

Measuring Well-Being *“Beyond GDP”*

in Asia, South-East Asia and Korea

Key issues paper for
the International Conference on
Measuring Well-Being “Beyond GDP”
in Asia, South-East Asia and Korea

Well-Being
**BEYOND
GDP**



Introduction

Asia, South-East Asia and Korea have achieved remarkable economic progress over the last half a century. Despite these achievements, key challenges, such as demographic change, inequalities in social development and opportunities, and environmental degradation, remain. The OECD's longstanding work on measuring economic performance and social progress beyond GDP, also known as OECD's work on well-being, has shown that well-being approaches help frame economic, social and environmental challenges in a holistic manner. Those approaches have also been underpinning new policy tools, such as New Zealand's Well-being Budget, that governments have put in place to address cross-cutting issues that require the consideration of the interrelated drivers and consequences of economic and social changes.

In this context, the *International Conference on Measuring Well-Being "Beyond GDP" in Asia, South-East Asia and Korea*, will offer an opportunity to review multidimensional approaches to measuring the outcomes that matter to people, and discuss how applying a well-being approach to policy could support countries in addressing the highly interconnected challenges they face on a variety of dimensions.

To support the discussion, this key issues paper for the conference provides a brief overview of relevant OECD work and describes some existing efforts in the region to measure well-being "Beyond GDP". Examples of existing initiatives and approaches which measure social development and well-being *beyond GDP* are introduced, such as Korea's Quality of Life indicators and Thailand Index of Well-being, among many others. Common dimensions of well-being, topics and measurement gaps that need to be highlighted in the regional context are also identified. In particular, enhancing well-being of vulnerable populations as well as of children, is discussed to achieve greater equality between population groups. Finally, suggestions as to how well-being data available in Asia can be used in policy as well as how the OECD can support the region in developing well-being approaches will be presented.

The Conference may constitute the first milestone of a broader OECD project on multidimensional well-being in South-East Asia. As such, the Conference may inform the development of the conceptual and measurement framework of this potential project, by building on the most promising well-being initiatives in South-East Asia, and by reflecting on the policy processes where the well-being evidence would be mostly relevant.

1 Insights on measuring well-being from an international perspective

Introduction

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the internationally recognized measure of economic production and performance of a country. It has been a useful tool for measuring the growth of economies for a large part of the twentieth century and, as such, it is still the “predominant political benchmark” (UN, 2023^[1]). In absence of better alternatives, GDP has become a proxy for measuring value and wealth creation, development progress, and the yardstick to development financing (UN, 2023^[1]). Furthermore, while not designed for this purpose, it is often used to represent societal progress or the economic well-being of the population.

Despite its wide use as a measure of economic development, GDP only measures changes in economic production. It is insufficient for describing and tackling various social and environmental challenges that are of increasing importance and does not capture the complexities of these issues. For example, GDP does not provide a picture of economic, social and environmental inequalities and of the important stocks that sustain well-being over time. GDP also lacks information on important aspects of well-being that matter most to people: whether people are healthy (physically and mentally); whether social support and cohesion are strong in the society; and whether people think that their life has a purpose, for instance. These important aspects of life need a proper accounting, beyond GDP (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2009^[2]; UN, 2023^[1]; UN, 2022^[3]; OECD, 2011^[4]; OECD, 2020^[5]). GDP as a proxy of national prosperity can also be misleading as some activities that impair, rather than foster, well-being (such as traffic congestion and pollution, wars, illegal activities) increase GDP. As the OECD’s work has shown over the last two decades, GDP growth does not necessarily translate into better living conditions for all.

Well-being and sustainability are complex issues that cannot be successfully captured by a single indicator. Rather, a multidimensional, dashboard approach may be more helpful in identifying areas which call for greater policy attention. The complex environment policy makers today are facing requires a more comprehensive accounting of social, economic and environmental issues and their dynamic interrelations thereof. For example, in Asia, the considerable socio-economic progress made by East and North-East Asia has come at the cost of environmental sustainability, while South-East Asia is one of the subregions most vulnerable to the impact of climate change (UNESCAP, 2023^[6]).

In this context, countries around the world are developing multidimensional welfare or well-being initiatives to measure, monitor and pursue well-being in a holistic manner. For example, two-thirds of OECD countries have developed national frameworks, development plans or surveys with a multidimensional well-being focus to monitor progress and inform policy processes (OECD, 2023^[7]). There is also a growing commitment to measuring economic advancement beyond GDP, using multidimensional frameworks and dashboards. *Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness Index* and Korea’s *Quality of Life Index* are some notable examples. While these national multidimensional welfare or well-being initiatives take different shapes and

sizes, they share common features: a multidimensional coverage of various aspects of well-being and a focus on both sustainability and inclusion (OECD, 2023^[7]).

International organizations are also helping countries forward work on well-being measurement and monitoring, as well as on integrated policy approaches to integrate well-being evidence in policymaking processes. Many of the national well-being initiatives often draw on existing work and agreed frameworks by international organizations such as the *OECD Well-being Framework* and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators (“UN SDGs”) (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, n.d.^[8]; UN, 2015^[9]). Other international initiatives, such as the UNEP’s *“Inclusive Wealth Report”* (UNEP, 2022^[10]) and the World Bank’s *“Changing Wealth of Nations”* (World Bank, 2021^[11]), have also highlighted that wealth is not just economic and have shown that it is possible to account for total wealth (natural, human, social, produced and financial capital) and assess changes across all countries, regardless of income level (UN, 2023^[11]).

International efforts for measuring well-being

The OECD Well-being Framework

Since 2011, the OECD has played a major role in moving forward work on the measurement of well-being, inclusion and sustainability, and on how these measures can be used to inform better policy-making. In particular, the OECD has worked to complement macroeconomic indicators like GDP with the [OECD Well-Being framework](#), which provides a comprehensive assessment of people’s material living conditions and quality of life, and the inclusiveness of these outcomes, today and in the future. The OECD Well-being Framework (Figure 1.1) based on the recommendations by the Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi-led Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2009^[2]) and various national initiatives in the field, guides the OECD’s work on monitoring trends in the diverse experiences and living conditions of people, as well as in the sustainability of well-being across member and partner countries.

The OECD Well-being Framework includes both material (e.g. income, wealth, jobs, housing) and non-material (e.g. environment, education, safety) dimensions, as well as more relational aspects of well-being (e.g. social connections) (Box 1.1). The *How’s Life?* reports (OECD, 2011^[4]; OECD, 2013^[12]; OECD, 2015^[13]; OECD, 2017^[14]; OECD, 2020^[5]) regularly assess and monitor well-being, leveraging existing internationally harmonised data, based on the *How’s Life? Well-being database* (OECD, n.d.^[15]). The dashboard underpinning the Framework features over 80 well-being indicators, together with disaggregated data (by age, gender and education), deprivations and dispersion measures, covering 41 countries and with time series dating back to 2005 where possible (OECD, n.d.^[15]). Despite some measurement gaps, every domain of the OECD framework can be described with international data. The dashboard has also been comprehensively reviewed and adapted in 2019 to ensure its alignment with more recent socio-economic developments (OECD, 2020^[5]).

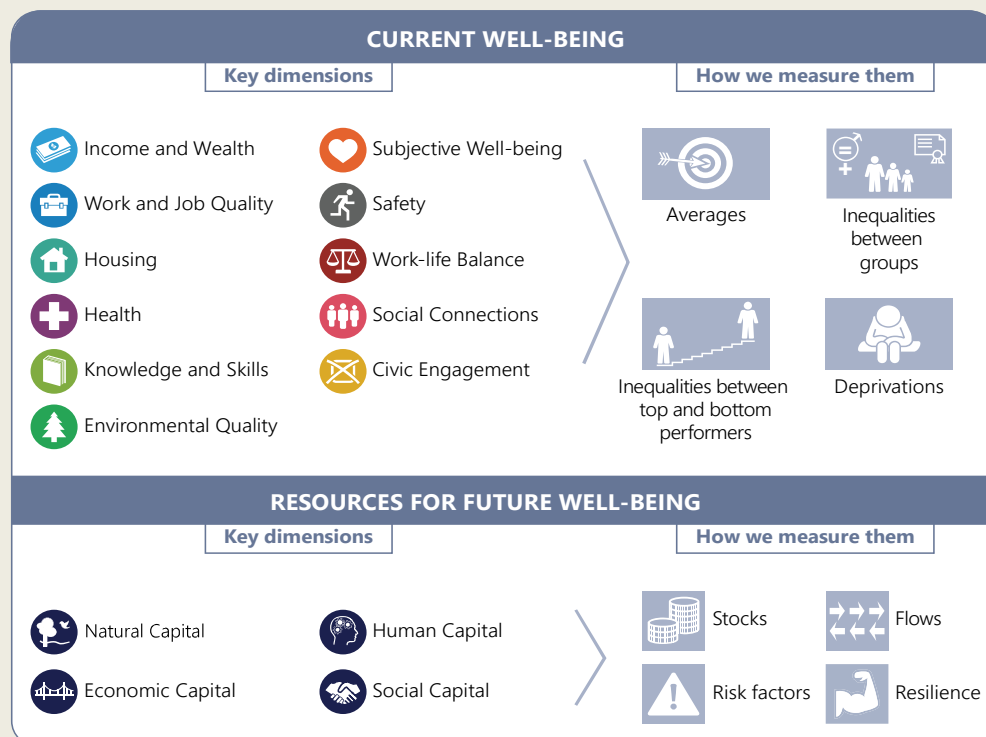
The OECD Well-being Framework has been used to assess the impact of pressing concern such as the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2021^[16]), mental health (OECD, 2023^[17]), the built environment (OECD (forthcoming)^[18]) and digitalisation (OECD, 2019^[19]) on people’s well-being. The well-being lens has also been used to implement a regional analysis of well-being. For example, the report *“How’s Life in Latin America? Measuring well-being for policy making”* (OECD, 2021^[20]) i) describes well-being and sustainability in Latin America, leveraging existing evidence, ii) identifies priorities for addressing well-being gaps and iii) describes how well-being frameworks are used in policy within Latin America and elsewhere around the world.

