UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

CES/2005/25
24 March 2005

Original: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-third plenary session
(Geneva, 13-15 June 2005)

THE MEASUREMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE SPANISH EXPERIENCE

Invited paper submitted by the National Statistical Institute of Spain*

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the Brundland Commission Report of 1987, there has been a worldwide effort to measure the multidimensional aspects of Sustainable Development (SD). In particular, the initiative by the United Nations to design a relevant set of Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI) has been followed by the OECD and other national and international bodies.

2. Because SD involves data from economic, social and environmental issues, developing a set of SDI presents many challenges for public statistical agencies. Designing new theoretical frameworks, enlarging the coverage of statistics and coordinating the production of data from many different sources are among the tasks to be carried out.

3. The National Statistical Institute of Spain (INE) began to address some partial aspects on SD at the end of the eighties, through the annual volumes *Social Indicators of Spain*. Nevertheless, the development of a set of indicators based on the three pillars of SD has been a very recent project.

4. INE carries out the production of SDI in the context of the Eurostat framework, under the impulse of the political priorities on SD formulated in the Gothenburg European Council Session in June 2001.

5. The main specific difficulty for Spain to develop a set of SDI has been the lack of

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statistical information on environment. An intensive program on environment statistics (both basic surveys and accounts) has been launched in order to compensate this deficit. More than ten new surveys have been carried out about different topics (water, waste, environmental protection expenditure). Moreover, several environmental accounts have been produced as pilot studies inside the Eurostat project.

6. This paper, together with the description of the Spanish framework for SD statistics, focuses on the development of environment statistics. The section below describes the system of SD statistics, including the institutional framework, the statistical production on SD and the Project on SDI. The following section describes the Environmental Accounts and the final section summarizes the new Environmental Surveys. The paper ends with some future perspectives on SD Statistics.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS

The Spanish institutional framework in favour of sustainable development

7. The Spanish Constitution of 1978, article 45.2, establishes that “Public Authorities will look after the rational use of all natural resources, with the purpose to protect and to improve the quality of life and to defend and to restore the environment, with the support of indispensable collective solidarity"; and in article 45.3, “ For those who violate what is stated in the previous section, the law will establish in its terms the penal or administrative sanctions, as well as the obligation to repair the damage caused ". It can be seen that the Spanish Constitution, without naming it explicitly (there were still some years before its formulation as such in the international forums) refers to the concept of sustainable development, in its triple economic, social and environmental dimension. An aspect related to institutional action is also present in the constitutional text.

8. Notwithstanding the above, the administration of the environment remained dispersed in several ministerial departments until the creation of the Environment Ministry (MMA) in 1996, with the following competencies:

- monitoring the flora, fauna, habitats and natural ecosystems;
- creation of a Databank of Nature;
- statistics and thematic studies;
- evaluation of the environmental impact.

9. In this context, the statistical production of the MMA is coordinated with the INE through a permanent representative in the Interdepartmental Commission of the High Council of Statistics. A signed Basic Agreement Framework of collaboration exists, complemented with specific agreements for concrete operations, usually implying data collection. The collaboration extends from units frame building or adaptation of questionnaires to the final analysis of survey results and environmental account drafts.

10. The MMA is also responsible for the elaboration of the Strategic Plan on Sustainable Development in Spain, which is in the process of being updated from the 2001 version. These plans envisage that progress will be measured by means of a set of indicators, and the Strategy will be subjected to evaluations and periodic revisions. The MMA coordinates the Spanish IONET networks of the EEA, with focal points in the different Autonomous Communities,

which support an important share in Environmental Policy. The MMA also coordinates the National Centres of Reference within Public Administrations. Some of the latter, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, have an important activity as producer of SD related statistics.

