NSM NORDIC STATISTICAL MEETING 2026

Lessons from building SDG reporting platforms in the Nordics

Agnes Tassy, Statistics Denmark, ata@dst.dk

Kristín Ósk Ingvarsdóttir, Statistics Iceland, kristin.o.ingvarsdottir@hagstofa.is

Sara Frankl, Statistics Sweden, sara.frankl@scb.se

Jukka Hoffrén, Statistics Finland, jukka.hoffren@stat.fi

Live Margrethe Rognerud, Statistics Norway, Live.Rognerud@ssb.no

Frode Larsen, Statistics Norway, Frode.Larsen@ssb.no

Jørn Kristian Undelstvedt, Statistics Norway, jørn.kristian.undelstvedt@ssb.no

Jonas Karlsson, Statistics and Research Åland, Jonas.Karlsson@asub.ax

Eyð Maritudóttir Grønadal, Statistics Faroe Islands, eyd@hagstova.fo

Kári Holm Johannesen, Statistics Faroe Islands, khj@hagstova.fo

Abstract

This paper examines how the Nordic National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Åland Islands disseminate statistics for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on contributions from SDG experts in Nordic NSOs, the paper examines technical solutions for SDG reporting platforms, approaches to communication and outreach, spillover effects and lessons learned. The authors identify four important lessons learned from the Nordic experience with SDG data production, dissemination, and cooperation. Firstly, integrated reporting platforms with API connection to NSO's databank or PxWeb are more sustainable than manual updating. Secondly, complex SDG information requires graphical presentation and active communication to reach users; numerical data tables alone are not sufficient to communicate SDG progress effectively. Thirdly, SDG work has generated positive spillover effects, including new and innovative data sources, broader statistical coverage, and stronger collaboration. Fourthly, the Nordic SDG network has played and continues to play an important role in sharing methods and knowledge, particularly in smaller statistical offices. These lessons are highly relevant for future statistics production and provide practical lessons for statistical co-operation.

Keywords: Indicator frameworks, Reporting platforms, Dissemination, Sustainable Development Goals, Nordic cooperation

1. Introduction

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015 created new challenges for National Statistical Offices (NSOs), which were tasked with monitoring the progress toward the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) using the global indicator framework. This required NSOs to coordinate, produce, validate and disseminate a large and complex set of 252 indicators covering environmental, social, and economic domains of sustainable development. The Nordic NSOs of Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Åland have each adopted their own technical and organizational solutions for SDG data production and dissemination, including SDG reporting platforms. The Nordic SDG network collaboration has supported NSOs in exchanging experiences, addressing methodological issues, and sharing practical solutions. This paper compares Nordic NSOs' approaches to SDG work and dissemination, focusing on platforms, communication, challenges, spillover effects, and lessons learned. Particular attention is given to the sustainability of reporting platforms, communication practices, innovation spillovers, and the role of Nordic cooperation.

2. Background

The interconnected nature of the SDG indicators means extending beyond traditional data production to include coordination across government, integration of new data sources, and dissemination to diverse users. In addition to reporting on the global indicator framework, three Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) have also maintained national SDG indicator sets to reflect their country-specific priorities and policy needs.

The Nordic NSOs are well suited for this role due to strong institutional foundations, high levels of trust, advanced data infrastructure, and established quality standards. These strengths have enabled them to build advanced SDG monitoring systems. However, the breadth of the indicator framework and the users' need for disaggregated data have introduced new demands for effective dissemination. These common challenges have encouraged Nordic NSOs to develop different technical and organisational solutions while simultaneously benefiting from knowledge sharing through the Nordic SDG network.

3. SDG reporting platforms and technical solutions

Appendix 1 describes different approaches to managing and disseminating SDG indicators in the Nordics, including the development of national SDG reporting platforms. Some have fully or partially integrated SDG reporting into their existing statistical dissemination infrastructure, such as PxWeb, while others have developed standalone reporting platforms or adopted open-source solutions. **Table 1** summarizes the different approaches adopted by each NSO, and the degree of integration with existing dissemination infrastructure.