Box 1.1. The OECD Well-being Framework

The OECD Well-being Framework (Figure 1.1) provides a structure for operationalizing the notion of well-being in different contexts.

- **Current well-being** is comprised of 11 dimensions: these relate to material conditions that shape people economic options as well as quality-of-life factors that encompass how well people are (and how well they feel they are), what they know and can do, and how healthy and safe their places of living are. Dimensions addressing community relations encompass how connected and engaged people are, and how and with whom they spend their time.
- **Inequalities** are systematically considered, in addition to averages: gaps between population groups (e.g. between men and women); gaps between those at the top and those at the bottom of the achievement scale in each dimension (e.g. the income of the richest 20% of individuals compared to that of the poorest 20%); and deprivations (the share of the population falling below a given threshold of achievement, e.g. a minimum level of skills or health).
- **Resources for future well-being** are measured in terms of country's investment in (or depletion of) different types of capital resources that last over time but that are also affected by decisions taken (or not taken) today. They include natural capital (stocks of natural resources, land cover, species biodiversity, as well as ecosystems and their services), economic capital (man-made or produced capital and financial assets), human capital (skills and the future health of the population) and social capital (social norms, shared values and institutional arrangements that foster cooperation).

Figure 1.1. The OECD Well-being Framework



Source: OECD (OECD, 2020^[5]), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9870c393-en>

Updating the System of National Accounts

The update of the System of National Accounts (SNA) aims to broaden the framework to better account for people's well-being and sustainability, following the mandate of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). Several international organizations, including the OECD, the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Eurostat and the World Bank, have joined forces to revise and update the System of National Accounts (SNA) (UNSC, n.d.^[21]). Dedicated task teams have been established to undertake the technical research and draft guidance notes (UNSD, n.d.^[22]), with the OECD leading the work of the Well-being and Sustainability Task Team (WSTT). The 2025 SNA will include more detailed information on important topics affecting household well-being, such as health care and education, and will enhance the link between the economy and the environment with more granular breakdowns for natural capital (including renewable energy resources). Depletion of natural resources will be reflected in net measures, recognizing the use of these resources as a cost of production, at the expense of future generations. The new SNA will also include complementary measures, among others, to account for household unpaid activities (such as care giving and cleaning) and to provide insights into the distribution of income, consumption and wealth across different household groups. Finally, the SNA update will give greater visibility to digitalization and free digital services, which are also relevant aspects for current well-being. (OECD, 2023^[7]).

System of Environmental-Economic Accounting

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework and the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting present an integrated statistical framework, that measures the contribution of natural assets and ecosystems to the economy as well as the impacts of the economy on the environment and on the natural capital that a country is endowed with. By using the same accounting rules, definitions, and classifications for environmental information as those used for economic information, the SEEA uses a language which economic policymakers and the financial sector are more familiar with (UN, 2022^[3]).

Expansion of the “Beyond GDP” agenda: recent initiatives in UN and Europe

The Rio+20 Conference with the Commitment “*The Future we want*” (UN, 2012^[23]) laid the foundations for defining key pillars of the 2030 Agenda and the subsequent UN Sustainable Development events fostered the adoption and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda, 17 inter-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, spans 231 unique indicators agreed by the international statistical community to monitor progress. The SDG agenda has been fully embraced by National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the Asian region and are being aligned with National development plans (NDPs). For example, Philippine Statistics Authority monitors the country's achievements in the SDGs to help align them to the national government's priority development agenda (as embodied in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP)) (Guillen, 2017^[24]). The SDGs framework itself embodies many aspects of a well-being approach, with a vision of progress that is multidimensional and centered on inclusive and sustainable outcomes for people and the planet. In addition, key performance indicators on well-being are often integrated with the plans to monitor progress in a transparent and quantifiable manner (OECD, 2023^[25]).

To accelerate action towards the SDGs and keep the “*Beyond GDP*” ambition high, the UN Secretary General António Guterres has proposed the development of a set of 10 to 20 headline indicators to focus and balance policy efforts, building on existing indicators (SDG indicators in particular) and current statistical frameworks (UN, 2023^[1]). The UN high-level forum “*Statistical measures beyond GDP*”, organized in occasion of the 54th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in February 2023, has also mirrored the growing demand from policy makers, governments, academics and the public to

move the statistical measurement framework beyond GDP (UNSD, 2023^[26]). More recently, in preparation of the Summit of the Future in 2024, the United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians has been organizing “Beyond GDP” Sprint 2023 meetings until October 2023 to ensure that the momentum of this issue is sustained (UNSD, n.d.^[27]). The UN Secretary General has suggested launching technical work on the “*UN Data Agenda for Beyond GDP*” after the 2024 Summit of the Future, building on its outcomes (UN, 2022^[3]).

The “*Beyond GDP*” agenda is also expanding on the regional scale. In the Asia Pacific region, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) organized a “*Measuring Progress Beyond GDP*” side event to feed into deliberations under the “Beyond GDP” Sprint of agenda item 3(o) (UNSD, 2022^[28]) of the 53rd session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2022 (UNESCAP, 2022^[29]). During the 79th session of UNESCAP in May 2023, governments from across Asia and the Pacific also adopted ten UN resolutions to strengthen regional action and partnerships towards achieving the UN SDGs (UNESCAP, 2023^[30]). In Europe, the Council of the European Union has acknowledged that the economy of well-being contributes to the European Social Model, empowering all people by promoting upward social and economic convergence (The Council of the European Union, 2019^[31]). The European Commission has also developed the Transitions Performance Index (TPI), which is both a scoreboard and a composite indicator that monitors progress towards fair and prosperous sustainability (European Commission, 2022^[32]). Eurostat has also been monitoring progress towards the SDGs in the EU context, with around 100 indicators structured along the 17 SDGs (European Union, 2022^[33]). In 2023, the “*Beyond Growth – Pathways towards Sustainable Prosperity in the EU*” event organised by the European Parliament, brought together an extensive range of European actors, from EU institutions, academia and civil society, to discuss new models of prosperity beyond growth (European Parliament, 2023^[34]).

What is next on this agenda?

Understanding what moving “*Beyond GDP*” entails is a prerequisite for advancing the well-being agenda. Generally speaking, the international community has already succeeded in coalescing around a vision of the “*Measuring well-being beyond GDP*” agenda that builds on the following common principles: the need to look at a broad spectrum of economic and non-economic factors that matter to current generations; the need to consider the capitals that drive well-being over time and therefore are responsible for the well-being of future generations; and finally the need to look at distributional aspects.¹

Additional aspects could be integrated² with the view of making this vision **more inclusive and context-relevant**, typically reflecting the perspectives of countries and communities that were not heavily consulted for previous initiatives; as well as **more operational and action-oriented**, to ensure that this can be

¹ Despite these commonalities, there are variations at indicator and data levels, and also national-level frameworks. These differences are often due to the need to consider country-specific or contextual factors, and the need to incorporate inputs from a variety of sources during the public consultations and co-designing processes of many national well-being initiatives (OECD, 2023^[25]).

² For a “Beyond GDP” measurement framework to be as successful as GDP, the UN identifies the following features: international comparability, wide acceptance, conciseness, actionability and attractiveness to decision-makers (UN, 2022^[3]). At the same time, “*Measuring well-being beyond GDP*” agenda should take into account different socio-economic status and contexts of countries and regions. The UN recognizes the necessity of different approaches depending on the context in each country, the need for the process to be gradual and iterative, and for measures to be dynamic and to evolve as priorities and challenges shift (UN, 2022^[3]). Connecting with the people of different backgrounds to identify well-being dimensions of greater concern will be essential in fostering the agenda more widely.

translated into pragmatic tools (such as in budgeting and policy evaluation) that evolve at pace with policy challenges and policy lessons.

International organisations can support this process by: i) raising and spreading awareness of the “*Beyond GDP*” agenda, ii) measuring and monitoring where countries stand in their ambition, iii) identifying and sharing best practices on measurement, iv) co-defining and co-developing new measurement and policy tools to push the measurement and policy agenda forward, and v) fostering international coordination and cooperation towards common goals.

In particular, international organisations can assist countries in advancement of well-being measurement, furthering work on new data and data techniques. Measurement should leverage existing information and develop new high-quality information from international and national official sources, while also exploring new data collection techniques and data sources beyond the spectrum of the official statistics (UN, 2022^[33]). For example, mobilizing new sources and developing very short-term forecasting tools such as nowcasting, may contribute to deepening of statistical measurement of economic performance and well-being (PSE, 2021^[35]).

Finally, for well-being evidence to be used in guiding decision-making, this evidence needs to be collected with high quality statistical standards as well as through constant dialogues between data producers and policy-makers. For example, based on the OECD Statistical Quality Framework (OECD, 2012^[36]), the OECD uses the quality criteria including include relevance, granularity to compute inequality measures, accuracy, credibility and comparability, timeliness and frequency, interpretability, and working constraints, to select and populate the OECD Well-being dashboard.

Effective communication between data producers and policy-makers and reporting on complex, multidimensional dataset are also crucial in integrating well-being evidence in policy. Hence, international organisations can support both statistical offices and government ministries by offering platforms for knowledge exchange and sharing of experiences learned from well-being initiatives across countries. The new OECD Well-Being Knowledge Exchange Platform (Box 1.2) will allow to make progress on these aspects.

Box 1.2. The OECD Well-being Knowledge Exchange Platform: to catalyse peer learning and further develop well-being policy practices

The systematic integration of evidence from multidimensional well-being dashboards is a rapidly developing but still relatively new area of public policy practice. It is clear from existing initiatives that the establishment of a framework (and accompanying indicators) is just the starting point. In November 2023, the OECD will launch a new Well-being Knowledge Exchange Platform, to draw together international examples that bring well-being evidence into policy practice and assist in their further development through peer learning and technical support.

