

Well-being Indices:



There are a number of indices which have been developed in an attempt to provide quantitative measures of well-being and sustainability; the main ones are summarised as follows:

1) Human Development Index:-

developed by the UNDP (2005) and published annually. However it only covers a minor part of all aspects of sustainable development (Neumayer, 2001). In summary the HDI provides a rough idea of the level of development, though not the sustainability of development, particularly in developing countries.

2) Environmental Sustainability Index, ESI-2005

– developed by Columbia University and Yale University, USA, (Esty, 2005). ESI covers the whole range of aspects of sustainable development in its broad context.

3) Environmental Performance Index, EPI-2006

- developed by Columbia University and Yale University, USA (Esty, 2006). Published in 2006 in order to present a better insight into the 'environmental dimension' of the Millennium Development Goals. The EPI comprises 6 categories (Environmental Health, Biodiversity and Habitat, Sustainable Energy, Water Resources, Air Quality, Productive Resource Management), derived from 16 indicators. Unfortunately the EPI only partly covers sustainable development in its broader context.

4) Commitment to Development Index, CDI-2009

- set up by the Centre for Global Development (2007). It has published the CDI every year since 2003. It is composed of seven components: aid, trade, investment, migration, environment, security, and technology. The CDI, again, only partly covers sustainable development and offers information on no more than 21 countries (Centre for Global Development, 2009).

5) Index for Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW)

– is calculated for over 10 countries, according to the design of Daly and Cobb (1989). This provides a useful correction to GDP. It shows clearly that taking GDP as a standard does not, however, include the main aspects of quality of life and does not offer a clear insight into the level of sustainability of a country. The ISEW, unfortunately, is only available for a limited number of countries.

6) Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)

– GPI and ISEW are both variants of the 'green GDP'. The GPI has been developed by Redefining Progress and was published for the first time in 1998. Its increasing importance is being recognized (Talberth et al., 2006; Lawn, 2003; Anielski and Rowe, 1999). Like the ISEW it does not, however, include the main aspects of quality of life and does not offer a clear insight into the level of sustainability of a country. The GPI is only available for a limited number of countries.

7) Ecological Footprint

– developed by Wackernagel and Rees (1996), published every two years by the WWF in the Living Planet Report (WWF, 2010). Converts everything a person consumes (house, mobility, energy, food, recreation, etc.) and what is needed to produce all these items, into the required area on earth, the number of hectares per capita. The Ecological Footprint only partly covers sustainability in its wider sense.

8) Wellbeing of Nations

– created by Robert Prescott-Allen (2001), and published in his book, *The Wellbeing of Nations: A Country-by-Country Index of Quality of Life and the Environment*. It comprises the Human Wellbeing Index and the Ecosystem Wellbeing Index. It covers the whole field of sustainable development and provides an enormous amount of information which, unfortunately makes it rather cumbersome. Although extremely comprehensive it is rather too complicated, and published only once to date.

9) Millennium Development Indicators

– set up by the UN (United Nations, 2005) to monitor progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (1990–2015). It presents much useful information, however, these indicators have a different objective than specifically measuring the level of sustainability of a country. These are a valuable set of indicators, excellent for monitoring the effectiveness of policy with respect to the MDGs, however of limited usefulness for determining the level of a country's sustainability (UN, 2010a).

10) EU Sustainable Development Indicators (SDIs)

are used to monitor the EU Sustainable Development Strategy in a report published by Eurostat biannually. Of more than 100 indicators, eleven have been identified as headline indicators. They are intended to give an overall picture of whether the EU has achieved progress towards sustainable development in terms of the objectives and targets defined in the strategy. In summary the set consists of a large number of indicators, including a number of indicators which are not particularly related to sustainability, like Gross Domestic Product and Official Development Assistance. The set is limited to the EU-member countries (EC, 2010).

11) CSD indicators

- developed by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development serve as reference for countries to develop or revise national indicators of sustainable development. There are 50 core indicators, which are part of larger set of 96 indicators of sustainable development. The current framework contains 14 themes, and coherence with Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators and major sectoral indicator initiatives have been increased. However, some of the indicators are hardly, or not at all, related to sustainability, like GDP, ODA and Tourism. In summary a comprehensive set, and although many indicators can provide a lot of useful information, they do not completely cover sustainability in its broadest sense (UN, 2010b) (Van de Kerk & Manuel, 2008).



