The Dutch Monitor of Wellbeing and SDG’s

78th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific:
From GDP to well-being and sustainability: means and measures

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Going Beyond GDP (1)

What, if any, do you see as the main shortcomings of GDP as a measure of progress and what motivated your efforts to move beyond GDP?
Going Beyond GDP (2)

< 2014
Demand for new well-being indicators is increasing

June 2014
Dutch parliament debated, motion to explore the possibilities of defining well-being in broader terms than GDP

June 2015
Working group discussed draft proposal with experts (oa CBS)

July 2015
House of Representatives requested CBS to report (September report)

October 2015
Temporary Committee on explorative study of a broad definition of well-being in close consultation with CBS experts

January 2016
CBS suggests to publish a report containing a selection of indicators to give a broad picture of well-being

April 2016
Committee recommends that CBS develop an annual ‘Monitor of Well-being’

December 2016
The cabinet stated that it would commission CBS to compile an annual Monitor of Well-being, and make funding available

January 2017
The House of Representatives debated the findings of the Temporary Committee with the cabinet, which adopted all the Committee’s recommendations. Thus it was officially confirmed that CBS was to publish an annual Monitor of Well-being

May 2018
Monitor was presented on Accountability Day
Going Beyond GDP (3)

- Independent measurement system, no political influence!
- Addressing all wellbeing issues, not only material wellbeing.
- With due attention to the *sustainability* of wellbeing (how can our quality of life be sustained over longer periods of time).
- Introducing a long-term perspective in our reports.
Measurement System (1)

What were the new measures you used? What do you consider the main result of the efforts so far?
Measurement System (2)

UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Taskforce for Measuring Sustainable Development

Building on Brundtland:

Human wellbeing
- “Here and Now”
- “Later”
- “Elsewhere”

And integrating the SDG’s
Example: wellbeing “here and now” (trends)
Main success of measurement system:

- Distinction wellbeing “here and now”, “later” and “elsewhere”.
- Integrating the SDGs in this framework -> a meaningful translation of the global SDG indicators to a regional/national level.
- Building datasets at subnational, local level; for industries.
- The Monitor as an instrument for policy formation -> accountability debate in May (ex post analysis).
Main challenges (1)

What were the main challenges in getting policy makers to use measures of progress other than GDP?
Main challenges (2)

Monitor of wellbeing and SDGs seen as a useful instrument, however:

- Lack of clear quantitative policy goals.
- Often a short-term perspective.
- No clear idea how to move towards long-term goals (carbonfree and circular society in 2050).
- Difficult to engage citizens in this process.