Contribution to Beyond GDP „Virtual Indicator Expo“

http://www.beyond-gdp.eu

Name of the indicator/method: **European Benchmark Indicators (EBI)**

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**Why we need the European Benchmark Indicators?**

With the knowledge that there is a growing need for comparative indicators to measure Member State’s environmental performance, MNP has developed the European Benchmark Indicators (EBI) to draw comparisons between Member States.

The indicator database is primarily meant for decision makers, but is also useful for the general public and scientists. Measurement of performance in this way, within an enlarged European Union, facilitates the improvement of policy effectiveness in a Member State and stimulates learning from the success of frontrunners.

To sum up, the EBI is a tool by which environmental performance within and between Member States can be measured and compared, on a 100+ indicator environmental indicator database. Datasources are many-sided and include among other organizations: Eurostat, World Bank, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the World Resources Institute.

**Description of the EBI**

MNP has composed an indicatorset of existing indicators that reflects the environmental performance on different themes and issues within the economic and social setting of a country. Especially within an European Union of 25 there is need for nuance. The environmental performance of countries can be very different because of differences in e.g. demography and economic structure.

Through the EBI the user is able to judge national environmental performance in a better way and within the proper country context. The air quality of the Netherlands is e.g. below average and heavily influenced by, among other things, the high car and population density. Performance judged by the deployment of clean air technology on the other hand gives exactly the opposite result: the Netherlands performs better than average.
Practically speaking, the EBI indicators have been divided into two parts. First a socio-economic profile, that should put environmental performance into proper perspective. Indicators reflects e.g. countries’ economic performance, -structure and social characteristics. Where possible, each indicator covers data on the present situation and a trend from the past.

Second, an environmental profile, that has been based on the OECD Pressure-State-Respons (PSR) framework. Within themes as Air Quality and Climate Change, performance is measured on the basis of environmental pressures, -technology, -quality and progress towards International Commitments.

Existing aggregated indicators, like the Growth Competitiveness Index (Xavier Sala-I-Martin, Columbia University) and the Ecological Footprint (Wackernagel and Rees) can be and are individual indicators in the EBI. Such composite indicators have the advantage that they provide an overall ranking of a country but also have quite a few disadvantages. The EBI individual indicator scores are not aggregated to a composite index as this is an area of methodological controversy.

Thus, the MNP indicator set is a product of a quite pragmatic method of working and finds its rationale in the creation of a collection of “environmental policy stories”, like Climate Change, Air Quality and Biodiversity.

History of the EBI initiative

The first version of the EBI was published in 2006 after 1 ½ years of research in concepts, method’s and existing indicators initiatives.

Information and downloads on the EBI web article, database (MS Excel) and background article (pdf) can be found at the following web addresses:


Current successes and key challenges for the EBI

Since introduction the EBI tool is getting more and more popular. After media attention in Europe (Ends daily), the US (Crosslands Bulletin) and the Netherlands (Dagblad de Pers 2007, Milieu 2007) the database is increasingly being used by media, general public and scientists.

Foreseen in 2008 is the first major update and revision of the EBI. The EBI will also be integrated in MNP’s environmental data-compendium through 7 environmental dossiers. That is to say: biodiversity, air-quality, water quality, climate change, waste, natural resources and ‘government & enterprise’.

Future steps, needs and prospects

The main focus for the future is to keep the EBI updated, adjusted to changing environmental policy perceptions and adapted to new availability of environmental data on issues not covered before. A dynamic and challenging task as a structured availability, processing and publishing of environmental data has a far less long history compared to (socio) economic data.
The European Benchmark Database (EBI)

### Part 1: Socio Economic Profile

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<tr>
<th>1.1</th>
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### Part 2: Environmental Profile

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<td>Government &amp; Enterprise</td>
<td>2.3.5</td>
<td>Government &amp; Enterprise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pressures
- Land fragmentation
- Road Transp NOx Emiss.
- Ammonia emissions
- Road Transp SO2 Emiss.

#### Air Quality
- Age Passenger Cars
- Nitrogen Balance
- Diesel Cars
- Organic Manure

#### Water Quality
- Organic Nitrates
- Rivers Nitrates
- Urban-PM10
- Lakes Nitrates

#### Policy Performance
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Member States’ performance on the environmental dossiers: air quality, climate change and biodiversity through indicators taken from EBI