may also be a considerable time lag between investment and capacity. Nevertheless, an initial assessment is provided by comparing the latest PRESS data with the World Bank’s scores (see Figure 8). PRESS 2019 data shows that countries in the lowest quartile of the distribution received the highest level of funding per capita (USD 0.67) and countries with the highest capacity received the second lowest. This distribution exhibits a positive signal for delivering the SDGs.

Figure 8. Average annual per capita commitment, 2017

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{per capita commitment (in US$)} & 0.67 & 0.40 & 0.31 & 0.37 \\
\text{Lowest 25%} & \text{2nd lowest Quartile} & \text{3rd lowest Quartile} & \text{Highest 25%} \\
\end{array}\]

\[\text{Sorted by Overall Statistical Capacity Score}\]

\(^{10}\) On an annual basis, the World Bank updates its “country-level statistical capacity indicator based on a set of criteria consistent with international recommendations.” This indicator – on a scale of 0-100 – is available for more than 140 countries. See http://bbsc.worldbank.org. This excludes those PRESS countries for whom the World Bank has not calculated a statistical capacity score (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Kosovo, South Sudan and Tuvalu).
9. Commitments to Small Island Developing States (SIDS)\textsuperscript{11} remain low, despite the SDGs’ focus on the environment and climate change. Between 2014 and 2017, SIDS covered in PRESS received commitments worth approximately USD 40 million (see Figure 9). Commitments in 2017 did not increase substantially despite the global positive trend. Social and demographic statistics and general budgetary support remain the dominant statistical activities and commitments to environmental and multi-sectoral statistics remain low.

Commitments to SIDS are more concentrated in top donors than global average (see Figure 10). More than 60% of aid to SIDS came from five major donors: IMF, Canada, Australia, the World Bank and UNICEF. Regardless of their donors, most SIDS are lagging behind in terms of building statistical infrastructure and the development of statistical plans. In 2018, only two out of nine SIDS had a fully funded and implemented NSDS.

\textsuperscript{11} For the purposes of this report, the definition of a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) is drawn from the United Nations. See http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?menu=1496.
Figure 11: Commitments to Small Island Developing States by region, 2015-2017

Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea

Pacific

The Caribbean

Link to Figure Data: PRESS 2019. Figure Data
10. With the support of development partners, national statistical systems in fragile states have made progress towards strengthening their statistical capacities. However, the NSSs of fragile states still lack resources and technical skills – and this was one reason used to explain the reported observation that these states were lagging behind all eight of the Millennium Development Goals objectives. (OECD, 2018)

Total financial commitments to statistical development received by fragile states between 2015 and 2017 amounted to USD 364 million, an increase from the previous period (2014-2016) of USD 24 million. Commitments have become less concentrated both in terms of donors and recipients, indicating a trend of diversification in funding. The top recipients (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, the Palestinian Authority and South Sudan) received 61% of the statistical aid donated to 35 fragile states (see Figure 12), down from 70% in the previous period.

Five donors (the World Bank, USA, European Commission/Eurostat, Sweden and UNFPA) provided slightly less than 80% of total aid towards statistics in fragile states (see Figure 13). By sector, demographic statistics still received the greatest proportion of total commitments – in particular to support civil and birth registrations. Its dominance over other areas of statistical activity is expected to remain in the lead up to the 2020 census round.

For countries experiencing fragility, more commitments and long-term investment are crucial for strengthening systems and capacity development. This is particularly important in light of the 2030 Agenda, to implement and monitor National Development Plans and the SDGs and to fill sector-specific gaps in areas such as environmental and economic statistics. Statistical capacity development must be at the centre of support provided to fragile states. Ensuring that funding for statistical development is explicitly included in this support is one way to guarantee consistent and sustainable statistical capacity.

