

Topic 1: The political value-added of a European set of SDIs

Question 1:

Under what conditions can SDIs play their role as a supporting tool to implement SD policies? Do you know examples of how SDIs have influenced political decisions?

- Policies should follow indicators (trends should be available for a long period)
- Audience targeted indicators (SDIs designed for different audiences)
- Indicators should be able to mobilize the public (e.g. carbon footprint) → they need to shock!
- Timeliness → SDIs shouldn't lag behind
- Statistical robust connection between “slow burning” and “shocking” indicators
- *Controversial issue*: SDIs confirmed at European Council
- SDIs should be published by independent institutions (independence from political willingness)

Topic 2: Visibility of the Eurostat SDI set and the EU SDS at the EU level and in Member States

Question 2:

How visible are the Eurostat SDIs and the EU SDS in your country? How could their visibility be increased?

- *Controversial issue:* Consistency between different SDI sets requires consistency between political documents
- Is there a need that a national SDI, when at the same time being an EU SDI, is recognized as EU SDI?
- Increase of consistency is natural to a certain extent:
 - Influence between EU and national levels in both ways
 - We are all talking about the same topic (SD)
- Differentiate between (a) putting forward a policy which also as an SD policy and (b) really referring to the NSDS/EU SDS
- High-level structures for SD needed (EU/MS level)
- Use different terms than SD → “well-being”, “welfare”, “quality of life”

Topic 3: SDIs as a tool to communicate SD trends and policies

Question 1:

How can SD trends and policies be communicated best?

- Indicators need to shock!
- Communication product is important (media friendly)
- Composite indicators raise awareness, but should then be complemented by other SDIs
- Different communication tools for different target groups (audience targeted)
- NGOs/SD councils could “translate” data for the media
- Sender of the information is important (e.g. Al Gore, N. Stern)
- Complement SDIs with projections/estimations (e.g. scenario building)

Question 2:

Should SDIs be used for benchmarking SD trends in the EU-27 and what are the reasons for your view? If so, how could benchmarking work?

- Benchmarking requires comparable data from all countries
- Good for awareness raising
- *Controversial issue:* Benchmarking can mislead (e.g. Human Development Index, Ecological Footprint)
- Include SDIs in peer reviews
- Rankings are accepted in many other areas (football, stock exchange, ...)

- NGOs/research institutes regularly publish rankings → should SD benchmarking be left to them?
- Allocate budget for SD benchmarking among EU 27 in FP7