

# Questions from our presentation on Ngā Tūtohu Aotearoa at the SDG Summit 2 September 2021.

---

Statistics New Zealand's [Ngā Tūtohu Aotearoa - Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand](#) (IANZ) brings together a broad range of indicators that capture the different dimensions of wellbeing that matter to New Zealanders. It is a broad and deep source of wellbeing data that supports a range of reporting requirements, including reporting under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The indicators were developed after wide consultation with the general public, business and community groups, and a range of experts to ensure the indicators are accessible and relevant to all New Zealanders.

The following Q&As represent the views of Mark Turner and Maya Gorbатовsky in response to conference questions and do not represent Stats NZ policy.

## Framework

---

**Q:** Can you **cross reference** across indicators? For example, to be able to say that those who are lonely are more likely to report reduced life satisfaction?

**Answer:** Generally, no. In the case of your example, you would need unit record data to allow this. Perhaps it can be done from a customized data request from our [General Social Survey](#).

Each indicator is a part of the overall picture of wellbeing. Many of the indicators come from different datasets / surveys, so we cannot model their correlation directly. Although it should not stop other people and organizations from using our data to make broader conclusions. For this purpose, we are happy to provide consultation and advice on underlying methodology and caveats.

## Alignment

---

### UN indicators

**Q:** So it's not the indicators set by the **UN**? If so, does it make it hard to measure the **global progress** though?

**A:** Each of the SDGs can be measured by individual countries based on their needs and situation. In the case of New Zealand, we have consulted widely to come up with Wellbeing indicators that meet our needs and reflect people's values. We can still measure global progress as we are monitoring the goals that are important to New Zealand. As the [Auditor General's report](#) points out, we still have a lot of work to do in this area.

---

**Q:** Is this data feeding into the **Sustainable Development Solutions Network report** that is issued each year?

**A:** Not that we aware of, but the data is there for anyone to use.

---

**Q:** How are we aligning to **International Measures**. I'm struggling to understand why the integration isn't there. Does Gov have a plan to tackle this and timeline?

A: Great question! This has also been raised by the [Auditor General's report](#), and we hope to contribute to ongoing monitoring efforts.

## Data gaps

---

### Collaboration

Q: How can **companies or NGOs** communicate with Stats NZ to fill the data gaps?

A: Please contact us by our email address [indicators@stats.govt.nz](mailto:indicators@stats.govt.nz). We are always keen to see how we can collaborate to fill these gaps.

---

Q: Could there be **private entities with data** that already exists in NZ that they may be prepared to share openly, e.g. utilities data to indicate access to affordable energy?

A: We have experts within Stats NZ who are aware about a number of sources, and these are being investigated. Currently, our major data suppliers are either Stats NZ or other government agencies. Generally, we tend to use internationally recognized gold standards of measures, but we definitely see the advantage of accessing other administrative data. If you happen to have any suggestions, please get in touch!

---

Q: I noted on the international SDG report that there is **no dedicated lead government unit** for the coordination and implementation of the SDGs across ministries for New Zealand....This may be a good start to help with linkages of data gaps.

A: This is currently with the Government after the tabling of the [Auditor General's report](#).

### Housing quality

Q: Is there a **timeline** for providing housing quality data **as housing quality** has a big impact on occupant health and wellbeing. This is particularly critical for the **vulnerable communities**.

A: Unfortunately, there is no clear timeline, but we do recognize the urgency of it. The lead agency is the [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development](#). To our knowledge, they are currently working on the development of an appropriate measure. Meanwhile, there are a couple of internal data sources in Stats NZ that we are considering using as proxies: for example, [Census](#) and the [General Social Survey](#) both provide somewhat relevant data.

### Environmental indicators

Q: What work is being done to develop the **biodiversity/native species** indicator? Would love to know more about bridging those gaps in the environmental data.

A: We are waiting on guidance from our [Environmental Reporting](#) team here at Stats NZ who are actively collaborating with the [Department of Conservation](#). You can have a look at some of their work over here: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/biodiversity>. If you have any further questions, we are happy to put you in touch with appropriate experts in their team.

---

Q: **Environmental data are the key gap**, given that natural resources and associated ecosystem services are critical for NZ and embedded in **te ao Māori**, what work is planned to fill these gaps?

Q: Environmental data is important because **wellbeing is more-than-human...** especially in **Te Ao Māori**

A: We are taking advice from the [Environmental Reporting](#) team at Stats NZ. Hopefully, this will be addressed in the [Data Investment Plan](#) developed by Stats NZ as the Government Data Steward. Work on te ao Māori wellbeing is currently being developed with [Te Puni Kōkiri](#) as the lead agency. This work will be Māori led and government supported.

---

Q: Does Stats NZ have any **responsibility to collect/store environmental data** and indicators?

A: Yes. Along with the [Ministry for the Environment](#), Stats NZ has a statutory obligation to report on environmental indicators started under the [Environmental Reporting Act 2015](#).

## Census

Q: Will any gaps be addressed in the **census** perhaps?

A: Currently, we do use some Census data, but it is mainly for contextual indicators (such as Population, Urban/rural distribution, Ethnic composition and so on). However, the indicators which we have data gaps for are not readily addressed by Census questions. So, the answer is no, we are not going to use Census data for any existing data gaps (with the exception of using it as a proxy for housing quality – see the question above).

## Granularity

---

Q: Given we have quite some data gaps, **when** can we expect to have all the measures ready?

A: This will depend on the outcome of the [Data Investment Plan](#). Its first draft is expected in October 2021, and further consultations will follow. Once decisions are made on where the government should invest in new data, it might take a while for the data to come in.

## Regional level

Q: Wellbeing is about **communities and people**. What about disaggregation **from national to local level**?

Q: Very interested in the **national >> local** disaggregation too.

A: Given the nature of many of our surveys, it is difficult to disaggregate down to these local levels. This is an issue that is being addressed in the [Data Investment Plan](#), but it will require considerable investment in order to increase the survey participant size. However, there is a clear intention to put a stronger focus on use of admin data to overcome the above stated limitations of surveys. At the same time, wellbeing outcomes are generally hard to infer from administrative data. This is a trade-off between frequency and granularity.

## Frequency

---

Q: Is the date in the indicators (which is **mostly lag data**) meaningfully informing **change initiative design**?

A: The need for more timely data has been raised by some of our data users and we have recognized it. This implies using alternative data sources. The reason for this is that we aim to use the data which can be disaggregated as much as possible and, since it is relatively resource intensive, such surveys do have large time lags. This is a trade-off between frequency and granularity.

# Collaboration

---

*Q:* As Stats NZ see their role as **collating the data** to enable other parties to **interpret and action**, what is the best way to get this information out to be addressed? Do you actively reach out to **partner with other organisations** or promote the results and await organisations to reach out or do you have other **initiatives** for this?

*A:* The best way to get this information out is by downloading it from [our website](#). We are in the process of promoting Indicators Aotearoa and looking for feedback and opportunities to assist. This includes providing any assistance or more detailed overview of the data and its use, or just catching up with people who are interested in monitoring wellbeing outcomes.