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**Figure 12. Fragile states with >USD 10 million in commitments, 2015-2017**

- Other Recipients - 140$m
- Congo (Democratic Republic of the) - 87$m
- Madagascar - 41$m
- Libya - 40$m
- Other - 55$m
- Mali - 21$m
- Palestinian Authority - 18$m
- South Sudan - 17$m

**Figure 13. Top donors committed to fragile states, 2015-2017**

- The World Bank
- Eurostat
- USA
- UNFPA
- Sweden
- UK
- Other Donors

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12 Total aid to statistical development is usually calculated on a 3-year rolling basis because commitments often span multiple years and fluctuations in annual figures are common.
METHODS OF FINANCING

11. Grants remain the main financing instrument employed by donors. ODA funding can be used to support a variety of interventions including statistical production, capacity building and to purchase necessary equipment, yet the types of activities funded as grants and loans tend to differ. Small size loans are usually better suited towards project-type interventions, while technical assistance is typically used to support statistical capacity building in partner countries. Grants with large amount are usually dedicated to support census and national surveys, especially for low-income countries. With the approaching of the 2020 census round, development partners should also increase the amount of loans to reach the targeted 0.7% of ODA. The larger funding envelope that allocated as loans “allows funding to cover many statistical domains, as well as the total overhaul of the national statistical systems” (Badiee et al., 2017), which may make loans also suitable for statistical programs or systemic interventions. For middle income countries who receive limited grants, loans can also provide a more predictable source of funding (Clements et al., 2004). According to Arakawa (2005), “ODA loans can mitigate the volatility and predictability of aid funds based on large multi-year commitments thereby creating stability within partner government budget processes”.

Figure 14. Total commitments by financing instruments, 2006-2017

BOX 5. MULTI DONOR TRUST FUNDS

Multi Donor Trust funds have been a customary financing mechanism for providing coordinated pooled financing and channelling aid resources, also in the data sector. In principle, they can facilitate donor coordination and harmonisation, reducing transaction costs and strengthening systemic capacity to deliver results. However, evaluations have shown that not all trust funds adhere to the Paris Declaration principles of country ownership and donor coordination nor contribute to increased harmonisation and accountability (PARIS21, 2019b; IEG, 2011).

Emerging trust funds today are more sensitive to some fundamental principles (ie. country-led, independent, transparent, clear mandate for financing, performance-based financing). Some financing facilities are starting to establish several sub-facilities for splitting core competencies and areas of work. One example is the World Bank’s new “Umbrella 2.0” Trust Fund, a programmatic Multi Donor Trust Fund with a thematic and/or geographic scope. The model aims to improve previous trust fund arrangements, introducing the possibility of accommodating donors’ interests in supporting a narrower thematic or geographic scope, by ‘integrating preferences’ in their contribution or by ‘associating’ their financing with other trust funds. In the case of association, an Umbrella aims to preserve specific donor attribution, and through economies of scale bring efficiency gains and allow for a focus on reporting and visibility.

These new approaches can be valuable when designing a facility to address the identified challenges in financing development data (ie. awareness, predictability, sustainability, alignment, harmonisation, transparency).

Source: The Bern Network (2019)
Since 2018, PARIS21 has been collaborating with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on a gender statistics programme within the framework of the flagship initiative, Making Every Woman and Girl Count. As one of the programme’s four activities, PRESS is monitoring global financial support to gender statistics, a critical measure for reinforcing current efforts to improve the production, dissemination and use of gender statistics in national statistical systems (NSSs).

Current under-reporting of the SDG indicators, including gender-specific ones, makes it difficult to assess progress being made towards achieving gender equality. Globally, only 14 of the 54 gender-specific SDG indicators are produced with sufficient regularity and are based on conceptually clear and internationally established methodologies. This means that not enough data are available to monitor progress towards achieving gender equality across all regions (UN Women, 2019).

In this edition, the PRESS survey aims to provide a general overview of bilateral and multilateral donor support towards gender equality and gender statistics.

