



Broad and inclusive measures of well-being

In support of SDG target 17.19 and the Secretary-General's call in his Our Common Agenda report, UN DESA supported the system-wide effort on finding measures that complement GDP, which culminated in the launch of the Secretary-General's policy brief *Valuing What Counts: Framework to Progress Beyond Gross Domestic Product* in May 2023, drafted by UN DESA, UNCTAD and UNDP.

In parallel to this effort, UN DESA also supported the High-level Forum on Official Statistics in February 2023 to explore broader measures of progress, and addressed both the need from data users for social and environmental measures to complement traditional measures of economic performance, as well as the approaches national statistical offices have taken in responding to these demands for broader measures.

Since June 2023, the Department has also supported the UN Network of Economic Statisticians to look at

various initiatives to measure and monitor people's well-being and quality of life; measure progress made in the development of standards to measure enterprises' non-financial performance (Environment, Social, and Governance, or ESG); compile well-being dashboards by looking at examples in selected countries; and compile distributional measures of macroeconomic aggregates such as income, consumption, savings, and wealth.

Celebrating 20 years of excellence in public service and promoting innovation

For two decades, the United Nations Public Service Awards Programme (UNPSA) has celebrated excellence in public service by recognizing the creative achievements and contributions of public institutions to address the social, economic and environmental needs of society. In the last 20 years, the UNPSA has gathered over 500 global initiatives showcasing the vital role of public service innovation in promoting sustainable development and inclusion. Throughout the years, UN DESA has supported

the organization of the UNPSA and recognized initiatives in support of tackling global challenges including poverty, climate change, and public health. Past winners include projects that improved access to healthcare, promoted gender equality, strengthened public financial management, and leveraged technology to enhance transparency and accountability in governance. In 2022, the Awards paid special tribute to initiatives that addressed the COVID-19 pandemic. As the programme marks its 20th anniversary in 2023, which also coincides with the SDG Summit in September and the mid-point review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a comprehensive review of the programme was undertaken to assess its effectiveness and to better promote and disseminate innovations in the public sector.

Strengthening digital capacity development programmes

In 2022-2023, UN DESA implemented a digital learning hub to deliver client-centered, agile, and effective e-Learning activities for Member States and other stakeholders. This initiative aligns with the commitment outlined in the Secretary-General's Strategy on New Technologies to enhance UN system support to government capacity development. The digital learning hub modernizes UN DESA's learning methods and platforms, recognizing the growing importance of technology as a strategic tool for capacity development activities. The success of various e-Learning programmes – developed to complement in-person capacity development activities – has led to the establishment of a central support structure to monitor best practices, scale innovations and create a more user-centered approach.

UN DESA now offers engaging, flexible, and highly effective digital capacity development programmes that drive transformative change and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. So far, more than 2,100 individuals from 141 Member States have benefited from learning opportunities on DESA's digital learning hub, earning more than 1,100 certifications across 44 learning offerings.

Pioneering innovative tools for policy design in developing countries



Image credit: UN DESA

In February 2023, UN DESA introduced the Overlapping Generations Model for South Africa (OG-ZAF). It demonstrates how to adapt the open-source "OG-Core" macroeconomic model to countries with more limited data. OG-ZAF is a sophisticated economic model that incorporates comprehensive demographic data for analysis. This initiative showcased UN DESA's capability to support policymakers analyze policy changes on macroeconomics and population.

The success of OG-ZAF opens the door to adapt the innovative model for other developing countries, leveraging flexibility, accessibility, and compatibility with data from sources like the UN, World Bank, and IMF— crucial in countries where data is scarce.

