



Post-2015 Data Test Canada Case Study in Progress

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In-Progress Note No. 3

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CURRENT STATUS: CANADIAN CASE STUDY

Progress to Date

On April 24th 2014, the Canada case study was formally launched through an inception workshop held at the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa. Attended by nearly thirty representatives from government, civil society and academia, the workshop introduced the initiative to local stakeholders. The workshop also solicited feedback on:

- National priorities for Canada across goal areas;
- Potential targets and indicators, including appropriate benchmarks and proxy indicators where appropriate; and
- Key challenges related to data availability and accessibility for measuring progress on post-2015 in Canada.

In addition to the workshop, researchers are conducting the literature review, including an initial scoping of the kinds of data available in Canada across post-2015 goal areas.

Next Steps

Going forward, the research team will finalize the list of targets and indicators for Canada. These lists will be shared with key experts in academia, civil society and government for validation and comment. Following this, the research team will begin the data mapping component of the project as well as key informant interviews.

In late May, preliminary findings will be presented at the annual conference of the [Canadian Association for the Study of International Development](#) (CASID). Researchers will hold a focus group with academics, civil society organizations and government representatives in attendance as part of this process.

To bolster the impact and validity of the Canada case study, the research team will seek out and establish an advisory committee comprised of

experts across the domains covered by the Post-2015 Data Test.

Implementation: opportunities

The NSI team is working to link the Post-2015 Data Test to other ongoing initiatives and opportunities in Canada. For example, the research team has identified potential collaborators working on post-2015, such as the UN Association of Canada, the UN Global Compact Canada Network, Canadian Council for International Co-operation (a civil society umbrella organization) and the Agha Khan Foundation of Canada, with whom to partner on communications, outreach and consultation. Discussions are currently underway to identify synergies with potential partners.

Implementation: challenges

An important challenge pertains to the nature of the project itself. It can be difficult for domestic stakeholders to see and understand the relevance of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda for Canada – it is seen as more of a “developing country” agenda. While NSI successfully engaged a number of domestic constituents on the research through the April 24th workshop, a number of key federal departments, particularly those responsible for areas such as natural resources, transport and energy were not in attendance. Similarly, while the invitation to the event clearly stated that the project was looking at Canada’s national priorities under the post-2015 agenda, some civil society organizations sent representatives who have greater responsibility for the international components of their work.

Going forward, researchers will take efforts to engage directly with representatives from various stakeholders on a one-on-one basis. They will also make use of the members of the advisory committee, as well as workshop participants, to



identify and provide introductions to key informants.

Finally, a third challenge pertains to the federal nature of Canada. In Canada, goal areas related to education, energy, infrastructure, natural resources, *inter alia*, are under the jurisdiction of the provinces, not the federal government. If Canada signs onto the post-2015 agenda, provinces would be largely responsible for implementation.

Given the timelines and resources available for this project, a challenge exists for researchers to sufficiently engage with different levels of government across the 10 provinces and 3 territories that comprise Canada. A number of inter-provincial councils exist however, such as the Council of Education Ministers. Engagement with councils should facilitate the collection of feedback from provincial stakeholders.

SUBSTANTIVE FEEDBACK TO DATE

Targets and Indicators

At the workshop, participants were presented the targets and indicators compiled for the initiative from key proposals on post-2015. These served as the basis for breakout group discussions across the potential goal areas.

A number of participants highlighted the inappropriateness of many of the targets and indicators for Canada. However, in a number of instances, participants felt they could be reformulated to fit the Canadian context. For example, the indicator for ending extreme poverty included in the study – “proportion of the population living under \$1.25/day (PPP)” – does not make sense for Canada. That does not mean, that the target “End Extreme Poverty” is not relevant to Canada, but rather how extreme poverty is defined needs to be adjusted.

In the case of nationally determined targets and indicators, such adjustments are not overly problematic. However, a number of the “global targets and indicators” under the study are problematic for Canada and in all likelihood, for other countries as well. Going forward, research teams will need to agree on a final list of global indicators for the study. Participants also noted

that a number of indicators need to be made more specific (for example, reference to reporting on social, economic and environmental accounts should refer to a specific standard) while others should be rethought. As an example, under global partnership, “% of aid to LDCs” is listed. However, the definition of aid by the OECD has changed over time and the composition of countries referred to as least developed will change over time.

Finally, it is not always clear what the optimal target should be for areas such as employment or inequality, nor if changes in their respective indicators (for example, employment rate and Gini co-efficient) always represent a positive or negative outcome. At the same time, one participant noted that targets and indicators in these areas should not necessarily be removed because societies can decide, based on their values and preferences, the outcomes they would like to see.

National statistics

Canada has historically had one of the best statistical systems in the world. During the 1990s, Statistics Canada was innovative in that it collected information on areas such as unpaid work, the underground market and time spent volunteering. However, Canada has seen its position decline owing to budget cuts and more recently, the decision to change the mandatory long-form census to a mandatory short-form census and voluntary National Household Survey (NHS) in 2011. According to experts, this change has jeopardized the comparability of 2011 results over previous years, (because the content and position of questions changed) as well as meant that certain communities are under-represented owing to low response rates to the NHS.

Nevertheless, Canada continues to have a good system overall. CANSIM (Canadian Socio-Economic Information Management) provides access to statistics produced by Statistics Canada free and micro data is often available for free. In instances where researchers require extreme levels of disaggregation, they can request the data for a fee. Additionally, though Canada has relatively good disaggregated data, it can still be difficult to get information for particular populations, such as aboriginal people.