Ghana National Data Roadmap Process

The purpose of this case study is to better understand the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data's (GPSDD) contribution to and the impact to-date of the national data roadmap process in Ghana.

The contents for this case study include direct inputs via questionnaires and key informant interviews with representatives from Ghana Statistical Service, the National Development Planning Commission, the Environment Protection Agency, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Ministry of M&E, Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority, Birth and Death Registry, and the CSO Platform on SDGs – as well as secondary information gathered through reports and documents noted in the annex.

Key GPSDD Contributions	Key Impacts
• Facilitation of National Data Roadmap Forum/Process	• Development and implementation of data roadmap process
• Connections to partners within the GPSDD Network	• High-level political engagement and support
• Lessons learned from other GPSDD Roadmap countries	• Increased stakeholder engagement on data
• Platform to leverage political support	• Momentum on existing data activities
• Brokering relationships and continued stakeholder engagement	• Development of new activities to address gaps
• Africa Regional Data Cube	

Introduction: Ghana and the SDGs

Ghana has a strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is demonstrated at the highest level through the UN appointment of the President of Ghana as the co-Chair of the Group of Eminent Advocates for the UN SDGs. In preparation to implement the SDGs, Ghana took onboard lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), focusing specifically on promoting stakeholder coordination and collaboration. The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) chairs the SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee. The primary function of the committee is to "facilitate the management of the alignment, adoption and adaptation of the SDGs within the broader national context, including alignment with the Long Term National Development Plan (2018- 2057), African Union Agenda 2063, and a number of other global and regional strategies."[1] The SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee provides technical oversight and support to the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda at the national level.

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[1] "Terms of Reference – Advisory Committee of National Data Roadmap, February 2017"

Global Partnership
for Sustainable Development Data

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) is the primary data producer, coordinator, and technical back-stopper of the National Statistical System (NSS). In this capacity, GSS is responsible for ensuring that the suite of information required for monitoring the SDGs, as well as other national, regional, and global strategies, is produced across the NSS. GSS and representatives of other key Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) – which have formed a platform around SDGs with over 150 members, and the private sector are all members of the SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee.[2]

In 2016, in collaboration with MDAs and Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), GSS conducted a data gap analysis to assess the extent of the SDG indicators already being produced, including the existence of data for computation, data sources, institutions producing the data, level of disaggregation, and data gaps. This analysis and stakeholder consultations illustrated that the monitoring requirements of the SDGs, in addition to those of other national, regional, and global development agendas, place a considerably increased demand on the NSS to provide a wide range of data, many of which are not readily available.

Early on, the GSS recognized that new technologies, approaches, data sources, and engagement of different stakeholders offer opportunities to address the immense data challenge posed by the SDGs. To maximize the potential of these opportunities, GSS joined the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data in December 2016. Along with support from the SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee, UNDP, and the UN Data Group, GSS and GPSDD collaborated to host the National Data Roadmap Forum in Accra on April 5-6, 2017. The Forum marked the beginning of the National Data Roadmap Process, which is intended to continue over the lifetime of the SDGs.[3] National data roadmaps are processes supported by GPSDD in several countries aimed at developing and implementing multi-stakeholder data ecosystems to improve the production, access, and use of data to achieve national development priorities and the SDGs.

National Data Roadmap Forum

The National Data Roadmap Forum agenda was informed by the results of the national capacity assessment and the recognition that a significant amount of discussion, coordination, and collaboration is necessary to address the identified data gaps.[4] The three tasks that were set forth were: 1. Assess the current state of data production in the country; 2. Identify possible ways to strengthen the national statistical system to fill data gaps; and 3. To develop a data roadmap to produce prioritized indicators in the short, medium, and long term.[5] The Forum brought together a variety of stakeholders including MDAs and MMDAs, multilateral organizations, national associations, media, private sector, academia, and civil society to underscore the need for a whole-of-government, multi-stakeholder approach to

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[2] http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/SDGs/Data%20Roadmap%20Forum-%20Concept%20Note.pdf
[3] http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/SDGs/Data%20Roadmap%20Forum-%20Concept%20Note.pdf
[4] "Terms of Reference – Advisory Committee of National Data Roadmap, February 2017"
[5] "Terms of Reference – Advisory Committee of National Data Roadmap, February 2017"

address data issues. In addition, attendance of the Vice President of Ghana, the Minister of Finance, and members of parliament represented high-level political buy in.

