

Comparative Summary of Existing Indicator Sets

Part 1 - National Level

	UN	Canada	SDI Group	UK	Dutch NEPP
1. Overview Information					
a. Initiator, Institutional Home, Date Project Established	UN Commission on SD, Work Programme on ISD 1995	National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) in Canada 2000	Originally PCSD; from 1997 through 2000 - the Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President. 1994-95	UK government 1999 With the publication of “A Better Quality of Life: Strategy for Sustainable Development in UK”	Environmental Ministry in cooperation with the National Institute for Health and Environment (RIVM) 1989 first NEPP approved by the parliament
b. Scale and Aggregation	National (all countries) Most indicators measure simple issues with minimal level of aggregation (e.g., energy use per capita).	National (Canada) Indicators are not developed yet	National (U.S.) Different indicators have different level of aggregation. Some simple indicators; some – more aggregate.	National (U.K.), regional and local Link between ‘headline’, national, regional and local indicators. Some simple, some aggregate.	National (Netherlands) but possible to use by the provinces Low level of aggregation – targets specific environmental problems with the objective to allow for actions.
c. Scope and Resulting Indicator Categories (see crosswalk for list of indicators)	Broad scope – covers all 4 dimensions of SD (environmental, social, economic and institutional) 1. Equity 2. Health 3. Education 4. Housing 5. Security 6. Population 7. Atmosphere	Broad scope: Produced, human and natural capital.	Environmental, social & economic themes, in some cases integrated 3 themes: 1. Economic (13) 2. Environmental (16) 3. Social (11) (number of indicators in each theme) Total of 40 indicators	Comprehensive scope (social, environmental, economic dimension) 4 themes: 1. Maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment 2. Social progress which recognizes the needs of	Environmental focus with 8 themes: 1. Climate Change 2. Acidification 3. Eutrophication 4. Dispersion 5. Waste Disposal 6. Local Nuisance 7. Dehydration 8. Squandering, or Resource Management

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	8. Land 9. Oceans/seas/coasts 10. Freshwater 11. Biodiversity 12. Economic structure 13. Consumption and production patterns 14. Institutional framework 15. Institutional capacity Total of 134 indicators			everyone. 3. Effective protection of the environment 4. Prudent use of natural resources.	
d. Goals, Targets, and Benchmarks	No	No	No	Objectives	Sets national goals and targets and then determines how much each sector (or 'target group') needs to contribute in the overall reductions.
e. Framework/ Concepts	<i>Theme/sub-theme</i> framework combined with the <i>driving force-state-response</i> framework.	"Capital" framework that tracks key types of capital: - produced capital - human capital - natural capital	Set of 40 indicators organised in 2 ways: - economic, environmental and social themes; - Long-term endowments and liabilities; processes and current results.	Organised around the three main pillars of SD – social, economic, env. 15 'headline' indicators to raise awareness; 147 national indicators 29 local indicators Regional indicators based on the 'headline' indicators.	Set of indicators within the major themes defined by the government.
f. Presentation and Communication	Guidelines and indicators available online. Web search of indicators by chapter, category or alphabetical. No graphs of the indicators provided. Link to some country reports.	Not completed yet, but website outlines progress and purpose. Some indicators available online through the Sustainability Reporting program (a new NGO initiative).	Printed report with the actual indicators with 1996 data.	Indicators available online. Graphs and evaluation presented. Raw data (excel format) available for manipulation.	Indicators, targets and achieved results available online.

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2. Indicator development process					
a. Purpose of and Audience for Indicators	To make indicators of sustainable development accessible to decision-makers at national level. To be able to track, assess and compare countries' progress toward SD. National governments are primary users; some educational uses.	To ensure sound basis for environmental and economic policy in the future (mainly at national level).	To track U.S. progress toward sustainable development and regularly report to public.	To track the progress of the country toward sustainable development on annual basis. To raise awareness among public. Intended users include: government, communities, NGOs.	Purpose of the NEPP is to promote significant reductions in environmental pressures; to educate business, NGOs and the public and lead to specific actions.
b. Organizational Setup and Participation	Co-operative, consultative, collaborative process Involving more than 30 UN organisations, intergovernmental, NGOs, governments. Expert Group of 45 members; 100 indicator experts as consultees.	Co-operative, collaborative process NRTEE is working with Environment Canada and Statistics Canada. Steering committee/cluster groups include env. groups, academics, indicator experts, gov. officials and business and financial orgs.	SDI group contributed to PCSD indicators then created national set. Involved EPA, DOI, NASA, DOC, HUD, etc. Review process included students, Fortune 500 companies, NGOs.	Developed by government. The Statistical Office in the Ministry of the Environment is responsible for the indicators. They have the direct support of the Minister.	Collaborative effort between government, business and NGOs as main actors. Broad participation of businesses, NGOs, academia, local and central government.
c. Authority/ Institutional Arrangements for Ongoing Reporting/ Funding	Through the UN CSD	Sponsored by steering and advisory committee members from variety of organizations including federal and regional government, non profit and businesses. Federal funding	1995 – 1997, provided information and advice to the PCSD. 1997 through 2000 reported to the Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President. Memoranda of Agreement for Federal Agencies to contribute resources to support the SDI Group: personnel, office space, funds, equipment, or data.	Commitment to publish an annual review of progress by the country as a whole towards sustainable development.	Approved by the parliament. Regular updating of the plan (every 4 years) with every 2 years publishing a “score card” of current status. Ongoing funding is provided by the central government to monitor progress.

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3. Results					
a. Achievements and Known Impacts	Agreed upon 134 indicators; the organizing framework and 22 countries tested the indicators.	Phase 1 completed (determine the approach to defining the indicators). Cluster groups formed; Broad stakeholder involvement and co-operation.	Published Report with 40 indicators; these have been revised and updated and posted on the web.	Published annual report in 2000. Developed 15 'headline' indicators and published on the web.	Extremely successful. Impressive results. Has transformed the entire national policy. All target groups have achieved or are close to achieve their target levels. More than 100 covenants were signed. Proved "absolute decoupling" of economic growth from environmental pressure. Brought to greater awareness about sustainability.
b. Lessons Learned	134 indicators is too much. Decided to use a smaller number of core indicators.		High level political support is needed to keep the momentum going for a major Federal effort. A good program can enroll that support.	The UK chose a small set of headline indicators after the release of a large number was less engaging to the public and policy makers	

1. UN Indicators of Sustainable Development, <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/isd.htm>
2. Canada Sustainability Report, <http://www.sustreport.org/home.html>
3. SDI Group (USA), <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/iwgsdi/Framework.html>
4. UK Indicators of Sustainable Development, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/indicators/>
5. Dutch National Environmental Policy Plan (NEPP), <http://www.vrom.nl/> (In Dutch. Select 'International' for English content or see <http://www.rrr.org/bestpractices/netherlands.html>)