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Institute for Statistics

UNESCO Institute for Statistics Medium-Term Strategy

2022-2029

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Background

UNESCO and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) have the broad mandate for producing international monitoring indicators based on their annual education survey and on other data sources that guarantee international comparability. Data are produced for more than 200 countries and territories. The mandate implies working in close collaboration with countries and partners to develop new indicators, statistical approaches and monitoring tools, to better assess progress in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There is a continuing need for strategic repositioning by the UIS, as indicated in the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) evaluations and the Dalberg report on the UIS strategic outlook. The review of the positioning and operating model of the UIS began in 2016 after the establishment of Agenda 2030 and the SDG indicator frameworks. A subsequent review was conducted by the UIS Governing Board (GB) in 2018 (UIS/GB/XX/Resolution 2 and UIS/GB/XX/Decisions 5) which was when the UIS began to redefine its core work and therefore allowed for longer-term, more predictable funding. The XXI UIS Governing Board (March 2019) endorsed the five criteria for defining the set of UIS core indicators (UIS/GB/XXI/Decisions/1.2); endorsed a UIS funding model (UIS/GB/XXI/Decisions/2.1); and endorsed the definition of core work, including prioritisation of elements (UIS/GB/XXIII/Decisions/3.1).

In addition, the Dalberg Report highlighted key stakeholder demands indicating that the UIS needs to address the way it is internally organized and to focus on priorities already defined by its existing mandate. To be able to respond effectively to stakeholders' demands, the UIS needs to be **agile and innovative in its approach to its current mandate, and to be able to respond quickly to existing and upcoming crises** (e.g.: COVID-19). To have an impact, the UIS must focus on how critical data are used, and to re-focus on a reduced set of relevant indicators. These indicators must be those needed by policymakers to inform important decisions on the delivery of education services to ensure learning equity and inclusion.

Recognizing that we have not fully unlocked our data and analytics potential, the UIS Medium-Term Strategy (UIS MTS) will guide us through a long-term transformation – so that everyone, everywhere nurtures **data as a strategic asset for insight, impact and integrity** – to better deliver on our mandates. Under the umbrella of the UIS mission, vision and mandate, the UIS MTS is an opportunity to establish a data strategy geared towards cultivating better approaches to **using data to deliver better outcomes.**

Capitalizing on the data revolution will require a number of key enablers, including a modern, adaptive and agile statistical agency. This UIS MTS reflects the UIS modernization

agenda within the Mission and Vision of the UIS, the UN Secretary General Data Strategy and the UNESCO Mid-Term Strategy.

This document provides a description of the strategy, outcomes, and enablers needed in order to make the UIS fit for purpose for the Decade of Action and to support countries in delivering SDG ambitions through evidence-based policy development.

1. UIS mission

"Within UNESCO's broad mandate to contribute to the achievement and sharing of knowledge and the free flow of ideas, the mission of the Institute is to provide statistical information on education, science, culture and communication which helps decision making in Member States and facilitates democratic debate in UNESCO's areas of competence, employing to that end the highest professional standards and intellectual independence in data collection and analysis"[1].

2. UIS vision

The prime objective of the UNESCO Institute for Statistic shall be to serve the needs of Member States through its core work, and ensure that:

- countries' policy, research and decision making are informed by sound statistical information, and
- countries can benchmark their progress towards national and international goals, and learn from the experience of others.

3. The UN Data Strategy

The United Nations (UN) system has been called upon to create new data solutions with the aim of expanding coverage, detail, relevance and timeliness of data and statistics produced and disseminated by the system. Recognizing that data are a strategic asset for the UN

1 Statutes of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, adopted by the 30th session of the UNESVO General Conference, November 1999 (Res. 44)

System, the Secretary-General's Data Strategy sets out a vision for a "*data ecosystem that maximizes the value of our data assets for our organizations and the stakeholders we serve,*" including high-level objectives, principles, core work streams,[2] and concrete system-wide data initiatives. The strategy signals that improving how we collect, manage, use and share data should be a cross-cutting strategic concern: across all pillars of the UN System, across programmes and operations, and across all levels of our organizations.[3]

Modernizing data and statistics has also been inspired by the Independent Expert Advisory Group on Data Revolution for Sustainable Development in their report A World That Counts. This report states that "*new institutions, new actors, new ideas and new partnerships are needed, and all have something to offer the data revolution*." More recently, the Dubai Declaration, following the 2018 UN World Data Forum, acknowledged that "*the data demands for the 2030 Agenda require urgent new solutions that leverage the power of new data sources and technologies through partnerships between national statistical authorities and the private sector, civil society, and the academia and other research institutions*."

The new paradigm is fairly represented in a recent document elaborated in response to a request from the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The Committee of Chief Statisticians of the UN System (CCS-UN)(in which UNESCO is represented by the UIS) proposed a menu to lead change in its **System-wide Roadmap for Innovating UN Data and Statistics.** The three goals identified by the Roadmap – (1) new data solutions, (2) addressing emerging policy needs, and (3) coordinated and innovative support to Member States – are all relevant for UNESCO and are aligned within the Medium-Term Strategy and current work of its statistical branch – the UIS.

SDG 4 is no exception to the need to innovate given that the main source of information used for tracking education has been administrative data. But the SDG 4 monitoring framework demands ***the use of school and household surveys and censuses to report on learning outcomes and disparities between population groups, and to fill data gaps for many regions.*** The gaps between what is possible and what is needed to make progress on SDG 4, and what is currently being done are large in some regions, such as Africa.

2 The Secretary-General's Data Strategy encourages action in five core work streams: People and Culture, Data Environments and Infrastructure, Data Assets and Use, Data Privacy and Protection, as well as Data Governance.

3 UNSG (2019), UN Secretary-Generals Strategy on New Technologies, at https://www.un.org/en/newtechnologies/

Reporting on the SDGs demands that statistical methods used in other sectors be adapted to develop estimates of quantities of interest for target populations. This model differs from the currently prevalent model at the UIS that looks at individual data sources separately and relies on a single data source per indicator for reporting. New approaches are needed to combine data from many sources. For education this means a complete change in the paradigm from sole reliance on administrative data to combining it with survey data and having the skills to deliver on this SDG-expanded mandate.

