

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Indicator 16.7.2: Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

Institutional information

Organization(s):

UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

Concepts and definitions

Definition:

This survey-based indicator measures self-reported levels of ‘external political efficacy’, that is, the extent to which people think that politicians and/or political institutions will listen to, and act on, the opinions of ordinary citizens.

To address both dimensions covered by this indicator, SDG indicator 16.7.2 uses two well-established survey questions, namely: 1) one question measuring the extent to which people feel they *have a say* in what the government does (focus on *inclusive* participation in decision-making) and 2) another question measuring the extent to which people feel the political system allows them to have an *influence* on politics (focus on *responsive* decision-making).

All efforts should be made to disaggregate survey results on these two questions by sex, income level, education level, place of residence (administrative region e.g. province, state, district; urban/rural), disability status, nationally relevant population groups and age.

Rationale:

SDG indicator 16.7.2 refers to the concept of ‘political efficacy’, which dates back to the 1950s, when the concept was discussed jointly with political trust as a key measure of the overall health of a democratic system (Craig et al, 1990). It can be defined as the “feeling that political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change” (Campbell, Gurin and Miller, 1954, p.187). This perception that people can impact decision-making is important as it makes it worthwhile for them to perform their civic duties (Acok et al, 1985).

The ability to participate in society, to have a say in the shaping of policies and to dissent without fear are essential freedoms. Political voice also provides a corrective to public policy: it can ensure the accountability of officials and public institutions, reveal what people need and value, and call attention to significant deprivations. Political voice also reduces the potential for conflicts and enhances the prospect of building consensus on key issues, with payoffs for economic efficiency, social equity, and inclusiveness in public life.¹

¹ See OECD, “Final report of the expert group on quality of life indicators”, 2017

Since the seminal studies of Campbell, Gurin and Miller (1954) and Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960), the political efficacy construct has been regarded both as an important predictor of political participation and as a positive outcome of participation (Finkel, 1985). High levels of political efficacy among citizens are regarded as desirable for democratic stability. Individuals that are confident about their ability to influence the actions of their government are more likely to support the democratic system of government (Easton, 1965).

There are two dimensions to political efficacy. First, subjective competence, or ‘internal efficacy’, can be defined as the confidence of the individual in his or her own abilities to understand politics and to act politically. Second, system responsiveness, or ‘external efficacy’, can be defined as the individual’s belief in the responsiveness of the political system, i.e. policymaking processes and government decisions that respond to public demands or preferences (Lane 1959; Converse 1972; Balch 1974). **SDG indicator 16.7.2 focuses only on this second dimension, ‘external efficacy’.**

Levels of external efficacy across various population groups are important to measure as they are correlated with trust in government and government evaluations (Finkel, 1985; Quintilier & Hooghe, 2012), as well as perceptions of the legitimacy of public institutions (Mcevoy, 2016). Higher levels of system responsiveness are also expected to be associated with higher levels of political participation, including voting in elections (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982), and with people’s own life satisfaction (Flavin and Keane, 2011).

The OECD monitors levels of external political efficacy – “the personal feeling of having a say in what the government does” – as part of its biennial report on Measuring Well-Being ([OECD, How’s Life? 2017: Measuring Well-Being](#), p.182). A survey question on system responsiveness, sourced from the OECD Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC)², is used by the OECD to produce one of two ‘headline indicators’ of civic engagement and governance for close to 40 OECD countries and/or partner countries (the other headline indicator used by the OECD is voter turnout). The specific question used by the OECD asks respondents: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? People like me don’t have any say in what the government does”, which is answered through a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 for “strongly agree” to 5 for “strongly disagree”).

Since 2016, the European Social Survey³ has integrated in its core module two questions on system responsiveness, namely “How much would you say the political system in [country] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?” and “How much would you say that the political system in [country] allows people like you to have an influence on politics?”, each answered through a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Not at all’, ‘Very little’, ‘Some’, ‘A lot’, ‘A great deal’, in its last Round 9 in 2018. In its last round 9 in 2018, the ESS was conducted in 29 European countries.⁴

As part of its 7th wave (2018-19), the [World Values Survey Association](#) (WVSA) administered in 15 countries worldwide⁵ the first question on external political efficacy used by the ESS (“How much would

² The question on external political efficacy was included in the past two rounds of the OECD Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC), with each data collection round including different countries: in 2008-2013, the PIAAC covered 20 OECD countries plus 3 OECD sub-entities, namely Flanders, England and Northern Ireland, and the Russian Federation; and in 2012-2016, the PIAAC covered 6 additional countries, as well as Lithuania (an OECD accession country).