Table 1. SDG reporting platforms and their integration with statistical dissemination infrastructure

NSO	NSO DISSEMINATION INFRASTRUCTURE	SDG REPORTING PLATFORM	INTEGRATION
FINLAND	PxWeb	Integrated with and disseminated through PxWeb	Full
FAROE ISLANDS	PxWeb	Integrated with PxWeb and disseminated through OpenSDG	Full
ÅLAND	PxWeb	Integrated with and disseminated through PxWeb	Full
NORWAY	PxWeb	Hybrid solution using PxWeb data within CMS thematic pages	Partial
ICELAND	PxWeb	OpenSDG not systematically integrated with PxWeb	Limited
DENMARK	StatBank	Separate global and national SDG platforms	None
SWEDEN	PxWeb	Separate SDG platform within NSO's website architecture	None

Despite the differences in platform design, the Nordic NSOs have a common challenge of maintaining and updating SDG indicators in a resource-efficient manner. Automated solutions streamline the dissemination of data already available in NSOs' databases; while updating the underlying data tables in PxWeb and metadata remains a manual process. Depending on the NSO, this work is carried out either by the SDG specialist(s) or by subject-matter experts across the NSO. Furthermore, typically some 40 per cent of global indicators rely on external data providers that often do not offer API connections, meaning that data collection, validation, metadata maintenance must still be done manually.

The comparison of Nordic approaches suggests that solutions integrated with existing dissemination infrastructure, such as PxWeb or StatBank, are generally more sustainable than stand-alone data platforms. Integration reduces duplication of work, improves consistency between official statistics and SDG reporting, and lowers long-term maintenance costs. By contrast, data platforms that require separate manual updates of data and metadata are more resource intensive and vulnerable to funding or staffing changes.

4. Communication and outreach

SDG reporting platforms provide public access to the underlying indicators, but numerical tables alone are often insufficient for effectively communicating complex information. There is a broad consensus that SDG statistics are more effective when presented through graphs and summaries, rather than data tables alone. Accordingly, Nordic SDG reporting platforms combine graphical displays with downloadable data tables, and several NSOs (Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Norway) have also experimented with integrating SDG statistics with geospatial data to present selected indicators in a map form. Nordic NSOs further contribute statistical annexes to the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) that their governments submit to the UN, typically twice or three times during the implementation period of the 2030 Agenda.

Statistics Finland places strong emphasis on graphical presentation of the SDG statistics and sees that communicating SDG statistics to the public requires a broader range of dissemination channels than is typically used in official statistics, including reports, expert articles, blog texts, videos (YouTube, TikTok) etc. Finland's 2025 VNR and its statistical appendix present both the key findings and the full indicator set in graphical form. *Statistics Sweden* has similarly found that concise summaries are effective in attracting attention from politicians and media. In its 2019 annual follow-up report, Statistics Sweden summarized the country's main challenges towards meeting the goals in three bullet points. This created bite-sized information that was easily repeated in press releases and presentations. Statistics Sweden has also developed an online course on the 2030 agenda for public administration employees and civil society organizations.

Like many NSOs, *Statistics Denmark* does not publish its own SDG reports. Instead, data are supplied to an advisory body, who publishes annual progress reports based on selected SDG indicators. Statistics Denmark's outreach activities focus on hosting public events on SDG-themes such as planetary boundaries, biodiversity, and beyond GDP. At the request of the Danish National Audit Office, a simple "traffic light" website was developed to illustrate progress on individual indicators. *Statistics Norway* has with the help of The United Nations Association of Norway been able to reach out to Upper secondary school/high school students with interdisciplinary learning resources that comprise 15 tasks regarding the 17 SDGs and has to some extent presented the SDG-platform to government agencies, NGOs, and local administrations. In 2023-2024, a series of Instagram posts presenting the 17 SDGs were developed by student interns, demonstrating a resource-efficient approach to social media outreach.