The Platform will create a space for sharing good practice and addressing common challenges on well-being measurement and policy between governments. It will provide a way to scale up and open up national and bilateral discussions to all interested OECD members, and will address questions from three angles:

- **Measurement:** recognising that measurement is the bedrock for integrating well-being evidence into policy, it will bring together both statistical and policy perspectives on strategic issues (such as effective reporting of complex multidimensional datasets) and emerging topics related to well-being metrics.
- **Policy ecosystem:** addressing the range of supportive tools, methods and knowledge for developing and embedding the strategic policy use of well-being frameworks.
- **Well-being lens:** Understanding how a well-being lens can give a more integrated and systemic view of solutions for specific policy challenges (e.g. climate change, mental health) or sectoral issues (e.g. transport).

The Platform will feature a range of activities, including the development of an online resource repository, providing an inventory of country experiences and relevant OECD work; a series of structured knowledge exchange webinars and workshops, to address specific topics identified by members; and substantive research to produce case studies, methodological development and policy advice on priority topics.

Source: OECD (2023), Economic Policy Making to Pursue Economic Welfare: OECD Report for the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, May 2023, Japan, OECD, Paris,
https://www.oecd.org/economy/G7_Beyond_GDP_Economic_policy_making_to_pursue_economic_welfare_2023.pdf.

Guiding questions for discussion

- How can international organisations best support countries to advance the well-being agenda in Asia and South-East Asia? What role could international organisations play in improving measurement of well-being and sustainability in the region?
- How well aligned are the main “Beyond GDP” measurement initiatives within Asia and with respect to non-Asian initiatives? How can the ongoing discussions at the international level further support the process of alignment?
- What are the main data and statistical innovations in the field of measuring “Beyond GDP” in Asia that could shape broader measurement developments within the region?

2 Korea's experience in measuring well-being beyond GDP

In recent years, Korea has been actively refocusing national policies towards promoting happiness and improving people's quality of lives, in line with global movements to explore horizons *beyond GDP*. Statistics Korea (KOSTAT) has been at the forefront of these efforts, particularly by examining *the "Quality of Life indicators"* in Korea since 2014. During Session 2 of the Conference, policy makers, researchers and civil society representatives of Korea will be asked to share insights from their experiences and innovations, in measuring well-being and applying a beyond GDP/well-being lens to policies in Korea.

Introduction

Improving the quality of life has been one of the top priorities of the Korean government since the turn of the century. Shift in national policies was crucial in dealing with a variety of social issues Korea is facing in recent years, such as low birth rate, rapidly ageing population, relative poverty, and high suicide rate. Despite strong economic growth and the development of a democratic society, the level of life satisfaction and happiness have not improved in parallel (Statistics Research Institute, 2023^[37]). It is against this backdrop that KOSTAT began research on developing indicators and metrics that could provide the basis for implementing well-being focused policies (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. Developing the "Quality of Life Indicators in Korea (KQoL)"

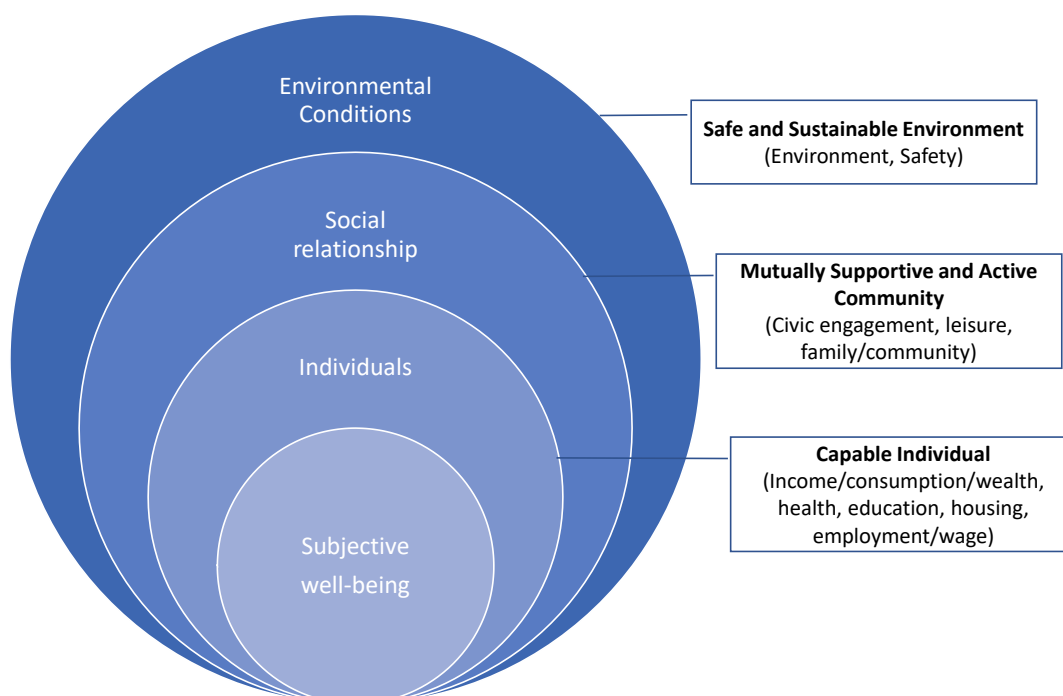
Since 2011, KOSTAT has been working on the "Quality of Life Indicators in Korea (KQoL)", making its measurement results public from 2014. Selected indicators and dimensions have been revised numerous times by the Committee for KQoL, composed of one reviewer and five advisors for each dimension. Selection criteria for the indicators included 1) *relevance* (whether the indicator can measure as intended, focusing on the outcome, with easiness to understand, reactivity to policy, and adaptiveness to the Korean context); 2) *quality of data* (whether official data and time series are available, covering the target population as much as possible); and 3) *neutrality* (can be selected and measured without any political bias). Public consultations also provided the backbone of the KQoL. In 2018, after a series of public consultations at the national level with various stakeholders in the previous year, KOSTAT undertook an overall restructuring of the KQoL framework, following concerns that the selection process was mostly top-down, rather than bottom-up. KOSTAT launched another public consultation in 2020, to discern 'dimensions of importance' and 'key indicators' for each dimension.

Source: Statistics Research Institute (2023), 국민 삶의 질 2022, https://sri.kostat.go.kr/board.es?mid=a90401000000&bid=11477&list_no=423793&act=view&mainXml=Y; Statistics Research Institute (2017), 국민 삶의 질 지표 개편, https://kostat.go.kr/board.es?mid=a90106000000&bid=12316&act=view&list_no=418664&tag=&nPage=1&ref_bid=

Existing measurement initiatives in Korea

The current Quality of Life Indicators in Korea (KQoL) provide well-being data on 11 dimensions, spanning from the individual level to the community level and the environmental conditions. Figure 2.1 illustrates the KQoL framework where subjective well-being is embedded within a broader system of well-being factors at individual, community and societal levels. On the individual level, indicators such as income and wealth, health, education and housing are included, aimed at supporting ‘capable individuals’. On the community level, the goal is to realize a ‘mutually supportive and active community’ and indicators relate to civic participation, recreation, and familial community. The most outer circle shows environmental conditions, with indicators related to ‘safe and sustainable environment’ (Statistics Research Institute, 2023^[37])

Figure 2.1. Framework of *Quality of Life Indicators in Korea*



Source: Rearranged from “Quality of life Indicators in Korea 2022”, Statistics Korea, 2023, https://sri.kostat.go.kr/board.es?mid=a90401000000&bid=11477&list_no=423793&act=view&mainXml=Y

In February 2023, KOSTAT published its latest and the fifth report of the series, “*Quality of Life Indicators in Korea 2022*”, which included 71 indicators under 11 dimensions (encompassing 42 objective and 29 subjective indicators) (Table 2.1) (Statistics Research Institute, 2023^[37]).³ Trends and indication of whether each indicator ‘improved(🟢)’, ‘deteriorated(🔴)’, or ‘no change(🟡)’ from the previous or the most recent year of measurement were also presented.

³ The series of “Quality of Life Indicators in Korea” will be published in English for the first time with its fifth version (Available from Sep. 2023).

Table 2.1. Quality of Life Indicators in Korea (KQoL)

Dimension	Objective Indicators (42)	Subjective Indicators (29)
Family· Community	Live-alone elderly rate Social Isolation Social group participation rate	Family relationship satisfaction Sense of belonging to a community
Health	Life Expectancy Healthy life expectancy Physical activity rate Obesity rate Suicide rate	Self-reported health Stress self-recognition
Education	Preschool enrollment rate Population with tertiary education Employment rate of college graduates	Degree of education cost burden (education affordability) Perception toward effects of school education School life satisfaction
Employment· Wage	Employment rate Unemployment rate Average monthly wage Working hours Proportion of low-paid workers	Job satisfaction
Income· Consumption · Wealth	Gross National income per capita Equivalised median income Household net wealth Household debt ratio Relative poverty rate	Income satisfaction Consumption (satisfaction)
Leisure	Leisure time Travel days per person Ratio of expenditure on leisure Participation in culture, art and sport event	Sufficiency of leisure time Leisure satisfaction
Housing	Home-ownership rate Rent to income ratio Residential area per capita Dwelling without basic facilities Commuting time to office	Housing environment satisfaction
Environment	Fine dust concentration level (Particulate Matter Concentration, PM2.5) Urban parks area per capita Waterworks supply rate in rural area	Climate change recognition Air quality satisfaction Water quality satisfaction Soil quality satisfaction Noise level satisfaction Green environment satisfaction
Safety	Homicide rate Child abuse rate Crime victimization rate Child mortality rate from safety accidents Industrial Accident mortality rate Number of fire fatalities road traffic accident fatality rate)	Feeling safe walking alone at night Perception toward societal safety
Civic engagement	Voter turnout rate Voluntary work participation rate	Perception of political empowerment Citizenship (Civic consciousness) Corruption Perceptions Index Interpersonal trust institutional trust)
Subjective Well- Being		Life Satisfaction Positive emotions Negative emotions

Source: Rearranged from "Quality of life Indicators in Korea 2022", Statistics Korea, 2023

In addition to KOSTAT's KQoL, NRC (the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences and Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs have also published "*Development of the Quality of Life Index*" in which it tried to calculate the quality of life index in Korea by using 20 indicators under 10 domains (i.e. subjective well-being, health, education/capability, work, economic living standards, sociocultural capital, safety, governance, social safety net, and environment), and showed that there is still room for improvement in areas such as life evaluation, suicide rate, GDP per worked hour, relative poverty (Kim and et al, 2021^[38]).

