Monitoring NSDSs

An overview of approaches

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IIED
### Scope of presentation

- Rationale for NSDS
- Monitoring in the NSDS cycle
- Selected approaches to NSDS monitoring
- Pros and cons of approaches
- Criteria for good monitoring
- Conclusions

**Based on desk review commissioned by OECD**
Monitoring and the systematic rationale for sustainable development strategies

**SET OF OBJECTIVES**
- Social
- Economic
- Environmental

**SET OF PROCESSES**
- e.g. Participation
- Communications
- Analysis
- Debate
- Investment
- Capacity strengthening

**CO-ORDINATION SYSTEM**

**MONITORING**

**STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**
Assessment of SD issues and debate priorities

Consensus on vision & priority goals for SD

Plans and Investment for SD

Empowerment and capacity building

Mainstreaming SD, controls & incentives

Monitor strategy mechanisms

Monitor SD outcomes

Communication
Participation
Coordination
Information
Learning

Monitor process

Implementation:

Monitor impacts

Monitor outcomes

Monitor content or products

Four key elements in monitoring the NSDS cycle
National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS)

Continuing strategy & monitoring cycles

NSDS 1 → NSDS 2 → NSDS 3 → NSDS 4

Continuous monitoring
Selected approaches to NSDS monitoring

- National peer reviews
- Internal reviews
- External auditing
- Parliamentary reviews
- Budgetary reviews
- Indicator-based monitoring
- Public, local monitoring
- International monitoring
  - Reports to CSD, UN conferences, national progress reports
  - Monitoring EU strategy
- Monitoring PRS
NATIONAL PEER REVIEWS (Voluntary)

eg France, EU

- Background report (interviews)
- 2-4 invited peer countries (govt + NGO)
- Facilitated PR workshop
- Agreed recommendations – report

| Process: | YES | Content: | YES | Outcomes | YES | Impact: | YES (4) |

PROS

- Voluntary
- Tailored
- Facilitates dialogue + sharing experiences
- Covers all 4 elements
- Workshop questions address strategy principles

CONS

- Could be non-judgemental?
- Resource intensive
- International agreement on PR difficult
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERNAL REVIEWS</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information gathering</td>
<td>Addresses progress on SD commitment &amp; delivering targets</td>
<td>Led by Govt officials driving NSDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis of report</td>
<td>Tool for change (when based on indicators &amp; targets)</td>
<td>Process exclusive to Govt</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Could be non-judgemental</td>
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<td>Resource intensive</td>
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<p>| Process: NO | Content: YES | Outcomes YES | Impact: RARE (2) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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**EXTERNAL AUDITING**

- By body not involved in developing/implementing NSDS
  - In-country process
  - Non-nationals

**PROS**

- Independent of strategy drivers
- Can keep Govt accountable for SD commitments
- Engages array of ministries (eg Canadian case)

**CONS**

- Influence depends on criteria selected as basis for audit; and independence of audit body
Standing committees to assess performance of govt departments

Some focus on environment and/or SD

PROS

Checks & balances between branches of government
Can raise political awareness of SD goals
Allows questions of government on SD

CONS

Short-term perspective
Mo real ‘measures’ of SD progress (outcomes, impacts)
Limited to debating a report submitted by government
**BUDGETARY REVIEWS**

- Govt departments account for their work on SD
- Green budgets (eg Sweden, Norway)

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<td>Content:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>RARE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact:</td>
<td>SOME (2)</td>
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**PROS**
- Involves most powerful ministry (Finance)
- Means to argue/lobby for $ allocations to SD actions
- Can increase SD awareness within ministries
- Generally demands ministries to focus on SD outcomes

**CONS**
- Difficult to involve finance ministries
- Can be hard to implement without better methodology
INDICATOR-BASED & QUANTITATIVE MONITORING