Management, use and integration data from different sources will be crucial in the coming years it is critical, therefore, to increase the capacity to create, manage and use data within a commitment to some common standards that allow interoperability. The demand compounding these challenges is the need for the UIS to provide strategic direction on data issues in the areas mandated by UNESCO. In this rapidly accelerating environment, data-driven innovation is the key to generating and accelerating analytical power.

4. Challenges

In delivering its strategy and work plans, the UIS identified several challenges and opportunities for expanding the capacity to collect and report internationally comparable data and to promote their use in policy development.

Mechanisms are needed for **linkages with policy use** including establishing governance architectures for the adoption of standards, norms and methodologies; developing and reporting on global and regional benchmarks; pragmatic resolution of methodological issues; and establishing agile responses to emerging data needs.

In terms of **methodological development**, all global indicators under UIS custodianship have been upgraded to Tier 1 methodology (data for 50% of countries) or Tier 2 (methodology but insufficient data), though there is still no accepted methodology for a few thematic indicators. The UIS must prioritise resources to guide countries in the application of international methodological standards in their collection of data.

There is an urgent need to **increase data coverage** to support effective decision making. The global baseline coverage in 2021 for global and thematic SDG 4 indicators is 55%, for Science SDG indicators it is 59% (taking as a reference a span of 10 years or more). New statistical and engagement approaches are required to combine country data from different sources (administrative records, sample surveys, population censuses, learning assessments and big data). Equity is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Agenda and remains a cross-cutting focus for UNESCO, however data coverage remains a challenge with only 60% of countries reporting on at least one dimension for three of the five relevant SDG 4 indicators. The UIS should seek to disaggregate data for dimensions of

disparity by maximizing the use of all sources and to support the expansion of coverage for Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through development of standards and guidelines.

The UIS must demonstrate the flexibility and readiness to **respond to crises and newly emerging priorities**. Standards and methodologies for SDG monitoring must be readily transferable to new data and indicators. Policymakers need broader, more real-time access to emerging data, particularly when mounting emergency responses, such as to the COVID-19 crisis. Strategies should also include Big Data. The UIS should be a standard setter and coalition builder in the fields of indicator development and data production. It must have the capacity to innovate and modernise.

The strength of the UIS is in developing global public goods including methodologies, tools and guidance and in **brokering solutions.** There is an urgent need for **collaboration** and monitoring of needs and resources to enable efficient and sustainable support to countries in their progress towards the Agenda 2030 goals. To the extent possible, technical partners, funders and organizations that influence policy development should be aligned on priorities in education, science and culture, and their monitoring frameworks should draw upon SDG indicators. One of the three core functions of the **Global Education Cooperation Mechanism** (GCM), launched by UNESCO in November 2021, is to increase the availability of data on education-related actions and outcomes and its use to enhance accountability towards SDG 4. The UIS is contributing to all five strategies foreseen for this functional area.

New challenges, new approaches, and new technologies require new skills. Data literacy, a focus on modern scientific methods and analytical capabilities continues to be a **core competency** that underpin the successful delivery of an effective data strategy. The UIS must have the human capital to develop and lead the agenda in the areas of its mandate.

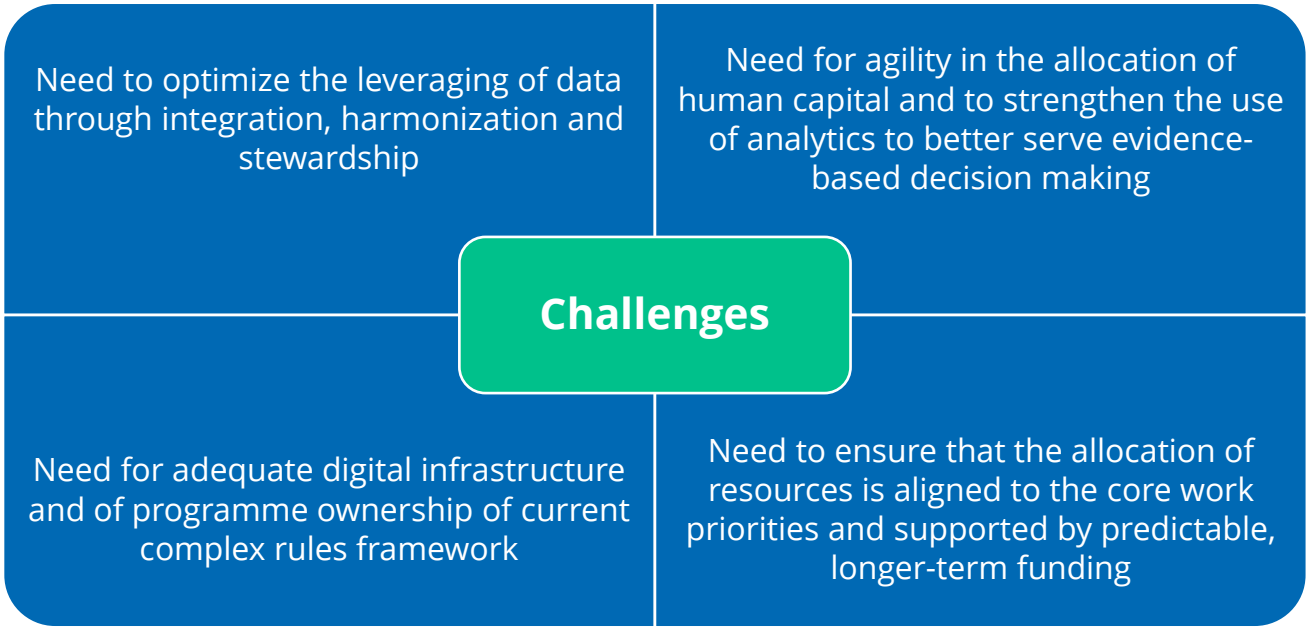
Financial sustainability and the capacity to invest in innovation are central to maintaining leadership and programmatic consistency. The core activities of the UIS should be financially sustainable through multi-year and predictable funding.