At *Statistics Iceland* and *Statistics Faroe Islands,* social media outreach has been more limited. Although the SDGs as a brand is visually well suited for social media, both NSOs report that the SDG statistics can be perceived as politically sensitive, which may constrain communication by NSOs that seek to maintain political neutrality. Statistics Iceland has addressed this by linking social media posts to UN's international days (e.g. International Day of the Girl Child, World Toilet Day). Statistics Faroe Islands has instead prioritized improving the usability of its SDG data reporting through the integration of PxWeb and OpenSDG rather than active promotion. In Iceland, SDG indicators were used to support the government led initiative, Sjálfbært Ísland (EN: Sustainable Iceland), a national collaboration platform that brought together representatives from government, labour market organizations, and civil society to develop a sustainable development strategy in 2024. At *Statistics and Research Åland,* selected SDG indicators have been included in sustainability publications, although these have attracted limited public attention.

Across the Nordic countries, experiences consistently show that users engage more readily with SDG statistics when they are presented through visualisations, summaries, maps, videos, or targeted communication activities. The examples from Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway demonstrate that dissemination strategies

extending beyond traditional statistical tables are essential for communicating SDG progress effectively.

5. Spill-over effects, challenges and lessons learned

Several lessons emerge from the Nordic experience. Most importantly, the efficiency of data production and the user value of SDG data can be increased by using the same data platform as for regular statistics (PxWeb/Statbank), by integrating the production of SDG indicators within regular statistical production and by integrating the data platform and the reporting platform. The Nordic experience confirms several other positive spill-over effects, the most frequently reported benefits being increased statistical data production, expanded statistical coverage, the use of new and innovative data sources, and stronger collaboration among partners within and beyond the statistical system.

One important positive spillover effect is statistical innovation. *Statistics Denmark* has integrated register data with geospatial data using information from a journey planner app to produce SDG 11.2.1. *Statistics Iceland* has experimented with geospatial data for selected SDG indicators in collaboration with Natural Science Institute of Iceland and the University of Iceland. At *Statistics Faroe Islands*, SDG as a statistical area has led to the prioritization of statistical areas that were underdeveloped, such as education, energy, and health statistics, and has led to new collaborations with agencies such as the Faroe Marine Research Institute and Faroese Environmental Agency. *Statistics Sweden* and *Statistics Denmark* also report broader statistical coverage on minorities, persons with disabilities, children and vulnerable groups, reflecting the UN's guiding principle *"Leave no one behind"*. *Statistics Norway* and *Statistics and Research Åland* similarly report improved cooperation with ministries, agencies and increased attention to statistical domains that previously received less focus. *Statistics Finland* highlights the cooperation with partners within and outside official statistics to increase data coverage and wider use of statistics in government reporting, including parliamentary sustainability assessments.

Another positive spillover effect is the strengthened role of NSOs in the national data ecosystems. Across the Nordic countries, NSOs report closer cooperation both within and outside the NSO, reflecting a broader shift from NSOs acting primarily as

producers of statistics to acting as data coordinators and data stewards within the wider data ecosystem. Stakeholder commitment and communication are important parts of the SDG work. Collaboration regarding SDG data production and dissemination with other organisations can substantially speed up data collection, improve dissemination and increase the use of SDG statistics.

Integrating SDG reporting with established dissemination systems, such as PxWeb, improves efficiency by embedding the monitoring of the SDG indicators, rather than relying on one or a few coordinators to collect and process all indicators manually. It also supports more consistent metadata management, and reduces the resources required to maintain the reporting platforms. Maintenance of the platform is less vulnerable to fluctuating political or other priorities. However, total automation cannot be achieved because many indicators depend on external data sources, making validation by the NSO, essential to ensure sufficient data and dissemination quality.

Taken together, the Nordic experiences demonstrate that SDG work has generated significant positive spillover effects. These include statistical innovation, broader coverage of vulnerable groups, increased use of new data sources, stronger partnerships, and a more prominent coordinating role for NSOs within national data ecosystems.

