



Task Team to Improve Statistical Support for Monitoring Development Goals

Terms of Reference for 'Improved understanding of MDG and PRSP data issues' study

This terms of reference covers the DFID funded element of two studies for the PARIS21 task team on 'Improved Support for Monitoring Development Goals'.

Overview

The overall work for the task team is described in the two Terms of References attached at Annex A and B. It consists of an international study (Annex A) and a series of six country case studies (Annex B). DFID will be funding the international study and preparatory work for the country case studies.

Scope of work

The consultants funded by DFID will be required to:

1. Carry out the work described in the terms of reference in Annex A – the international study.
2. Carry out the first phase of the country studies Terms of Reference (Annex B) for two or three of the six countries. This work will be approximately half of the first phase described in Annex B. The aim will be to provide enough information for the task team to agree a methodology for progressing with the remainder of the country study work. The EC, World Bank and DFID will decide the countries to be investigated.

The total workload is expected to be around 105 days work – approximately 75 days on the international study and 30 days on the country case studies.

Timetable

The start date will be 19 March 2003.

Initially the consultants will spend up to 10 days investigating sources and assessing what is both feasible and realistic to be achieved by the end of May. This initial work will be presented to the conveners of the task team (the EC and the WB) and DFID at a briefing meeting on **26 March** in Luxembourg. At the meeting the consultants should also present a detailed proposal for the scope of work up till the **end of May** to be agreed at the meeting.

The next full task team meeting will be at the **beginning of June**. The consultants will present the work done so far at this meeting for the team members to agree how to take this forward.

It is anticipated that at the meeting in June the consultants will present:

- Initial results of the first two phases of the international study described in Annex A (the description of the process of producing and disseminating MDG data by the lead UN agencies; and identifying inconsistencies with other international data sources);
- Initial results of the first phase of the country studies for two or three of the six countries as described in Annex B (collecting together all relevant material on data and data systems available on the two countries and addressing as many of the 'issues to investigate' as possible on the basis of available information)
- Suggestions on how the remainder of the international study and country case studies could be carried out (confirming the general issues the two studies could and should address; suggestions for how further country desk studies could be carried out; and suggestions for how and whether country visits could be conducted.)

The accompanying initial reports should be provided to DFID at least 10 days before the date of the June meeting. This stage of the work is expected to take around 65-75 days.

After the June meeting the remainder of the international study will be conducted by the DFID contracted consultants. The anticipated timetable and scope of work is in the relevant TORs, although this may be amended at the June meeting.

The remainder of the work on the country case studies will be contracted by the EC. The DFID consultants may not be eligible to be considered for the follow on country work given their involvement in the design stage.

Reporting

The DFID consultants will officially report to the designated DFID reporting officer although briefing will be provided jointly by DFID, the EC and the Bank.

ANNEX A: Terms of Reference for International Study for PARIS21 Task Team on Improved Support for Monitoring Development Goals

PROJECT	To improve understanding of international MDG data issues to feed into the work on the PARIS21 task team on improved support for monitoring development goals.
TIMETABLE	Up to 75 days work between Mar and Oct 03
OUTCOME	A report for the PARIS21 steering committee, task team members and relevant UN agencies. The aim of this report will be to help the task team, and international statistical community more generally, identify actions to improve the availability, timeliness, coherence and quality of international MDG data.
LOCATION	The project will primarily be conducted as a desk study, although it will require short visits to the key international agencies.
SUMMARY	<p>The aim of this project is to gain an understanding of the existing processes for collecting and disseminating international data on the MDG indicators and to identify the key constraints and issues associated with producing and publishing the data.</p> <p>The intention is that this study will help the international statistical community identify strategies to improve the quality of international data for MDG monitoring. Some specific issues include understanding and addressing inconsistencies between different international sources of MDG data – particularly between the World Bank, UNSD and the different UN agencies, and investigating whether current sources of international data make best use of the data available in countries.</p> <p>There are four stages to the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first stage will consider each of the 48 MDG indicators in turn and record the process of publishing data by the official <u>lead agency</u>. This will include recording how the indicators are constructed, existing availability and timeliness, the process of collecting data from the original sources, and the key quality issues. It will mainly involve drawing upon and bringing together information from existing publications, websites and metadata. • The second stage will be to identify <u>other main sources</u> of international data on any the 48 MDG indicators and record and explain differences between these sources and the data published by the official lead agency. • The third stage will <u>use the results of the country studies</u>, being conducted by the task team in parallel with this study, and highlight the issues related to international MDG monitoring. This will involve identifying differences between the data available in countries and internationally, the reasons why MDG data doesn't exist in countries or doesn't get published internationally, the key quality and timeliness issues, and the suitability of any proxy indicators which are available. • The final stage will be to <u>set out the key constraints and difficulties</u> in the current system, and suggest measures which could be taken to address these, particularly focusing on improvements in quality, availability, timeliness and coherence of international MDG data possible in the short term.