³ See https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire/

⁴ The European Social Survey in its Round 9 (2018) was run in Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

⁵ The World Values Survey Association administered the first question on external political efficacy used by the ESS in the following 15 countries: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru.

you say the political system in [country] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?”). This question has since been incorporated in the core WVS questionnaire for all countries, and the WVSA will incorporate the second question used by the ESS (“*How much would you say that the political system in [country] allows people like you to have an influence on politics?”*) in its next survey wave.

Concepts

Decision-making: It is implicit in indicator 16.7.2 that ‘decision-making’ refers to decision-making in the public governance realm (and not all decision-making).

Inclusive decision-making: Decision-making processes which provide people with an opportunity to ‘have a say’, that is, to voice their demands, opinions and/or preferences to decision-makers.

Responsive decision-making: Decision-making processes where politicians and/or political institutions listen to and act on the stated demands, opinions and/or preferences of people.

Disaggregation dimensions

People’s perceived capacity to shape government decisions is affected by their personal characteristics and socio-economic background. As such, the indicator calls for disaggregation of survey results by age, sex, nationally relevant population groups and disability status. The following international human rights instruments contain provisions on enhancing opportunities for participation by individuals and groups holding such characteristics:

The universal right and opportunity to participate in public affairs

Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) recognizes “the right and opportunity, without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives”.

Sex

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government (Article 7). States parties agree to take all appropriate measures to overcome historical discrimination against women and obstacles to women’s participation in decision-making processes (Article 8), including legislation and temporary special measures (Article 4). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also call for women’s equal access to public service jobs, by setting a target of a minimum of 30 percent of women in leadership positions.

Age

The 2015 Security Council Resolution 2250 urges Member States to consider ways to increase inclusive representation of *youth* in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflict and counter violent extremism.

Furthermore, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Political Declaration, adopted by the international community at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002, recognize for the first time in history that “ageing has profound consequences for every aspect of individual, community,

national and international life”.⁶ The Madrid Plan of Action in particular stresses the importance of research, data collection and analysis in supporting policy and programme development as a key priority for national Governments and international assistance. Following the adoption of the Plan of Action, the General Assembly, at successive sessions, has called for the international community and the United Nations system to “support national efforts to provide funding for research and data-collection initiatives on ageing” (see, e.g., Assembly resolution 69/146, para. 38).

‘Population group’ status

The Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) provide that persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples have the right to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

Disability status

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) calls upon State Parties to ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others. Under Article 31 of the Convention, State Parties commit to collecting disaggregated information, including statistical and research data to give effect to the Convention, and assume responsibility for the dissemination of these statistics.

Comments and limitations:

Excludes measurement of ‘internal political efficacy’

There are two dimensions to political efficacy. First, subjective competence, or ‘internal efficacy’, can be defined as the confidence of the individual in his or her own abilities to understand politics and to act politically. Second, system responsiveness, or ‘external efficacy’, can be defined as the individual’s belief in the responsiveness of the political system, i.e. policymaking processes and government decisions that respond to public demands or preferences (Lane 1959; Converse 1972; Balch 1974). *SDG indicator 16.7.2 focuses only on the second dimension, ‘external efficacy’.*

This methodology therefore stops short of measuring ‘internal political efficacy’ (also called ‘subjective competence’), which can be defined as the confidence or belief that an individual has in his or her own abilities to understand politics and to participate in the political process.

Subjective competence is expected to be correlated with political interest (ESS, 2016). Higher levels of subjective competence are also expected to be associated with higher levels of political participation, including voting in elections. As such, policymakers interested in identifying factors driving high or low levels of political participation should not base their diagnostics solely on levels of external efficacy measured by SDG 16.7.2, as levels of internal efficacy (*not* measured by SDG 16.7.2) also come into play.

Translation challenges

The idiom ‘having a say’ can be difficult to translate into other languages, given it can also have various meanings in English (such as expressing one’s views, or being in command, among others). To ensure global comparability of results on this question, getting good quality local language translations is a critical step in the measurement of SDG 16.7.2. To ensure the best possible quality of local language translations, NSOs should be cautious not to use formal or ‘academically correct’ versions of the local languages; rather, they should focus on the everyday (colloquial) use of the language.

