



Inter-Agency Task Force on the  
Development of a Monitoring and  
Evaluation Framework for the Antigua and  
Barbuda Agenda for Small Island  
Developing States

(IATF-ABAS)

**Discussion Paper 2**

*Selection of Indicators*

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## Discussion Paper 2 - *Selection of Indicators*

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### 1. Introduction

This is the second of three discussion papers that will guide the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (IATF-ABAS).

This paper ***sets out a selection process and proposes a set of guiding principles and selection criteria for indicators at the global level for the M&E framework***. An indicator<sup>1</sup> is a measurable variable derived from observed facts that can be used to assess conditions and trends, track progress and inform policy decisions.

Indicator selection takes place once a list of targets has been finalized. Please refer to the first discussion paper for details on the stepwise approach to developing the ABAS M&E framework.

### 2. Process to select indicators

The process to search, screen, and select monitoring and evaluation indicators for the framework at the global level consists of four steps:

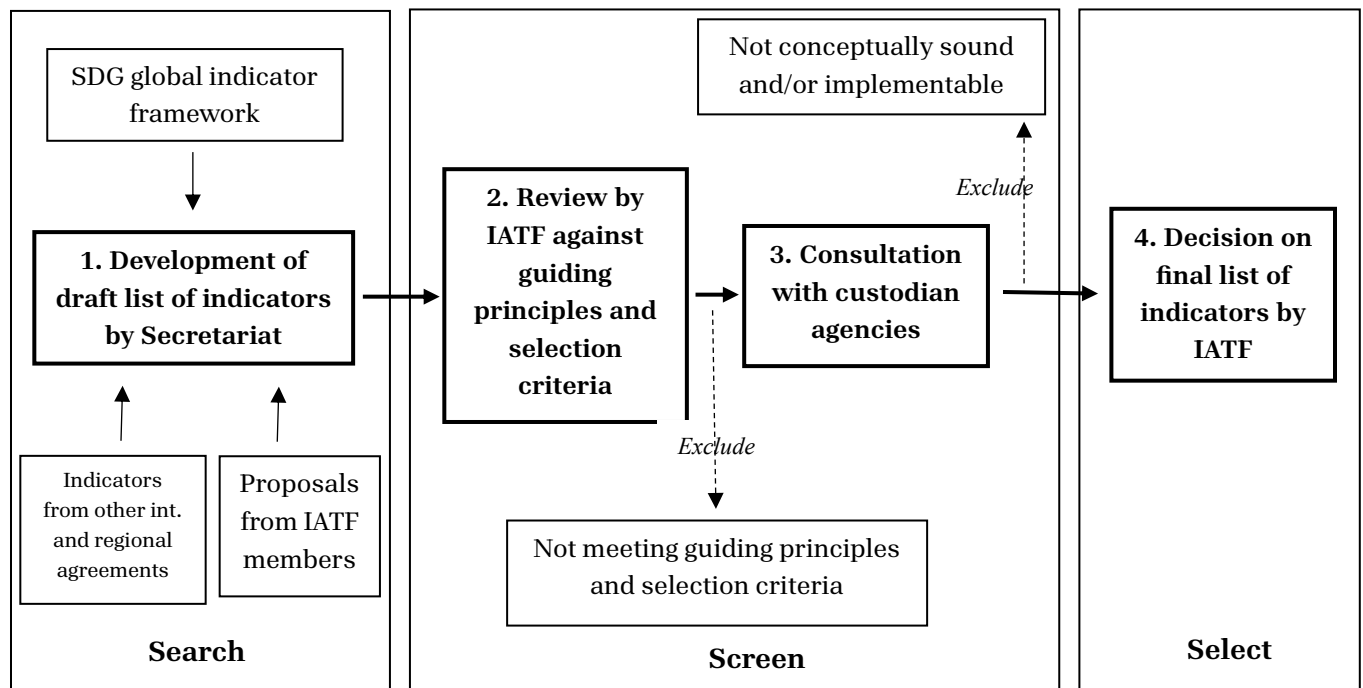
- (i) In **Step 1**, the Secretariat will develop a draft list of indicators, drawing on the [SDG global indicator framework](#), indicator frameworks from relevant international and regional agreements, and inputs from IATF members received thus far (see the compilation of responses from the initial consultation with members that was circulated before the 12 September 2024 meeting of the IATF), in consultation with experts on particular areas where they are needed. The draft indicators will align as closely as possible with existing indicators to reduce duplication of efforts and ensure coherence in reporting. At this stage, the draft list will include all potential indicators. The Secretariat will refrain from ranking the candidate indicators and allow IATF members to express their preference on which indicators to select in the next step.

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<sup>1</sup> A [statistical indicator](#) is the representation of statistical data for a specified time, place or any other relevant characteristic, corrected for at least one dimension (usually size) so as to allow for meaningful comparisons.

