Expert Group Meeting
Institutionalizing Sustainable Development Indicators for
Measuring Progress of National Strategies
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Indicators of Sustainable Development and Monitoring National Sustainable Development Strategies

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Outline

1. *Why* monitoring national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) is important?
2. *Which broad areas* of an NSDS require monitoring?
3. *What* are the CSD indicators of sustainable development
4. *Which indicators* could be selected?

Importance of monitoring

- Monitoring is critical for effective implementation of an NSDS and should be built into the NSDS
  - Without monitoring, the risk is great that the NSDS is merely a list of good intentions.
  - Integration of monitoring system in NSDS supports the choice of measurable and specific targets
  - Facilitates policy interventions and corrections of the NSDS
  - Provides a feedback mechanism and promotes culture of learning
  - Promotes accountability
  - Promotes public interest and information

Areas of NSDS to be monitored

- Three broad elements of a NSDS require monitoring:
  - Actions and activities planned in the NSDS
  - Effects and impact of NSDS on sustainable development
  - Progress towards sustainable development

Areas of NSDS to be monitored

- Monitoring actions and activities planned in the NSDS
  - addresses the question: Are all of us doing what the NSDS calls for?
  - is critical for accountability of individual institutions and actors.
  - Progress or performance or accomplishment indicators are a major tool.

Areas of NSDS to be monitored

- Monitoring effects and impact of NSDS on sustainable development
  - Addresses the question: Are we achieving the goals and targets of our NSDS?
  - Critical for accountability of all stakeholders;
  - Indicators follow often directly from the formulation of NSDS targets;
  - Assists review and adjustment of NSDS.

Areas of NSDS to be monitored

- Monitoring progress towards sustainable development
  - Addresses the question: Are we on track towards sustainable development?
  - Allows for status-quo assessments and to detect trends of sustainable development;
  - Assists prioritization in early stage of NSDS;
  - Contributes to review and adjustment of NSDS.

Areas of NSDS to be monitored

- Because a NSDS typically aims at making development of a country more sustainable, there is substantial overlap in monitoring effects and impact of NSDS and monitoring overall progress towards sustainable development.

- Monitoring overall progress typically covers a wider range of issues.

- Monitoring NSDS impact is more directly geared towards strategy actions.

- Indicators of sustainable development are useful tools for both tasks.

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development

- UN DESA publishes a set of Indicators of Sustainable Development.
  - First edition published in 1996, second edition in 2001.
  - Third edition released in late 2007.
- These indicators serve as reference for countries to develop or revise national indicator sets.
  - They are intended to be adapted to national conditions.
- They originate from a work programme adopted by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 1995.

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development - History

Phase 1 (1994-96)

- Consensus-building meetings among major stakeholders
- Adoption of indicator framework ("Driving force –state-response')
- Identification of 134 indicators, grouped according to four pillars of SD
- Preparation of methodology sheets for each of the 134 indicators
- Publication of first "Blue Book" (1996)

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development - History

Phase 2 (1996-1999)

- Pilot tests in 22 countries from all major regions of world & capacity-building

Phase 3 (2000-2001)

- Evaluation of national testing
- Revision of ISD based on evaluation (2001)
- Reduction to 58 indicators
- Introduction of a thematic framework
- Publication of second "Blue book" (2001)

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development - History

Review (2005-2007)

- Review of the indicator set, in order to
  – Incorporate national and international experiences
  – Reflect new thinking and priorities
  – Explore Synergies with other indicator sets (Millennium Development Goal Indicators)
- The review included:
  – Analytical studies
  – Expert group meetings in 2005 and October 2006
  – Participants from countries and international organizations
  – Decisions on revisions made by consensus

Indicators of Sustainable Development

Indicators of
Sustainable Development:
Guidelines and Methodologies

Economic & Social Affairs

October 2007
Third Edition

United Nations

- Detailed methodology sheets for each indicator available online.
- Methodology sheets will be updated regularly.
- Guidelines address use of the indicators for monitoring strategies.
- Currently most downloaded document on DSD website.
- http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/isd.htm

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development

- The CSD indicators consist of 96 indicators of sustainable development, of which 50 are regarded as core indicators.
- The CSD indicators are organized in 15 themes with 44 sub-themes.
- Indicator themes:
  - Poverty
  - Governance
  - Health
  - Education
  - Demographics
  - Atmosphere
  - Land
  - Oceans, seas, coasts
  - Freshwater
  - Biodiversity
  - Economic Development
  - Natural hazards
  - Global partnership
  - Consumption and production patterns

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development: Sample indicators

Theme	Sub-theme	Core indicator	Other indicator
Poverty	Sanitation	Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	
Oceans, seas and costs	Coastal zone	Percentage of total population living in coastal areas	Bathing water quality
Land	Forests	Proportion of land covered by forests	Area under sustainable forest management
Economic Development	Employment	Employment-population ratio	Vulnerable employment

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development

- The framework of the CSD indicators can be characterized as policy-based.
- The themes and sub-themes broadly follow common policy areas.
  - This facilitates the use of these indicators in countries, who typically use policy frameworks.
  - However, they are based on policy areas, rather than specific policies and objectives.
- The indicators are also linked to the international policy agenda, in particular Agenda 21.

CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development

- Most indicators for monitoring NSDS are using policy or theme-based frameworks, following the structure of the NSDS.
- Indicators used for other purposes often use other frameworks.
- Other purposes
  - Assessing the state of sustainable development
  - Awareness raising
  - Communicate concept of sustainable development
- Other frameworks
  - Theory-based, in particular capital framework
  - Indices (theory-based, statistics-based, ad-hoc)
  - Pressure-State-Response

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Indicator selection - process

- Selecting indicators can be done through
  - multi-stakeholder involvement;
  - technical experts;
  - consensus approach;
  - top-down decisions.

Indicator selection - criteria

- Indicators should meet certain criteria
- For example, CSD indicators used the following criteria
  - primarily national in scope;
  - relevant to assessing sustainable development progress;
  - limited in number, but remaining open-ended and adaptable to future needs;
  - understandable, clear and unambiguous;
  - conceptually sound;
  - representative of an international consensus to the extent possible;
  - within the capabilities of national governments to develop;
  - dependent on cost effective data of known quality; and
  - broad in coverage of Agenda 21 and all aspects of sustainable development.

Indicator selection - criteria

- Some criteria need to be adapted
  - Coverage of issues in NSDS can replace coverage based on Agenda 21
  - National consensus and standards may be used instead of international ones, if international consensus and standards are lacking or do not reflect national realities.
  - Allowing for meaningful breakdowns (spatial, by socio-economic group, by gender, …) can be an additional criterion for many indicators.
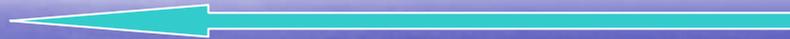
Indicator selection - criteria

- The following additional criteria are relevant if indicators are used to monitor implementation of NSDS

  – policy responsiveness,

    - often, a further breakdown of indicators by target group increases the responsiveness;

  – timeliness,

    - This concerns primarily indicators dependent on census and large surveys. Small-scale surveys and estimations can increase timeliness, but may reduce accuracy.

Indicator selection - adaptation

- Existing indicator sets are often a useful starting point or additional reference
  - CSD indicators.
  - Other global indicator sets such as MDG indicators.
  - Indicator sets used by other countries
  - National and regional indicator sets designed for other purposes (e.g., statistical yearbooks).
  - Sectoral indicator sets.
- These indicators have to be adapted.

Indicator adaptation matrix

Indicator relevance

Data availability

	Relevant	Related indicator relevant	Relevant but missing	Irrelevant
Available	To be used	To be modified	To be identified	To be removed
Potentially available	To be used	To be modified	To be identified	To be removed
Related data available	To be modified	To be modified	To be identified	To be removed
Not available	To be removed	To be removed	To be removed	To be removed

To be used | To be modified | To be identified | To be removed

Indicator selection - adaptation

- Characterization according to relevance:
  - Relevant.
  - Related indicator relevant, for example because
    - national issue more focused (for example, the CSD indicator on child nutrition covers both under- and overweight, but in some countries only one of the two poses a development problem);
    - subjective instead of objective indicators are preferred (e.g., health issues)
    - related issues are relevant (e.g., regional trade instead of trade with LDCs as in the CSD indicators)
  - Relevant but missing from set, because CSD indicators may not include relevant country-specific issues
  - Irrelevant, for example coastal indicators in land-locked countries.

Indicator selection - adaptation

- Characterization according to availability of quality data:
  - Fully available.
  - Potentially available, for example through
    - Changes in regular surveys;
    - Arrangements with data 'owner';
    - Improved handling of raw data;
    - Shorter release time.
  - Related data available, For example, number of cars rather than distance traveled could be used for an indicator on the development impact of automobile travel.
  - Not available.

Indicator selection – data sources

- Common types of data needed for indicators
  - National accounts
  - Censuses
  - Household and other surveys
  - Administrative records
  - Estimations based on agreed standards

- Common sources of data and indicators
  - Statistical offices
  - Other ministries and governmental agencies
  - Reports to intergovernmental bodies
  - Regional and international organizations

Thank You

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