Donor contributions fluctuate each year and furthermore, the majority (54%) of funding received between 2015 and 2021 for the UIS's core work is earmarked by donors. The UIS has grown thanks to short- to mid-term voluntary contributions **as long-term funding** from UNESCO and the host country Canada **have remained static at between USD 5 and 6 million for the last 20 years.**

UIS operating models have been unstable. The evolution of organisational structures and budgets did not take into consideration that staffing and overhead costs exceed the level of long-term funding. The allocation of resources is largely historical and needs to be better aligned to priorities, particularly in increasing the proportion dedicated to foresight

and innovation functions and support to countries through the Regional Field Network, to match their responsibilities.

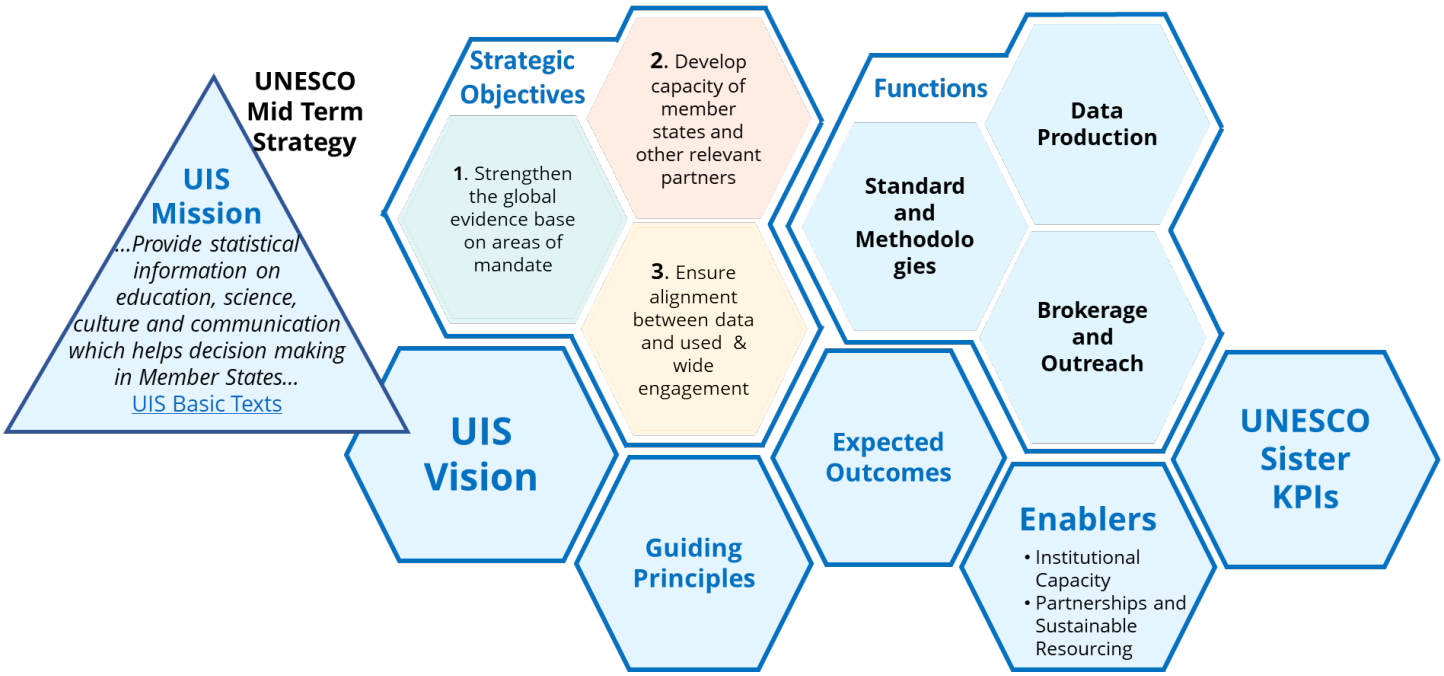
Figure 1: Challenges



5. UIS Medium Term Strategy 2022-2029

The UIS strategy pursues a simple idea: focus not on process, but on the utility and use of the data so that the UIS' work adds value for stakeholders and Member States. The UIS vision and strategy must be centred on the Institute's mission and mandates, with its basic principles in line with the UN Secretary General's Data Strategy and UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy.

Figure 2: Summary of UIS MTS 2022- 2029



The strategy includes collaboration across agencies and stakeholders to collect, compile and publish data; to avoid duplication; and to promote the use of the information collected with clearly defined outcomes:

- Improved services to Member States through its core work programme
- Greater value from data based on greater availability and usability
- Efficient stewardship based on sound governance
- Better dissemination and articulation of linkages to policy needs
- Increased evidence-based decision making
- Increased inter-agency, regional and inter-governmental partnerships.

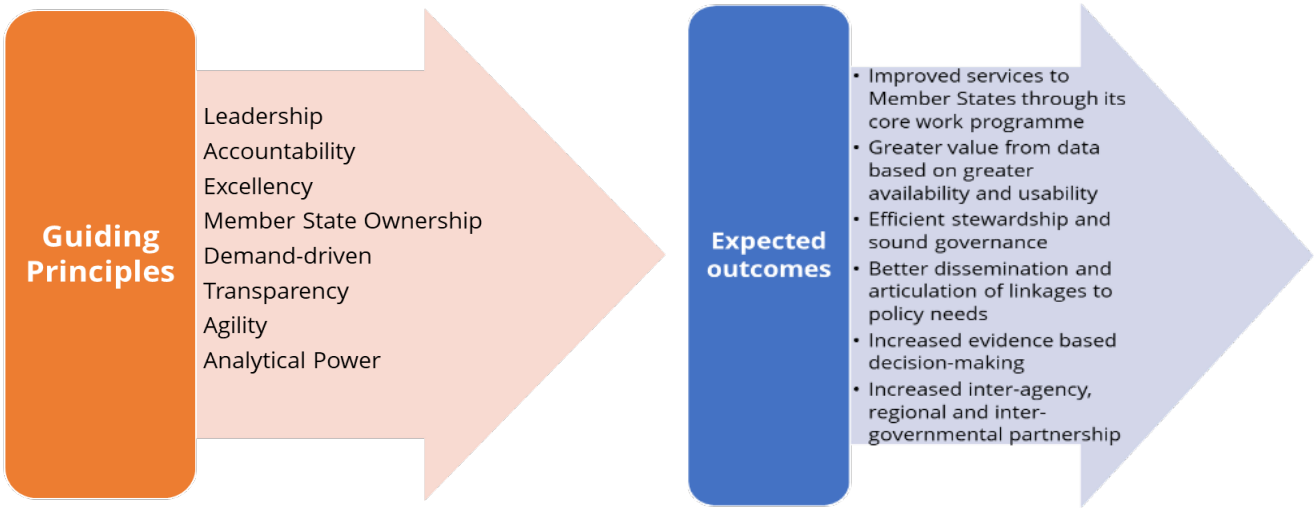
The capacities of countries to improve the lives of children and adults through the Agenda 2030 SDG Goals is strengthened by the use of effective policies and high-quality statistics.