GPSDD worked closely with GSS to coordinate and structure two days of workshop-style discussions. Based on GSS' priorities and needs, GPSDD facilitated participation of international partners who could bring their expertise to bear on the discussions. The Forum led to the identification of three priority areas and associated sub-areas for action:

1. Address data gaps
   a. Build administrative data systems
   b. Strengthen censuses and surveys
   c. Explore new types of data
2. Encourage data use
   a. Create iterative feedback loop between producers and users
   b. Make data more available
   c. Provide training in key areas
   d. Increase communication and visibility of data
3. Strengthen the data ecosystem
   a. Establish strategic partnerships
   b. Harmonize policy and enabling environment
   c. Ensure sufficient resources for data ecosystem
   d. Sensitize the general public to data

Governance Structure and Political Support

While the National Data Roadmap Forum marked the official beginning of the data roadmap process, part of the governance structure to support the process – the National Data Roadmap Advisory Committee - was established in advance of the Forum and was strategically engineered to serve as a consultative mechanism to shape the agenda and build broad stakeholder buy-in and ownership. The idea to set up this structure even before the Forum was informed by advice from colleagues in Kenya drawing on their own data roadmap process and engagement with GPSDD.

The National Data Roadmap Advisory Committee's mandate was to 1. Coordinate the organization of the National Data Roadmap Forum and 2. Take forward the outcomes of the Forum. This ensured that there was a multi-stakeholder commitment to the roadmap process for the long-term. The committee is co-chaired by GSS and NDPC and is comprised of high-level members from key government and non-government institutions, including the SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee.

To implement the priority areas and activities identified as a result of the Forum, 12 workstreams were formed focusing on administrative data, financial and economic data, census and survey, gender data, spatial and big data, communication and dissemination, policy and enabling environment. These workstreams represent the technical arm of the process. Each of the workstreams is structured to be chaired by the MDA around which the workstream revolves and includes at least one member of the Advisory Committee, GSS staff, and national and international experts. Similar to the Advisory

Committee, the workstreams also have terms of reference that guide the composition, objectives, and activities.

Each of the workstreams has an identified focal person who is responsible for reporting to the Advisory Committee, creating a link between the oversight and technical arms. Reporting formats have been developed to facilitate this process, as well as an electronic platform via googledrive to document meetings and other relevant information.

An SDG Secretariat was established within GSS to help manage and coordinate the roadmap process. The governance structure did not have this body built in from inception, but has incorporated it as the need for additional personnel and capacity was recognized. The secretariat supports the Advisory Committee and coordinates the workstreams. While the secretariat did not have a budget in 2017, they now have increased visibility and relevance with a growing team and designated office space.

The National Data Roadmap process in Ghana has also fostered high-level political engagement at the level of the Office of the President and Vice President. This was another area where the GPSDD secretariat provided advice on the importance of political support for the roadmap process and later provided regional and global platforms to sustain and build the political engagement that started with the Forum.

At the Forum, the Vice President gave opening remarks and the Minister of Finance spoke as well. "Ghana's attainment of the SDG goals will critically be underpinned by a robust data regime that is collectively supported by all partners, including the private sector, academia, NGOs, bilateral, and non-bilateral institutions […]," stated Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Ghana's Vice-President. He noted that while the wrong data leads to the wrong policies, most governments underinvest in data collection, and Ghana should invest in its data systems thinking of the return on investments they will provide in the long-term. "Whereas in the past, we have been satisfied with national or regional averages, we now seek information at the district level to adequately reflect the different realities and diversities of our beloved country," Dr. Bawumia concluded.

The participation of the Vice President and his strong message in support of data and statistics had a significant impact on the Forum and its aftermath. Having the Vice President speak at the Forum helped to get traction for follow-up activities with other stakeholders inside and outside of government. The Association of Ghana Industries, which was technically a member of the Advisory Committee before the Forum, began engaging in earnest afterward and is now an active participant of several post-Forum workstreams set up by the Committee. They have also expressed a desire to find concrete areas for collaboration with GSS around the data they hold.

Following the success of the Forum, GSS and the Advisory Committee used the milestone of the High-Level Meeting on Data for Development (HLM) – a GPSDD event co-hosted with the governments of Kenya and Sierra Leone in June 2017 – to sustain momentum and drive action behind several of the priority areas that were identified through the Forum, including the integration of civil registration and

vital statistics (CRVS) into the National Identification System, using telecommunications data to measure migration patterns, and open data.

Beyond the HLM, Ghana featured prominently at a number of key global events focused on data in 2017, including a UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) side event, two UN General Assembly (UNGA) events, and the Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on SDG Indicators.