What are the issues at stake?

According to the "Quality of Life indicators in Korea 2022", participation in the community, level of trust, and leisure activities began to climb again in 2022 after a steep dip during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Life satisfaction and air pollution level (PM 2.5) improved compared to the 2021. Overall, indicators related to health, education, income, housing, environmental quality and safety have continuously improved since 2010. In contrast, the live-alone elderly rate, the obesity rate, household debt ratio and continued to deteriorate; child abuse rate continued to increase as well (Statistics Research Institute, 2023^[37]).

In addition to measuring well-being for the overall population, the Korean government has developed measurement frameworks and indicators to better monitor the well-being of populations groups and regions that need further policy attention. Some examples are children and youth, young adults (aged 19-34) and the elderly. Efforts to capture regional disparities in terms of well-being are underway, as well as the development of innovative indicators to assess changes in people's lives in the digital age.

Well-being of children and youth

For the first time in 2022, KOSTAT published the report, "*Children and Youth Well-being in Korea 2022*⁴". The report provides well-being data for social policymaking related to children and youth, who generally record low levels of subjective well-being despite showing high academic achievements (Statistics Research Institute, 2022^[39]). Korean children experience high academic achievement pressure and consequently short leisure time and sleep time, which is pointed out as a major factor explaining the low subjective well-being level of Korean children (Yoo, 2023^[40]).

8 dimensions (and 60 indicators) have been identified to describe children and youth (aged 0 to 17) current well-being, its evolution and inequalities: 1) social background (unlike other dimensions, this dimension gives more of a macro-description of the environment surrounding the children and youth), 2) material situation, housing and environment, 3) health, 4) learning and competence, 5) leisure, activity and participation, 6) safety and behaviour, 7) relationship, 8) subjective well-being (Statistics Research Institute, 2022^[39]). The report has helped raise awareness on the state of well-being of the younger generation in Korea: 9.8% of the children and youth were below the relative poverty line in terms of household income in 2020, down from 16.0% in 2015; suicide rate has increased to 2.7 per 100 000 in 2021 from 2.0 in 2010; study time for elementary students was 5 hours 9 minutes in 2019 with a decreasing trend since 2014; 95% of children and youth responded that their rights were being respected at home and at school; ratio of experiencing bullying reduced to 5.9% in 2020 from 8.5% in 2018; life satisfaction for those aged 9-12 scored 6.99 (out of 10) in 2020, down from 7.39 in 2017 (Statistics Research Institute, 2022^[39]).

⁴ English version of the summary of the report was published in June 2023.

Well-being of the elderly

Countries experiencing low birth rates and ageing population are increasingly interested in policies targeting the elderly. In particular, the elderly population living alone can be vulnerable not only in terms of economic conditions and physical health, but also in terms of mental health (Statistics Research Institute, 2023^[37]). The percentage of the population aged over 65 who lives alone increased from 16.0% in 2000 to 20.08% in 2022 (ibid.). In this context, during the 2021 National Quality of Life Measurement Forum, KOSTAT and the Statistics Research Institute (SRI) decided to start working on the definition of a framework of indicators that can shed light on the quality of lives of the population aged 65 or older (Statistics Korea, 2021^[41]). In that occasion, they recognized the importance to see the elderly as independent socio-economic entities rather than targets of welfare programs, and also noted the importance of a *community-based* ('ageing in place') care system, rather than leaving care responsibilities falling on individuals, family members or medical facilities (Statistics Korea, 2021^[41]).

The preliminary research of KOSTAT and SRI revealed the well-being framework for the elderly with 8 dimensions; 1) population/household, 2) health, 3) income guarantee, 4) participation, 5) social connections, 6) living environment, 7) socio-cultural environment and 8) subjective well-being. To give an overall picture of well-being of the elderly, 18 key indicators were selected: aged population, life expectancy, suicide rate, out-of-pocket medical expenses, long-term care authorization rate, income security, relative poverty rate, public pension receipt rate, participation in social organizations, main leisure activity, marital status, social network, percentage of households dwelling below the minimum housing standard, pedestrian traffic accident fatality rate, abuse victimization rate, discrimination experience rate, perception on parental support and subjective well-being (Statistics Korea, 2021^[41]). During the 2021 Forum, KOSTAT and the SRI stated that further work will be conducted to develop new indicators related to inter-generational exchange, community care system, status of the elderly in care facilities, and well-dying, in order to better measure well-being of the elderly and to complement the current framework.(ibid.).

Regional Well-being

Propelled by increased usage of well-being data by government ministries and the call to compare different regions (Statistics Korea, 2022^[42]), in 2020, KOSTAT joined hands with local governments, the Ministry of Interior and Safety, and the Presidential Committee for Balanced National Development to implement social surveys at the regional level that have common well-being indicators. Since 2020, 17 regional governments (covering the entire 229 municipalities in Korea) have carried out social surveys which include 21 well-being indicators (subjective well-being, trust in public, social support, sense of local community belonging, average monthly income, experience of difficulties in livelihood, fear about crime, evaluation on safety, quality of environment, satisfaction about various dimensions including social services, jobs, education, leisure, housing, transportation and time-use) (Statistics Korea, 2022^[42]). Data are comparable across municipalities and at the regional and national level using the same indicators even though the local governments conduct the surveys individually at the local level.

Well-being in the digital age

Tackling the digital divide and measuring quality of life in the digital era have become topical for the Korean government. That digital transformation can expand opportunities, but it can also pose risks for people's well-being, ranging from cyber-bullying, the emergence of disinformation, to cyber-hacking (OECD, 2019^[19]). With the highest level of internet access among OECD countries (almost 99% of the population have access to internet in Korea (OECD, n.d.^[43]), these risks and opportunities are pronounced in the Korean society and impact the well-being of Korean people in many different aspects. On top of this, internet has become accessible to Koreans almost anytime and everywhere: 97% of the Korean adult population uses smartphones, including the older generations such as those in their sixties (98%) and their seventies (81%) (Gallup Korea, 2022^[44]). Improving digital literacy, especially for the elderly has become

essential to the Korean government, who is trying to tackle the issue of the digital divide. In 2023, KOSTAT also started discussing the matter of measuring quality of life in the midst of the digital transformation. The 9th National Quality of Life Measurement Forum held in June 2023 discussed the topic of “Social change and quality of life due to digital transformation” (Statistics Korea, 2023^[45]). Some of the indicators suggested by the Korea Information Society Development Institute included indicators that have implications for both opportunities and risks. In terms of opportunities, the indicators suggested are internet usage on mobility, internet usage for online education, ratio of online purchase, internet banking usage, internet usage for participation in expert networks and R&D intensity in nano bio and medical companies. As for the risks, suggested indicators included digital divide, ratio of feeling technostress, ratio of having received work-related online messages afterwork, and ratio of over-dependency on smartphones (Statistics Korea, 2023^[45]).

What are next steps?

Well-being measurement in Korea is well advanced and information is available to the public through a dedicated quarterly updated homepage and an annual report on “Quality of Life Indicators in Korea (KQoL)”, released along with the KOSTAT’s National Quality of Life Measurement Forum that aim disseminating knowledge on measurement of well-being in Korea. Efforts have also been made to measure well-being for some of the most vulnerable population groups (the young and the elderly generations), as well as at different geographical levels; national, regional and at local administration level, joining forces across institutions. KQoL are tailored to the Korean context and so they well represent the characteristics of the fast-changing Korean society. However, this may reduce their international comparability (Kim and et al, 2021^[38]). Statistical authorities and policymakers in Korea need to ensure continued alignment of different well-being frameworks and indicators developed concerning specific topics, or at different regional levels, and also enable smooth communication of the findings between data producers and data users.

Guiding questions for discussion

- What are the main challenges of measuring well-being in Korea? What lessons have been learned in developing and advancing the “Quality of Life Indicators in Korea”?
- What areas of measurement gaps need to be addressed most urgently?
- What are important well-being dimensions and indicators that require increased attention from policymakers in Korea?

3

What are the common dimensions across Asia that should be considered for measuring well-being and what data are available to measure them?

The Asian region has achieved remarkable economic progress over the last half a century, making it the fifth largest world region in GDP terms. Despite these achievements, key challenges, including demographic changes, inequalities in social development and opportunities, and environmental degradation, remain. A well-being approach to policy, based on concrete well-being evidence, would support the Asian countries to address the highly interconnected challenges they face on a variety of dimensions. This session will aim at identifying the common dimensions which need to be considered to measure people's well-being in the region, looking at both the outcomes that matter today and the key resources and capitals that drive and sustain well-being outcomes over time. During Session 3 of the Conference, speakers from Asian and Pacific countries with experiences of developing well-being approaches will be asked to share their lessons learned so far. The session will also feature the variety of well-being data used across the region and reflect on which additional efforts are needed to fill existing gaps and to make data more comparable at international level.

