UN Big Data Regional Hub for Africa

REPORT ON CPI WEB SCRAPING WEBINAR

PREPARED BY

UN REGIONAL HUB FOR AFRICA

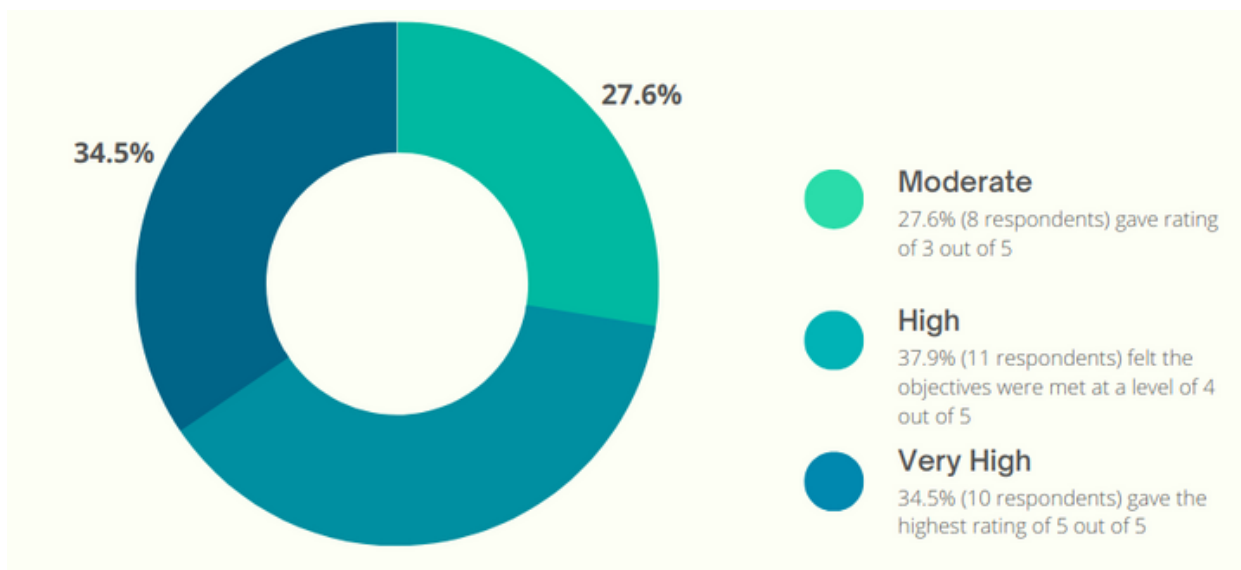https://ecastats.uneca.org/regionalhub

SEP, 2023

Introduction

In July 2023, the UN Big Data and Data Science Regional Hub for Africa hosted a webinar on CPI Web Scraping. This event was held to share the outcomes and learnings from a collaborative NSO project with Regional NSOs and introduce them to the learning materials.