To ensure equivalence of meaning during translation, the following protocol is recommended:

⁶ See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/03/Report-of-the-United-Kingdom-of-Great-Britain-and-Northern-Ireland-on-ageing-related-statistics-and-age-disaggregated-data.pdf>

- NSOs should make sure that translators understand the concepts, rationale and meaning behind each question before they embark on translating.
- Initial drafts of each local language translations should be given to independent reviewers for blind back translation back into the national language. These translators should not have seen the original language version of the questionnaire.
- The original team of translators should then further refine their translations based on the review of the back translations.
- These revised translations should then be pre-tested. Feedback from the pre-tests should lead to final refinements of the translations to produce the final versions that will go to the field.

It is important to recognize that it takes time to go through these steps and get good quality translations. NSOs should start this process well ahead of the planned fieldwork dates so that the procedures can be carefully followed.

Translation for the two questions is readily available in all languages used by the 29 European countries covered by the European Social Survey, as well as in Arabic, Catalan, Malay, Chinese/ Mandarin, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Indonesian, Urdu, Bengali, Russian, Swahili and Kazakh languages.

Social desirability bias

Surveys are the most common and most reliable method of gathering public opinion data representative of the population from which the sample is drawn. However, when studying public opinion with surveys, the researcher assumes that respondents answer truthfully to the questions that interviewers pose. It has been shown that this assumption does not hold in many instances. Survey measures of self-reported voter turnout for example are highly biased in that a significant portion of survey respondents in the US have been found to state they have voted, when they have in fact not.⁷ Similarly, social scientists have determined that many common survey items are plagued by such bias such as those that probe for an individual's attitude towards race relations⁸, corruption, and electoral support.

'Social desirability bias', as this is known in the literature, arises whenever survey respondents do not reveal their true beliefs but rather provide a response that they believe to be more socially acceptable, or the response that they believe the interviewers wish to hear. Naturally, this poses a threat to the reliability and validity of survey items.

It is possible that the two questions used to measure SDG indicator 16.7.2 could be affected by social desirability bias. However, pilot-testing of the two questions across all regions and diverse national contexts, as well as statistical analysis of existing survey results on these two questions (using national datasets from the ESS), have not detected any systematic occurrence of social desirability bias. A useful way of detecting more positive results inflated by social desirability bias is to compare the results obtained by an NSO to results obtained by different entities (e.g. by independent researchers from the WVSA or the ESS), provided the time lag between the two data collection efforts is not too wide. It is useful also to keep in mind that high levels of 'don't know' or 'refuse to answer' in a national dataset may be a possible sign that respondents do not feel comfortable revealing their true opinion on the questions posed.

Methodology

Guidelines on survey methodology

⁷ See Holbrook, A. L., & Krosnick, J. A. (2010). Social desirability bias in voter turnout reports tests using the item count technique. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 74 (1), 37{67}.

⁸ See Kuklinski, J. H., Cobb, M. D., & Gilens, M. (1997). Racial attitudes and the new south. *The Journal of Politics*, 59 (02), 323{349}.

- **Two questions:** SDG indicator 16.7.2 aims to measure both the inclusiveness *and* the responsiveness of decision-making. As such, the methodology for 16.7.2 consists in two separate survey questions addressing these two distinct dimensions, namely:
 1. **To measure inclusive participation in decision-making:** *How much would you say the political system in [country X] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?*
 2. **To measure responsive decision-making:** *And how much would you say that the political system in [country] allows people like you to have an influence on politics?*
- **Questions to be incorporated in a support survey:** These two questions to measure SDG 16.7.2 can be inserted into existing national surveys run by NSOs, using these surveys' additional batteries on demographics for subsequent disaggregation of results.
- **Target population:** Residents of the country aged 18 or older.
- **Sampling frame:** Data should be collected on the basis of a nationally representative probability sample of the population residing in private households within the country, irrespective of language, nationality or legal residence status. All private households and all persons aged 18 and over within the household are eligible for the question set. The sampling frame as well as methods of sample selection should ensure that every individual and household in the target population is assigned a known probability of selection that is not zero.
- **Translation:** All respondents have the right to hear the questionnaire in the language of their choice. In principle, every language group that is likely to constitute at least 5% of the sample should have a translated questionnaire. In practice, because of the complications and costs introduced by too many versions of the questionnaire, it is desirable to limit the number of local language translations to no more than six, and preferably fewer. On-the-spot translation by interviewers would severely compromise the quality of the data. Since it takes time to get good quality translations, NSOs should start this process well ahead of the planned fieldwork so that a rigorous translation protocol can be carefully followed. Translation for the two questions is readily available in all languages used by the 29 European countries covered by the European Social Survey, as well as in Arabic, Catalan, Malay, Chinese/ Mandarin, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Indonesian, Urdu, Bengali, Russian, Swahili and Kazakh languages.
- **Obtaining the informed consent of respondents:** Respondents must have the ability to opt out. The following introductory statement could precede the two SDG 16.7.2 questions:

Your answers will be confidential. They will be put together with [xx – size of sample] other people we are talking to, to get an overall picture. It will be impossible to pick you out from what you say, so please feel free to tell us what you think. Answering these two questions will take no more than 2 minutes. There is no penalty for refusing to participate. Do you wish to proceed?
- **Refer to interviewer instructions for additional guidance on terminology:** Interviewers should refer to the specific wording provided below if respondents do not understand certain terms. To ensure consistency in the way this methodology is applied across countries, interviewers should *not* try to explain the meaning of certain words in their own terms.
- **“Don’t know”, “refuse to answer” or “not applicable” should not be read out loud to respondents:** Providing a “don’t know” or “refuse to answer” option provides an easy way for respondents to avoid engaging with the subject of the question. As such, when respondents say they “don’t know”, enumerators should repeat the question and simply ask them to provide their best guess. The “don’t know” and “refuse to answer” options should be used only as a last resort. Interviewers should use

separate coding for “not applicable” (NA – 97), “don’t know” (DK – 98) and “not applicable” (NA – 99), as indicated in the questionnaire.

Questions

1. ***How much would you say the political system in [country X] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?***

- (1) Not at all***
- (2) Very little***
- (3) Some***
- (4) A lot***
- (5) A great deal***
- (6) Refusal***
- (7) Don’t know***
- (8) No answer***

2. ***And how much would you say that the political system in [country] allows people like you to have an influence on politics?***

- (1) Not at all***
- (2) Very little***
- (3) Some***
- (4) A lot***
- (5) A great deal***
- (6) Refusal***
- (7) Don’t know***
- (8) No answer***

Clarifications on question wording

“The political system in [country]”: A particular form of government. For example, democracy is a political system in which citizens govern themselves. Other political systems include republics, monarchies, communist systems and dictatorships.

“Having a say in what the government does” means having a channel to express one’s demands, opinions or preferences about what the government does, and feeling listened to.

“Have an influence on politics” means feeling that decision-makers listen to and act on one’s demands, opinions or preferences.

Computation method

NSOs should simply calculate the cumulative rating on each question (on a scale of 1 to 5), and then calculate the average rating for the two questions (again, on a scale of 1 to 5).

Global reporting on SDG 16.7.2 will require:

- Distributions of answers across all answer options, for each one of the two questions;
- Cumulative ratings provided on each one of the two questions; and
- Average rating for the two questions

**Note: It is important for NSOs to clearly report, for each question, the number of respondents who selected “don’t know” (DK), “no answer” (NA) or “refuse to answer” (RA), and to exclude such respondents from the calculation of average ratings. For instance, if 65 respondents out of 1000 respondents responded either one of these three options on the first question, the average rating for this first question will be calculated out of a total of 935 respondents, and the reporting sheet will indicate that for this particular question, x respondents responded DK, y responded NA, and z responded RA.*

Disaggregation categories

Indicator 16.7.2 aims to measure how individual beliefs in the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the political system differ across various demographic groups, including by sex, age, disability status and nationally relevant population groups. While empirical analysis confirmed the effect of these demographic variables on self-reported levels of external efficacy, other influential variables were identified, including income and education level. Moreover, since target 16.7 focuses on ‘decision-making at all levels’, disaggregation by place of residence (by administrative region e.g. by province, state, district; urban/rural) is also important to help identify areas in a given country where people feel most excluded from decision-making.