Statistical production on sustainable development

11. The concept of sustainable development (SD) could be found implicitly within the Spanish statistical system at the end of the eighties through the annual INE volumes *Social Indicators of Spain* and (at longer periods) in the *Spain Social Outlook*. In these INE projects of statistical synthesis, a wide set of indicators related to several fields of social concern was presented, including a chapter on a dimension designated as Environment. In that section, from the very beginning of the series, the multiple perspective of economic development, environmental impact, social consequences and the institutional action, considered jointly, was approached at national and regional level. Together with the environmental indicators, social cohesion or morbidity indicators from environmental causes, among others, have been systematically published by INE over the last decade.

12. At present, parallel with the production of environmental statistics by INE, and based on an integrated framework of surveys and environmental accounts, a project is being implemented for the systematic dissemination of SD indicators. This will be described in more detail below.

13. The statistical activity of the MMA is more oriented to the production of environmental indicators, which are included systematically in annual or more frequent reports with an approach based on the methodology of the EEA. Starting in 1998, the MMA publishes the Synthesis Report, as well as the Environmental Profile of Spain. The main environmental sub-sectors are represented in the reports, e.g. climate, atmosphere, water, bio-diversity, waste, etc. An overview of the different sectors interrelated with the natural resources (energy, oil products, tourism, integrated system of administration and environmental certifications) is also included, together with other issues such as environmental public expenditure.

14. In the near future, SD indicators to be produced by INE should be integrated into MMA reports with coherence aims, since MMA plans to widen the scope of its indicator system to cover sustainability within the framework of the National Strategic Plan.

Sustainability indicators in particular sectors

15. With the objective of quantifying the environmental aspect in particular sectors, and their interaction with sustainable development, the economic sectors more closely linked with the use of natural resources or the emission of negative externalities toward the environment, such as the agrarian, industrial, tourism, energy and transport sectors, constitute areas of interest for statistical analysis under the sustainability approach. For these sectors, some reports are sporadically made available in Spain, and indicators are partly integrated into the

MMA Environmental Profile. Particular attention should be paid to the project on agri-environmental indicators, integrated at the European level through a TF within Eurostat, with the combined participation of INE and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Other elements of the information system on sustainability

16. Intense reporting activity also exists in the academic world, business corporate organizations and non-profit institutions. The recent formalization of the Observatory of Sustainability in Spain (OSE) is worth mentioning here. It is an independent entity founded in Autumn 2004 with the participation of MMA and the Foundation for Bio-diversity; its headquarters are in the University of Alcalá de Henares (Madrid). It aims at becoming a centre of reference at the national level to gather, elaborate and evaluate quantitatively and qualitatively the basic information on sustainability in Spain (state, tendencies and scenarios) in its different dimensions (social, economic and ecological).

The INE Project on indicators of sustainable development

17. INE's approach to the production of SDI is in the context of the Eurostat project, under the impulse of the political priorities on sustainable development formulated in the Gotemburg Council Session in June 2001. The activities of the Working Group, begun in April 2002 and continued until the recent April meeting, have produced a list of indicators following the pattern "driving forces-pressure-state-impact – response". The European Council of Seville, 2002, included among the Gotemburg priorities the external dimension (globalization) of the strategy of sustainable development. Later on, the Eurostat project added the dimension Economic Development, to arrive at the present ten topics, structured in sub-themes and areas in a pyramidal shape which cover the economic, social, environmental and institutional aspects of SD: economic development; poverty and social exclusion; ageing society; public health; climatic change and energy; production and consumption models; administration of natural resources; transport; good governance; and globalization.

18. INE participation in Eurostat work on SD indicators has taken place in parallel with the first steps in the development of the INE project of environmental statistics, as well as with the improvement of administrative sources on that subject which has facilitated an acceptable coverage of the SD EU system of indicators. An additional effort has been dedicated to the production of SD indicators at the NUT II level, the coverage of which is still unsatisfactory, although some improvements are expected in the near future in collaboration with regional authorities. National and regional coverage of the Eurostat project on SDI can be illustrated as follows:

Indicators SD proposed by T. F. Eurostat.
INE (SPAIN) . Coverage per geografical level.