- Numerous indicator frameworks & sets
- Core/headline indicators

PROS
- Can be rigorous if indicators are also targets
- Allows long-term vision when inter-generational indicators included

CONS
- May be hard to agree on short list of core indicators
- How to measure certain SD concepts?
- Data can be unreliable or lacking
- National indicators less relevant at local level

| Process: | NO |
| Content: | NO |
| Outcomes | YES |
| Impact:  | YES |

(2)
PUBLIC, LOCAL MONITORING

- Eg COS Netherlands – Local Sustainability Metre
  - Benchmark info for most municipalities
  - 4 questionnaires- yes/no answers, points, total score
  - Website

PROS
- Engages publics/civil society
- Participative / transparent
- Indicators agreed by range of stakeholders
- Builds links between NGOs and local officials

CONS
- Bias towards local authority SD action: risks of neglecting national strategy elements
INTERNATIONAL MONITORING (A)

Reports to CSD, UN Conference, national progress reports

- CSD reports – every 2 yrs
- 14 page format focusing on NSDS / thematic country info
- Future emphasis on case studies

**PROS**
- Creates peer pressure – promotes SD reforms
- Official commitment to report – can be used by stakeholders to push for action

**CONS**
- ‘Box filling’ approach (completing questionnaire)
- Emphasis on successes, failures downplayed

<p>| Process: | NO |
| Content: | YES |
| Outcomes | YES |
| Impact:  | RARE (2) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring the EU strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNATIONAL MONITORING (B)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process:</strong> NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content:</strong> YES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes:</strong> YES</td>
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<td><strong>Impact:</strong> POOR</td>
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- Spring Council progress reviews – not effective
- Future – SD indicators, forecasts, scientific data-based
- 2004-2006: review process
- Revised strategy (June 06)

**PROS**
- Regional (European) perspective
- Future monitoring based on SD indicators (12 headline)

**CONS**
- Inadequate attention to external dimensions
- Lacks comprehensive assessment of ESE impacts
- Inadequate stakeholder engagement
- Process run by strategy drivers)
- Process buried in EU bureaucracy
POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY MONITORING

- Poverty monitoring system
- Annual PRS progress report
- PRS Credit/Budget Support Performance Assessment Framework

**PROS**
- Address 4 elements (increasingly re: MDGs)
- Performance assessment triggers tranches of donor $
- Basis for capacity development

**CONS**
- Annual progress reports focus on donor needs
- Mainly to support donor-client government relationship
- Strategic value of monitoring not yet fully realised
- Poor links with existing national monitoring processes
- Inadequate stakeholder participation

| Process: | NO |
| Content: | YES |
| Outcomes | YES |
| Impact:  | YES |

(3)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>CRITERIA FOR GOOD MONITORING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adequate policy priority for monitoring</td>
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<td>Addresses strategy principles</td>
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<td>Constructed and developed as a system</td>
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<td>Effective utilisation of existing monitoring systems</td>
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<td>Stakeholder participation</td>
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<td>Timely and influential</td>
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<td>Driven by strategy objectives</td>
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<td>Clear, but flexible SD reference framework</td>
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<td>Range of assessment criteria</td>
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<td>Building key datasets</td>
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<td>Adequate resourcing</td>
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<td>Measures real progress</td>
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<td>Visibility and transparency</td>
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SOME CONCLUSIONS

(A)

- Approaches seldom used in isolation
- Articulated very differently in individual countries, and often used in combination
- Issue is fitness for a specific purpose – rather than inherent pros & cons
- Each approach may have a role to play (individually/ in combination) - depends on needs and circumstances.
SOME CONCLUSIONS (B)

- No real objective basis for judging approaches (serve different purposes; evidence from limited examples/countries)

- **Difficulties for external reviews**
  - Most monitoring systems not yet producing reports accessible to external reviewers;
  - Strategy docs say little about monitoring;
  - Available info partial; insufficient depth

- Countries could carry out own assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of strategy monitoring