The UIS has identified eight core principles on how to leverage data **collaboratively** with **transparency**, **accountability** and **excellence**:

1. **Leadership:** the UIS should provide leadership in the areas of its mandate. It should be an effective data steward with strategic discipline to capturing opportunities while navigating challenges[4].
2. **Accountability:** robust **internal and external data governance** is in place to clarify data roles, responsibilities, standards and policies, and to ensure accountability.
3. **Excellency:** the UIS strives for excellence and **continuous improvement** in how it generates value.
4. **Ownership**: data belongs to Member States and stakeholders and is held in trust. It serves to enhance in decision-making with an equity focus.
5. **Demand-driven:** the UIS's work serves the policy priorities of Member States, and UIS is efficient in disseminating information making it available and usable.
6. **Transparency:** data and analytical products are **comprehensible** and **traceable** as the UIS catalogues, describes, classifies and properly documents its data assets. The UIS uses common **standards** so that their **characteristics and value** are **readily accessible** at any time.
7. **Agility:** the UIS is able to reply to new challenges through a culture of innovation and experimentation.
8. **Analytical power:** the UIS has the analytical capacity and data abilities to address evolving demands.

4 Stewardship demands transformation from data producers into coordinators and "data stewards in line with the increasing demands from the 2030 agenda that led to innovation and a widening in data ecosystem with a rapidly growing range of data actors."

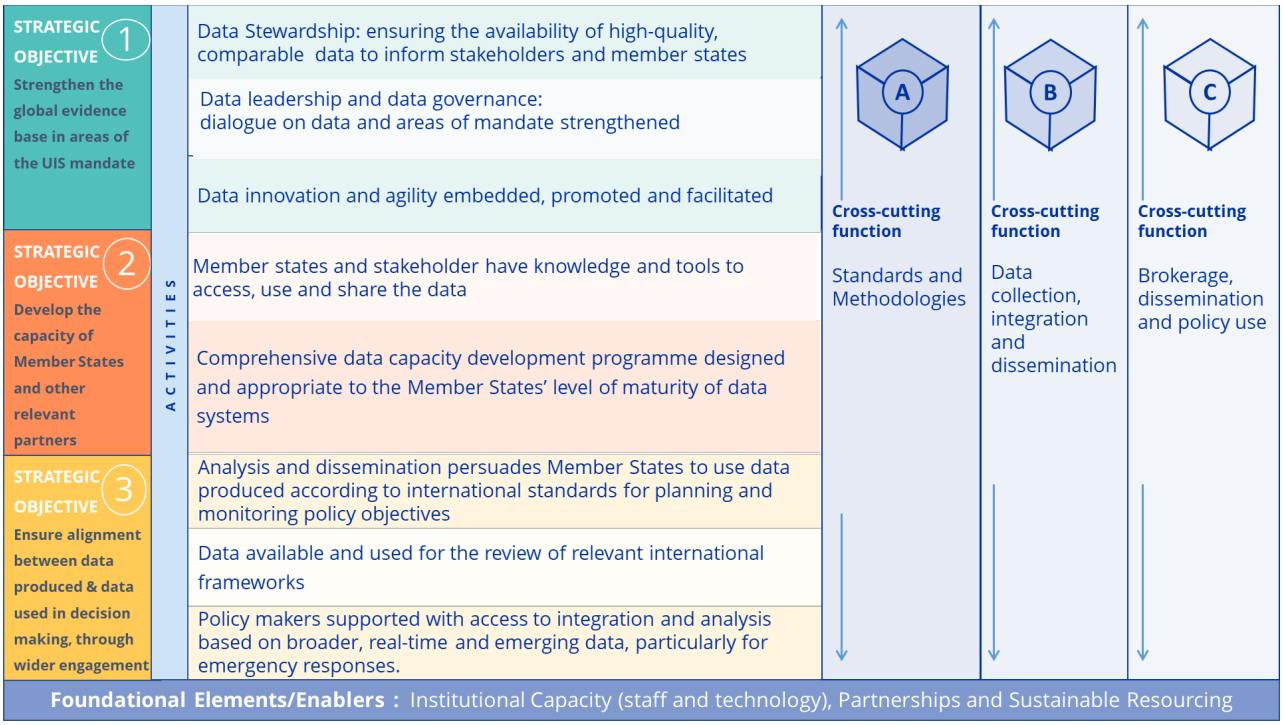
Figure 3: Guiding principles and expected outcome of the UIS MTS



5.1. Strategic objectives

The effective use of data for evidence-based decision-making is essential in supporting sustainable development and relevant international frameworks. The Data Strategy maps out a path to reach this goal and identifies three Strategic Objectives (S0s) with specific cross-cutting themes. While each objective has a specific focus, the objectives are complementary, supporting coherence of actions around principled and responsible approaches to data, cooperation and innovation.

Figure 4: Strategic objective, functions and expected outcomes – UIS Medium Term Strategy



SO1: Strengthen the global evidence base in areas of the UIS mandate

Expected outcome 1: Data stewardship ensuring the availability of high-quality and internationally comparable data to inform stakeholders and Member States.