Ghana co-hosted the GPSDD's flagship UNGA side event in September 2017. This event was particularly noteworthy because of the direct engagement required with the Office of the President and it was the first time that the Office of the President asked for GSS representation. This engagement has strengthened the visibility and relevance of GSS within Ghana and has strengthened political support for the roadmap process. In addition, the Minister of Planning delivered several keynotes and remarks at these GPSDD events and he served as a panelist at the UN HLPF. This level of engagement from the Minister of Planning has garnered political support and commitment to push forward activities related to the roadmap process.

The Vice President of Ghana is now a member of the GPSDD board, signaling high-level political commitment to data and GPSDD's key role in facilitating political engagement. This is particularly important for GSS as the engagement has provided a direct linkage to the seat of government and has increased the visibility and relevance for the role of GSS in delivering the SDGs.

June 2017	July 2017
Kenya High Level Meeting (GPSDD Event)	UN High Level Political Forum
Keynote address by Minister of Planning	(First side event hosted by Ghana on data at UN Forum)
- commitment to improve administrative data, particularly CRVS	Minister of Planning as Panelist
	- How statistics can contribute to evidence based decision making

September 2017	September 2017	November 2017
United Nations General Assembly Side Event	United Nations General Assembly Side Event	UN IAEG- SDGs
(Ghana co-hosted with GPSDD)	(GPSDD Event)	Ghana's representative voted to co-chair workstream to develop guidelines on SDG data disaggregation for adoption by UNSC in March 2019
Address read on behalf of HE the President of Ghana	Keynote address by Minister of Planning	
- Signaling the political importance of developing the data ecosystems to address the SDGs	- Inclusive data to end poverty and leave no one behing	

Despite the Advisory committee's well-developed structure, improved political support at the highest level and increased visibility for GSS, the process is not without its challenges. The Advisory Committee workstreams have struggled to gain traction in operationalizing to their full potential. There is a lack of

anticipated diversity in the membership of and consistent engagement with the workstreams. For example, there is often low-attendance at workstream meetings, with high turn-over in the MDA representatives who attend, making it difficult to ensure continuity of activities. Many of the members find it difficult to commit to delivering for the workstream in addition to their full-time responsibilities elsewhere. To address these challenges, the composition of the workstreams is evolving with plans to combine several workstreams addressing similar topics, such as administrative data, to gain more traction. In addition, there are plans to develop and implement monitoring frameworks to guide activities and track progress in 2018.

Stakeholder Engagement

GPSDD has played a key role in connecting stakeholders to foster engagement with the roadmap process and continues to engage with the various stakeholders on an on-going basis to broker relationships and provide connections to expertise as the context evolves.

For example, GPSDD has met with a number of the MDAs as well as non-government entities such as the CSO platform for SDGs, GIZ, and Youth Advocates Ghana individually to discuss data gaps and challenges and recommend potential connections and resources. This level of continuous engagement enables connections across sectors and access to a variety of data producers and users within the country. In addition, GPSDD also enables connections at a regional level, such as facilitating introductions between interested organizations in Ghana and Sierra Leone and through convenings such as the High-Level Meeting (HLM) in Kenya. GPSDD's continued engagement also enables socialization of and access to resources such as the Africa Regional Data Cube (see section on Address Data Gaps) and API Highways[6] to connect data producers and users across borders and fill data gaps.

In order to facilitate buy-in to the process from the various MDAs, the SDGs Secretariat organized a briefing workshop with the Chief Directors of the MDAs in December 2017. This workshop discussed the necessary adaptations to the various MDAs' data collection methods to align with UN meta-data requirements for the SDGs. Given that the various MDAs have different data collection, storage, and sharing capabilities and practices, this workshop provided an opportunity to encourage communication between the MDAs and discussion of standardization and interoperability. This workshop was useful in fostering high-level buy-in to the process, GSS's role, and the emerging projects and partnerships. The workshop also resulted in the agreement to establish an SDGs team within each MDA with a focal person to improve communication and delegation of responsibilities. This will greatly help in taking the roadmap priorities on administrative data forward. GSS is also working in collaboration with Statistics South Africa on developing a data quality assurance framework to use across MDAs and beyond.

While the activities and projects being implemented through the roadmap workstreams include activities that were underway prior to the start of the roadmap process, MDAs have leveraged the roadmap process for support, and new projects that have emerged as a result of the process. For

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[6] A GPSDD project that brings together data through a standard API and let others build on top of the infrastructure – allowing for data access and aggregations from a variety of sources: https://apihighways.org/

example, the CRVS workstream co-opted the on-going work on strengthening the birth and death registration process and linking it with the National ID system. This work is seen as part of the roadmap process because of its alignment with identified priorities and the high-level political commitment made to it at the GPSDD hosted High-Level Meeting in Kenya in 2017. On the other hand, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has leveraged the gender workstream to conduct an assessment of Gender statistics that is feeding into the development of the National 5 Year Plan on Gender Statistics. In response to a request for technical collaborations, GPSDD is facilitating connections between the Ministry of Gender and relevant GPSDD partners.