Overall, the Nordic SDG network has provided substantial value for NSOs. The network has enabled the exchange of technical solutions, reporting practices, metadata approaches, and communication methods. This has been particularly beneficial for smaller statistical offices, which have been able to build capacity and avoid duplicating work by learning from the experiences of larger NSOs. These lessons are highly relevant for future indicator systems and modernising all production of statistics.

6. Conclusion

The Nordic NSOs have taken different technical approaches to manage, update and disseminate SDG data, reflecting differences in resources, dissemination infrastructure, agency policy, access to funding, and political context. Despite these differences, four common lessons emerge.

First, integrated reporting platforms with API connection to NSO's main databank or PxWeb are both more sustainable and more user friendly than manual updating. Second, sharing complex SDG information requires graphical presentation and active communication; numerical data tables alone are not sufficient to communicate SDG progress effectively. Third, SDG work generates positive spillover effects, including new data sources, broader statistical coverage and stronger collaboration both within and outside NSOs. Fourth, the Nordic SDG network has played an important role in sharing methods and building capacity, particularly in smaller statistical offices. These lessons are highly relevant for the future modernisation of official statistics, particularly in relation to integrated dissemination systems, user-oriented communication, cross-organisational collaboration, and the growing role of NSOs as coordinators within national data ecosystems.

References

Hoffrén, J (2026), Effective communication of SDG data. UNECE. Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs. Geneve 9-10 April 2026.

Hoffrén J. (2024), Using key indicators in SDG communication. Oslo, 23 October, 2024.

Hoffrén J. (2019), The development of national reporting platform for global SDG indicators in Finland. ISI 62nd World Statistics Congress. August 2019. Kuala Lumpur.

Statistics Sweden, PxWeb, https://www.scb.se/en/services/statistical-programs-for-px-files/px-web/

Tassy, A (2026), SDGs with geospatial information - examples from Denmark. UNECE. Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs. Geneve 9-10 April 2026.

Tassy, A (2025), National experiences producing SDG indicators using geospatial data Eurostat SDI Working Group meeting. Luxembourg 25 September 2025

Appendix 1 – SDG reporting platforms in Nordic NSOs

Statistics Finland, Statistics and Research Åland, and Statistics Faroe Islands have fully integrated SDG reporting into their PxWeb dissemination infrastructure. In Finland and Åland, PxWeb itself serves as the SDG reporting platform, allowing users to access SDG indicators as tables and graphs. In Faroe Islands, SDG data are automatically transferred from PxWeb to OpenSDG, an open-source platform for managing and publishing data and statistics related to the SDGs. This combines centralized data management in PxWeb with OpenSDG's built in visualization and international comparison features.
Statistics Iceland also uses OpenSDG as its SDG reporting platform, but unlike Faroe Islands, it is not fully integrated with PxWeb. Instead, SDG data are stored as CSV files and disseminated directly through OpenSDG. While some indicators based on statistics produced by Statistics Iceland are updated automatically through API connections to PxWeb, most indicators rely on external data providers and therefore require manual updates. All metadata are maintained manually.
Statistics Norway uses a hybrid solution based on PxWeb data within CMS thematic pages. Rather than developing a dedicated SDG reporting platform, the NSO built on existing thematic pages within its site. Data produced by Statistics Norway are automatically retrieved from PxWeb and displayed as tables, graphs, and key figures on the pages, while data from external data providers and all metadata are maintained manually.
Statistics Sweden **and** ***Statistics Denmark*** have both developed separate SDG reporting platforms within their website architecture. However, automatic integration with PxWeb was not technically possible when the platform was developed in 2021. As a result, SDG data and metadata had to be maintained individually. The platform was retired in 2025 due to lack of dedicated government funding. Denmark uses StatBank, its own statistical dissemination infrastructure rather than PxWeb, and has developed separate reporting platforms for global UN and for national indicators. These platforms consist primarily of static indicator lists that require manual updates of data and do not facilitate access to metadata.