Data stewardship means managing, overseeing and facilitating the use of data assets by all stakeholders. The UIS should ensure that the data compiled or produced are of high quality and internationally comparable; the data should be easily accessible and used efficiently and in a consistent manner by Member States and other stakeholders. The UIS must provide a global and comprehensive data platform, including data produced by the Institute and data from other sources, and ensure harmonization. Activities:

Related to availability of high quality and harmonized data: collect data through the UIS survey (dynamic templates piloted in 2022); compile data from other surveys such as HHS and LA; fill data gaps by mining data from national sources; harmonize data from different sources.

Related to access to data: publish the data on the UIS website; present the data in tables, dashboards, repositories, country profiles, and the Global Education Observatory (GEO).

Ensure Member States are aware of the existence of such resources and know how to use them.

Expected outcome 2: Data leadership and governance: dialogue on data and areas of mandate strengthened.

The UIS should take the leadership in the strategic production and use of data in the areas of its mandate, strengthening the dialogue related to monitoring progress towards the achievement of the global goals and the development of indicators. The Institute must implement data systems that help in global, regional and national monitoring mechanisms, making sure there is alignment and coherence between the various frameworks. The Institute also plays a leading role in helping countries set national benchmarks for selected SDG indicators that represent countries' voluntary national contribution to the attainment of SDGs. Data governance is important and the UIS should have a clear accountability framework to ensure appropriate behaviour in data management and use. The UIS must ensure that it is strategically aligned and modernized to serve stakeholders in the best way. Activities:

Related to being a leader in data production: develop methodologies to produce indicators through the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG); update metadata if needed.

Related to data systems: follow up closely on national and regional education monitoring frameworks and study their alignment with the global SDG framework for better data production and production of relevant indicators that may measure progress.

Related to benchmarking: assist countries in the benchmarking process and follow up closely to establish these critical values to measure progress towards the SDGs.

Related to governance: develop an accountability framework to clarify roles, responsibilities and rights in data governance.

Expected outcome 3: Data innovation and agility embedded, promoted and facilitated.

The UIS should be innovative and agile and adapt to ever-changing contexts. The UIS should be innovative in ways of data collection and production, maximizing the use of available skills and calling for additional resources when needed. The UIS should use sound and modern methodologies and technology to make sure there is better integration of data from all available sources. The work of the UIS should be tailored to the evolving needs of Member States. The UIS should provide support to policymakers with access to broader, real-time and emerging data, particularly for emergency responses. The UIS should be open, reactive and resilient to emerging challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Flexibility is an important precursor to visibility. Activities:

Related to innovative methods of data collection: be innovative in the approach to data collection, such as using the automated dynamic newly launched template for collection of education data, which will increase data coverage while empowering Member States in understanding and producing SDG indicators.

Related to internal and external skills and resources: provide data production and data analysis trainings to staff for better and more efficient results; increase staff collaboration; resort to specialists (partner and consultants) when in-house skills are not available.

Related to agility and resilience: be ready to adapt to changing needs by collecting the relevant data; be ready to adapt the work depending on the context, eliminating a 'one-size fits all' approach, for better results; be ready to respond to emerging challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

SO2: Develop the capacity of Member States and other relevant partners

Expected overall outcome: Ownership of indicators and data: increased capacity of Member States and other relevant partners to understand, produce and own their indicators.

Expected outcome 1: Member States and stakeholders have the knowledge and tools to access, use and share the data.

The UIS should provide Member States with the knowledge and tools to enable them to access, use and share the data they need. The Institute should ensure the constant development of guides and methodologies and share them in full transparency with all stakeholders, encouraging them to use these resources for better data production at the national level. The Institute should provide timely, accurate and clear information so that users from different backgrounds and disciplines understand it. The UIS must offer support and assistance to users. Activities:

Related to the production of tools, guides and methodologies: produce relevant tools, guides and methodologies to help Member States collect data, produce and disseminate indicators; ensure countries understand the importance of metadata and ISCED classification.

Related to characteristics and dissemination of information and support to MS: update the UIS website with all relevant tools and methodologies; communicate the updates to respondents and encourage them to use the resources and provide feedback to the UIS. The UIS products presentation is to be maintained as a brochure and updated as new tools are developed.

Expected outcome 2: Comprehensive data capacity development programme which is designed to be appropriate for the level of maturity of Member States' data systems.

Capacity development is central to the work of the UIS. The Institute designs a clear and comprehensive programme with specific objectives aiming at building or developing data production capacities at the national level. The aim is for Member States eventually to be fully capable of collecting the appropriate data and producing the indicators on their own, taking ownership of the resulting outputs, and become knowledgeable on all aspects of the global framework and targets. Activities:

Related to the programme of capacity development: design a relevant programme that will build capacities at the national level, including workshops and trainings as highlighted below.

Related to tailored activities: implement a prioritised programme of one-to-one in-depth trainings with Member States as needed on indicators and metadata, or other topics as required.

Related to accompanying users until they are independent: implement workshops and webinars, provide in-person or online trainings, preferably with hands-on applications so that users are fully knowledgeable of the methodology to produce indicators.

Related to ways to identify needs and respond to them: communicate regularly with Member States to know their needs; stock-take missing data to try to find solutions.

SO3: Ensure alignment between data produced and data used in decision making through wider engagement

Expected overall outcome: Data produced is used effectively for evidence-based policy making and in planning and monitoring – based on improved services with greater value from data.

Expected Outcome 1: Improved analysis and dissemination.

Persuade Member States to use data compiled and produced according to international standards for planning and monitoring their policy objectives including national benchmarks. Activities:

Strengthen analysis and experimentation: enabling the more strategic use of data requires their greater and more widespread use, including through analytics and innovation to transform data into new knowledge and insights. A number of initiatives are executed, planned or underway to increase access to data, including:

- combining data sources through sound methodologies to better understand results (e.g. Out-of-school Children project),
- a series of scalable pilots to examine the potential to measure learning in a less costly, more agile and targeted way,
- supporting Members States in setting and monitoring national benchmarks.

