Data Considerations for the SDGs

In 2018, *Social Justice Ireland* released two research publications on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – the *Sustainable Progress Index Measuring Progress: Economy, Society and Environment in Ireland* and *Ireland vs EU28: Measuring Ireland's Progress towards Achieving the SDGs.* The objectives of our research were twofold: (i) to provide an analysis of Ireland's track record in achieving the SDGS over time and (ii) to understand Ireland's performance on the SDGs in an EU context. Based on our experience, the following are some comments and suggestions on data collection for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We believe the monitoring of the SDGs would benefit if consideration is given to these improvements in data collection and availability.

The main difficulty we encountered in our research was the unavailability of data on indicators to enable analysis *over time*, and in particular, over the *longer-term.* Also, in some cases, the latest available data was quite old - 2012 or 2013. In both instances, this implied comparisons with other countries, and over time, were hampered. Clearly, more data is becoming available in recent years, facilitating analysis of the performance of the SDGs in the short-term (3-5 years) and commentary on the achievements of the objectives of the SDGs. But there are still gaps, and *indicators need to be available on a regular (annual) basis*. The following are some suggestions for data improvements that would facilitate more effective and comprehensive commentary.

SDG Number	Data Gaps/Suggestions for Improvement
1 NO POVERTY	• Housing costs measures – including purchase and rental costs as % of disposable income, disaggregated by type of cost, for total population and by income decile, by location
2 ZERO HUNGER	• Prevalence of obesity, obesity rates by BMI – by age/age groups, by income groups (health risks) • Sustainable agriculture measures, including a measure of the proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture; soil erosion measure
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	• Smoking prevalence - by age, sex, income/income decile • Alcohol abuse – by age, sex, income/income decile • Measures on access/coverage of essential health services, by income decile and location
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	• Data on adult literacy by sex, age, income, location

5 GENDER EQUALITY	• Prevalence of girls/women who have experienced physical or sexual violence • Gender pay gaps by occupation, sector, location
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	• Data on water exploitation, water quality, level water stress • Indicator on connection to waste water treatment facilities (% of population) • Proportion of wastewater that is safely treated
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	• Investment in energy efficiency by sector as % of GDP
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	• An effective and inclusive measure of decent work, by sex • Data on % of employees in jobs where they are considered 'over-qualified'
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	• Indicator on perception of all types of infrastructure, in urban and rural areas
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	• Benefit from inclusion of indicator on discrimination – experiences of people at work, in accessing services, other aspects of life, etc.
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	• Public transport – access, expenditure and efficiency indicators (at least annual data) • Perceptions of transport adequacy, by age, sex, disabilities, location • Indicators of housing adequacy, availability and affordability in cities • Extent of recycling by households, by income decile, location
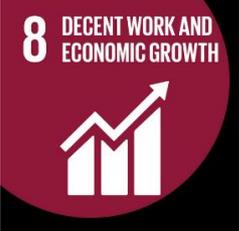
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	• Number of educational projects in schools (primary, secondary) on sustainable development • Data on numbers of companies publishing sustainability reports • Measure of food waste/loss
13 CLIMATE ACTION	• More data required in order to comment on climate impacts and climate initiatives; climate mitigation (and specifically GHG emissions) is only theme that can be tracked currently
14 LIFE BELOW WATER	• Little data available for this SDG; need measures of ocean acidity, over-fishing, marine conservation, public expenditure on conservation
15 LIFE ON LAND	• Soil erosion by water, biodiversity impacts, land degradation, public expenditure on conversation • Forest area subject to a management plan
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	• Benefit from inclusion of measures of government efficiency, especially re. expenditure by government departments
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	• ODA is main indicator used for this SDG • Benefit from inclusion of other indicators that capture: government commitment to the SDGs (including supporting data and evidence gathering and analysis); perception of the fairness of tax system, social welfare system; cooperation agreements between countries to achieve the SDGs