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
• 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.
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.
- These indicators serve as reference for countries to develop or revise national indicator sets.
  - They are intended to be adapted to national conditions.
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)
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

- 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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Core indicator</th>
<th>Other indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceans, seas and costs</td>
<td>Coastal zone</td>
<td>Percentage of total population living in coastal areas</td>
<td>Bathing water quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Forests</td>
<td>Proportion of land covered by forests</td>
<td>Area under sustainable forest management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Employment-population ratio</td>
<td>Vulnerable employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data availability</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Related indicator relevant</th>
<th>Relevant but missing</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available</td>
<td>To be used</td>
<td>To be modified</td>
<td>To be identified</td>
<td>To be removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentially available</td>
<td>To be used</td>
<td>To be modified</td>
<td>To be identified</td>
<td>To be removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related data available</td>
<td>To be used</td>
<td>To be modified</td>
<td>To be identified</td>
<td>To be removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>To be used</td>
<td>To be modified</td>
<td>To be identified</td>
<td>To be removed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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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