Dissemination: Expanded the user focused access to value-added products with evolution from static data tables and analysis from tools for evaluating and supporting responsible data use. E.g.:

- The Global Education Observatory (GEO) and the new data browser become a key resource and a one-stop-shop.

Expected outcome 2: Increased availability and usage of data in decision making for the follow-up and review of relevant international frameworks.

Activities:

Brokerage to serve global, regional and national monitoring: transform and analyze data to embed its usage into policy and advocacy objectives through:

- Supporting global leadership in existing frameworks by establishing well-defined governance mechanisms and facilitating collaboration with other agencies and Members States.
- Supporting partnerships at the regional level: the UIS supports regional frameworks, including through the regional TCGs and activities related to data advocacy.
- Supporting the functional area of the Global Architecture for Global and Regional monitoring and accountability.

Expected outcome 3: Support policymakers with access to integration and analysis based on broader, real-time and emerging data, particularly for emergency responses.

Activities:

Build analytical products: in order to strengthen policymaking in emergent areas.

Dashboard and dissemination: support the usage of dashboards and help to embed them into policy and advocacy objectives, thus transforming and analyzing the data so that it serves another purpose.

5.2. Cross-cutting functions

A - Standards and methodologies

Function: Develops and implements **methodologies, norms and standards** to compile, produce and harmonize internationally comparable statistics in the areas of mandate.

This function is in line with the objectives of the UIS Basic Text [5], and aims to develop common and agreed high-quality norms, standards and methodologies for the collection and production of data and indicators in the fields of education, science, culture and communication; and to improve and develop overall standards and guidelines that govern how departments access, collect, use, safeguard and share data, with a clear process for developing and refining these over time.

The UIS has to develop new tools, guidelines and methodologies for international reporting of data and assist countries in applying these norms and standards in order to improve their national statistical systems. These resources are essential to help ensure that countries have the data they need for their regular policy development and decision making and for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The activities are:

- Establish the norms, standards and methodologies needed by countries to ensure the comparability and quality of data production at the national and international levels. They form the foundation of strong statistical systems, which are central to the production of high-quality data.
- Develop and maintain methodologies and standards to reflect the needs and challenges of countries at all stages of development.
- Develop frameworks and be a trusted broker to strengthen the capacities of countries to produce and use high-quality statistics.
- Help set common data definitions, standards and policies to support inter-operability.

5. UIS Basic Texts; "to arrange for the collection, production, analysis and timely dissemination of policy-relevant statistics, indicators and related documentation … (SO1); to support the development of the statistical and analytical capacities of Member States not only for their own purposes, but also as a contribution to the achievement the objective set in subparagraph (b) above; and (SO2); to foster the development of international statistics in its fields of competence which reflect the changing policy contexts in those fields and which are reliable, of worldwide comparability, robust and feasible to collect (SO3)."

- Ensure agile response and definition to respond to emergency policy needs such as tools to analyse the effect of COVID-19 (e.g. survey on policy responses; definitions of students affected by COVID-19; measuring the impact of learning outcomes).

B – Data collection, integration and dissemination

Function: Arrange for the collection, production, analysis and timely dissemination of policy-relevant statistics, indicators and related documentation. The UIS will also be the trusted data warehouse for the indicators needed to monitor the SDGs and emergency policy needs.

This function, in line with UIS Basic Texts (SO1), envisions that the production of international data is influenced by the statistical capacity of Member States as well as the processes within the UIS. Data quality at the national level is of utmost importance, but UIS processes also have a significant impact on the production of international statistics, the evolving role of the UIS as data steward, and the need to develop methodologies and processes that allow the reporting of internationally comparable indicators. It also ensures cooperation between regional and international organizations. The activities are:

- collecting, processing, validating, aggregating from partners, and disseminating high-quality, transparent, relevant, cross-nationally comparable data about education, science and technology, culture and communication,
- producing high-quality, internationally-comparable data and indicators for monitoring and reporting on education, science, culture and communication in line with the UIS basic texts,
- expanding data production to meet the measurement requirements of the 2030 Agenda, while making every effort to minimize the reporting burden on Member States and maintaining the collection of key data items required for other purposes,
- acting as an effective data steward in the areas of mandate by compiling, aggregating and harmonizing data from different sources and putting in place methodologies to harmonize different sources to ensure commitment to common standards,
- exploring new ways of data collection and embracing new opportunities by better leveraging data and reducing the burden of data collection for Member States,
- engaging with Member States and the international community to integrate data from official and other reliable sources, developing new indicators, and implementing new data collections, while revising and improving the existing suite of indicators.

The pressure to innovate and develop new statistical processes and products is high, yet resources remain scarce and statistical systems in many developing countries are weak.

There is an urgent need to strengthen these systems, develop national capacities, and identify new data sources, while ensuring the quality and integrity of the data produced.

The UIS, working with partners, will support Member States in delivering internationally-comparable statistics to inform policies related to education, science, culture and communication for the global and thematic monitoring of the SDGs.

C - Brokerage, dissemination and policy use

Function: Integration of data and analysis into decision making processes through increased data analytics and broader data literacy.

This function, in-line with UIS Basic Texts[6] (S02 and SO3) brokerage, refers to **facilitation and promotion of data use for policy dialogue** at global, regional and country levels, **supporting Member States** in their capacity to produce and use data to monitor and inform decision making.

Since the start of the SDG process, the UIS has taken a leadership role in education measurement by convening the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Post-2015 Indicators, in which the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report was a member, which developed the proposal of 43 global and thematic SDG 4 monitoring indicators. This work continues through the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) on the Indicators for SDG 4 – Education 2030 for which the UIS fulfils the secretariat function. The TCG serves as the platform for the Member States and education stakeholders to refine and develop the indicator framework while forging the consensus needed to mobilise efforts to address the measurement challenges. The latest update can be found in the TCG progress report. In the particular case of learning outcome-related indicators, this development work is undertaken through a series of task forces under the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), also led by the UIS.