29 total responses were collected from participants in 12 countries namely Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Italy, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Nigeria had the largest representation in the sample with 11 total responses, accounting for 37.9% of the total. Senegal and Uganda tied for the second-highest participation with 4 responses each (13.8% of the sample). Ghana followed with 2 responses (6.9% of the sample). The remaining 8 countries - Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Italy, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia had 1 response each, making up the final 27.6% of total responses.
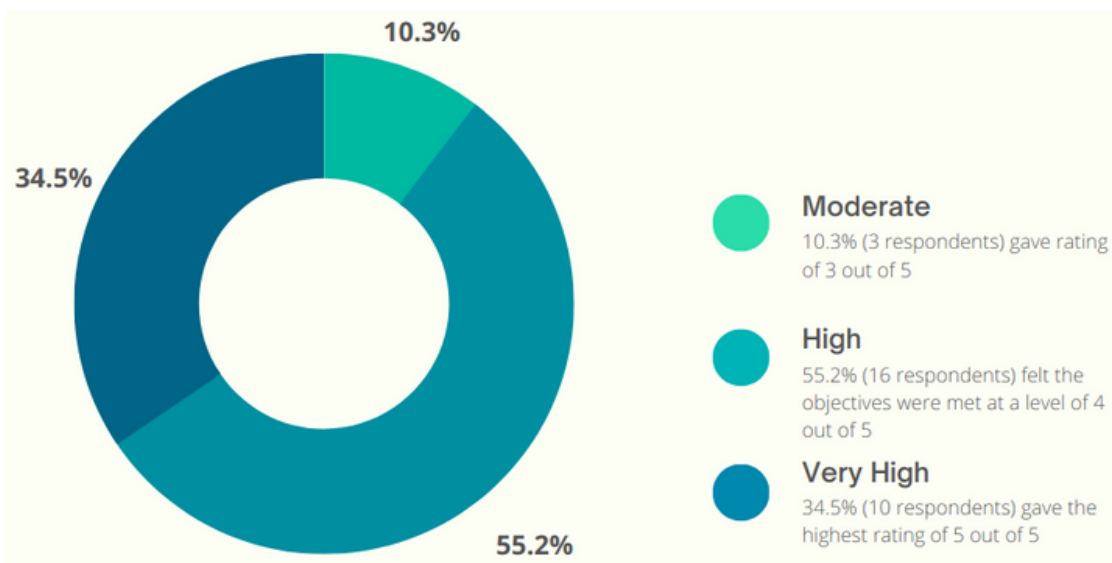
Achieving Webinar Objectives

The majority of respondents rated the webinar as successfully meeting its objectives with 37.9% (11 respondents) felt the objectives were met at a level of 4 out of 5, while 34.5% (10 respondents) gave the highest rating of 5 out of 5 and 27.6% (8 respondents) gave a rating of 3 out of 5, indicating they felt the webinar moderately achieved its aims. In summary, the aggregated feedback indicates the webinar largely fulfilled its intended goals.
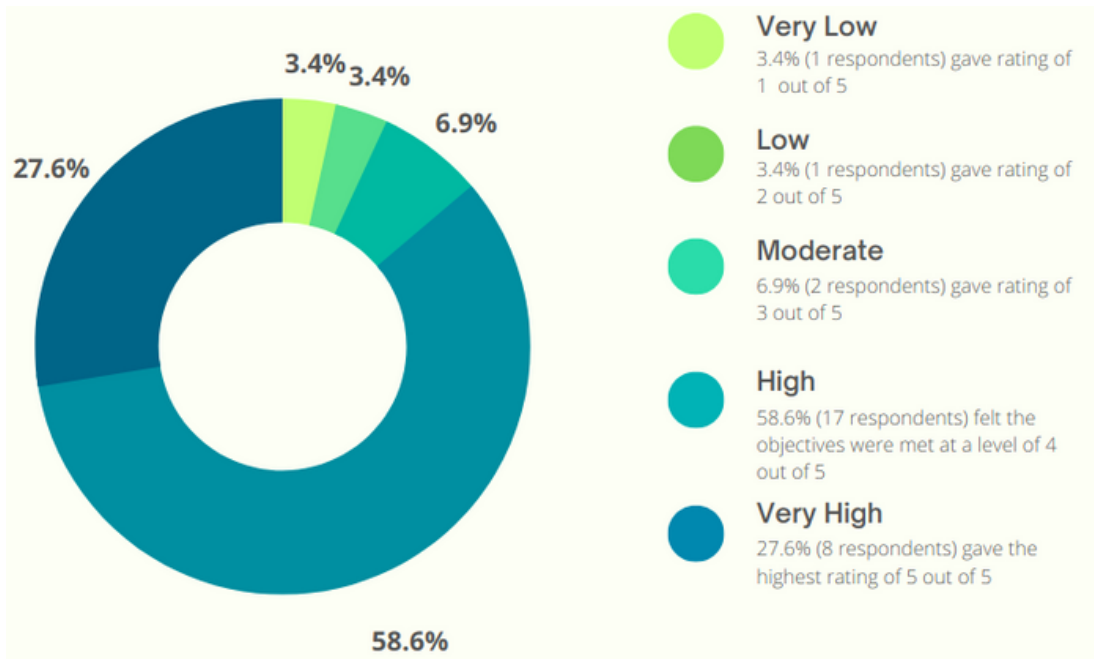
Presentation Quality and Informativeness

