

Inter-Institutional Initiative CNEL / ISTAT on the measurement of progress in Italy

Coordination Committee

Proposal for domains

Fundamental domains for the measurement of wellbeing in Italy are presented below; these domains arise from the discussion of the Cnel-Istat Committee. The Cnel-Istat committee delivered some general recommendations on cross-cutting issues which are common to all domains and need to be taken into account in the choice of indicators. In particular:

- It is recommended to take into account differences in gender, generation, origin and geographical differences (if it is possible on regional scale).
- It is recommended to consider both objective indicators and subjective indicators, if possible.
- It is recommended to consider distributional aspects in order to evaluate equity.
- The committee also recommends that the scientific commission evaluates:
 - methodological solutions relevant to measure sustainability, not only from an environmental perspective but also from a social and economic perspective.
 - methodological solutions appropriate for the creation of composite indicators for domains.
 - the possibility of an additional subsequent aggregation of the twelve domains in larger conceptual areas, these areas are used to identify the domains more directly related to the quality of life and those that may be considered tools or levers for the achievement of well-being.

List of domains

1) Environment

The environment where we live greatly affects the well-being of citizens. From the resources that feed the manufacture and the economy to the pleasure the contact with nature gives us, human well-being is inextricably linked and dependent on the environment.

The environment must be considered our natural treasure that affects human well-being in several domains both directly through resources and indirectly through services. The advanced scientific knowledge and the increased "ecological conscience" have revealed that typologies of production and consumption, the use of resources and energy, the provision of services can change environmental conditions significantly. This domain is based on indicators that provide an assessment of the state of the environment in Italy, of the ecosystem services, of quality of the environment where we live, with a relevant attention to the urban environment.

2) Health

Health is an essential dimension of individual wellbeing. It has consequences that affect all dimensions and all different phases of people life, modifying life conditions and influencing behaviour, social relationships, opportunities and prospects of the individual and, often, of their families. Recognizing to health a multidimensional feature, the OMS (1948) defines

health as the ability of subjects to be in balance with themselves and with their environment and, therefore, to enjoy a "complete physical, mental and social well-being" and not only as the absence of disease.

From a legal perspective, the article 32 of the Italian Constitution recognizes health as "a fundamental right of the individual and an interest of the community". Economists define health as "a meritorious asset", that is a fundamental asset for development and for economic and cultural growth of a civil society. The progress achieved in health didn't affect all citizens equally and that has created inequalities among individuals, social groups and territories.

The main dimensions of this domain are measured through indicators which concern objective and subjective conditions of health and of psychophysical wellbeing.

3) Economic wellbeing

The income and the economic resources should not be seen as an end but rather as a mean by which an individual is able to obtain and to support a specific standard of living.

The analysis of the economic welfare refers to income, wealth, ability to consume, but also to some dimensions of material well-being that those tools allow to acquire. The economic welfare analysis can't be limited to the study of average levels of chosen indicators, but it has to evaluate the inequality of distribution and redistribution of the population resources: a higher level of national income can be achieved at the cost of greater inequality, greater economic insecurity or giving up goals of social policy, such as the reduction of poverty.

The measure of economic well-being is not the "simple" measurement of the capacity to grow of the Italian economic system, but also its ability to transform the economic growth into an increase of equity and sustainability, through the analysis of the economic system, of redistributive policies and of their effect on families.

4) Education and training

Education is a personal resource which is fundamental to achieve and maintain wellbeing.¹

Training has a crucial role in providing individuals with the knowledge, abilities and skills they need to take part in the society and in the economy of the country. Higher levels of competence can improve people's wellbeing in domains such as health, social participation and personal happiness. A lot of studies show that people with a high level of education have a longer life, participate more actively in social life, have a higher level of cultural enjoyment, commit fewer crimes and need less social assistance. The training path must involve all stages of life: from children in preschool age to adult in third and fourth age. This domain detects:

- education and training levels of the different segment of population (with particular attention to children in preschool age);
- acquired competence levels, with particular attention to competency levels of the adult population.

5) Work and life balance

Work is the basic activity to achieve material support and the realization of individual aspirations. A full and good occupation is one of the main parameters of economic stability, social cohesion and quality of life. If employment plays a central role in protecting families

¹ Michalos, A. C., Sharpe, A., Arsenault, J., Muhajarine, N., Labonte, R., Scott, K., et al. (2010). An Approach to the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Toronto, ON: Canadian Index of Wellbeing.

from poverty, a long-term unemployment is one of the causes of poverty with a consequent deterioration of living standards. The target of this domain is to measure both participation to the labour market and quality of work (as recommended by the “International Labour Organization”)², by categorizing the different segments of employment in relation to work stability, income, competences, reconciliation between working time and personal/family time, safety at work, employee participation in life of the company , own satisfaction at work.