BACKGROUND

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by the international community at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. These goals are accompanied by 18 specific targets for progress by 2015. Subsequently 48 indicators were identified to monitor progress towards these goals and targets. Reliable, timely, internationally comparable data on these indicators is essential to hold the international community to account, encourage sustained public support and funding for development, for effective allocation of aid, and to compare and contrast progress between countries.

The UN Secretary General was given the mandate to report on global progress towards the MDGs. A lead agency (usually an UN/IFI agency), or group of agencies, has been identified as the official UN source for each indicator and an inter-agency expert group on 'Millennium Development Goal Data and Trends', consisting of all the lead agencies, has been set up. This expert group is coordinated by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). The group has the responsibility for collating the data from the various agencies, and producing an annual report on overall progress towards the development goals for the UN Secretary General. The first report was produced in May 2002¹.

This publication, 'UN MDG Data and Trends 2002'², highlighted some of the data problems associated with global reporting. It noted that there were 'serious and far reaching problems in almost all the indicators' in terms of the availability, consistency over time, accuracy and relevance to the targets.

A separate process is also going on within countries. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is producing MDG progress reports for all countries and the World Bank is also producing a limited number of country reports. These use the data available in countries, which could be different to the data available from the international agencies and used for international reporting, although they are still focused around the same MDG indicators. These reports have highlighted the lack of good quality data at the country level.

The MDGs, along with other recent development initiatives such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) monitoring frameworks, have highlighted the need for better statistical information both in countries and internationally. In response to this PARIS21 has set up a task team to consider how the international statistical community can improve their support for monitoring progress towards development goals³. The first meeting of the task team was held in Paris on 15 October 2002 where the initial work programme was agreed. This initial work will concentrate on ensuring a good understanding of the current situation with regard to MDG and PRSP reporting and on identifying the key constraints to improving data availability and quality.

¹ The data and details can be found at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp.

² See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mdg_report.pdf

³ The terms of reference for the task team are at <http://www.paris21.org/htm/task/impmdg/ttmdgtr.pdf>.

The work will be approached in two ways. The first approach will be a set of around 6 country studies to explore the current process and data systems for reporting on development goals in countries. This will include identifying the key constraints to better data production and use. They will also consider possible conflicts between nationally owned data for PRSP monitoring and internationally comparable data for MDG monitoring. The aim will be to identify strategic actions which the international community could do to improve countries' ability to report progress towards national and international development goals.

The second part of the work, which will be carried out in parallel with the country studies, will be an international study which will consider similar issues for international MDG data collection and dissemination. This TOR is for the international study. To prevent duplication the international and country studies will need to be coordinated, and this international study will use some of the outputs of the country studies.

PURPOSE

The objective of this work will be to provide a basis for identifying actions/strategies for the international statistical community to improve the availability, coherence (both over time and between different sources of international data), quality and timeliness of international MDG data. It will particularly focus on improvements possible in the short term.

Specific questions which the international statistical community are looking to address include:

- What are the differences between MDG data reported by the World Bank, UN SD and UN agencies and how can these be reconciled?
- Does the international MDG data make best use of the data available in countries, from both country statistical systems and international surveys? If not, why not?
- What are the reasons for differences between data available in countries and internationally?
- To what extent is the international data used within countries for MDG/PRSP reporting? If it is not used, why not?
- Could the process of obtaining data from countries by the international system be made more efficient?

The work will feed into and assist on-going work which is underway in this area by, in particular, UN Statistics Division and the agencies responsible for the individual indicators. It is not meant to duplicate existing efforts, and it will not necessarily be the role of the task team to take forward any actions identified.