The presentation quality received positive feedback overall, with the majority of respondents finding them informative. Specifically, 34.5% of respondents (10) gave the presentations the highest rating of 5 out of 5 for being informative. Additionally, 55.2% (16) gave a rating of 4 out of 5. Together, these responses indicate 89.7% of participants found the presentations to be of high quality. The remaining 10.3% (3 respondents) gave a moderate rating of 3 out of 5 for informativeness. In summary, the aggregated ratings suggest the webinar presentations were successful in providing attendees with useful insights.
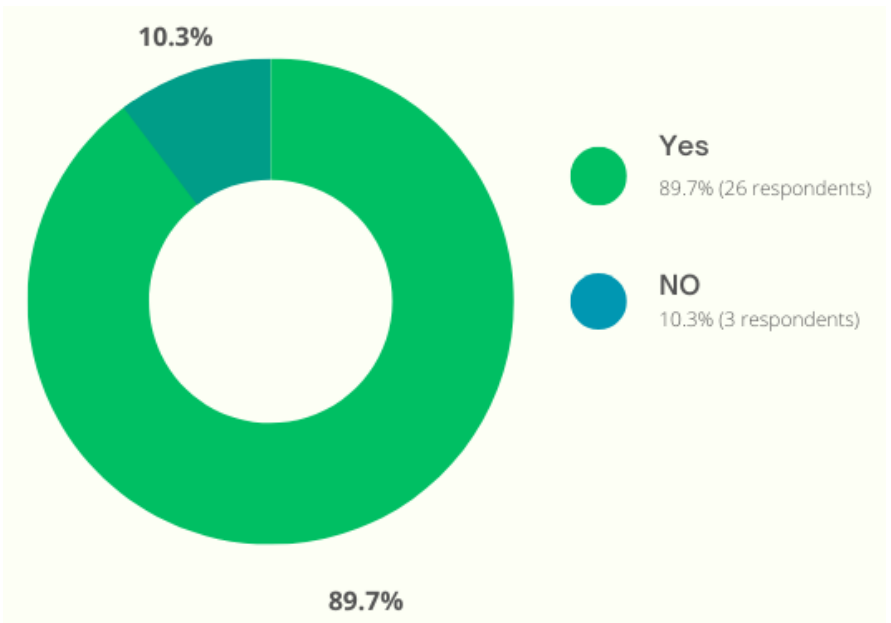

Discussion relevance to participants

Specifically, 58.6% of respondents (17) rated the discussions a 4 out of 5 for relevance. Additionally, 27.6% (8) gave the highest relevance rating of 5 out of 5. Together, these responses show 86.2% of participants found the discussions to be pertinent to their professional context. The remaining 6.9% (2 respondents) gave a moderate rating of 3 out of 5 for relevance. However, 6.8% of respondents (2) gave lower ratings of 1 and 2 out of 5 for relevance.

Very Low
3.4% (1 respondents) gave rating of 1 out of 5

Low
3.4% (1 respondents) gave rating of 2 out of 5

Moderate
6.9% (2 respondents) gave rating of 3 out of 5

High
58.6% (17 respondents) felt the objectives were met at a level of 4 out of 5

Very High
27.6% (8 respondents) gave the highest rating of 5 out of 5

Potential applications

The vast majority of respondents see the potential to apply the techniques from the webinar in their organizations. Specifically, 89.7% of participants (26) answered "Yes" when asked if they see potential applications at their workplaces. Only 10.3% (3 respondents) did not see potential applications. This overwhelmingly positive response indicates the webinar content aligned well with the operational contexts and needs represented by attendees.

