

SDG indicator metadata

(Harmonized metadata template - format version 1.0)

0. Indicator information

0.a. Goal

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

0.b. Target

Target 8.4: Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead

0.c. Indicator

Indicator 8.4.1: Material Footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP

0.d. Series

0.e. Metadata update

4 February 2021

0.f. Related indicators

Indicator 12.2.1

0.g. International organisations(s) responsible for global monitoring

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

1. Data reporter

1.a. Organisation

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

2. Definition, concepts, and classifications

2.a. Definition and concepts

Definition:

Material Footprint (MF) is the attribution of global material extraction to domestic final demand of a country. The total material footprint is the sum of the material footprint for biomass, fossil fuels, metal ores and non-metal ores.

Concepts:

Domestic Material Consumption (DMC) and MF need to be looked at in combination as they cover the two aspects of the economy, production and consumption. The DMC reports the actual amount of material in an economy, MF the virtual amount required across the whole supply chain to service final demand. A country can, for instance have a very high DMC because it has a large primary production sector for export or a very low DMC because it has outsourced most of the material intensive industrial process to other countries. The material footprint corrects for both phenomena.

2.b. Unit of measure

Tonnes
kilograms per constant United States dollar
Tonnes per capita

2.c. Classifications

3. Data source type and data collection method

3.a. Data sources

Description:

The global material flows database is based on country material flow accounts from the European Union and Japan and estimated data for the rest of the world. Estimated data is produced on the bases of data available from different national or international datasets in the domain of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining and energy statistics. International statistical sources for DMC and MF include the IEA, USGS, FAO and COMTRADE databases.

3.b. Data collection method

The IRP Global Material Flows and Resource Productivity working group compiles the data from countries and from other sources.

3.c. Data collection calendar

Under discussion

3.d. Data release calendar

11 September 2017

3.e. Data providers

National Statistical Offices

3.f. Data compilers

UNEP, OECD and EUROSTAT

3.g. Institutional mandate

4. Other methodological considerations

4.a. Rationale

Material footprint of consumption reports the amount of primary materials required to serve final demand of a country and can be interpreted as an indicator for the material standard of living/level of capitalization of an economy. Per-capita MF describes the average material use for final demand.

4.b. Comment and limitations

The global material flows database is based on country material flow accounts from the European Union and Japan and estimated data for the rest of the world.

4.c. Method of computation

It is calculated as raw material equivalent of imports (RME_{IM}) plus domestic extraction (DE) minus raw material equivalents of exports (RME_{EX}). For the attribution of the primary material needs of final demand a global, multi-regional input-output (MRIO) framework is employed. The attribution method based on I-O analytical tools is described in detail in Wiedmann et al. 2015. It is based on the EORA MRIO framework developed by the University of Sydney, Australia (Lenzen et al. 2013) which is an internationally well-established and the most detailed and reliable MRIO framework available to date.

4.d. Validation

The prefilled questionnaire with estimated data will be send to the National Statistical Office (NSO) Focal Points (FP) for the compilation of the national data for this indicator. The FPs will coordinate the data collection with stakeholders within their countries and report back the data to UNEP. For countries with no national data collected for this indicator, UNEP will ask the countries to agree on publishing and releasing the estimated data on the World Environment Situation Room and in the SDG Global database.

4.e. Adjustments

4.f. Treatment of missing values (i) at country level and (ii) at regional level

- **At country level**

A zero is imputed when no positive real value was officially recorded, in the base data sets used, for any of the underlying components which make up this aggregated total. Thus "0.0" can represent either NA, or a genuine 0.0, or (crucially) a combination of both, which is a common situation. This allows for values to be easily aggregated into further aggregations; however, it should be thus noted that due to imputing missing values as '0.0', the aggregations may represent a lower value than actual situation.

- **At regional and global levels**

Similarly, missing values are imputed as zero in the regional and global aggregations. However, in the case where no data is available at all for a particular country then the per capita and per GDP estimates are weighted averages of the available data.

4.g. Regional aggregations

The data will be aggregated at the sub-regional, regional and global levels. For the aggregation methods, please see: http://wesr.unep.org/media/docs/graphs/aggregation_methods.pdf

4.h. Methods and guidance available to countries for the compilation of the data at the national level

UNEP, Eurostat with the IRP and UNSD have developed a global manual on Economy Wide -Material Flow Accounting (EW-MFA) which brings in the European guidelines, but provides a modular approach for countries looking to develop EW-MFA for the first time and it addresses specific issues related to resource extractive based economies.

https://seea.un.org/sites/seea.un.org/files/global_material_flow_accounting_manual_final_draft.pdf
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines/-/KS-GQ-18-006>

4.i. Quality management

4.j Quality assurance

4.k Quality assessment

5. Data availability and disaggregation

Data availability:

The data covers more than 170 countries.

Time series:

The data set covers each nation individually, over a time period of 47 years (1970-2017).

Disaggregation:

The MF indicator can be disaggregated to four main material categories, a varying number of economic sectors whose expenditure require materials and to three domestic final demand sectors (household consumption, government consumption and capital investment) and foreign final demand (i.e. exports).

6. Comparability / deviation from international standards

Sources of discrepancies:

7. References and Documentation

References:

EUROSTAT (2013). Economy-wide material flow accounts. Compilation guide 2013.

Wiedmann, T., H. Schandl, M. Lenzen, D. Moran, S. Suh, J. West, K. Kanemoto, (2013) The Material Footprint of Nations, Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. Online before print.

Lenzen, M., Moran, D., Kanemoto, K., Geschke, A. (2013) Building Eora: A global Multi-regional Input-Output Database at High Country and Sector Resolution, Economic Systems Research, 25:1, 20-49.