The output will be a report which will be circulated to the PARIS21 steering committee members, the PARIS21 task team and the relevant data agencies. The report should be accompanied by a short verbal and slide presentation of the main findings and recommendations.

The report should contain a standard section for each indicator which should bring together all the outcomes from the different stages of the work for that particular indicator. The bulk of the report should be written as a reference document so that any particular piece of information on any indicator can be found easily and quickly. This should be supplemented by tables which summarise the key properties for all the indicators. The report should also contain a synopsis of the main findings and recommendations of no more than 10 pages.

SPECIFICATION OF WORK

The work will consist of four stages.

The **first stage** will consider each of the 48 MDG indicators in turn and record the process of publishing data by the official lead agency. The report should address the following questions for each indicator:

- Which is the official lead agency as identified by the UN MDG reporting process?
- What is the availability and timeliness of current data?
How many countries have data for the last available year? What was the last available year and when were the data published?
- What are the original sources?
E.g. Does the indicator use data from administrative sources or surveys or a mixture?
- How is the indicator constructed?
Are the original data amended and if so how and why? Are estimates, or other alternatives, ever used to supplement original data and if so when?
- How does the agency obtain the data from the original sources?
E.g. What is the process of collecting data from country sources?
- What are the key quality issues for the data?
E.g. What checks are done on the quality of the original source/final indicator? What are the circumstances when data collected from countries are not disseminated internationally? What action is taken by the agency if the country data are not considered reliable?

The aim of this stage is primarily to draw together and collate existing information and metadata on the MDG indicators which has already been published. This existing work should include: the UNSD metadata on MDG indicators http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp, recent work on drawing up metadata for the UN Common Country Assessment Indicators sponsored by DFID, the indicators for sustainable development methodology sheets,

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/indisd/english/english.htm>, the Friends of the Chair report on indicators, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc02/2002-26e.pdf> and the individual agency websites and publications. This stage may also require contact with the agencies to collect any additional information needed.

The **second stage** aims to systematically highlight any major inconsistencies between the data produced by the official lead agency and alternative international sources of the indicators. For each indicator the report should identify other published sources of international data on the same indicator and record any major differences between these sources and the data published by the official lead agency. This should contain an assessment of whether any differences are clearly explained in publications. To keep this stage of the work manageable this should be initially restricted to UN agencies, the World Bank (in particular the World Development Indicators data) and USAID (which publish the DHS surveys). This stage of the work should also highlight any inconsistencies between existing international data collection instruments and MDG data requirements.

The first two stages will be presented alongside the initial country study work at a task team meeting in June 2003. The scope of the following two stages will be confirmed at that meeting.

The **third stage** will be carried out through the country studies which are being conducted in parallel with the international study. The work within this study will be to report the issues related to the international MDG system. Within each country the type of questions which should be addressed include:

- What data are available within the country for reporting against each MDG indicator and how often is it published?
- How does the data available in countries compare with the data available from the official international source? What are the reasons for any differences?
- What are the key quality and timeliness issues, including the reasons for any large time lags between national and international dissemination?
- Are international data used within countries for MDG/PRSP monitoring? If not, why not?
- Are there any proxy/national indicators available in countries which do not directly correspond to the international definition but essentially measure the same thing?

This stage will consist of drawing out the information from the country studies and relating it to the work done in the first two stages, and hence will be conducted after the country studies have been completed. The consultant responsible for this international work will need to be regularly consulted on the specification and progress on the country case studies to ensure it includes the relevant information needed for this study. Given the potential for this to be a huge piece of work, this is only expected to provide an overview of

the key issues for each indicator rather than an in-depth analysis. Inevitably this stage will focus on the 36 MDG indicators which use data on developing countries (the other indicators use data on developed countries).

The **final stage** will be to use the information to address the questions outlined on page 3, and to identify the key constraints and difficulties within the current country and international systems for collecting and reporting international MDG data. This should focus on issues which affect: a) the availability of international MDG data, b) the quality, c) the timeliness and d) coherence between different sources. This should provide the basis for the international community to decide what actions are needed to improve international MDG reporting.

