

Monitoring Sustainable Development Strategies and the Role of Indicators

Matthias Bruckner

Division for Sustainable Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

Outline

1. Importance of monitoring
2. Framework of indicators for monitoring sustainable development strategies
3. Monitoring progress towards sustainable development
4. Monitoring implementation of national sustainable development strategy (NSDS)

Importance of monitoring

- Monitoring is critical for effective implementation of an NSDS
 - Without monitoring, the risk is great that the NSDS is merely a list of good intentions.
 - Without monitoring, there is no basis for correcting NSDS
- Monitoring mechanisms should be built into the NSDS itself
 - Facilitates policy interventions
 - Promotes culture of learning
 - Promotes accountability
 - Promotes public interest and information

Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS

- ◆ Two dimensions of monitoring
 - Monitoring progress towards sustainable development
 - Monitoring implementation of sustainable development strategy
- ◆ The two dimensions are interrelated
- ◆ Some indicators are useful for both purposes

Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS

- ◆ Monitoring progress towards sustainable development
 - allows for status-quo assessments and to detect trends of sustainable development
 - assists prioritization in early stage of NSDS
 - tracks progress made by NSDS
 - assists review and adjustment of NSDS

Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS

- ◆ Monitoring implementation of sustainable development strategy
 - Ensures accountability
 - Both actions contained in NSDS and effect of NSDS should be measured
 - ◆ Are all of us doing what the NSDS calls for?
 - ◆ Are we achieving the goals of our NSDS?
 - The two questions require different types of indicators.

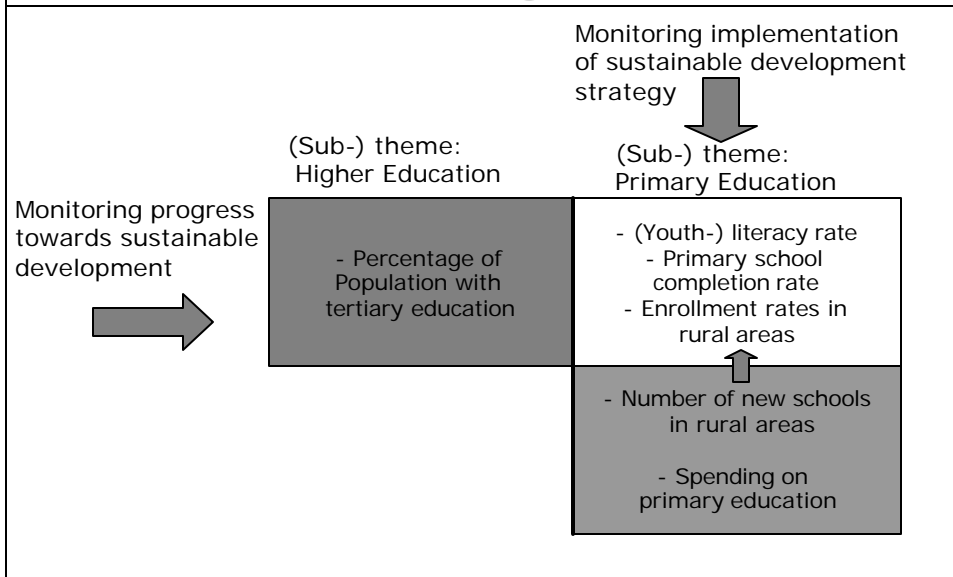
Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS

- ◆ Many countries have national sets of indicators of sustainable development
- ◆ Most of them select and organize their indicators in a thematic framework
 - Chosen themes often correspond to thematic/sectoral areas from NSDS.
 - Such frameworks cover indicators on effects of NSDS.
 - They can be extended to include indicators on actions contained in NSDS.
 - Inter-thematic linkages should not be ignored.

Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS

- ◆ Hypothetical example:
- ◆ Literacy rates are low, due to low attendance of primary schools. The lack of schools outside urban areas is a main problem.
- ◆ NSDS calls for new schools, and includes specific timetables and targets
- ◆ Few people have university degree. Stakeholders agreed that this is not a priority area for the NSDS, but could become a major issue in the future.

Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS

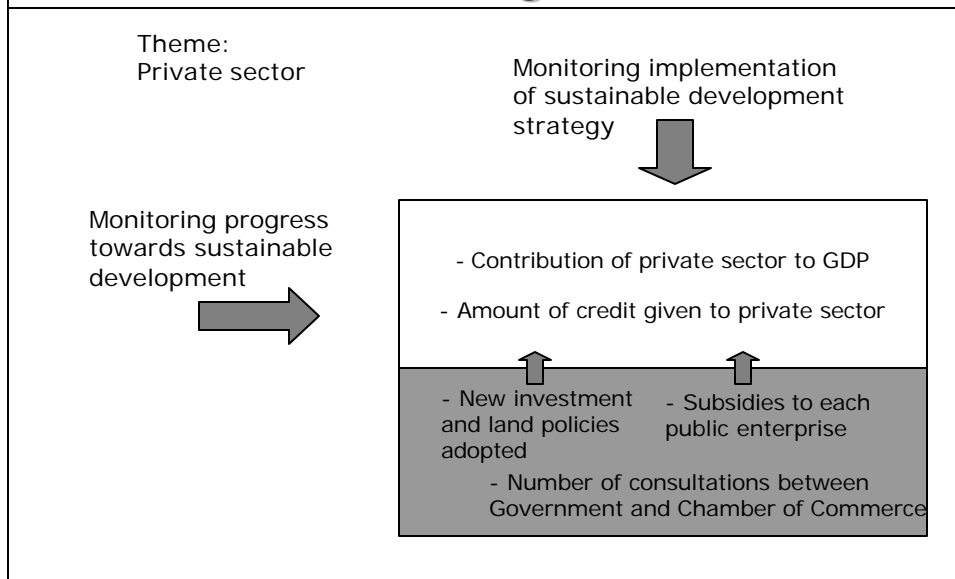


Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS

◆ Hypothetical example:

- ◆ Private sector is underdeveloped. Lack of access to credit due to inadequate investment policies (e.g., land cannot be used as collateral) and high level of subsidies to public enterprises are among the main problems.
- ◆ NSDS calls for a 50 % increase of private sector contribution to GDP and specific policy reforms.

Framework of indicators for monitoring NSDS



Monitoring progress towards sustainable development

- ◆ Which areas/themes are to be monitored?
- ◆ Themes inside NSDS priority areas
- ◆ Themes outside NSDS priority areas that are
 - relevant
 - important for revising and updating NSDS
 - beyond national scope
 - necessary to give comprehensive picture of sustainable development in the country

Monitoring progress towards sustainable development

- ◆ General criteria for indicators
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Dependent on cost-effective data
 - Reliable and sufficiently precise
 - Unambiguous
 - Clear and understandable
 - Selected through participatory process
 - Responsive to policy changes (for themes covered by NSDS)
 - Timely available
 - Open to disaggregation (by sex, geography, etc.) if necessary

Monitoring progress towards sustainable development

- ◆ Common types of data needed for indicators
 - National accounts
 - Surveys and censuses
 - 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

Monitoring progress towards sustainable development

- ◆ Useful points of departure for national indicators:
 - Global indicator sets
 - ◆ Examples: CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development (CSD-ISD) and MDG indicators.
 - Indicator sets used by other countries
 - National and regional indicator sets designed for other purposes (e.g., statistical yearbooks)
 - All these indicator sets require ‘tailoring’ in order to be nationally relevant.

Monitoring implementation of NSDS

- ◆ Indicators used for monitoring effects of NSDS can also be used to monitor sustainable development progress
- ◆ Indicators measuring actions often follow directly from strategy or associated action plan
 - Beneficial interaction between indicator selection and strategy development
 - High specificity of the strategy simplifies indicator selection.
 - Indicator selection strengthens focus of strategy.
 - Integrated approach important.

Monitoring implementation of NSDS

- ◆ Indicators used for monitoring implementation should follow a logical chain
 - *Inputs* into the activities contained in the strategy are transformed to *outputs*, which generate *outcomes* of the strategy actions that will have an *impact* on sustainable development in the country.

Monitoring implementation of NSDS

- ◆ Evaluation
 - Evaluations are undertaken periodically.
 - Process evaluation to assess whether activities are implemented effectively.
 - Impact evaluation to assess whether strategy effectively reaches its goals.
 - Important for strategy revisions.

Thank You

Contact: Matthias Bruckner
Division for Sustainable Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

email: brucknerm@un.org
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html>

Annex: CSD indicators of sustainable development

◆ Mandates

- Chapter 40 of Agenda 21
- UN Commission on Sustainable Development (1995 work programme) and subsequent sessions
- World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)
- CSD-11 (2003): New multi-year programme of work

Annex: CSD indicators of sustainable development

- ◆ History of CSD-ISD: Implementation of work programme in 3 phases
- ◆ Phase 1 (1994-1996)
 - Consensus-building meetings among major stakeholders
 - Selection and development of methodology sheets of 134 indicators, embedded in DSR framework
- ◆ Phase 2 (1996-1999)
 - Pilot testing in 22 countries and capacity building activities
- ◆ Phase 3 (1999-2001)
 - Evaluation and revision of CSD-ISD
 - ISD consists of 58 indicators, embedded in thematic/sub-thematic framework
 - Publication of 'Blue book' (2nd edition)

Annex: CSD indicators of sustainable development

- ◆ Current status of CSD-ISD
 - Review process until end of 2006
 - Reflecting new knowledge and experiences with sustainable development indicators and trend of measuring development progress (such as MDGs)
 - In December 2005, an EGM agreed on preliminary revised set
 - ◆ 58 core indicators, 33 additional indicators and 12 indicators for future work
 - ◆ Thematic/sub-thematic framework maintained with modifications

Annex: CSD indicators of sustainable development

Proposed main themes of CSD-ISD

- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Governance
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Demographics
- ◆ Atmosphere
- ◆ Land
- ◆ Oceans, seas, coasts
- ◆ Freshwater
- ◆ Biodiversity
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Equity
- ◆ Global partnership
- ◆ Consumption and production patterns

Annex: CSD indicators of sustainable development

Sample indicators of CSD-ISD	Poverty	Governance	Health	Education	Demographics	Atmosphere	Land	Oceans, Seas and Coasts	Fresh Water	Biodiversity	Economic Development	Equity	Global Partnership	Consumption and Production Patterns
Percent of Population Living Below National	■													
Mortality Rate Under 5 Year Old	■		■	■										
Dependency Ratio (Young and Old)				■										
Land degradation						■			■					■
Concentration of Pollutants in Freshwater		■	■						■					■
GDP per Capita	■	■	■				■				■			■
Intensity of Energy Use					■									■