The overall recognition of the importance of gender equality does not translate to strong support. The 2017 data show that almost 60% of statistical projects financed by bilateral donors consider gender equality to be an important objective (according to the CRS marker ‘gender equality’, Figure 15, category 1). A similar distribution of shares is visible when looking at the amount of commitment. However, only 5% of all projects and a similar share by commitment amount they received (6%) put gender equality as the main objective (Figure 15, category 2).

**Figure 15 Projects by their reference to gender equality, 2017, bilateral donors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 0</th>
<th>Category 1</th>
<th>Category 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t target on gender equality</td>
<td>Gender equality as one of the objectives</td>
<td>Gender equality is the main objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By number of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5% Category 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36% Category 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59% Category 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By amount of commitments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6% Category 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39% Category 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55% Category 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

**Category 0:**
The project/programme has been screened against the marker but has not been found to target gender equality.

**Category 1:**
Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.

**Category 2:**
Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results.

The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.
Looking at the commitment to gender statistics reported in the CRS database, the trends have been positive, especially in the past three years. In line with the support for statistics in general, an important rise in commitments to gender statistics has been observed with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, bringing the share of commitments slightly beyond 4% of all statistical projects in 2015-2017 (Figure 16).

Canada, Gates Foundation and Sweden led in bilateral support in 2017, together accounting for more half of all support to projects with gender equality as the main objective (Figure 17). Other important donors were the United Kingdom, Australia and Austria.

For multilateral donors reporting through the PARIS21 questionnaire, 13% of projects for statistical development committed in 2017 had activities supporting gender statistics (Figure 18). These activities received approximately 8% of the total budgets of all projects reported. While these commitments were dedicated to different areas, Poverty, Health and Human Rights accounted for more than 50% of the projects (Figure 19).
**BOX 6. DEFINING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO GENDER STATISTICS**

The UN Statistics Division defines gender statistics as the sum of the following characteristics:

- a) Data are collected and presented by sex as a primary and overall classification;
- b) Data reflect gender issues;
- c) Data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives;
- d) Data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender bias in the data.

PARIS21 recognises activities related to gender statistics if they refer to statistics, which have at least one of these characteristics. Furthermore, a project is defined as ‘covering gender statistics’ if gender statistics are the main area of this project, or if the project has activities related to gender statistics, but these statistics are not the main area of the project.

Source: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/What-are-gender-stats.ashx

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**Figure 19. Topics of projects containing activities in gender statistics, 2017, multilateral donors**

[Diagram showing topics such as Poverty, Health, Human Rights, Economic Empowerment, Children, Violence against Women, Education & Training, Other Topics, Power and Decision Making]
KEY FINDINGS BY PROVIDER OF DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

12. A large share of global support to statistics continues to come from a very small number of providers. The top five providers of development co-operation in statistics – the World Bank, USA, the European Commission/Eurostat, IMF and the UK – provided 66% of total commitments in 2015-2017, from the previous period. This marks the second consecutive year of diversification of donors. It is a positive sign indicating that new donors are investing more in statistics. Better donor coordination and alliance is needed with this background and the upcoming 2020 World Data Forum and 2020 census round. While the UNFPA and USA are strongly engaged in country-specific aid to statistics, Gates Foundation and the IMF are among the top donors for unallocated commitments to ‘regional or sectoral commitments. Figures 20-21 illustrate support from the top 10 providers for each category.

Figure 20. Top donors 2015-2017

Figure 21. Top 10 donors: country-specific commitment in 2015-2017
Figure 22. Top 10 donors: unallocated commitments in 2015-2017

- 24% EUROSTAT/EUROPEAN COMMISSION
- 16% THE WORLD BANK
- 14% OTHER DONORS
- 10% IMF
- 7% UK
- 7% GATES FOUNDATION
- 5% FAO
- 4% UNICEF
- 3% UNFPA
- 3% AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Link to Figure Data: PRESS 2019_Figure Data
04. REFERENCES


