

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?

- Use Headline and / or composite indicators to communicate with non-specialists
- Guarantee high level of political commitment and visibility on the political level
- Whenever possible, indicators should be linked to SD policy targets
- Active communication, of benchmarking results in particular, produce political pressure

Question 2:

What can we learn from the use of indicators in the Lisbon Strategy for increasing the political value-added of SDIs at both the EU level and in your country?

- Structural indicators gained importance through benchmarking
- Structural indicators were accepted both on the EU and the national level
- Structural indicators were driven by powerful ministries
- To improve awareness for indicators, select them in relation to key topics and develop story lines

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

Question 1:

How visible are the Eurostat SDI set and the EU SDS objectives in the EU policies? How could their visibility be increased?

- SDIs are not visible, knowledge of SDIs is restricted to specialists
- There are too many SDIs, while the SD concept is still fuzzy
- Not all SDIs are convincing and / or the data are not always of homogenous quality between countries

Question 2:

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

- New EU SDS will influence national SDS renewals, therefore EU SDIs will increasingly be used
- As such, EU SDIs are not and need not be visible on the national level
- Progress report on EU SDS increases visibility of this strategy and of the EU SDIs
- Link SDS and “hot” issues on the national level

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

Question 1:

How can SD trends and policies be communicated best?

- For the general public as target audience, use indicators that relate to daily life
- For politicians as target audience, link indicators to the economy and public opinion
- Develop story lines behind indicators, avoid pure statistics
- Use famous personalities as ambassadors
- Link indicators and education, involve stakeholders

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 is needed to raise SD profile
- Benchmarking must go along with qualitative information and discussion
- Avoid naming and shaming, benchmarking must be part of a mutual learning process
- Common definitions, data availability and quality are a precondition, but avoid perfectionism and completeness
- Implement benchmarking in partnership, combine top-down and bottom-up approach (EU coordination, voluntary participation of MS, at least at an initial stage)
- Use ESDN as a discussion forum accompanying benchmarking