- (ii) During **Step 2**, the IATF will review each indicator in the draft list against the guiding principles and selection criteria proposed in Section 3 of this paper. Indicators that do not meet the principles and criteria will either be revised or removed from the list. Members may also propose new indicators that better monitor the targets, especially in cases where the targets lack indicators to measure them. If a new indicator is proposed, the proposer must demonstrate that it meets the guiding principles and selection criteria.
- (iii) Concurrently, the draft list of indicators will also be shared with relevant custodian agencies in **Step 3**. Custodian agencies will be asked to review the indicator(s) under their purview and offer feedback to the IATF on whether the indicator(s) are methodologically sound, and data can be reported without undue burden to countries. They will also be requested to confirm that the indicator(s) fulfill all the guiding principles and selection criteria set out in this paper. Custodian agencies may propose new indicators, especially for targets currently without indicators. The burden of proof is on the custodian agencies to demonstrate that new indicators meet the guiding principles and selection criteria.
- (iv) Finally, in **Step 4**, the IATF will take the feedback from custodian agencies into account when finalizing the list of indicators for the ABAS M&E framework.

**Figure 1: Process to search, screen, and select ABAS indicators**



The global indicator framework serves as the foundation for regional and country-level monitoring, but should be strategically adapted to reflect specific contexts, priorities, and data capabilities. At the regional level, indicators can be modified or supplemented to address unique regional challenges, integration mechanisms, and shared priorities among member states. Countries can further tailor these indicators to align with national development plans, institutional capacities, and local realities while maintaining comparability with global metrics.

### 3. Guiding principles and selection criteria for the ABAS M&E indicators

To screen the indicators for inclusion in the ABAS M&E framework (in Step 2 of the process outline above), the Secretariat proposes the following **guiding principles**:

- (i) **Indicators are relevant to SIDS and directly measure the agreed targets:** While indicators may have wider applicability, they must primarily be suitable to measuring development progress in SIDS given their unique contexts and priorities. They should directly track progress on the agreed targets.
- (ii) **Indicators should align with existing global and regional indicator frameworks:** “The framework should build on the monitoring and evaluation framework for the SAMOA Pathway, in line with the targets and indicators of the SDGs, and use data from existing reporting mechanisms where possible and should not be overly burdensome or create new processes or requirements for SIDS.” (ABAS para 38)
- (iii) **Indicators should be limited in number:** The number of indicators should be limited to ensure effective monitoring and reporting. Where multiple indicators are available to measure a target, only primary indicator(s) that most directly map to the wording of the target should be selected. As a general rule, each target should be measured by one indicator. In some cases, two or more indicators may be used to monitor a complex or multidimensional target. At the end of the indicator selection process, targets that do not have indicators attached to them may be revised or dropped from the final M&E framework.

To operationalize these guiding principles, the following **selection criteria** should be applied:

- (i) **Indicators are well-established:** Indicators should have internationally agreed standards and methodologies. Where such standards and methodologies are not yet available, proxy indicators that are closely related to the main indicators may be used in the interim.

- (ii) **Indicators are ready for implementation:** There is a metadata for each indicator that sets out, at a minimum, definitions and concepts, data sources, data collection process, method of computation, and information on current data availability. Additionally, there is a custodian agency for the collection, validation, harmonization, and dissemination of data for each indicator.
- (iii) **Data for indicators are already being reported:** The indicators should impose minimum additional reporting burdens on SIDS countries. Priority will be given to indicators that already have data available for at least 50 percent of the countries and populations in each SIDS region. This will enable the calculation and reporting of global and regional aggregates by SIDS regions. For indicators where data availability is below this 50-percent threshold, custodian agencies must demonstrate a realistic roadmap to meet the requirement in the next five years. Such indicators may be considered for inclusion during the midpoint review (see Section 4). In the case of no indicator meeting the 50 per cent data availability requirement for a target, the best available indicator with the highest data coverage and policy relevance may be selected, provided that there is a clear plan to improve data availability and methodological consistency over time.

#### **4. Process to review and revise the indicator framework**

The indicator framework should undergo a comprehensive midpoint review in 2029 to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. This review will encompass several key components: a thorough assessment of indicator performance to evaluate their effectiveness in measuring progress, a detailed evaluation of data availability progress across SIDS regions, the integration of new indicators that have met the established threshold requirements, and a review of any methodology updates and improvements. This systematic approach ensures the framework remains dynamic and responsive to evolving measurement needs while maintaining statistical rigor and relevance to SIDS development priorities.

## 5. Timeline

The selection of indicators will follow the timeline below. Time timeline is a best estimate and may be adjusted as needed.

24 February	IATF meets to consider second discussion paper and approve selection process, guiding principles, and selection criteria for indicators
24 March	Secretariat shares draft list of indicators for IATF's review
31 March	Secretariat shares draft list of indicators with custodian agencies for review, with IATF members in copy
31 March-14 April	Custodian agencies review indicators and provide feedback to IATF
14-28 April	IATF considers feedback from custodian agencies and finalizes list of indicators