



RESEARCH ARTICLE

How to read African development indicators without overclaiming

Define the indicator, record its unit and period, inspect what is missing, and never read a regional aggregate as a country observation.

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ABSTRACT

A practical method for comparing World Development Indicators across countries without asserting more than the series supports.

KEYWORDS indicators, comparability, aggregation, measurement

This practical guide explains how to use World Development Indicators for cross-country comparison: define the indicator, record its unit and period, inspect missing values, and avoid treating regional aggregates as if they were country observations.

The guide is an ADG editorial synthesis based on the World Bank metadata

and its warnings about comparability and aggregation.

WHAT THIS DOES NOT ESTABLISH

The guide restates the World Bank's own comparability warnings; it does not independently audit any series.

SOURCE AND PROVENANCE

World Development Indicators metadata and aggregation guidance

Source: World Bank Africa DataBank

Licence: Open under the World Bank terms of use | Retrieved: 10 September 2026



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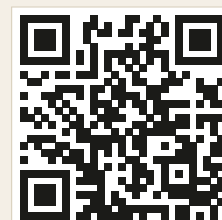
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