Sustainable Development of Cantons and Cities in Comparison: «Cercle Indicateurs»

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Sustainable Development of Swiss Cantons and Cities in Comparison

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Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation

Art. 3 Cantons
The Cantons are sovereign except to the extent that their sovereignty is limited by the Federal Constitution. They shall exercise all rights that are not vested in the Confederation.
Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation

Art. 2 Aims [of the Swiss Confederation]
2 It shall promote the common welfare, sustainable development, internal cohesion and cultural diversity of the country.

Art. 73 Sustainable Development
The Confederation and the Cantons shall endeavour to achieve a balanced and sustainable relationship between nature and its capacity to renew itself and the demands placed on it by the population.
Ch. 4.4 Cooperation between the federal government, cantons and municipalities

„Cantons and municipalities are to receive support with the development and deployment of suitable instrument for monitoring, managing and evaluating sustainable development.“
Participants 2011: 19 cantons + 16 cities + federal government
Cercle Indicateurs: Overview (II)

- Origin: several bottom-up initiatives of cantons and cities
- Coordination by federal government
  - ARE: political coordinator
  - Federal Statistics Office FSO: technical support
- Periodicity: every 2 (cantons) / 4 years (cities)
- No legal obligation
- Voluntary participation, but adhesion for 4 year planning periods
- No immediate political consequences, not part of a particular sectoral policy
Types of Monitoring and Benchmarking
(→ Fenna 2010)

Cercle Indicateurs

- Internal vs. external
- Independent vs. coercive vs. collegial
Cercle Indicateurs: Objectives

- **Monitoring and benchmarking** of SD on a strategic level
- **Definition and periodic calculation** of a common indicator system for both cantons and cities
- **Exchange platform** for SD indicators and their use by public entities, including SD reporting
Cercle Indicateurs: Rules of Cooperation

- **Statute** setting rules and obligations for all participants
- **Decisions** taken by majority of votes
- **One vote per canton / city / federal office**
- **European Statistics Code of Practice** part of statute (limits to political influence)
Cercle Indicateurs: Indicators

- **3-dimensional SD model** with 35 target areas
- **37 indicators**
- Indicators from both federal («central») and cantonal / city statistics («decentralised»)
- **Outcome indicators** of cantonal / city policies, if possible
Cercle Indicateurs: Procedure

- Cantons and cities provide data for the «decentralised» indicators
- FSO calculates «central» indicators and collects «decentralised» data
- Publication on FSO’s website
- Participants provide commentary to their own results
- Publication of aggregated benchmarking on ARE’s website
- No sanctions or incentives
Strengths / Weaknesses Profile
Deviation from Mean Value
Comparison per Indicator
Aggregated Benchmarking a) per SD dimension

Utility Value

Environment  Economy  Social

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Aggregated Benchmarking
b) full aggregation
Utilisation of Data

- ARE / FSO provide indicator information
- Utilisation in participants’ competence
- Indicators as a basis for
  - Analyses by cantons / cities
  - SD reports
  - Cantonal / city government programs or strategies
  - Communication to wider audience
Results / Impacts

- Increasing number of participants (from 8 cantons in 2005 to 19 of 26 in 2011)
- Increasing number of cantonal / cities SD reports
- Impacts on «new public management» policies of cantons / cities (target setting, reporting)
- «Cercle Indicateurs» as an entry point for broader SD programs by cantons / cities
- «Cercle Indicateurs» as a key element of cantonal / local SD governance
Local SD processes in Switzerland

Cantons with sustainability processes
Cantons with no sustainability processes
Municipalities with sustainability processes

Standing: 8.2011

Sources: INFOPLAN-ARE, GEOSTAT-SFSO, swisstopo

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Experiences and „Lessons Learned“ (I)

- Clearly defined objectives and rules are essential (collegial ≠ cosy)
- Governance is essential for every benchmarking project
- Methodical and technical quality is crucial (cf. involvement of FSO)
- Indicators: «2nd, 3rd best» as a concession to the reality of data availability
- Participatory approach secures long-term support
Experiences and „Lessons Learned“ (II)

- Collegial approach appropriate, where central government does not need to or cannot exert control
- Collegial elements also to consider in stricter benchmarking projects (common definition of rules, e.g.)
- Exchange of experiences important to support learning effects
Thank you!

www.are.admin.ch/sustainabledevelopment
www.are.admin.ch/cercleindicateurs