



CORTE DEI CONTI

KEY NATIONAL INDICATORS:

THE ITALIAN DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIES

A system of Key National Indicators (KNI) involves the consideration of all the dimensions representing the well-being (economic, environmental and social development) evaluated in a short and long term perspective.

It is, therefore, clear that each country needs a system of KNI individually designed as to identify strengths and weaknesses, gender differences, as well as particular territorial disequilibrium or advantaged/disadvantaged social groups, even in an intergenerational perspective.

In Italy, as already explained during the meeting in Krakov in 2013, the CNEL (National Council for Economics and Labour) and ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) initiated in 2011 the establishment of a steering group on measurement of the Italian community progress, composed of representatives of both social and civil parties.

This is the first institutional experiment to define the dimensions of individual and social well-being at national level with the aim of developing a multi-dimensional approach of "equitable and sustainable well-being" (BES), which allows to integrate the key indicator that shows the level of economic well-being of a country, the GDP, with other indicators which provide a more complete overview of total well-being.

The project BES has identified 12 relevant domains of well-being for our country: health, education and training, work and life balance, economic well-being, social relationship, politics and institutions, security, subjective well-being, landscape and cultural heritage, environment, research and innovation, quality of services.

Subsequently, 134 indicators have been selected with high statistical quality, they are suitable to show the well-being and to become a constant point of reference, shared by the Italian community, and able to indicate the direction of progress.

In the framework of the reform law concerning public accounting (L.196/2009), it should also be mentioned the introduction of the Eco-budget, or environmental budget, the accounting document

that presents an expenditure estimate for activities or actions aimed at protecting the environment and the use and management of natural resources.

Furthermore, within the analysis of equitable and sustainable well-being, the Ministry of Economic Development, elaborates, in the context of the regional policy, the regional indicators for the evaluation of the development policies.

In parallel with the studies and analysis of the national experience, some local level projects have been developed as the: “BES of the provinces” and “URBES of metropolitan cities” with the aim of establishing a sound research and analysis basis to identify and define context indicators, through sectorial and regional depth studies, and outputs indicators in relation to the sectors of intervention that are consistent with the perspective of measuring the BES.

These projects have identified indicators that do not always correspond with those selected at national level and, in some cases, they replace or add to the first ones. It has been therefore necessary to set up a taxonomy of specific indicators, functions, operations and strategic projects, which have a direct connection with the functions carried out at local level.

Measuring the BES at local level brings many conceptual and operative challenges: from the availability of statistical detailed and qualitatively adequate information, the need to identify indicators suitable to show the specific features of each local community, the input to explore the connections between the local authorities activities and the levels of well-being of the territories.

In particular, the project of measuring and evaluating the equitable and sustainable well-being of the provinces called Strategic Plan "Province 2020" contains the overview of a province for the future in planning and testing the well-being in crisis period.

The governance of the well being managed by local authorities reflects the necessity of a special attention by institutional levels which are closer to the needs of the community and then able to identify specific additional indicators integrating the set of the general BES indicators.

The specific additional indicators are, for example:

- taxable income and its distribution
- electoral abstention by gender in the various electoral competitions
- participation rate in secondary school education
- rate of job uncertainty
- perception of safety while walking alone in the dark

- percentage of bicycle paths per municipal road network
- average monthly family expenditure
- per-capita expenditure for home care for the elderly

As shown in the examples listed above, the additional indicators appear clearly heterogeneous and reflect the environmental, social and economic differences due to the territorial dimension and, frequently, related to social needs which are not always objectively perceptible.

This perception, distinctly personal, although significant as underlined by ISTAT, does not always assure a subsequent administrative action.

In fact, ascertained the high utility of additional indicators, it should however try to make objective the indicators, they have to be able to intercept objective profiles in order to implement administrative adequate and consistent activities and, at the same time, to allow economic evaluations.

It is very interesting the project URBES “models for measuring the municipal well-being”; it has highlighted the BES of the cities taking into consideration the general and/or specific indicators identified in the 12 dimensions of well-being.

It is also noteworthy the strategic project of Rome “Metropolitan capital – ideas for better living” which, through new consumption and production models, will have to ensure a new economic development connected to innovation and to the green economy, the safeguard of the full efficiency of the eco-systemic services, the preservation of the territory meant as primary resource to be protected against the progressive and devastating urbanization, the promotion of a new relation between the multi-functionality of the agricultural system and the quality of the environment, the support of the relationship among different cultures in order to reduce disparities and to foster social and territorial integration and cohesion.

The project has identified 5 areas: 1) a sound environment 2) an organized territory 3) an innovative culture 4) a smart development 5) an united society; each area is aimed at specific goals as result of the agreement with local administrators and stakeholders.

For instance, the goal of the functional re-organization of the territory (area no.2) will be reached once it will be removed the disequilibrium between the city center which holds economic, cultural, health-care and strategic functions, and the extended suburbs where to the continuous increase of the resident population does not correspond a development in the business and working

opportunities, arelevant distribution of services and functions for the population and for the enterprises.

In this respect, a homogeneous plan of the infrastructures and transport system takes a crucial importance.

It is necessary to underline that the local administrations, even though have to take into consideration the BES national indicators, as guidelines for the assessment of wellbeing, implement an *ad hoc* project in order to set the development strategies and the fundamental choices to guarantee cohesion, sustainability and growth of the territory.

Actually, the analysis, that leads to the choice of a specific indicator, should take into account the context elements in order to properly measure and evaluate the economic and the environmental benefit which can arise from a targeted action.

For instance, choosing within the quality of services (one of the 12 dimensions of the general BES) the selective collection of municipal waste, we should have the conviction that it is symptomatic of positive consequences.

It can be affirmed that the selective collection implies an ecological benefit aimed at protecting the environment, limiting the disposal in the dumping grounds and, in the meanwhile, favoring the valorization of wastes, by recycling, directing them to productive or energetic goals and, anyway, allowing a safe disposal of wastes which cannot be recycled.

It is obvious that the implementation process of the waste collection should snap the "spring of interest" in the citizen: he will have to radically change his own habits and carefully behave in order to produce and manage the disposal in a scrupulous manner. From this behavior, we will have a waste reduction due to the burden of the disposal operations and, concomitantly, to the awareness that an economic and ecologic benefit will follow.

Essentially, an indicator, such as the urban waste collection which involves every citizen, allows to measure the improvement of the environmental conditions as well as the economic values deriving from recycling.

This process will have effects not only downstream of the production cycle of goods, but also on the choices related to the production of the good, because these choices may (or, better yet, should) take into account the waste disposal arising from its use and connected to the process of wrapping and packaging.

Lastly, it is important to highlight the first report on well-being, drawn by ISTAT in 2013 after the implementation of the BES, which brings out some profiles such as the importance of family, work and Police Force, and the awareness of the environmental situation (need for an increase of urban

green spaces and protected areas, but also necessity to remedy the hydrogeological upheaval on the whole national territory).

The report on equitable and sustainable well-being is the first step for an overall analysis included in the reports of the different government levels on their respective projects which will allow to have, in the near future, a set of tested and reliable indicators to measure and assess the level of well-being of the country in an integrated way and no more represented exclusively by the GDP.

It should therefore start a virtuous process of important modifications in culture and behaviors aimed at significantly improving the well-being of the community.