Addressing the Priority Areas

In addition to the on-going MDA activities that have leveraged the roadmap process, a number of collaborations and partnerships have emerged to support the implementation of the three priority areas identified during the Forum. The section below provides a categorization of the key activities that have been identified to-date. While this is not an exhaustive list of all the activities and partnerships that are facilitated or supported by the roadmap process, it provides insight into the level of impact the process has had to-date and anticipates having in the near future.

Addressing Data Gaps

Call Detail Records (CDRs) to produce indicators for monitoring SDGs. This activity was developed through a partnership between GSS, Flowminder Foundation/WorldPop, Vodafone Ghana, and Hewlett Foundation, and was initiated at the National Data Roadmap workshop. This partnership is the first public-private partnership for GSS. It will serve as a pilot for future collaborations and has enabled GSS to establish itself as an innovative institution.

This activity explores new types of data to fill data gaps and enable the use of more dynamic data. Most of the current GSS data comes from surveys which collect information at a single point in time, whereas the data collected through this activity will be continuous. In particular, call detail record (CDR) data allows for the production of a range of metrics on human mobility and migration and can be used to estimate changing demands on health facilities, map contemporary estimates of poverty and other development/health metrics at high spatial resolution. As part of this activity, Flowminder will train two people within GSS to build capacity in-house and enable the development of a sustainable framework for integrating mobile network operator (MNO) data into the production of national statistics and measuring migration and SDG indicators.

Satellite Data. The Africa Regional Data Cube (ARDC) is a partnership between GPSDD and Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), which includes NASA and GEO partnering with the GSS. The ARDC collaboration will provide capacity for Ghana to apply Earth observation data to address local and national needs such as measuring water extent and quality, deforestation, land change, among others. It will also allow access to and use of diverse data sets via interoperable methods and support connections to common GIS tools. The data that will be available through the ARDC is anticipated to have significant impact on decision-making such as reducing illegal mining and finding underground water sources. This

activity has enabled GSS to establish relationships with a new group of stakeholders who need this type of data. For example, a high-level Technical Team has been put together across MDAs and academia to outline a national strategy for the use of geospatial data from the ARDC and establish a framework for national capacity development.

GSS has also developed a partnership with the UN Global Pulse Lab Kampala via Hewlett Foundation to use satellite data to produce proxy measures of poverty. This activity is still in development.

Administrative Data Assistance. This activity is a partnership that was developed between GSS and Statistics Denmark through discussions initiated prior to the National Data Roadmap Forum, and further developed through the discussions at the Forum. GPSDD helped ensure that Statistics Denmark could be represented at the Forum given that administrative data was a key priority area. Administrative data is identified as the source providing more than 50 percent of SDG data in Ghana. This activity will focus on two goals (4 and 5) of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics II. Goal 4 is to update statistical infrastructure and goal 5 is to enhance data production, quality, dissemination, and use.[7] This includes the development of a population register and other administrative registers; data linkages between the various data producers in the NSS, and the development of matching metadata systems for all administrative data produced by MDAs.

Encourage Data Use

Open Data and Indicator Tracking in 3 Components. This activity is designed to be a holistic approach to developing and operationalizing an indicator tracking platform that coordinates across all the MDAs to facilitate streamlined provision and access to data and subsequent use of data. The activity is structured in three components: 1. Development of an indicator tracking platform; 2. Up-skilling of data producers; and 3; up-skilling of data users to utilize open data for evidence-based policy making.

In order to build an online platform that allows tracking of national, regional, and global indicators, GSS is commissioning a landscape assessment within the country to assess the existing database structure and what it will take to have a central system. This is anticipated to be completed in 2018 and will be followed by the development of a platform in 2019 that adheres to the Principles and Guidelines of SDG Monitoring and Reporting Platforms reviewed and endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2018.

For components 2 and 3, five key MDAs and 2 MMDAs have been identified to receive capacity building assistance: Health, Education, Employment, Food and Agriculture, and Water and Sanitation. The capacity building activities for the data producers is a partnership between the Advanced Information Technology Institute[8] and Open Data Institute; and the capacity building activity for data users is a partnership between the African Center for Economic Transformation and PARKS Africa. Both of these components are still in the process of securing funding for implementation.

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[7] http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/publications/NSDS%202%20Ghana.pdf
[8] https://www.aiti-kace.com.gh/

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