



A Guide to Sustainability Indicator Websites
by Jeff Pritchard
December, 2003
(More sites will be added in 2004)

155 Cottage Street NE, U20
Salem, Oregon 97301 -3966
503-378-3201 Fon
503-378-4048 Fax
www.econ.state.or.us/opb

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor
Chair

BRETT WILCOX
Vice Chair

NEIL BRYANT

DAVE FROHNMAYER

STEVE HARPER

MICHAEL JORDAN

DUKE SHEPARD

DIANE SNYDER

ED WHITELAW

MAX WILLIAMS

GARY WEEKS
Ex Officio

HEATHER KAPLINGER
Student Ex Officio

JEFFREY TRYENS
Executive Director

Sustainability Plan for the City of San Francisco

<http://www.sustainable-city.org/>

San Francisco has created a sustainability plan which includes goals, objectives and specific measures of success. The website titled, "Sustainable City: Working toward a Sustainable Future for San Francisco," is one of the most comprehensive websites found during the Progress Board's search. Specific goals outline the sustainability plan for each addressed issue. The report is divided into 10 categories: Air Quality; Biodiversity; Energy; Food and Agriculture; Hazardous Materials; Human Health; Parks; Solid Waste; Transportation, and Water. When a topic is chosen the introduction, strategy, and indicators are laid out at the upper portion of each webpage allowing for seamless navigation.

Measures are primarily outputs and intermediate outcomes.

Canada Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/cesd_cedd.nsf/html/deptsd_e.html

This webpage lists 25 federal departments and agencies within the country that are using, or in the process of developing, sustainable development plans. It is a very useful directory for finding goals objectives and, sometimes, measures on a broad variety of topics. As a whole-of-government approach, this is the best set of sustainability plans we have found.

Most of the indicators are either outputs or intermediate outcomes.

Agencies covered are: [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#); [Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency](#); [Canada Customs and Revenue Agency](#); [Canadian Heritage](#); [Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency](#); [Correctional Service of Canada](#); [Department of Canadian International Development Agency](#); [Citizenship and Immigration Canada](#); [Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec](#); [Environment Canada](#); [Finance Canada](#); [Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada](#); [Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Department of](#); [Health Canada](#); [Human Resources Development Canada](#); [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada](#); [Industry Canada](#); [Justice Canada](#); [Department of National Defense](#); [Natural Resources Canada](#); [Office of the Auditor General of Canada](#); [Parks Canada Agency](#); [Public Works and Government Services Canada](#); [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#); [Solicitor General Canada](#); [Transport Canada](#); [Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat](#); [Veterans Affairs Canada](#) and [Western Economic Diversification Canada](#).

Sustainable Development – The United Kingdom Government’s Approach

<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/indicators/index.htm>

This website provides detailed look at the sustainable development plan within the United Kingdom (U.K.) from a national and regional standpoint. Indicators are separated in five different sections, Headline, National, Regional, Local and International indicators. The headline indicators section covers the 15 key measures of the program. The national indicators section describes 147 indicators and explains how they are being used to track sustainable development. The regional indicators section demonstrates how the headline indicators are used for the nine different regions of the U.K. The local indicators give 29 indicators used at the local level. Lastly, the International indicators section provides links to other European agencies who are researching new sustainability measures. This is an unusual site showing sustainability from both the national and regional levels.

While most of the indicators are high-level, there are some intermediate outcomes and even output measures in the mix.

Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network

<http://www.moea.state.mn.us/sc/mnscn.cfm>

The Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network (MNSCN) recognizes the need for a more sustainable society and they have their own plan to achieve their goals. Listed under the “Resources” section of the website, MNSCN has a *Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook* which can be downloaded. In this guide book are the four types of indicators used by the MNSCN to measure sustainability. The four indicator categories are as follows: Data Poetry Indicators, Core Indicators, Background Indicators, and Deep Sustainability Indicators. Indicators are also categorized into three types: Local Sustainability, Quality of Life and Performance Evaluation. The MNSCN has a very broad selection of indicators.

The indicators are a mix of high-level and intermediate-outcomes and outputs.

Ecologically Sustainable Development of Australia

<http://www.deh.gov.au/esd/national/indicators/report/index.html>

The Ecologically Sustainable Development of Australia website looks at 21 different sustainability issues ranging from living standards to freshwater health. Within each issue are several indicators showing how they track their sustainability topics. The indicators seem to be more analytical than most other sites. While there are a wide variety of indicators at the national level, the site lacks indicators used on the local level for individual communities. Regardless, this site offers a useful, broad and foreign perspective of sustainability indicators.

Most of the indicators are high-level outcomes with only a few that could be considered intermediate outcomes.