In 2019, in its report to the UNSC, the UIS upgraded its mandate adding a brokerage function. This brokerage function consists of information sharing, networking, and coordination of support. It has as its objective to guide donors and countries' investment and to coordinate

(a) to support the development of the statistical and analytical capacities of Member States not only for their own purposes, but also as a contribution to the achievement the objective set in subparagraph (b) above; and (SO2)

(b) to foster the development of international statistics in its fields of competence which reflect the changing policy contexts in those fields and which are reliable, of worldwide comparability, robust and feasible to collect; (SO3)

more effectively with both recipients and donors in order to produce more integrated, better quality, cost-effective, and timely statistical data for education.

Through the discussions of the TCG working groups and GAML task forces, UIS has been able to build consensus on international reporting and measurement of education indicators based on fit-for-purpose methodological approaches and practices. The TCG and GAML have the core responsibilities for developing or approving:

- methodologies for SDG 4 global and thematic indicators
- reporting standards, guidelines, and tools to support countries in collecting, analysing, and using data.

The activities envisioned are:

- strengthening the governance mechanisms in place in all areas of mandate
- sustaining and expanding existing partnerships at the global and regional level
- expanding the analytical work, and in particular GEO as the one-stop-shop, and sustaining the generation of analytics and visualizations such as the data tables, repositories, dashboards, and country profiles among others
- maintaining the Global Education Observatory.

5.3. Enablers/foundational elements

Modern and flexible workforce

Data literacy, a focus on modern scientific methods, and analytical capabilities continue to be the core competencies of the UIS for nurturing data-related skills and talents across the organization. In doing so, the UIS will continue to creates a data-driven culture with experienced, competent, trained and gender-balanced teams comprising data engineers, analysts and scientists. The activities are:

- improving data communication and advocacy skills
- reinforcing staff collaboration, increasing transparency and sharing, aiming for progress and excellence
- aligning resources and skills to support the value propositions. The UIS must be able to have an innovation function with seed funding that allows investment in rapid initiatives that recognize the fact that the field of statistics is evolving rapidly with new methodologies, tools and approaches emerging
- quick and efficient access to specialized skills relevant to its mandate through a blended model of temporary resources and contracting
- accountabilities for KPIs
- strategic thinking, planning, management and resource mobilisation.

Technology environments

The UIS needs to make sure the Institute's technological tools and processes are helping stakeholders make the best use of the data it produces. The UIS should provide training to ensure stakeholders are familiar and at ease with using the Institute's analytics and data management tools. One critical aspect is the use of technology which is flexible and agile and adapts to emerging challenges.

Technology is important to provide supporting architecture, to facilitate data management and analytics, to ensure appropriate tools, infrastructure and processes are available, and to keep pace with and fully harness technological opportunities.

The actions envisioned are:

- tools to collect, store, analyze, share and visualize the increasing volume and diversification of data
- ITS identify common business requirements, develop a catalogue of recommended and pre-approved tools, and establish updated guidelines and processes for their implementation
- ITS to assess required infrastructure needs over the short and medium terms taking stock of historical assets but with a forward-looking approach
- the UIS will define an IT strategy including moving from a "custom-build" approach to a "borrow and buy" approach and building only when necessary to improve agility and responsiveness.

Partnerships

Addressing the challenges of people and the planet goes beyond the capabilities of one organization therefore partnerships increase the chance of success. The UNSG recommends a five-step approach to partnerships, focusing on stakeholder alignment, responsible governance, and shared insight generation, as well as broad adoption with improved and consistent communication, sustainability and scalability. This includes improving data sharing arrangements to enhance the value and impact of UIS work.

The actions envisioned are:

- increasingly, the UIS needs to learn to integrate its data and analytics platforms better with those of partners, individuals and others
- to integrate well, the UIS needs to be clear about the problems it is trying to solve and tackle the data integration challenges in order to remain the leader in the areas of mandate.

Financial resources

Financial sustainability and the capacity to invest in innovation are central to maintaining leadership and programmatic consistency. The core activities of the UIS should be financially sustainable through multi-year and predictable funding.

Article III. 4 of the UIS Statutes defined the primary objective of the Institute as serving the needs of Member States through its core work programme and limiting responsiveness to other needs or demands (from other parts of UNESCO, and other users in Member States and international organizations) to the extent that it was supported by additional funds. In 2019 the UIS Governing Board **endorsed a funding model**, which:

a) foresees funding of the UIS core work exclusively via a core budget provided by UNESCO
b) allows complementary funding of core work via voluntary contributions for upscaling and replicating the core work results, including capacity development, in more countries and with more partners
c) prescribes funding of any non-core/project work exclusively via specific agreements signed with partners, understanding that such agreements should cover all related costs.

Programmes and structures under the UIS MTS must work towards sustainability of the UIS by **implementing the decision of the UIS Board (UIS/GB/XXI 2) that core work is supported by long-term and predictable funding**. Modernisation of data collection and production, acquisition (internally and externally) of the skills needed, containing support costs, and embedding a culture of resource mobilisation and cost recovery, should enable the UIS to be both sustainable and fit for purpose.

The following principles will be followed to establish a **financially sustainable operating model** for the UIS, within the context of its mission, taking into account the needs of the Member States (SO4):

- The priorities defined for UIS work must be consistently implemented, core work costed, and the Regular Programme (RP) budget and resources dedicated to delivering these before other activities are assumed.
- Core work should, to the extent possible, be resourced by the UNESCO RP contribution, which currently constitutes less than 40% of the annual budget, requiring increased efficiency in routine tasks.
- Beyond the seed funding and function, piloting and scale up of innovation and foresight activities should be resourced with extra budgetary funds and implemented through partnerships.

- Structures and operating models should enable the implementation of core work prioritisation, allow flexibility for variations in voluntary contributions, and increasingly implement a blended model of temporary resources and contracting.
- Resource mobilisation should take into account that increasingly donors are focussed on approaches that have a demonstrable impact on building the capacity of countries to monitor, analyse and use data.