- **Sex:** Male/Female
- **Age groups:** It is recommended to follow UN standards for the production of age-disaggregated national population statistics, using the following age groups: (1) below 25 years old, (2) 25-34, (3) 35-44, (4) 45-54, (5) 55-64 and (6) 65 years old and above. Since age exhibits a negative relationship with external efficacy (evidence shows that older respondents report lower levels of political efficacy than younger respondents), a particular focus should be placed on older age brackets.
- **Disability status:** ‘Disability’ is an umbrella term covering long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation of disabled persons in society on an equal basis with others⁹. If possible, NSOs are encouraged to add the Short Set of Questions on Disability developed by the Washington Group to the survey vehicle used to administer the two questions selected for 16.7.2 to disaggregate results by disability status.
- **Nationally relevant population groups** (groups with a distinct ethnicity, language, religion, indigenous status, nationality or other characteristics): The population of a country is a mosaic of different population groups that can be identified according to racial, ethnic, language, indigenous or migration status, religious affiliation, or sexual orientation, amongst other characteristics. For the purpose of this indicator, particular focus is placed on minorities. *Minority groups* are groups that are numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the state—possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, even if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.¹⁰ While the nationality criterion included in the above definition has often been challenged, the requirement to be in a non-dominant position remains important (United Nations, 2010).¹¹ Collecting survey data disaggregated by population groups should be subject to the legality of compiling such data in a particular national context and to a careful assessment of the potential risks of collecting such data for the safety of respondents.
- **Income level:** By income quintile
- **Education level:** Primary education, Secondary education, Tertiary education

⁹ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/45f973632.html>

¹⁰ Francesco Capotorti, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (1977).

¹¹ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation, 2010, HR/PUB/10/3, <<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4db80ca52.html>>

- **Place of residence:** by administrative region e.g. by province, state, district; urban/rural

Treatment of missing values:

- At country level

There is no treatment of missing values.

- At regional and global levels

There is no imputation of missing values.

Regional / global aggregates:

The simple average of results on the two questions selected to measure SDG 16.7.2 will be provided for each region, and globally.

Sources of discrepancies:

There is no internationally estimated data for this indicator.

Methods and guidance available to countries for the compilation of data at national level:

To disaggregate survey results by disability status, it is recommended that countries use the [Short Set of Questions on Disability](#) elaborated by the Washington Group.

Methods and guidance available to countries for the compilation of data at international level:

European Social Survey: Source questionnaire and accompanying guidance, in various languages: https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire/

OECD's Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC): Questionnaire and accompanying guidance, in various languages: <http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/samplequestionsandquestionnaire.htm>

Quality assurance:

NSOs have the main responsibility to ensure the statistical quality of the data compiled for this indicator. One possible quality assurance mechanism would be to compare results obtained by the NSO with readily available survey results on external political efficacy generated by relevant national, regional or global unofficial data producers (see potential global and regional unofficial sources below).

Data Sources

Description:

This indicator needs to be measured on the basis of data collected by NSOs through official household surveys.

Collection process:

- NSOs should identify suitable survey vehicles to incorporate the two questions for measuring SDG indicator 16.7.2. Examples of potentially well-suited large-scale survey vehicles include:

Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS); Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS); Household Budget Survey (HBS); Labour Force Survey (LFS); etc.

- Several UN agencies and other international organizations are supporting the implementation of such potential survey vehicles (e.g. the World Bank support LSMS surveys, UNFPA supports DHS surveys, UNICEF supports MICS surveys, ILO supports LFS, etc.) NSOs can approach these agencies to discuss the possibility of incorporating the two questions for measuring SDG 16.7.2.
- For results to be nationally representative, it is important for the survey vehicle to use probability sampling, using sampling frames developed by the NSO, and giving everyone in the household an equal chance to be selected (integrating the questions for SDG 16.7.2 in a household survey that targets household heads only should be avoided at all costs).