Sustainable Seattle

<http://www.sustainableseattle.org/>

The Sustainable Seattle website is very concise and well organized. In the programs section the website reveals 40 regional indicators used to measure sustainability efforts. The 40 indicators were

chosen from a list of 99 indicators selected by a “Civil Panel” of 150 citizens. The indicators are divided into five different sectors: Environment, Population & Resources, Economy, Youth & Education, and Health & Community. Each indicator has trend data, as well. (The data is unchanged since 1998, making it a bit outdated.)

Nearly all their 40 indicators would be considered high-level outcomes although a few, like “arts instruction,” are outputs or intermediate outcomes.

Minnesota Milestones

<http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/mm/index.html>

Minnesota Milestones incorporates 19 publicly determined goals in four areas: People, Community & Democracy, Economy and Environment. Measuring success in achieving these goals are 70 indicators. The report is well organized. With a click of the mouse each indicator can be analyzed in detail. The amount of information and research that is recorded under each indicator is substantial. Goals, graphs and rationale for selecting the specific indicator can all be found when an indicator is clicked with the mouse. This site is also full of links for further investigation.

Minnesota Milestones are all high-level outcomes.

Portland Multnomah Progress Board Benchmarks

<http://www.p-m-benchmarks.org/tblcnts.html>

The Portland Multnomah Progress Board has a number of specific indicators under seven different issues. Included are indicators relating to the Economy, Education, Environment, Governance & Civic Participation, Health & Families, Public Safety and Urban Vitality. Once a topic is chosen a webpage reveals the actual indicators used to measure each issue. An even further in-depth analysis can be found by clicking on each indicator. Graphs and statistics are used to demonstrate the success of each indicator in the past.

The indicators used would all be considered high-level outcomes.

The New Jersey Sustainable State Institute

<http://www.njssi.net/index.htm>

The New Jersey Sustainable State Institute (NJSSI) is “an independent, non-profit institute providing objective information, analysis, and practical strategies to help New Jersey develop a sustainable path” (according to their website). The NJSSI has 11 goals they wish to achieve: Economic Vitality, Equity, Strong Community, Culture & Recreation, Quality Education, Good Government, Decent Housing, Healthy People, Efficient Transportation and Land Use, Natural and Ecological Integrity, Protected Natural Resources, and Minimal Pollution and Waste. Measuring the progress towards achieving these goals are 41 indicators. The *Living with the Future in Mind* progress report can be downloaded in the “Goals and Indicators” section of the website. The NJSSI briefly introduces why sustainable development is important, reveals graphs that have tracked each measure and shows which indicators are used to measure each goal.

The indicators are mainly high-level outcomes.

The companion piece, *Governing with the Future in Mind* is, in essence, an integrated sustainability plan for New Jersey state government. It contains many specific recommendations for action and recommended changes to the indicators proposed in the above described report.

State of the Environment: Canada

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/soer-ree/English/headlines/default.cfm>

This site is limited to environmental indicators but is included because it is very well done. The website divides indicators into nine sections: Water Use, Water Treatment, Air Quality, Climate Changes, Acid Rain, Stratospheric Ozone Layer, Wildlife & Wilderness, Toxic Substances, and Waste & Recycling. In each section a description of each indicator can be found along with information about how citizens can help strengthen each indicator. The website also discusses what actions the Canadian government is taking to improve each indicator trend.

All indicators would be considered high-level outcomes.

Measuring Community Success and Sustainability

www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu/Community_Success/about.html

Measuring Community Success and Sustainability is a how-to site aimed at helping citizens' measure success using sustainability indicators. Under the "Introduction to Measuring" section is a well-written introduction and guide on how the most relevant and reliable measures can be selected. Sample indicators are also present throughout this section to assist the reader. The Measuring Community Success and Sustainability website uses five "outcomes" or goals its authors believe to be the most important when measuring sustainability. Within each of these outcomes are at least three indicators that are used to measure each outcome. Also included are measures used to track the success of the indicators in each outcome. Each outcome has very detailed case studies, methods and assessment that fortify well constructed research. The website not only shows recommended indicators but also presents suggestions for developing the needed data.

All the indicators referenced in this report are inputs or outputs and appear designed to show how well processes are working in a community from a sustainability perspective.

Sustainable Measures: Communities that are working on indicators

<http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/Resources/Communities.html>

This is a list of 44 institutions within 26 states in the United States that report on indicators relating to sustainability. This site also lists two federal sites with sustainability plans, although one is no longer active. Each institution listed has a brief, but useful summary of what issues each site is covering. Sites in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are also included. Also listed is the *2001 Environmental Sustainability Index* which measures the progress towards environmental sustainability for 142 countries. This 301-page report can be downloaded from the site free of charge.

These sites have not yet been reviewed for the types of indicators presented.