

Findings of the “Beyond GDP” consultations of the Network of Economic Statisticians and the evolving Canadian Data Ecosystem

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United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians – an introduction

- Established by the 52nd Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission to:
 - facilitate networking, co-ordination and communication on new innovations, experiments, and best practices for the purpose of making progress on priorities to keep economic statistics relevant.
 - operate under a clearly defined mandate to provide a transparent and collaborative horizontal co-ordination mechanism for all existing statistical committees and groups
 - co-ordinate with statistical committees and groups, as appropriate, for the purpose of measuring the multidimensional relationships between the economy, environment and society of the 2030 Agenda

The Network operates through thematic sprints that seek to achieve defined outcomes



Our Common Agenda as the motivation for the “Beyond GDP” series of sprints

- *Our Common Agenda* sets out to identify a complement or complements to GDP that will measure inclusive and sustainable growth
- Initial findings indicate that a new broad-based conceptual framework should be developed that describes an integrated system of flows and stocks and additional indicator and composite index dashboards for measuring wellbeing, coherence and sustainability that are complementary to the measurement of GDP.
- UNNES is well positioned to identify a clear roadmap which builds on existing data collections and current improvements in various standards to provide clarity on potential methods to meet this ambition
- The United Kingdom (ONS) and United States (BEA) took the lead in this series of sprints

Framing the issue

- Many economic statistical bodies and organizations are focused on recent or forthcoming updates to various standards (e.g. SEEA, SNA, manuals on international trade statistics, ISIC, CPC, and National Transfer Accounts (NTA))
- There is a need to reflect on the landscape beyond these updates and consider what opportunities new development will present
- The development of a more integrated framework needs to be undertaken in a more multidisciplinary way (in terms of population, social impact and ecological footprint).

A Beyond GDP Framework can build on existing practices

- Encouraging the greater use of net economic measures as compared to their gross equivalents
- Developing composite indices to summarize economic, wellbeing, sustainability, and inclusiveness aspects
- Utilizing inclusive or comprehensive wealth measures for the national and global capitals for measuring the sustainability of growth and wellbeing and their distribution
- Developing tailored products, such as multidimensional indices for poverty, vulnerability, human development, and comprehensive or inclusive wealth to target specific questions, recognizing different users have varied needs.
- Strengthening dashboards of indicators and composite indexes covering wellbeing, cohesion, and sustainability
- Integrating all the above into a global accounting framework or 'system of systems' for the coherent measurement of wellbeing, cohesion, and sustainability, and their interrelationships.

Sprint series on “Beyond GDP”

Sprint 1:
Measuring
Modern
Capital

Issues concerning the measurement of various types of capital across different statistical domains

Sprint 2:
Distributional and wellbeing initiatives associated with the update of the SNA (part 1)

Sharing ideas and strategies in relation to the SNA revision

Sprint 3:
Distributional and wellbeing initiatives associated with the update of the SNA (part 2)

Push the frontier beyond the core framework

Sprint 4:
The socio-demographic disaggregation of national accounts: Measuring Modern Capital

Focus on National Transfer Accounts to link population and economics

Sprint 5:
Beyond GDP indexes, indicator frameworks, wealth and health approaches

Review of approaches for indexes and other frameworks

Sprint 6:
Summaries and conclusions

Systemic review of the first five sessions

Key results

- The Sprint supported the UN Secretary General's 'Our Common Agenda', including improved dashboards, wider use of distributional metrics, new composite indices, and inclusive wealth, without the need for every indicator to be drawn from a balanced account
- Ultimately this requires a 'system of systems' which gives clarity around how the range of statistical standards and outputs can be utilized to give a comprehensive picture of the modern world, and delivers a coherent framework within which users can utilize different data in varied ways to meet complex policy questions.

The way ahead

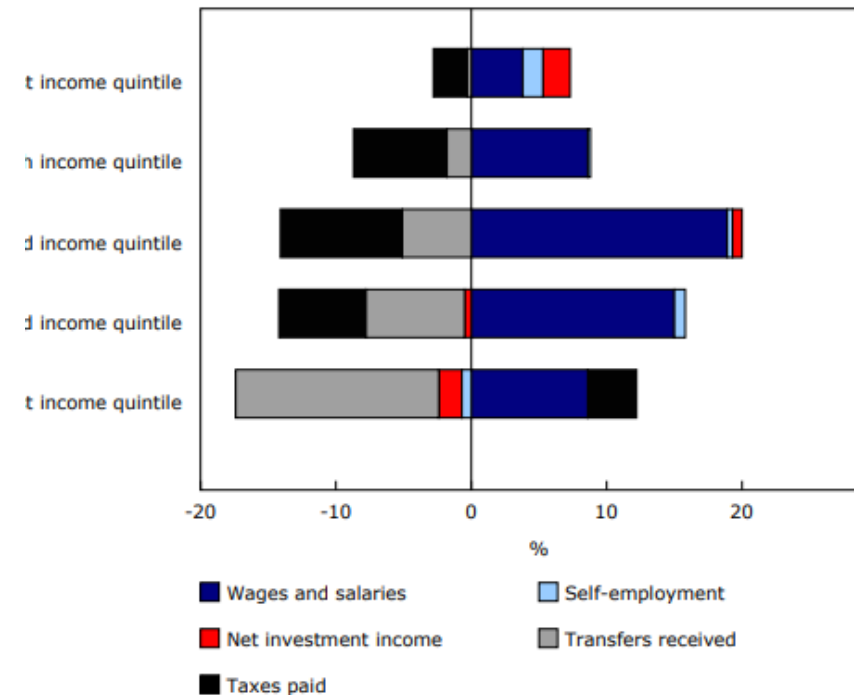
The UNNES proposes a shared research and testing agenda for a new system architecture with four thematic components:

1. Explaining the relationship between the various indicators available today – which to use when.
2. Wellbeing – developing a comprehensive dashboard of core indicators and composite indices (link to SDGs)
3. Cohesion and distribution – developing further improvements in wellbeing and distributions in aggregated and disaggregated accounting
4. Sustainability and Economic Welfare – bringing together comprehensive and inclusive wealth accounting, taking into account a wider landscape of capitals than those considered in the SNA, with a focus on consistency of measurement for the derivation of ‘objective’ composite indices to provide a fuller landscape of the trade-offs involved in achieving economic welfare.

Examples from Statistics Canada

- Distributed Household Economic Accounts
 - Data available quarterly
 - Covers income, expenditure and wealth

Disposable income by income quintile, including contribution of each component, first quarter 2022 relative to first quarter 2021



Examples from Statistics Canada

- Quality of Life Framework
 - Includes: prosperity, health, society, the environment and good governance. In addition, the indicators of life satisfaction and sense of meaning and purpose are included as overall measures of quality of life.



Examples from Statistics Canada

- Census of the Environment
 - Enumeration of all of ecosystems across the Canadian landmass including extent, condition, and associated ecosystem goods and services (SEEA-EA)
 - Allows for geospatial integration of economic and population data



Concluding thoughts

- Various communities are engaged in different *Beyond GDP* initiatives
- Progress on *Beyond GDP* is a team sport, that requires cooperation between National Statistical Offices, international organizations, academia, business and civil society – breaking down barriers between economic, population and environment statistics
- Development of *Beyond GDP* measures needs to be inclusive of global perspectives