



BACKGROUND

As the 2015 target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, deliberations and negotiations are intensifying on what the successor framework should be. Broad consensus exists that the post-2015 framework should include goals, targets and indicators, like the MDGs. But the architecture for the post-2015 agenda looks set to differ from the MDGs in some significant ways. The framework will likely be universal, applying to all countries, not just developing ones. It appears likely that countries will have greater space to determine their own post-2015 targets, and the corresponding indicators by which they measure progress. The range of issues prioritized in the global framework will be broader, and in many ways more complex, than the issues captured by the MDGs. To better understand how progress is distributed within society, the post-2015 goals will be measured in a disaggregated way.

To support this post-2015 framework, a “data revolution” has been called for. The revolution, it is hoped, will enhance the quality, diversity and accessibility of information available to monitor economic, social and environmental performance at the national and global levels. This should enable governments and decision makers to better track development progress and make more informed policy decisions, as well as equip people with the information and evidence they need to hold their governments and relevant global agencies to account.

THE INITIATIVE

To contribute to this effort, the *Centre for Policy Dialogue* (CPD, Dhaka) and *The North-South Institute* (NSI, Ottawa) in association with the network *Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals* (*Southern Voice*) and the *Partnership for African Social and Governance Research* (PASGR, Nairobi), are leading an initiative – Post-2015 Data Test – to unpack the data revolution at the country level through an early examination of candidate post-2015 goals, targets and indicators.

With the support of the International Development Research Centre’s Think Tank Initiative, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and PASGR, the initiative will apply a select set of potential post-2015 goals, targets and indicators to a number of low, middle and high income countries – Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Peru, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Tanzania, and Turkey. In doing so, it will assess the adequacy of data available for measuring post-2015 progress at the country level, seeking to inform debates and decisions on the architecture and priorities of the “data revolution.” It will also identify opportunities and challenges that may arise from a universal, country-relevant post-2015 framework. Through the process, the initiative seeks to enhance the capacity of Southern think-tanks – who will conduct the country studies – to contribute to the global policy debates shaping the post-2015 agenda, while also ensuring that the global processes are informed by country-level realities.

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE POST-2015 DATA TEST

Data adequacy, including disaggregated data, for measuring post-2015 progress at the country level.
Feasibility and relevance of selected candidate “zero” or “global minimum standard” targets in different country contexts.
Challenges of implementing a universal but country-relevant post-2015 framework, particularly from a measurement perspective.
Improvements in data quality, accessibility and transparency at country level and their drivers.
Potential of technology-enabled and non-traditional modes of data collection to support measurement of the post-2015 agenda.
Different stakeholders’ expectations for the “data revolution,” including likely opportunities and constraints.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The inception phase of the initiative is complete. Plans for the initiative were discussed at a methodology and planning workshop in New York in November 2013. Supported by the *United Nations Foundation* and the *Hewlett Foundation*, the workshop was attended by statistical, research and policy experts from national statistical authorities, think-tanks, UN agencies, universities, diplomatic missions, and philanthropic foundations from around the world. Participants provided detailed feedback on how to situate the initiative within the broader post-2015 and data revolution discussions, refine the methodology and maximize policy usefulness and impact.

The initiative is moving forward quickly to ensure that the research results and policy recommendations can inform national approaches and inter-governmental discussions on the post-2015 framework broadly, and the data requirement specifically, throughout 2014. A number of country teams have already hosted inception workshops at the country level and are engaging with others working in the areas of data assessment to ensure that the initiative is complementary. The initiative’s website – www.post2015datatest.com – will be launched at the end of March. The methodology and implementation guide for the country studies will also be made publicly available on the website. Others are encouraged to refine and apply it.

INITIATIVE TIMELINE