Data Availability

Description and time series:

- There is no existing globally comparable official dataset on the “Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group.” While a large number of countries have experience with measuring external political efficacy, there is large variability in the ways NSOs and government agencies in individual countries collect data on this concept, in terms of question wording and response formats, etc. This variability poses a significant challenge for cross-country comparability of such data.
- However, a number of non-official global and regional survey data producers have already incorporated the two questions for 16.7.2 reporting in their questionnaires, and are already producing the necessary data. In line with the [2017 Guiding Principles of Data Reporting and Data Sharing for the Global Monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (Version 1) developed by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) which states that “non-official sources may be used by international organizations in compiling official statistics to reach the following objectives: ...d) to construct international data series in fields which are not covered by existing official sources; and...e) to impute national data where national official data do not exist or are of proven poor quality”, it is suggested to consider using these non-official sources for countries where the NSO has not yet incorporated the two questions selected for 16.7.2. **As outlined in the above-cited Guiding Principles, NSOs would need to validate this unofficial data before it is submitted to the international level for SDG reporting.**
- For OECD/EU countries:
 - The [European Social Survey](#) has integrated in its core module – a core set of key questions used to generate time series to track trends over time¹² – the two questions selected for SDG indicator 16.7.2 since 2016. The ESS was conducted in 29 European countries¹³ in its last Round 9 in 2018. The ESS is conducted every two years, which is ideal for SDG reporting.

¹² The ESS was primarily designed as a time series that could monitor changing attitudes and values across Europe. For this reason, its questionnaire comprises a core module, containing items measuring a range of topics of enduring interest to the social sciences as well as the most comprehensive set of socio-structural ('background') variables of any cross-national survey. The exact number of items can change from round to round, but each question has a unique variable name to assist users working with data over time.

¹³ The European Social Survey in its Round 9 (2018) was run in Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

- The OECD Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC) is already producing data on the first question (on “having a say in what the government does”) and has committed to aligning the wording of this particular question with the formulation to be used for reporting on SDG 16.7.2. The PIAAC was run in 39 countries (incl. OECD member states and OECD ‘partners’ in other regions) in its last round, which span three waves from 2008 to 2019¹⁴. However, the PIAAC in any given country is conducted only once every 10 years (with three ‘waves’ of the PIAAC survey taking place during that 10-year period, each one covering a different subset of countries).
- Both sources are highly regarded by the OECD and the EU for their high-quality standards, and both sources are already used by the OECD in its flagship publication “How’s Life? Measuring Well-Being”.
- Globally, the World Values Survey Association pilot-tested in 2018-19 and incorporated the first question (on “having a say in what the government does”) in its standard questionnaire, and plans to also incorporate the second question starting next year.

Calendar

Data collection:

To ensure timely capture of changes in levels of external political efficacy, NSOs should report data on indicator 16.7.2 at least once every two years.

NSOs will need to choose the most appropriate time/period for administering the 16.7.2 questions. Electoral periods should be avoided, and NSOs should aim for the middle of an electoral term. Experience shows that surveys conducted at the beginning of an electoral term generate more positive responses than surveys conducted at the end of a term.

Data release:

Data will be reported at the international level in April each year. The first full release of data for the indicator will take place in April 2021.

Data providers

National Statistical Offices

Data compilers

UNDP

References

¹⁴ In 2008-2013 (round 1), the PIAAC covered 20 OECD countries plus 3 OECD sub-entities, namely Flanders, England and Northern Ireland, and the Russian Federation; in 2012-2016 (round 2), the PIAAC covered 6 additional countries, as well as Lithuania (an OECD accession country); in 2016-19, the PIAAC is covering Ecuador, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Peru and the United States.

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Related indicators

SDG indicator 16.7.2 complements indicator **16.7.1** (under the same target 16.7 -- “Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”) which draws on administrative data sources to measure the proportional representation of various population groups in public institutions. The two indicators are highly complementary as proportional representation alone is no guarantee that all population groups represented in public institutions have equal decision-making power, or that all population groups in the national population have equal opportunities to voice their interests and preferences and to influence public decision-making. Indicator 16.7.2 provides important additional information by focusing on the inclusiveness and responsiveness of decision-making, as perceived by the population (drawing from population surveys).

Indicator 16.7.2 can also be used to complement SDG target 10.2 on the promotion of the “social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”, which only has one indicator measuring *economic* exclusion (**SDG 10.2.1** – Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities). Indicator 16.7.2 therefore provides important additional information to measure progress against this target by providing data on *political* inclusion.

Similarly, 16.7.2 can also be used to complement SDG target 10.3 on “Ensuring equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard”, which only has one indicator measuring felt discrimination on various grounds (**SDG 10.3.1** Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed within the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law). Indicator 16.7.2 therefore provides relevant additional information to measure progress against this target by helping to identify whether certain population groups might feel discriminated against in terms of their inclusion in public decision-making and the extent to which political institutions are responsive to their demands/preferences.