6. UIS Medium Term Strategic Objectives and UNESCO and UIS Outcomes 2022-2025

The UIS 2022-2029 Strategic Plan spans the final eight years of the Agenda 2030 Decade for Action and is informed by UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and 4-year Work Programme (41 C/5). The UIS input into the 4-year Work Programme (2022 -2025) with Key Performance Indicators can be found in UIS-GB-E2-5 INF. Annexe I provides mapping of the UIS MTS to medium term (2025) and short term (2023) activities.

Table 1: UIS Strategic Objectives (2022-2029) and links to UNESCO and UIS Outcomes (2022 – 2025

UIS Medium Term Strategic Objective / 2022-2025 Strategic Outcomes	SO1. Strengthen the global evidence-base in areas of mandate	SO2: Develop capacity of Member States and other relevant partners	SO3: Ensure alignment between data produced and data used in decision making, through wider engagement
UNESCO Outcome 2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation.	**UIS Outcome 2.1**: Global leadership in the monitoring of the SDG 4 Education 2030 Agenda enhanced through the development of internationally agreed norms and standards and the collection, production and distribution of timely and high-quality data.	**UIS Outcome 2.2**: Member States' capabilities to design and implement the SDG 4 Education 2030 Agenda supported through strengthening capacity to monitor and report against SDG 4 targets.	**UIS Outcome 2.3** Response to relevant policy needs provided to develop the global education agenda, based on research, foresight and innovation.
UNESCO Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation.	**UIS Outcome 4.1** Evidence-based policy formulation and monitoring of progress towards the SDGs facilitated through timely and globally comparable data for science.		
UNESCO Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expression.	**UIS Outcome 5.1** Evidence-based policy formulation and monitoring of progress towards the SDGs facilitated through the provision of timely and globally comparable data for culture.		
UIS cross-cutting functions	Development of methodologies, norms and standards.		
	Collection, aggregation, analysis, and timely dissemination of policy-relevant statistics.		
	Brokerage, dissemination and policy use.		

Annexe I. Short and medium-term activities supporting the UIS MTS

UIS Medium-Term Strategic Objectives	Short-term activities (2022-2023)	Medium-term activities (2022-2025)	Future activities (UIS 2029 Outcomes)
SO1. Strengthen the global evidence base in areas of mandate	Collect and compile data (UIS survey, dynamic templates, HHS & LA), fill data gaps from national sources, harmonize data. Expand Global Education Observatory to provide accessible education data. Revise and implement Statistical Quality Assurance Framework.	Establish accountability framework to define roles, responsibilities and rights in data governance. GEO and UIS websites to provide a one-stop shop for accessible data, tools and guidelines to Member States. Expanded coverage, quality and alignment of learning data.	1.1 Data stewardship established ensuring availability of high quality and comparabe data to inform stakeholders and Member States.
	Establish ISCED Review Committee, ISCED-T developed and piloted. Develop methodologies through the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) for SDG 4 Indicators. Establish Regional TCG mechanism, monitor and report progress towards national commitments to benchmarks on global and regional education monitoring frameworks. Implement plans to increase coverage of SDG indicators.	Data and Accountability Pillar of the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (GCM) established. Progress assessed and reported for global and regional benchmarks and monitoring frameworks.	1.2 Data leadership and governance: dialogue on data and areas of mandate strengthened.
	Skills for a modernized UIS: staff learning and development, roster of consultants and	Innovative methods of data collection, culture of agility and resilience in UIS.	1.3 Data innovation and agility embedded,

UIS Medium-Term Strategic Objectives	Short-term activities (2022-2023)	Medium-term activities (2022-2025)	Future activities (UIS 2029 Outcomes)
	partners for specialist skills and extra budgetary projects.		promoted and facilitated.
SO2: Develop capacity of Member States and other relevant partners	Provide complete, high quality, transparent documentation, processes, and guidance for production of internationally comparable statistics.	UIS resources for capacity development are updated, made accessible and dissemination promotes use by stakeholders.	2.2 Member States and stakeholders have the knowledge and tools to access, use and share data.
	Programme to build capacities at national level: priorities and approaches identified based on analysis of needs, stocktaking of missing data completed to find solutions. Use of Dynamic template scaled-up to fill data gaps for education indicators: focus on Africa and Asia. Provide country reports for UIS Surveys.	Data Capacity programme established and supported by transparant, high quality records. Members States supported in setting and monitoring national benchmarks. Pilot methodologies for Learning Outcomes in Policy Linking and Statistical Linking scaled-up.	2.3 Comprehensive data capacity programme designed.
SO3: Ensure alignment between data produced and data used in decision making, through wider engagement	Plan for analytical products developed and implemented. Expanded access through GEO to tools and information for evaluating and supporting responsible data use.	Access to data increased, including through scalable pilots.	3.1. Improved analysis and dissemination to make Member States use data compiled and produced according to international standards for planning and monitoring their policy objectives.
	Regional partnerships maintained and expanded, supported by MOUs.	Global leadership strengthened in existing frameworks by well-defined governance mechanisms.	3.2 Data needed for the follow-up and review of relevant international frameworks made available.

UIS Medium-Term Strategic Objectives	Short-term activities (2022-2023)	Medium-term activities (2022-2025)	Future activities (UIS 2029 Outcomes)
	Report on GCM commitments. Technical products on harmonisation of data sources and concordance between international and regional learning assessments finalised, disseminated and scale-up plans defined. Funded workplan for contribution to the UNESCO Culture 2030 Indicators, and flagship publications for CI and Science implemented.	Indicators (including COVID-19), methodologies, tools and guidelines developed to address relevant current and emerging policy issues in education. UIS analytical products for policymaking in emergent areas strengthened. Dissemination to support usage embedded into policy and advocacy objectives Collaboration with UNESCO Science and Culture Sectors to deliver a medium-term fully-funded work programme for data within their MTS.	3.3 Support policymakers with access to integration and analysis based on broader, real-time and emerging data, particularly for emergency responses.
Cross cutting enablers	Modern, flexible workforce.		
	Fit-for-purpose, cost-efficient and adaptable technology.		
	Strong, sustained partnerships.		
	Financial sustainability: core work supported by long-term and predictable funding.		