GOAL TRACKER

A VISUAL DATA TOOL FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS

Goal Tracker is a ground breaking digital platform that enables countries and their citizens to visually track implementation of the Global Goals. Designed to be country-led and user-friendly, the online platform is open-access and can be tailored to any specific country, translating complex data on development priorities into innovative and accessible information.

Broad access to this sort of tool is critical in monitoring and achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By turning data into useful, actionable information, it enables evidence-based decision making and ensures greater transparency and accountability around the implementation of the goals and targets.

FAQ

HOW DOES IT WORK?
Goal Tracker is built on a foundation of core features and data visualisation tools that can be adapted to any country. Together with local partners we jointly analyze available data and then customises the platform for each country. It draws on national statistics but can also pull data from many of other sources such as the United Nations, OECD and the World Bank, as well as innovative sources like citizen generated data, satellite data, telcodata and big data.

WHAT DOES IT SHOW?
The digital platform delivers intuitive and powerful visualisations that range from static charts to interactive data stories. It allows users to dive into and understand data around the SDGs in a specific country by goal, geography, gender and age. It also provides visualisations of data gaps across the Goals, Targets and Indicators, making it clear where data is missing. In addition, the platform allows countries to share descriptive information on their policies and actions to meet the goals and targets.

WHAT ELSE CAN IT DO?
By incorporating Google Analytics and other similar analytics software, the platform captures useful metrics that track the number and type of users accessing the platform. The platform is also fully integrated with social media, allowing for content and data to easily be downloaded and shared with unique messages for every page. User can also automatically create presentations and reports based on the web content and data visualizations.

HOW IS IT UNIQUE?
Developing effective, yet user-friendly, data-driven communication is hard. For data visualisation to be effective it needs to be developed in close collaboration with the end users, which is why each feature and data visualisation tool of the platform is developed together with the partner country. It uses a simple and modular solution that can be adapted to any country and is built from a selection of proven web technologies.

WHO HAS OWNERSHIP OF THE PLATFORM?
The online platform is open-access and open source but each country-specific platform is owned and run by the government in the respective country, usually through its Ministry for Planning and/or National Statistics Office. Local partners receive training and are given the technical know-how to take ownership of the work. Opportunities are also provided for partners in different countries to get specific training on state of the art data visualisation and data story techniques, as well as for government officials and other key stakeholders to understand the data and make use of the platform. Through peer to peer learning across countries and regions we will also help countries get up to speed quickly.

WHAT IS THE RESULT?
Citizens and decision makers have access to a communication platform that can explain if and where there is progress on the implementation of the SDGs and why specific targets and inter-ventions need to be prioritised. It will offer a common space for multiple stakeholders to engage with the 2030 Agenda and to hold each other to account. Ultimately the platform can contribute to better development outcomes for people and the planet.

WHO SUPPORTS THE PLATFORM?
Goal Tracker is developed by Data Act Lab, which specialises in data communication and data storytelling. It has developed pioneering data visualization tools and web platforms for world-leading think tanks and development organisations. Data Act Lab is also one of the anchor partners of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Devel-opment Data, a network of 200 data champions working to harness the data revolution for sustainable development. Data Act Lab has partnered with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation to expand the initiative and enable more countries to develop their own SDG platforms. The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation is a non-governmental organisation established in memory of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, which seeks to advance dialogue and policy around sustainable peace and development.

THE TECHNICALITIES

WHAT IS THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND GOAL TRACKER?
The platform is built on modern web technologies.

The frontend currently uses these core libraries:
- React
- NextJs
- D3
- VictoryCharts

Whereas the backend is built on top of:
- Postgres
- Contentful
- Airflow

HOW IS IT TECHNICALLY SET UP?
The platform is built on open source technologies and is monitored 24/7. The system combines multiple different programming languages and tools to create the best possible experience/ ecosystem.

The source code is managed on Gitlab by a team of frontend and backend developers. Goaltracker is currently available as a hosted solution (centralised maintenance and servers = lower maintenance costs). A self-hosted option is on the roadmap, available 2019.

HOW IS THE PLATFORM MAINTAINED?
The platform source code is continuously updated with new core deployments on a weekly or monthly basis by a team of developers in Stockholm, Sweden.

WHAT IS REQUIRED BY COUNTRIES WHO WANT TO USE GOAL TRACKER?
Strong governmental commitment to the 2030 Agenda and a relatively well-functioning statistical agency that can provide indicator data and meta data in one of the supported JSON/CSV or SMDX formats is required. In addition:
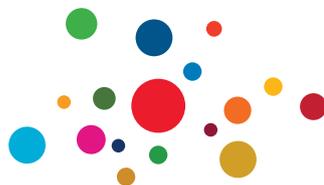
- one full-time point of contact with strong knowledge in English, management, web development project management

- one full-time data engineer/data scientist with strong knowledge in Python, SDMX, open data standards

HOW DOES THE PLATFORM INTEGRATE COUNTRY DATA?
Country users can upload copies of official datasets to the platform via a user-friendly dashboard. The platform can also connect to country APIs (interfaces where official data is already available) via custom code setup and readymade tools. In addition, the platform can connect to 3rd party APIs to retrieve common code lists and other useful data and metadata.

WHAT IF A COUNTRY HAS LIMITED DATA?
The platform supports qualitative pages that enable a country to include information on its challenges and opportunities in implementation of the SDGs. Goaltracker can also integrate country data from various traditional and non-traditional data sources, such as data from the United Nations, OECD and the World Bank, as well as innovative sources like citizen generated data, satellite data and big data.

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