Yes
89.7% (26 respondents)
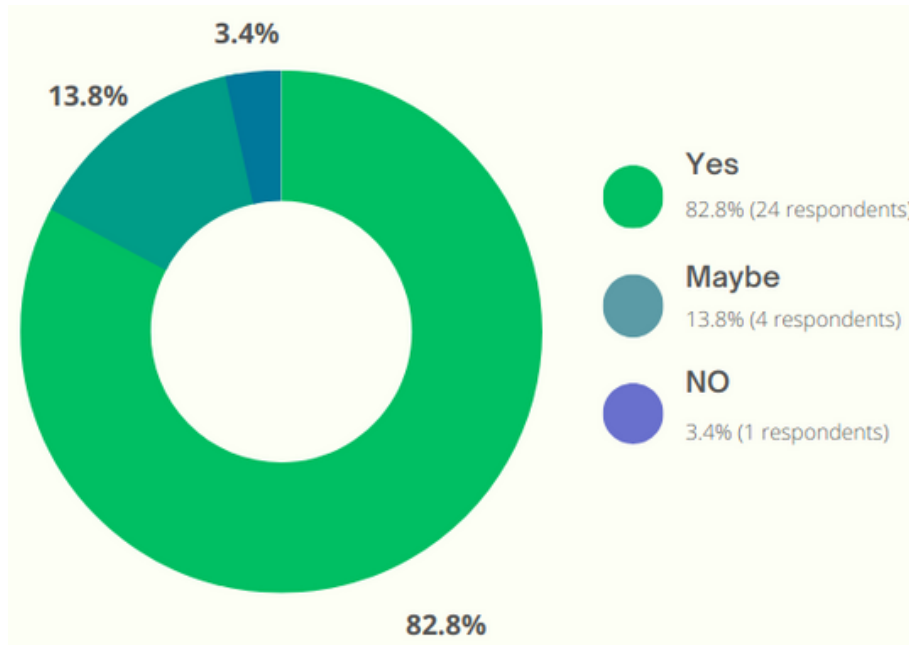
NO
10.3% (3 respondents)

When participants were asked about potential applications of web scraping techniques, the most prevalent response centered around Consumer Price Index (CPI). Specifically, 15 respondents saw value in leveraging web scraping to bolster CPI processes including data collection, compilation, and calculation. Other top use cases identified were utilizing web scraping for generalized prices data gathering and CPI analysis beyond index creation (5 respondents), developing institutional capacity for web scraping and data science through training initiatives (3 respondents), enabling online data collection across statistical domains (3 respondents), and applying the approach to Producer Price Index (PPI) and alternative economic indicators such as IHPC (2 respondents each). In summary, participants overwhelmingly saw web scraping as a valuable technique to leverage for strengthening CPI operations, from data collection to index calculation. Beyond CPI, many recognized web scraping's potential to enhance economic statistics more broadly, power new types of data analysis, and build critical data skills.

Support from Regional Hub

The overwhelming majority of participants expressed interest in receiving web scraping support from the Regional Hub for their organizations. Specifically, 82.8% (24 respondents) answered "Yes" when asked if they would like the Regional Hub to provide web scraping assistance. Another 13.8% (4 respondents) indicated they "Maybe" would like support. Combined, these two positive responses account for 96.6% of participants. Only 1 respondent (3.4%) answered "No" regarding interest in web scraping support.

This data highlights a substantial appetite among organizations represented for the Regional Hub to offer expanded web scraping capacity building. The most commonly requested area of support was for CPI-related applications like data collection, compilation, calculation, and analysis. With such an overwhelming percentage of attendees eager to leverage web scraping and desiring backing to do so, the Regional Hub has a significant opportunity to play a lead role in driving adoption across Africa.

Summary of Participant Feedback

The most common suggestions for enhancing future meetings were:

- Lengthen the webinar and discussion segments: Multiple participants felt more time was needed to fully engage with the content. (Increase webinar duration)
- Offer more extensive CPI and web scraping training: Participants expressed interest in more detailed training on technical topics like CPI computation and hands-on web scraping.
- Share presentations and resources: Providing materials to participants after the webinar would allow for continued learning.
- Conduct in-person workshops: Some respondents preferred physical workshops to build skills more effectively.
- Maintain consistent representatives: Having the same country's points of contact attend each meeting would improve continuity.
- Accommodating different time zones.

Overall, respondents provided valuable perspectives to aid in optimizing future virtual webinar engagements.