6) Social relationships

The depth of social relationships and the social network where one lives affect psychological and physical wellbeing of individuals and, at the same time, represent a form of "investment" that can increase the effects of human and social capital. The household is a place of privileged observation of relationships but there are other important forms of relationships such as friendship, work, neighborhood, public and private commitment and volunteering. The indicators of this domain will also concern interpersonal trust.

7) Security

Personal safety is a basic component of individual wellbeing. Being a crime victim can result in economic loss, physical or psychological injury due to the suffered trauma. The most important effect of crime on people’s wellbeing is the sense of vulnerability that determines. The fear of being a victim of criminal acts can affect their personal freedom, their quality of life and the development of areas of the country.

Also the theme of violence is strongly bound to personal safety and quality of life. The domain measures features and dimensions of criminality and violence with particular attention to domestic violence, consequences of violence and crime suffered, observed social and environmental deterioration.

8) Subjective wellbeing

This domain intends to measure the well-being as perceived by people, by detecting the subjective opinions on their own lives. This subjective perspective gives additional information to that provided by objective data, which are extremely useful to measure general quality of life of individuals. Both from the consultation conducted by ONS³ in Great Britain and from the analysis of weights supplied by those who have consulted *My Better Life Index* of OCSE⁴, the evaluation of subjective well-being is regarded by citizens as one of the elements of greater importance in assessing well-being.

9) Landscape and cultural heritage

Landscape, richness and quality of artistic, archaeological and architectural heritage make Italy a unique country in the world. The right to beauty and the protection of landscape aren’t just one of the many activities for the Republic, but one of its main missions, public and inalienable for constitutional rule and for will of a millenary identity.⁵

² See the studies on *decent work*: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>

³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/well-being/wellbeing-knowledge-bank/understanding-wellbeing/findings-from-the-national-well-being-debate.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/>

⁵ Cfr. 100 mayors together for “manifesto per la bellezza e il paesaggio”.

Article 9 of our “Carta fondamentale”, states: “*The Republic encourages the development of culture and the scientific and technical research. Protect the landscape and the historical and artistic heritage of the Nation*”.

This domain tries to consider these elements measuring the presence of the historical, artistic, cultural heritage and the landscape patrimony; the protection; the usage by the population. It also measures the economic attractiveness of territories depending on the presence of a cultural and landscape heritage as an element that induces productivity and appeal to National and International creative class.

10) Research and Innovation

Research, innovation and technology give a fundamental contribution to a durable and sustainable development, more important in an economy, like the Italian one, that shows a heavy delay in a context that awaits answers to the challenges of economic, demographic and social change. To better understand the progress of a country⁶ it will be necessary to find a set of indicators in “Research & Development” areas, considering the public and private research, the innovation in business, the search of efficiency in resource use and the high level of competence in the scientific field, considering also the Europa2020 indicators.

11) Quality of services

The analysis of well-being and progress opportunity require an assessment of infrastructures and services reinterpreted in the light of their functionality and efficiency, degree of utilization, accessibility, quality of service⁷. The social infrastructures have a decisive impact on population quality of life and in turn they affect the opportunities of territory. It is necessary to evaluate the condition of infrastructures and services, weighted with respect to its functionality in some strategic areas, such as morality, communication, energy, water services, services for children, seniors and people with disabilities, health services.

12) Policy and institutions

Now more than ever citizens demand transparency from their institutions. The quality of policy-making process is essential for trust in institutions of democracy. Openness and transparency improve public services and reduce risk of fraud, corruption and mismanagement of public funds. A cohesive society only exists if citizens believe in their institutions and public administration. The opportunity to express a public opinion and to participate to the decisional process is important for the quality of life. The domain measures forms and methods of political participation, presence of women and underrepresented groups in institutions and in decision-making places, level of public confidence of citizens in the institutions, quality of Justice.

⁶ Refer to: ISTAT (2011), *Rapporto annuale – Capitolo 5*, Rome, www.istat.it; ISTAT (2011), *Noi Italia*, Rome, www.istat.it; ISTAT (2010), *L'innovazione nelle imprese italiane*, Comunicato Stampa Rome, www.istat.it, 9 december; OECD (2009) *Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2009*, Paris, december, www.oecd.org; OECD (2010), *Science, Technology and Industry Outlook 2010*, Paris, december, www.oecd.org; <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/page/regional-innovation-scoreboard>.

⁷ Compare: Banca d'Italia (2011), *Le infrastrutture in Italia: dotazione, programmazione, realizzazione*, Roma, www.bancaditalia.it; ISTAT (2008), *Atlante statistico territoriale delle infrastrutture*, Rome, www.istat.it; ISTAT (2011), *Rapporto annuale – chapter 4*, Rome, www.istat.it;