Introduction

Countries of the Asian region, ASEAN-10 countries in particular, have shown resilience in the face of global economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine (OECD, 2023^[46]). South-East Asian countries are expected to grow on average by 4.6% in 2023 and 4.8% in 2024, keeping the growth momentum (OECD, 2023^[46]). New technologies and digital infrastructure are spreading rapidly throughout South-East Asian countries, with the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating the adoption of new digital solutions, and the region is projected to be one of the world's fastest-growing data centre markets in the next few years (OECD, 2023^[47]). However, structural problems of inequality persist despite remarkable improvements in average living conditions. For example, South-East Asian women face discrimination within social institutions in various dimensions; in the family and household context, in relation to physical integrity and access to productive and financial resources, as well as within the political and civil spheres (OECD, 2021^[48]). Women in South-East Asia disproportionately face barriers to participating in the formal labour force (OECD, 2023^[47]). Sustainability well-being is also being undermined by damages to resources that underpin sustainability such as environmental degradation. The projected adverse impacts on GDP due to climate change are relatively high in South-East Asian countries, where GDP is projected to fall by 3.13% by 2047 on average (OECD, 2023^[47]). Climate change is noticeable

through an increasing number of natural hazards and extreme temperatures and has important implications for people's well-being in the Asian region (OECD, 2023^[47]). According to the *"State of Southeast Asia: 2020 Survey"*, conducted by the ASEAN Studies Centre at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, more than half (52.7%) of the ASEAN respondents viewed climate change as a "serious and immediate threat to the well-being" of their respective countries (ISEAS and Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020^[49]).

These megatrends underpin the rationale for why countries in South-East Asia as well as in the wider Asian region would benefit from adopting a multi-dimensional approach to well-being measurement and policy. Applying a well-being lens to policies with well-being evidence unearthed by multi-dimensional measurement can help guide countries tackle multi-faceted challenges that are often interconnected. For example, addressing digital divide for rural women in South-East Asia may facilitate their access to new market opportunities and market information, effectively unlocking women entrepreneurial activities in rural area (OECD and ASEAN, 2021^[50]). Coordinated cross-government action could raise both current and future well-being while also promoting opportunities for all, offering *"triple-wins"* (OECD, 2021^[51]).

What are the issues at stake?

Existing measurement initiatives in the region and related measurement challenges

Against this backdrop, countries in the Asian region are increasingly recognizing the importance of applying a well-being perspective, and a variety of *"Beyond GDP"* well-being measurement initiatives and frameworks are being developed, showing both commonalities and differences. Many of the initiatives are generally aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda as well as the OECD Well-being framework. Dimensions of housing, health, education, environment and civic engagement (participation) recur across several Asian well-being measurement frameworks. On the other hand, dimensions related to subjective well-being or life satisfaction are not found universally, and only appear in some frameworks (Bhutan, Korea, Japan). There are also some dimensions that are not included in the OECD Well-being framework, such as **cultural resilience/diversity or religion** (Bhutan, Thailand Human Achievement Index (HAI), Malaysia). **Family and community** (Korea, Thailand HAI, Philippines, Japan) is another example of such dimension; even though the OECD framework includes social connections, some Asian countries have specified *family*, for example Japan's well-being survey reports on satisfaction with ease of taking care of family member. Below are some selected well-being measurement initiatives in the Asian region and their methodologies with, a focus on dimensions included:

- Bhutan's **Gross National Happiness Index (GNH Index)** is intended as a single value, which ranges from 0 to 1, that tracks the Bhutanese population's overall well-being and happiness (Ura Karma et al., 2023^[52]). It is based on 33 indicators spanning 9 domains, with the latest survey results released in 2023. The *happy* people refer to those who have achieved sufficiency in at least 66% of the weighted domains or indicators. GNH index is based on the GNH questionnaire which includes questions about life satisfaction, emotional experience, physical and mental health, access to services, and health behaviours, how individuals spend their time, educational attainment, access to education, and the quality of education, questions about cultural identity, connection to culture, and cultural values, trust in institutions, social connections, community involvement, environmental protection, income, and housing (Ura Karma et al., 2023^[52]). The GNH dimensions generally overlap with the dimensions of the OECD Well-being framework, but dimensions of work and job quality and economic capital are missing. The 2022 GNH Index value is 0.781 with 48.1% of the Bhutanese people classified as either 'deeply' or 'extensively' happy (Ura Karma et al., 2023^[52]).
- In the Philippines, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) spearheaded a study in 2015 to determine the long-term aspirations of the Filipinos (*"AmBisyon Natin 2040"*), and based on this, began to develop **Quality of Life Index (QLI) in the Philippines** (Edillon, 2022^[53]). QLI,

to realize “AmBisyon Natin 2040”, has 12 domains under three pillars of *Matatag* (strongly rooted), *Maginhawa* (comfortable) and *Panatag* (Secure). In March 2023, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) approved the conduct of the National and Regional Survey Research to estimate a QLI for the Philippines by NEDA (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023^[54]). NEDA is conducting a nationally and regionally representative survey of at least 22,000 households to solicit responses that will determine the quality of life of Filipinos (Edillon, 2022^[53]). Main domains explored by the survey will include demographic characteristics, schooling status, economic characteristic, overall quality of life and quality of life domains (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023^[54]). The QLI still needs to be adopted as part of the regular surveys conducted by PSA and some of the QLI domains and indicators may need be altered in order to address unexpected socio-economic challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Edillon, 2022^[53]).

- Thailand has been active in developing a variety of well-being indexes and incorporating them in their National Development Plans, spanning Well-being Index (8th Plan (1997-2001)), Economic Strength Index and Sustainable Development Index (9th Plan (2002-2006)), Green and Happiness Index (11th Plan (2012-2016)), and Human Achievement Index (11th Plan (2012-2016)) (Sakondhavat, 2022^[55]). Among these, **Human Achievement Index (HAI)** has been published biennially since 2014, as the result of the collaboration between the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) and the UNDP Thailand (Sakondhavat, 2022^[55]). UNDP Thailand has adapted the concept and methodology of the Human Development Index (HDI) to develop HAI (Sakondhavat, 2022^[55]). HAI is a composite index, covering 8 dimensions and using 32 indicators, and has been tracked in the regional and provincial level (Sakondhavat, 2022^[55]). HAI does not take into account resources for the future (e.g. human, natural, social and economic capital) and mostly focuses measuring the current well-being.
- Malaysia’s Department of Statistics has developed the **Malaysian Well-being Index (MyWI)** in 2018, with the latest fourth edition released in December 2022 (Department of Statistics, 2022^[56]). MyWI is comprised of two sub-composites, social well-being (with 9 components) and economic well-being (with 5 components), and there are 66 indicators under these two sub-composites (Department of Statistics, 2022^[56]). It sets the baseline year in 2000 (=100) and measures the progress in social and economic well-being in terms of each indicator. On the other hand, at the regional level, **the Happiness in Penang (HIP) Index** has been developed by the state government-funded think tank, Penang Institute, which attempts to measure happiness levels across different domains: freedom and governance; economic well-being; environmental sustainability; and livability and social well-being (Pey, Dr and Vaghefi, n.d.^[57]). HIP index uses the Alkire-Foster methodology and those who are considered unhappy would have achieved less than 50% sufficiency across the weighted indicators (Pey, Dr and Vaghefi, n.d.^[57]).
- In Korea, Statistics Korea has been publishing the **Quality of Life Indicators in Korea (KQoL)** annually since 2014. KQoL summarizes changes and current situation of the quality of life and well-being in Korea, by describing trends of 71 indicators (42 objective and 29 subjective) under 11 dimensions. Criteria for selecting indicators were data quality (i.e. official statistics, coverage, time-series); relevance (i.e. face validity, output orientation, understandability, policy responsiveness, relevance to the national context); and impartiality (not influenced by political orientation) (Choi et al., 2022^[58]). In an effort to promote better use of KQoL, Statistics Korea is trying to further disaggregate indicators by population group and regions (Choi et al., 2022^[58]). For example, efforts to measure the QoL for different age groups of life stages (i.e. children and youth, adults, elderly) and to standardize disaggregated sub-national indicators are underway to enhance well-being measurement (Choi et al., 2022^[58]).
- In Japan, the "Liaison Conference of Relevant Ministries and Agencies on Well-being" was established in July 2021, to share information, strengthen cooperation, and horizontally deploy best practices for the promotion of well-being initiatives across the 11 Ministries (Government of Japan, 2021^[59]). The Japanese Cabinet Office is also conducting an **annual Survey on Satisfaction and**

Quality of Life since 2019, constructing a set of indicators (dashboard) and measuring ‘overall life satisfaction’ as well as sector-specific levels of satisfaction spanning 11 well-being dimensions (Japan Cabinet Office, 2022^[60]). Included indicators are presented in a Cabinet Office Well-being Dashboard and draws on the OECD Well-being Framework (Japan Cabinet Office, 2022^[60]).

Table 3.1. Dimensions of selected well-being initiatives

Selected well-being initiatives in the Asian region and their alignment with the OECD Well-being Framework

Well-being Initiative	OECD Well-being Framework	Bhutan GNH Index (2022)	Philippines Quality of Life Index (2022)	Thailand Human Achievement Index (HAI) (2017)	Malaysia Well-being Index (MyWI) (2021)	Korea Quality of Life Indicators (2022)	Japan Cabinet Wellbeing dashboard (2022)
Dimensions of current well-being	income and wealth	living standards		income	Income and distribution	income·consumption·wealth	household finances and assets
	work and job quality			employment	working life	employment·wage	employment environment and wages
	housing	living standards	material living conditions	housing and living environment	housing	housing	housing
	health	health	health status	health	Health	health	health
	knowledge and skills	education	education and knowledge	education	education	education	education level and educational environment
	environmental quality	ecological diversity and resilience	environmental quality		environment	environment	natural environment
	subjective well-being	psychological wellbeing				subjective well-being	satisfaction with the quality of life; enjoyment and fun of life
	safety	community vitality	safety and security		public safety	safety	personal safety
	work-life balance	time use	work-life balance; recreation		entertainment and recreation	leisure	work and life
	social connections	community vitality	family and friends; community-connectedness	family and neighborhood life	family	family·community	social connections
civic engagement	good governance	participation and governance	participation	governance, social participation	civic engagement	politics, government and courts	
Additional dimensions		<i>cultural diversity and resilience</i>	<i>culture and religion, transport traffic and mobility</i>	<i>transportation and communication</i>	<i>Culture, Transportation, communication</i>		<i>ease of raising children, ease of taking care of family members</i>

Note: Japan Cabinet Wellbeing dashboard measures satisfaction with each of the dimensions.

