Resource Efficiency Indicators: A Policy Perspective

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Outline

• Findings from a policy study on Resource Efficiency data and indicators in developing countries
• Some thoughts based on yesterday’s discussions
Data on resource use and resource efficiency

Situation
- Many relevant datasets exist, but...
- Weak coordination of data collection and data compilation
- No-one seemed to have a good overview of existing datasets
- Lack of effective systems for data sharing
- Poor documentation of definitions and data collection methods
- Insufficient access to reliable and useful data
The Vicious Circle of Low Capacity

Low awareness and perceived need for MF indicators among political leaders and government officials

Low capacity to compile credible data sets and make time series, difficult to generate interesting results and demonstrate the benefits of indicators

Limited efforts to systematically collect data and to establish an information infrastructure.

Lack of overview, limited access to data, scattered data sets, low and uncertain data quality, unclear definitions, infrequent updating, issues with data compatibility, paucity of historical data
Effective Uptake and Use of Indicators Requires Capacity Strengthening

- Lack of awareness appears to be one of the main obstacles that need to be addressed.
- The transfer of experiences among countries may be one way to break the vicious circle, especially transfer among developing and newly industrialized countries.
- The establishment of national coordination functions ‘Resource Data Focal Points’ can be one key action.
- To be effective, initiatives to strengthen capacity need to:
  - be sustained over the long-term,
  - address all key actor groups (government officials, statisticians, and academics/experts), and
  - target individuals (awareness, knowledge and skills) as well as organizations (routines, assignment of responsibilities, budget allocation etc.) and institutional arrangements.
  - Cover also sub-national levels.
When Developing and Promoting New Indicator Frameworks We Should

- Avoid reinventing wheels and build on what already exists
- Review past experiences of introducing new indicators systems and base what we do on lessons learnt
- Aim for an indicator framework that:
  - includes a few headline indicators that all countries in the region can/”should” use, but
  - that also allows for adaptation to national circumstances and priorities
- Be mindful that certain indicators may be suitable mainly for experts and knowledgeable users
- Minimise the amount of extra work placed on government officials
- Realise that the uptake and institutionalisation of new indicators takes time
- Aim for mainstreaming indicators so that they are used in general development/economic planning, e.g. in national 5-year plans

In order to do this we need better knowledge on the situation in the countries, including for example the existing capacities of governments and stat’s offices, political priorities, and institutional arrangements.
Monitoring Investment Flows

- Most of the discussions are on Pressure and State indicators
  - Focus on the interface between Society/Economy and Environment
  - Change rather slowly
- Need to monitor also changes within the Economy
  - Investment flows are key
  - Quicker to change
- Example: energy consumption in the building sector
  - Pressure:
    - Total annual energy use in the sector
    - kWh per m$^2$ per year (average for existing building stock)
  - Investment:
    - Per cent of new buildings that meet high energy efficiency standards
    - ($\frac{\text{Energy consumption in new buildings}}{\text{Energy consumption in average buildings}}$)
Indicators: Governance Tools

Indicator systems are not only policy tools to be used by governments but also governance tools for society as a whole.

– Broad involvement in indicator system design increases relevance and builds ownership
– Regular public reporting builds awareness and public understanding
– Use of various media is needed for effective outreach
– Can be used by civil society to see whether governments deliver on their targets – Transparency and Accountability
Political Acceptance of Indicators

• Precondition for political acceptance and uptake. Adi: not make people frightened.
• Some decision-makers may prefer Feel-good indicators that show that everything is OK.
  – But that is not what we need!
  – Need indicators that can shake us out of the current BAU mindset.
• How to send uncomfortable messages so that they are taken up and can trigger meaningful action?
• How to make people listen to Inconvenient Truths? Huge challenge.
From Dashboard to Radar Screen

• We need to ask how we can use indicators effectively as tools for changing the socio-economic system
• Need not only to monitor the current situation but also to explore where we are heading
• Modelling, scenario building (different possible futures), vision exercises, targets
• Identify unfavourable trends, anticipate future problems, take preventive action to avoid unnecessary human suffering and high restorative costs.
Thank you for your attention