While recognizing that the only long term solution to improving international MDG data is to build sustainable statistical capacity in countries to produce the data, the focus of this work should be on any measures which would improve the consistency and quality of data in the short term while not undermining the longer term capacity building efforts. The discussion should also take care to recognise that national data systems need to be primarily driven by national rather than international data needs.

PROCESS

The work will primarily be conducted as a desk study.

The work allows for one visit to New York and Washington to visit the Bank, UNSD, and other UN agencies; a further visit to Washington to attend a task team meeting; one visit to Geneva to visit the WHO; and one visit to Paris to report the findings. It also allows for two additional trips to other locations if the information for another agency cannot be obtained from publicly available documents. It is also likely to involve a visit to the organisation carrying out the country studies.

The work allows for three briefing visits to the manager of the project.

TIMETABLE

The project will run in parallel with the country studies. The aim is that the work will be conducted over 75 days between 19 March 2003 and 31 October 2003, although the final date will be dependant on the timetable of the country studies.

Initial drafts on the first and second stages of the project should be completed by around mid May and presented at the task team meeting at the beginning of June 2003. It is expected that these two stages will take around 35-45 days. The full report should be completed one month after the country studies have been completed.

ANNEX B: Terms of Reference for Country Case Studies for PARIS21 Task Team on Improved Support for Monitoring Development Goals

Background

The MDGs, and emerging Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) monitoring frameworks, have highlighted the need for better statistical information both in countries and internationally. In response to this PARIS21 has set up a task team to consider how the international statistical community can improve their support for monitoring progress towards development goals⁴. The first meeting of the task team was held in Paris on 15 October 2002, where the initial work programme was agreed.

The first element of this programme will consist of six country-level case studies, which will explore the processes and data systems for reporting progress towards development goals. A key focus will be the identification of the constraints to better data demand, production and use. The studies will also consider significant differences which are often found between internationally reported series including estimates, and official national series and estimates. The aim will be to identify strategic actions which can be used by both the international community and by countries themselves to improve reporting of progress towards national and international development goals.

The second element will focus on issues relevant at the international level, and will consider similar issues for MDG data collection and dissemination by international organisations and agencies. Although this international-level study is not part of the scope of these Terms of Reference, it will be important that each study informs the other as work progresses.

Objective of the country case studies

The overall objective of conducting the case studies will be to identify strategic actions which can be implemented by both countries and the international community, so that capacity to report progress towards national and international development goals can be improved.

The purpose of the studies are:

- to inform and help provide options for both short and long-term strategies to improve the quality and availability of statistics to monitor PRSPs and the MDGs;
- make recommendations for changes at the country level (including international statistical practice) that would improve MDG and PRSP monitoring processes.

⁴The terms of reference for the task team is at <http://www.paris21.org/htm/task/impmdg/ttmdgtor.pdf>.

to review the needs of data users and describe the interaction between data users and data providers at the national level, and in consultation with the other Paris 21 Task Team project, between national and international levels

Starting from the perspective of indicators needed for the MDG and PRSP processes, it will be necessary to investigate which data source programmes are in place to provide the desired indicators, what is the availability at the national level of the indicators from those sources, what additional programmatic sources are needed and cost-effective for a particular country. The case studies will also build on the work, conducted by the World Bank, comparing MDG indicators and indicators selected in PRSPs and national development plans. The results should inform and complement on-going work on PRSP and MDG monitoring, particularly that taking place in the UNDP and the World Bank; they should not duplicate existing efforts.

Process and Activities

The countries to be included in the study will be selected by the task team, but will, as a minimum, be countries that have either already produced, or are about to produce, UN country MDG reports and PRSPs.

The work should take place in two phases. The **first phase** will be a desk study for each selected country which brings together as much information as is possible and available from national and international sources, focusing on the data and data systems which underpin the indicators in the UNDP country reports, PRSPs and other national development plans. Examples are attached as Annex 1. In many cases, donors have previously conducted evaluations of all or specific areas of a country's statistical system and these and other available documentation should also be gathered to the extent possible.

National Statistical Offices, or other appropriate bodies, will be asked to participate as members of the Task Team in the country studies. A process of communication with other donors will also be initiated during the desk study phase, to obtain information about support for statistical activities or use of data in the country concerned.