Source: Rearranged from “Bhutan GNH 2022” (<https://ophi.org.uk/bhutan-gnh-2022/>); “Quality of Life Index In the Philippines” (https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/Philippines_GDP-Well-being_SldeEvent_Commission78_26May2022.pdf); “Thailand’s Social Development in Q2/2017” (https://www.nesdc.go.th/nesdb_en/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=4356&filename=social_dev_report); “Malaysian Well-being Index report (MyWI) 2021” (https://www.dosm.gov.my/uploads/release-content/file_20221206151702.pdf); “Quality of Life Indicators in Korea” (<https://kostat.go.kr/board.es?mid=b10105000000&bid=0060>); “Survey report on Satisfaction and Quality of Life 2022: Trends in well-being in our country”, <https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai2/wellbeing/manzoku/pdf/report06.pdf>

The international community in the Asian region is also working together to advance the *Beyond GDP* agenda. For example, UNESCAP organized the side event to 78th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, “*From GDP to well-being and sustainability: Means and measures*” in May 2022, during which various regional initiatives to measure sustainable development beyond economic growth were identified (UNESCAP secretariat, 2022^[61]). T20 Indonesia, Think20 - the official engagement group of G20, released a policy brief in 2022, calling for G20 countries to move beyond GDP by complementing it with *inclusive wealth indicators* by 2025; with inclusive wealth measuring the assets that underlie human well-being such as natural, human, social, produced and financial capital (Smith, Zoundi and Bizikova, 2022^[62]). In addition, ASEAN, in an effort to monitor its progress towards meeting the SDGs, published the *Snapshot Report for the ASEAN region*, based on 29 SDG indicators (ASEAN, 2022^[63]). A quality assessment of data was carried out to obtain a set of SDG indicators that can yield regional estimates which are representative of a greater number of ASEAN member states, and 29 indicators were selected based on data availability (from National Statistical Offices) and consistency in definition with global standards (ASEAN, 2022^[63]).

Despite the great progress made by the region on measuring well-being in the last couple of decades, the statistical agenda ahead is still very rich. First, methodologies, as well as dimensions and indicators, vary widely across regional well-being initiatives. It is generally difficult to compare data across Asian countries when using a broad range of well-being dimensions and despite the large efforts made, notably in the context of the SDG agenda, there is scope for further harmonizing definitions and methodologies. In order to do that, it will be key to organise consultations on ‘what matters the most’, in the specific socio-economic and cultural contexts of the region; and to review the best indicators available (or that need to be developed) to measure those aspects⁵. In-depth discussions between data producers and policymakers will also be necessary to improve comparability of well-being evidence, to enhance relevance and credibility. Second, countries should double down on measurement of future well-being, to better understand the role that resources for the future (i.e. social, human, natural and economic capital) may have in addressing current challenges such as inequalities, demographic change and environmental degradation.

What are next steps?

First and foremost, **measurement and data collection challenges need to be addressed**. Harmonised, disaggregated data on various dimensions of well-being is required. Additional efforts to measure subjective well-being, for instance, are necessary. It will pave the way for regional well-being initiatives to be fully effective. Stakeholders of the region, including policymakers, academia, civil society and businesses, should be involved in identifying dimensions and indicators that can best monitor people’s

⁵ For example, in order to support the regional conversation on measuring well-being in Latin American and the Caribbean countries, the OECD developed the project OECD’s *How’s Life in Latin America?*. Done in collaboration with major institutional actors of the LAC region, the project and related report identified issues that are of particular importance to the Latin American region, where inequalities and other structural challenges persist despite economic progress, such as absolute poverty, food security, child labour, youth informal employment, slum prevalence and impact of natural disasters (OECD, 2021^[20])

well-being⁶. In addition, **capacity building for data producers as well as policymakers is essential**. From the data producers' side, lack of capacity to collect timely and accurate data from different sources and compiling them with a framework should be addressed (UNESCAP, 2020_[64]). Efforts are also needed to enhance capacity of data users to interpret or analyse new data and communicate the analytical findings with policymakers (UNESCAP, 2020_[64]). Capacity building, however, needs to be tailored to national and regional circumstances to be effective (Smith, Zoundi and Bizikova, 2022_[62]), as the level of understanding and readiness to act on well-being issues may vary widely. Finally, **launching a network of policymakers, civil society, statisticians to have regular discussions on well-being measurement** could be helpful in disseminating best practices and maintaining a coherent approach across the region.

Guiding questions for discussion

- What are the well-being dimensions that matter most for people's lives today and in the future in Asia, South-East Asia and Korea?
- What are the key resources that drive well-being over time in the region?
- How can we enhance measurement of well-being in the Asian region? What are the areas for improvement in data collection and coverage?

⁶ For this, quality assessment criteria that have been instrumental in selecting indicators to populate the OECD well-being dashboard can be of reference. These criteria include relevance, possibility to compute inequalities, accuracy, credibility and comparability, timeliness and frequency, interpretability, and working constraints (i.e. practical requirements to produce comparable and affordable well-being statistics such as covering the widest and more diverse set of countries and limiting the burden on data producers).

4 Unpacking well-being challenges in Asia: measuring the well-being of vulnerable populations and groups left behind

Introduction

Evidence has shown that reducing inequalities can be highly beneficial for society as a whole. Yet inequalities in Asia remain, across individuals of different age, income, level of education, gender, ethnicity and place of living. Inequalities are also multidimensional and persistent, compounding across several life domains, across life spans and over multiple generations. Adopting a well-being lens can help examine the interrelations between these different dimensions and how inequalities often transmit over time and across places. During Session 4 of the Conference, speakers will be asked to present empirical evidence where possible, on well-being of vulnerable groups and communities in Asia, which groups have been left behind and which specific data and statistical approaches are needed to best map progress made to this point. The session will also look at the use of qualitative information, with a focus on lived experiences of disadvantaged communities.

Asian countries are increasingly using well-being frameworks or multidimensional indices to understand the well-being of vulnerable populations and groups left behind. Several countries have adapted the *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)*⁷ to their national contexts. Some have tailored the MPI or designed specific well-being frameworks to zoom in on specific population groups (e.g. children) or regions. Other countries have monitored progress on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to measure well-being of vulnerable groups, with some implementing voluntary national reviews (VNR).

Existing measurement initiatives in the region and related measurement challenges

National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

The MPI is a multidimensional poverty measurement tool that provides a comprehensive assessment of poverty based on sufficiency measures. Gender, age and urban/rural areas are the socio-demographic characteristics most recurrently investigated, followed by subnational region and household size or type

⁷ The MPI has been developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) for inclusion in UNDP's flagship *Human Development Report (HDR)* in 2010. It has been published annually by OPHI and in the HDRs ever since with a coverage of over 100 countries. A person is defined multidimensionally poor when deprived in a third or more of ten (weighted) indicators over the three equally weighted dimensions (Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network, n.d.^[65]).

(Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network, n.d.^[65]). The national MPI is used to complement income-based poverty measures (Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network, n.d.^[65]), as there is only a small overlapping of being both income poor and multidimensional deprived. Multidimensional poverty is also monitored as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator 1.2.2. "reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions" (UNDESA, n.d.^[66]). The strength of the MPI methodology lies in its simplicity and its aggregation and disaggregation properties at different level of analysis (national, subnational and supranational). However, the calculation of the MPI at individual level requires a wealth of information from a unique source or that can be linked across sources, thus may only enable poverty assessment on a limited number of dimensions or time points.

Countries, such as Bhutan, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, calculate the national MPI to identify those who are multidimensional poor (Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network, n.d.^[65]). In addition to the three core dimensions of MPI (i.e. health, education and living standards), countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, have expanded the scope to include employment, financial security and access to information (i.e. usage of telecom services and assets for accessing information). Bhutan has recently complemented its original MPI with the *Moderate MPI*, aiming to capture future expectations and aspirations of citizens and policy makers. For example, the Moderate MPI relies on i) more ambitious cut-offs for identifying deprivations (e.g. drinking water piped into the house and flush toilets, moving *beyond* availability of drinking water in the household surroundings), and on ii) educational indicators that mirror middle income development structures (e.g. school lag, moving *beyond* attendance) (National Statistics Bureau of the Royal Government of Bhutan and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), 2023^[67]).

