



The 3rd OECD World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy”

Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life

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**COMPENDIUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATOR
INITIATIVES: HOW TO DEFINE, FIND, SHARE, DEVELOP AND
FOLLOW BEST PRACTICE ON THE USE OF SYSTEMATIC
INDICATOR INITIATIVES.**

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Even though many sustainable development indicator systems have evolved since the call by the Brundtland Commission and later Agenda 21, it is still not common at national and especially at regional and local levels to systematically follow and monitor progress on an ongoing basis using a holistic framework.

Sharing knowledge and information on systematic indicator initiatives is crucial for harmonization, capacity building and influence on policy.

The landscape of sustainable development indicator systems whose number has significantly grown in number and sophistication since the 2nd World Forum in Istanbul is full of success stories, but also of continuing major challenges. Indicator systems are key policy tools to define in detail and operationalize the general concept of sustainable development based on shared but differentiated responsibilities. Indicator systems that help articulate and track progress in fulfilling these responsibilities are fundamental as planning, implementation and evaluation instruments, and also as instruments of communication and coordination across different scales, up to and including the global scale. However, the landscape of indicator efforts is fragmented in terms of types of indicator systems and ways of indicator development and use in informing policy development. It is also fragmented in terms of developed versus developing countries and national versus local or sectoral initiatives.

Despite many international efforts there is still no general consensus on a more systematic approach to measuring progress and on how to use these measures in policymaking more effectively, which is most evident in the lack of clarity about what progress measures should be used to track the success of economic stimulus initiatives. Even in cases where there is consensus on the indicators, due to the different priorities or unsystematic design of monitoring efforts in the past, availability and quality of time series data is a major problem.

The 3rd OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy presents an unprecedented opportunity to advance the measurement and sustainability agenda in pragmatic ways at a critical point in time. In this light you may see the Compendium on Sustainability Indicators – A global directory for indicator initiatives as an attempt to bring together experience in one place on best practice related to measuring progress from the global to local level. While the Compendium offers no synthesis and does not by itself offer solutions, it lays bare the facts on parallel indicator systems with the explicit intention of facilitating cross-scale and cross-jurisdictional dialogue and cooperation. As we view the development of sustainable development and well-being indicators as part of a long-term social learning process, the Compendium itself is intended to be a long-term, ongoing initiative. Being probably the most comprehensive and certainly the longest maintained information sources on systematic indicator initiatives, the Compendium documents the development and potential of a social movement many representatives of which will be present at the 3rd World Forum.