Initial findings will be used as material for a meeting where key stakeholders of the National Statistical System (usually NSO directors) will be invited to review the initial findings. This will help ensure that countries are fully involved, determine what further field work will be necessary in each case, and will allow the preparation of an interim report .

The **second phase** will involve missions to some or all of the countries, to follow up on the results of the first phase. It will also use the preliminary results from the parallel international study. A decision on whether a visit is

required will be taken on a case by case basis, after the results of the first phase have been discussed and agreed.

If fieldwork does take place for a particular country, it is recommended that country level meetings/seminars are held involving all key stakeholders to discuss the results of the first phase and the key issues to be addressed during the second phase.

Issues to Investigate

The studies will focus on the indicators in PRSP monitoring plans and the relationship with the MDG indicators and will consider the following **issues**:

- What data are available within the country for reporting against each MDG and PRSP indicator, when and how often are they published and by who i.e. which source ? How do these data (usually from the national statistical system) compare with the data published by international organisations/ sources? If there are differences – why? What mechanisms are in place to compile, disseminate and analyse the indicators from each basic source. The analysis of the statistical system should identify gaps between what data are currently produced and what data are needed for monitoring progress towards the MDGs and the specific targets set out in the PRSP (or in sector programmes). There are some indicators for which data is going to be available easily, and there are others for which data will not be available unless a specific study or survey is conducted. What is advised for those latter indicators ?
- Are the demands for the data at the national and international levels consistent? What is the balance for the demand for data between local users (Government) and the international community? What indicators do the user community find credible and most useful?
- What are the constraints to the production of data which are needed to monitor MDG and PRSP goals, and to what extent are the data flows institutionalised? The process of indicator selection within the PRSP process should also be examined, to determine the rationale behind the selection of particular indicators, and to determine the extent to which the statistical office was involved.
- Are there any proxy indicators, or data available to support them, which might be used to measure changes in the PRSP or MDG indicators?
- What support do countries receive / need from the international community in this area ? Is there effective coordination between different donors?

Outputs

The final output in each case will be a relatively short document of no more than 20-25 pages that should include recommendations for strategic actions which can be used by countries to improve reporting of progress towards national and international development goals . They should also include recommendations to help countries develop or appropriate plans for statistical development, or improve existing plans. These reports will be synthesized by the Task Team conveners into a single document, providing summary recommendations to make improvements to statistical systems, donor coordination mechanisms, and changes in international statistical practice that would improve MDG and PRSP monitoring processes

Inputs

The required inputs for the first phase of the study are 60 person days. This will include provision for two missions to Washington /New York , the second of which will be to attend the meeting to present the the results of the first phase. The costs of organising this meeting including the travel and subsistence costs of stakeholders from the case study countries, will be met by the World Bank.

The second phase of the project will require 48 person days. This is based on missions to three of the case study countries of no longer than two weeks (12 days) per country. This also includes provsion for a mission within Europe to present the final report of the project. The total budget for the study is 150,000 Euros.

Timetable

The work on the first phase should start in March 2003. An interim report should be then made available for the next planned meeting of the task team in June 2003. The final report(s) are anticipated in September 2003.

Annex 1

The desk studies should utilise information from:

- UN MDG country reports (where completed);
- GDDS metadata
- the country's web site, if one exists;
- any statistical publications that are available at World Bank headquarters in Washington (the Bank country teams would be a good source for such information), the United Nations Libraries collections at New York and Geneva or at Eurostat in Luxembourg;
- Bank and Commission staff on country and sectoral teams who use the country's data;
- documentation of statistical practices in the country contained in statistical handbooks or other sources;
- the results of surveys that have been carried out in the country, including those carried out by donors or with donor support (e.g. Demographic and Health Surveys, reproductive health surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, Core Indicator Questionnaire surveys, household income or consumption surveys);
- data collected by international agencies on the country (in addition to data collected by the Bank - this should include regular data collection by the various UN agencies such as UNICEF, UN Population Division and UN Statistical Division, including any evaluations of data completeness and quality done by these agencies (e.g. GDDS - General Data Dissemination System, DQAF - Data Quality Assessment Framework));
- PRSPs or similar strategic documents, to review indicators chosen, their source, frequency and availability
- Inputs from the National Statistical Office.