Table 4.1. Selected national Multidimensional Poverty Indices in the region: common dimensions and specificities

Country MPI (start year/update)	Global MPI (2010)	Nepal MPI (2017/2021)	Sri Lanka MPI (2021)	Bhutan Moderate MPI (2022)	Thailand MPI (2019)	Philippines MPI (2018)	Vietnam MPI (2015)
Responsible agency	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and UNDP	Government of Nepal National Planning Commission	Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), Ministry of Economic Policies and Plan Implementation	National Statistics Bureau (NSB) of the Royal Government of Bhutan	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC)	Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA)
Dimensions	Health	Health	Health	Health	Healthy living	Health and nutrition	Health
	Education	Education	Education	Education	Education	Education	Education
	Living standards	Living standards	Living standards	Living standards	Living conditions	Housing, water and sanitations	Housing, Living standards
	Additional dimension				Financial security	Employment	Access to information

Source: Adapted from the Multidimensional Peer Network, <https://www.mppn.org/multidimensional-poverty/who-uses/> and Bhutan Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022 (National Statistics Bureau of the Royal Government of Bhutan and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), 2023^[67])

Initiatives tailored to specific population groups or subnational regions

Sri Lanka and Thailand have designed Child MPI, recognising the lifelong impact of child deprivations. Both Child MPIs have indicators that have different deprivation cut-offs depending on the age group of the child. For example, the Child MPI in Sri Lanka targets children aged 0-4 and is directly linked to the national MPI. The Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) of Sri Lanka has added the dimension of “child development” (with two indicators: *undernutrition* (being underweight or stunted) and *early childhood development*) to its national MPI to better capture two deprivations of early childhood (Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), 2021^[68]). On the other hand, the Child MPI in Thailand aims at capturing key aspects of deprivation for children aged 0–17 years. The index is the result of the cooperation between the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) Thailand and is not directly linked to the national MPI. While dimensions of Thailand’s Child MPI broadly overlap with the national MPI (i.e. education, health, living conditions/standards), indicators in each dimension have been specifically selected and tailored to children. For example, the dimension of “*child welfare*” includes two indicators (*child protection* and *living conditions*).

Korea has developed a unique well-being framework for children and youth, “*Children and Youth Well-being in Korea 2022*”, providing well-being data for social policymaking related to children and youth (Statistics Research Institute, 2022^[39]). It provides well-being data on 8 dimensions (and 60 indicators) related to children and youth (aged 0 to 17) current well-being, its evolution and inequalities: 1) social background (unlike other dimensions, this dimension gives more of a macro-description of the environment surrounding the children and youth), 2) material situation, housing and environment, 3) health, 4) learning and competence, 5) leisure, activity and participation, 6) safety and behaviour, 7) relationship, 8) subjective well-being (Statistics Research Institute, 2022^[39]).

At the subnational level, the city of Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam has piloted the Ho Chi Minh city MPI, in collaboration with UNDP and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) for poverty monitoring, evaluation and policy formulation (Ho Chi Minh City and the UNDP Vietnam, 2014^[69]). It aims to account for the specific urban contexts in mapping material deprivation (i.e. the headcount income poverty is 0.1% in the city, compared to 11.1% at national level (Ho Chi Minh City and the UNDP Vietnam, 2014^[69])).

SDG monitoring and voluntary national reviews (VNR)

Voluntary National Reviews and SDGs monitoring are two additional ways Asian countries have undertaken to measure and monitor the well-being of vulnerable population groups. Many Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Korea, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam also undertake *Voluntary National Reviews (VNR)*, which is a voluntary accountability and progress monitoring mechanism that leads to assessment of national progress made in implementing the SDGs (UN OHCHR, n.d.^[70]). While some SDGs target poverty (SDG 1), women (SDG 5) and inequality (SDG 10) directly, vulnerabilities are identified across all the SDGs (e.g. Indicator 11.1.1 “Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing”). Thus, measurement challenges faced during the implementation of VNRs should be addressed to better assess progress made for vulnerable population groups.

What are the issues at stake?

Inequalities can be multidimensional, encompassing both economic and non-economic facets. While income and wealth inequality and poverty are probably the most well-known manifestations of inequality, disparities are visible in every aspect of people’s life: from health to education, from social connections to safety. Since 2011, the OECD “*How’s Life?*” reports have been measuring and monitoring well-being

outcomes and their distributions across the population in eleven dimensions of well-being: income and wealth, work and job quality, housing conditions, work-life balance, health, knowledge and skills, subjective well-being, safety, social connections, environmental quality and civic engagement (OECD, 2020^[75]). Social gradients exist in many of the well-being dimensions, for instance higher incomes are often associated with higher education and better health (OECD, 2017^[14]).

Inequalities can transmit over time and impact a wide range of well-being outcomes, impairing social mobility and a better future for all. Social mobility refers to the extent to which individuals change their socio-economic situation with respect to their parents (*inter-generational mobility*) or during their lifetime (*intra-generational mobility*). The *intergenerational* transmission of advantage and disadvantage perpetuates inequality because unequal starts have a persistent impact on a wide range of well-being outcomes later in life (Bowles and Gintis, 2002^[71]; D’Addio, 2007^[72]; Causa and Johansson, 2009^[73]; Corak, 2013^[74]; OECD, 2018^[75]). For example, children whose parents have a tertiary degree are 45 percentage points more likely to graduate from university themselves compared to those whose parents have less than a secondary degree, across the OECD (Balestra and Ciani, 2022^[76]). In terms of *intra-generational mobility*, evidence shows that people in poverty struggle to escape (*sticky floors*), while those with high incomes tend to remain at the top of the income ladder (*sticky ceilings*). Apart from income, other well-being dimensions – e.g. physical and mental health and social capital – are rather enduring over a person’s lifetime, tend to influence each other, and thus compound advantage or disadvantage (Balestra and Ciani, 2022^[76]). For example, long periods of unemployment can damage workers’ health, thus reducing, in turn, their chances to secure a new or high-paid job.

Places also contribute to shape inequalities. Local contextual factors – across regions, but also within cities – play an important role during childhood and continue to affect people’s opportunities during their lifetime through access to public services and job, training and digital opportunities (OECD, 2018^[77]; OECD, 2021^[78]; OECD, 2021^[79]). The quality of local areas during childhood also plays a key role, as households with lower socio-economic status often live in neighbourhoods that are more affected by exposure to pollution and noise or with higher violent crime rates (Clarke and Thévenon, 2022^[80]). National studies suggest that differences in intergenerational mobility between regions in the same country are wide and can be larger than cross-national comparisons (Balestra and Ciani, 2022^[76]). The mechanisms behind these territorial differences remain largely under-explored. A number of studies and experiments have highlighted the role of different factors, such as pollution (Currie, 2011^[81]; O’Brien et al., 2018^[82]) and social networks (Chetty et al., 2022^[83]). Several factors – including high house prices and family ties – often limit people’s opportunity to move to areas with better opportunities (Cavalleri, Luu and Causa, 2021^[84]; Causa and Pichelmann, 2020^[85]), thus constraining the extent to which geographical mobility can help overcome geographical inequalities.

Current megatrends and recent shocks can highlight or exacerbate existing vulnerabilities. High cost of living, economic slowdown, geopolitical tensions, digitalisation and climate change are slowing or reversing many of the Asia-Pacific region’s hard-won gains in well-being, equality and sustainable development (UNESCAP, 2023^[6]). These megatrends are more likely to hit low-income families, low-skilled workers and more broadly those lacking (or with very few) resources to face these challenges. For example, climate change will likely hit more vulnerable areas, such as rural communities (OECD, 2021^[86]). The East Asia and Pacific region is one of the most impacted regions that will likely experience multiple layers of climate and environmental shocks and stresses. In this region, children are more vulnerable than elsewhere: 41% of children in the region face 5 or more shocks, compared to the global average of 14% of children (UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), 2023^[87]). Demographic change will also likely weaken the growth prospects of rural regions that are experiencing faster aging, limiting further their ability to invest in the provision of key services, such as health care and education (OECD, 2019^[88]). Another example is the rapid digitalisation and automation of activities, which will lead to artificial intelligence and robots replacing a non-negligible fraction of jobs across the board, with a stronger impact for low-skill jobs (Nedelkoska and Quintini, 2018^[89]; OECD, 2019^[90]; OECD, 2023^[91]). In South-East and Pacific Asia, access to

affordable internet and digital devices is still insufficient and the gender digital literacy divide needs to be addressed through the development of advanced digital competencies to ensure girls' empowerment (UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), 2023^[92]).

What are next steps?

Securing **granular data on vulnerable population** groups in the Asian region is crucial in understanding their deprivations and needs. For example, data disaggregation (e.g. by sex, area of residence, ethnicity and disability status) needs to be strengthened in South-East Asia (UNESCAP, 2023^[93]), in order to uncover current inequalities as well as inequality of opportunities. Ensuring universal civil registration is also a pre-condition to legally acknowledge people and make them visible to the State, so that those in need may access basic services, such as education and healthcare and secure employment and social benefits. This is still a challenge in most countries in Asia and the Pacific, where the births of 64 million children under the age of five and deaths of 8.4 million people are invisible to governments every year (UNESCAP, 2023^[94]).

Beyond data granularity, additional **evidence on social mobility** is necessary in order to design and implement targeted policies for those striving to climb the social ladder. Evidence on social mobility and its evolution in the medium and long term are key in analysing past determinants and anticipating future trends (Balestra and Ciani, 2022^[76]). In particular, monitoring child well-being is important as inequalities are very often rooted in early-life disadvantage. In this context, the *OECD Observatory on Social Mobility and Equal Opportunity* was launched in November 2022, to help bring the Organisation's work in this area to the next stage by generating new evidence and deepening the analysis of the factors that impact social mobility and equal opportunities (OECD, n.d.^[95]).

Finally, **using a well-being approach** can help tackle multidimensional and interrelated inequalities. To unbundle and understand the complexity of the concurring challenges of this century and to better target solutions, well-being measurement approaches are particularly helpful. For instance, the OECD well-being framework can help identify the most vulnerable groups to design tailored policies aiming at addressing people's exposure to negative shocks, helping them to better manage risk and build resilience.

Guiding questions for discussion

- What evidence is available on the well-being outcomes and opportunities of vulnerable groups and communities in Asia, South-East Asia and Korea?
- Which disadvantaged population groups in Asia, need more attention from policymakers?
- How can countries better measure progress towards sustained well-being and equal opportunities for vulnerable population groups, and children and youth? What are the specific data, statistical approaches and techniques needed to best map progress?

5 How can well-being data be used in policymaking?

Introduction

Not only measuring and monitoring of people's well-being but integrating well-being dimensions in policy strategies is also crucial in moving "*Beyond GDP*". Well-being approaches to policy are being used increasingly by OECD countries in national policy processes, to support more integrated, coordinated, and forward-thinking solutions that can better address the interdependencies between economic, social, and environmental policy objectives (OECD, 2023^[7]). Emerging policy practices better integrate well-being evidence into budgeting, policy appraisal and evaluation, and strategic priority setting. Rather than being a simple add-on to existing economic policy practice, the adoption of a "well-being lens" is a novel approach that allows to overcome traditional policy silos, encourage more collaborative and effective ways of working across government and then support a more efficient and effective use of public resources (OECD, 2023^[7]). During Session 5 of the Conference, the speakers will be asked to share best policy practices of using well-being evidence and more broadly how the integration of well-being approaches in Asia, South-East Asia and Korea can support governments in achieving their objectives.

What are the issues at stake?

Tackling the complexity of current challenges requires a systemic approach. A well-being perspective brings a more holistic approach to understanding policy issues and it enables a structured assessment of the interlinkages between economic, social, environmental, and distributional policy objectives. The well-being approach can help countries reorient strategies towards better balancing of multiple policy objectives and identify "win-win" solutions that can benefit the system as a whole. The multidimensional, integrated and inter-generational view of societal outcomes provided by well-being frameworks can help define "triple wins" that 1) boost current well-being outcomes, 2) protect long-term sustainability, and 3) strengthen equity simultaneously (OECD, 2023^[7]).

On the other hand, changes in one well-being outcome can yield an array of direct and indirect impact on other well-being outcomes, sometimes leading to feedback loops with both positive and negative consequences. Policies taken in isolation may be inefficient because they do not consider all the underlying drivers. Hence, an immediate policy implication of well-being analysis is to identify policy packages, cutting across interlinked well-being domains, to build synergies and draw from natural complementarities (OECD, 2023^[7]).

What are the policy implications and ways forward?

Applying well-being approaches to policy⁸

National practices of mainstreaming well-being are rapidly emerging. These range from budgeting, policy appraisal and evaluation, strategic alignment and management to applying “a well-being lens” to address specific policy issues or sectoral challenges. Countries are experimenting different methods and processes depending on their policy contexts. Multidimensional well-being frameworks are often used in the context of decision-making at the whole-of-government level (e.g. strategic priority-setting) or in aspects of policy design and analysis where multiple government objectives are simultaneously being balanced (OECD, 2023^[7]). Three of the key emerging areas for the application of well-being approaches are i) budgeting, ii) policy appraisal and evaluation, and iii) strategic coordination and performance management.

Budgeting

Assessing and managing synergies and trade-offs among different government objectives are particularly important in budgetary priority-setting and implementation. This is a key example of a cross-government activity where well-being approaches can be of valuable support. The use of well-being frameworks to identify societal priorities and integrate relevant evidence at different points of the budgeting process is current (or intended) practice in countries like New Zealand, Canada, Italy, Ireland, France, Sweden, Iceland, the Netherlands and Australia. Most of these efforts focus on the development, reporting and integration of well-being indicators and other evidence in the budgetary process. Some countries (notably New Zealand) are also enacting deeper organisational changes to foster more integrated and longer-term budgetary responses for well-being priorities (OECD, 2023^[7]).

Since 2019, New Zealand has been publishing *Well-being Budget* every year. The Treasury’s Living Standards Framework (and dashboard), adapted from the OECD Well-being Framework, informed the longlist of 12 well-being priorities for the 2019 Budget. Based on these priorities, the Cabinet selected a final list of 5 well-being budget priority areas after an extensive process of expert consultation and cross-Ministry deliberation: i) transitioning to a sustainable and low emissions economy; ii) harnessing the social and economic opportunities of digital technology; iii) lifting Māori and Pacific incomes, skills, and opportunities; iv) reducing child poverty and improving child wellbeing; and v) supporting mental well-being for all New Zealanders (New Zealand Government, 2018^[96]). The final 2019 Well-being Budget directed all new annual spending towards the five priority areas, representing about 4 per cent of total government expenditure. The New Zealand Treasury has continued to develop its methods for applying well-being evidence in the budgetary process, accompanied by institutional reforms to encourage more coordinated, long-term funding for priority issues (OECD, 2023^[7]). Australia has also initiated efforts towards integrating well-being evidence in the budgeting processes in 2022. The 2022 Australian Budget committed the Treasury to developing a national wellbeing framework incorporating input from public consultation (Government of Australia, 2022^[97]).

Policy appraisal and evaluation

Adapted policy appraisal and evaluation methods are necessary to strategic well-being planning. To implement strategic processes of well-being planning and priority setting, including budgeting practices, it is necessary to adapt tools and methods for appraising, analysing and evaluating different policy options and programme outcomes. Some national agencies have adapted cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and well-being valuation methods to integrate well-being considerations into the analysis of trade-offs between

⁸ This section primarily draws on the report, “*Economic Policy Making to Pursue Economic Welfare (OECD, 2023)*”, which the OECD submitted for the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Japan.

different policy and programme options, others are strengthening modelling and forecasting techniques to predict the potential impact of government policies and decisions on societal outcomes more accurately, and others are developing new well-being impact assessment and evaluation methods (OECD, 2023^[7]).

In 2015, the New Zealand Treasury developed an adapted cost-benefit analysis tool (CBAX) to help agencies take a consistent approach across government to cost-benefit analysis, including common values and assumptions; take a long-term and broad view of societal impacts, costs and benefits; rigorously assess these by monetising and discounting impacts, where possible, and; be transparent about the assumptions and evidence base (New Zealand Treasury, 2023^[98]). With over 270 values, the CBAX spreadsheet covers different social impacts, derived from market valuations, revealed preferences, discrete choice experiments, contingent valuation and values inputted by departments themselves. Recognising that the cost-benefit analysis can only be one of many inputs into the decision-making process, the New Zealand Treasury considers also non-monetised impact assessments and broader evidence and assumptions to inform value for money advice, alongside wider issues such as strategic alignment with political priorities (New Zealand Treasury, 2022^[99]). An independent evaluation concluded that the existence of CBAX improved the quality of Treasury advice, leading to improvements in problem definition and identification of impacts, boosting the proportion of initiatives that used quantitative analysis, and increasing the transparency of explanations of assumptions made (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2018^[100]). Another example is in the Australia Capital Territory (ACT), where the state government has developed a well-being impact assessment template to help plan for and make decisions based on a fuller understanding of the impacts of proposals (including both co-benefits and trade-offs) on well-being in the region. The well-being impact assessments were used in Cabinet and Budget processes for the first time in 2021-2022, with concerted efforts to inform and train civil servants on their use (ACT Government, 2023^[101]).

Strategic coordination and performance management

Examples of using a well-being approach to underpin high-level strategic coordination and priority-setting exercises are i) performance frameworks (including key performance indicators), ii) inclusive growth strategies, and iii) national development plans. In this context, well-being frameworks define a clear, shared, and measurable vision of the goals a country wants to achieve, thus supporting coordinated action across different departments and levels of government, and to structure engagement across different sectors and groups of society (OECD, 2023^[7]).

Key performance indicators (KPIs) of Japan Cabinet Office present one such example. Following the release of the Japan Cabinet Office's *Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform* document in June 2021, the concept of well-being became established in the public policy agendas of central ministries and agencies in Japan, and efforts are being made to understand how well-being KPIs could be best employed in the Japanese national and local contexts. These efforts include i) the establishment of a Liaison Conference of Relevant Ministries and Agencies on Well-being in July 2021, to share information, strengthen cooperation and horizontally deploy good practices in order to promote initiatives on well-being (Government of Japan, 2021^[102]), and ii) an annual Survey on Satisfaction and Quality of Life (since 2019) to understand the structure of Japan's economy and society for policy management (including through the use of the data to inform the Cabinet Office's KPIs). The survey measures (subjective and objective) are presented in a Cabinet Office Well-being Dashboard spanning 11 well-being dimensions (chosen with reference to the OECD Well-being Framework) (Japan Cabinet Office, 2022^[103]; Japan Cabinet Office, 2023^[104]).

The OECD has also summarised the implementation of well-being approaches in terms of four "R"s: *refocusing* policies towards the outcomes that matter most to people, *redesigning* policy content from a more multidimensional perspective, *realigning* policy practice across government silos, and *reconnecting* people with the public institutions that serve them (OECD, 2021^[16]). While recognising that every country

context is different, and no panacea to improve societal well-being exists, the approach helps to identify channels that can simultaneously contribute to addressing current well-being concerns, promoting equal opportunities, and improving future well-being outcomes (“triple win channels”). The well-being approach can be used to address specific policy issues or sectoral challenges, such as mental health or climate change. For example, the OECD has applied a well-being lens to identify integrated and synergistic solutions in COVID-19 recovery strategies (OECD, 2021^[16]), for climate change and sustainability (OECD, 2019^[105]; OECD, 2022^[106]), mental health (OECD, 2023^[17]) and for the built environment (OECD (forthcoming)^[18]).

Moving forward

The establishment of a framework (and accompanying indicators) is just the starting point of a more systematic integration of evidence from multidimensional well-being dashboards. In late 2023, the OECD will launch a new *Well-being Knowledge Exchange Platform* (see also section 1), to draw together international examples that bring well-being evidence into policy practice and assist in their further development through peer learning and technical support. The Platform will create a space for sharing good practice and addressing common challenges on well-being measurement and policy between governments from three angles: i) measurement, ii) policy ecosystem and iii) applying a well-being lens approach (OECD, 2023^[7]).

Guiding questions for discussion

- What types of policies and policy processes that use well-being evidence are emerging in Asia, South-East Asia and Korea? What action could countries take to facilitate integration of well-being data in policymaking processes?
- Which specific policy areas would most benefit from applying a “well-being lens”? Are there best policy practices that can be shared across the region?
- What role could international organizations play to support the implementation of the well-being policy agenda?

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