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Total
Eurostat T.F. Number of SDI proposed	16	48	84	148
Indicators that can be provided by INE	11	25	44	80
Geographical coverage:				
- National only	8	11	22	41
- Regional	3	14	22	39

ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTS

19. Climate change, natural resources and waste are key policy issues in the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme. Furthermore, greenhouse effect gas emissions, material consumption and generation of waste parameters will be included in the EU framework for SDI.

20. One of the major challenges of SDI is to explain the way in which the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development are connected. Accounting frameworks applying a harmonised approach to the economy and particular environmental issues, and seem to be the finest tool available to describe the links between dimensions.

21. The System for Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA), formulated by the United Nations in 1993 and modified in 2003, constitutes the accounting framework for integrating the environmental and economic information in a global and coherent manner. The SEEA objective is to provide a detailed description of environment and economy relationships, for which the availability of environmental and economic data based in similar accounting standards and concepts is essential.

22. From the pilot studies that have been carried out in European Union countries in the 1990s, it can be concluded that the SEEA is an adequate framework to describe the relationship between the economy and the environment. Its development depends on the quality level reached in the base statistics.

23. Spanish Environmental Accounts have been carried out thanks to the effort the INE has made in the last few years to implement an Environmental Statistics System. In this sense, the surveys on water, waste and environmental protection expenditure are the main statistical basis on which the environmental accounts have been constructed.

24. INE has been working on the set of accounts that will constitute the central nucleus of the Environmental Accounts System. The following accounts have been published:

- Water accounts 1997-2001;
- Atmospheric emissions accounts 1995-2000;
- Environmental protection expenditure accounts 1995-2001;
- Material flow accounts 1996-2000;

- Forest timber accounts 1995-2000.

At present, INE is working on waste and energy accounts.

25. These environmental accounts have been developed following the same structure and characteristics, which will allow their grouping for the complete study of the integrated economic and environmental system.

26. The development of a model of these characteristics on territorial levels below the national level offers a more detailed description of the spatial aspect of the state of the environment. In that context, breaking down some of the tables of the environmental accounts on a regional level (NUTS II) is an important target for Spain.

27. In this way, the first phase of environmental accounts development is being completed. Compiling these accounts will provide a solid information basis to develop a system of SDI.

28. Priority areas recommended by the European Strategy for Environmental Accounting for harmonised reporting EU-wide (air emission and energy accounts, water flow accounts -water supply and use-, economy-wide material flow accounts, environmental protection expenditure and environment industry accounts, environmental taxes, forest timber accounts, subsoil asset accounts -oil and gas-) have been covered almost completely.

Water Accounts

29. Water is a natural resource that is essential for the economic development of a country. The fact that the economic and social structure in Spain presents an agrarian sector with a growing expansion of irrigation farming, and a potent tourism sector whose basic elements are the sun and the water, determines that their future development is closely linked to the availability of water.

30. Given the relevance of this resource, it is necessary to have at our disposal statistical data that provide information on the availability and quality of water, with the aim of programming measures to satisfy demand and protect quality. The implementation of Water Accounts in Spain is essential for the development of political actions in the hydrographic sector. The Water Accounts respond to the majority of issues raised, and allow for the investigation and modelling of other issues related to water.

31. These accounts constitute a satellite account within the general framework of the national economic accounts to determine and quantify in a structured and detailed manner, in physical and monetary terms, the flows that arise between the hydrological system and the economic system.

32. From a territorial point of view, the results of the tables on the supply of water and treatment of wastewater, as well as the economic accounts, have been broken down by regional results, in monetary and physical units. Some economic and environmental data are also assigned by Water Basins, which would allow us to reflect the real costs in contrast with

the prices paid in each one of the corresponding basins, in accordance with the objectives sought within the Water Framework Directive.

Atmospheric Emission Accounts

33. To solve the problem of climate change, priority has been given to establishing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that does not lead to substantial disruption to the climate. With this objective, sectoral policies that promote changes in the production processes or the alternative use of less contaminant energy sources are necessary.

34. Achieving this goal means having reliable statistical information available that measures the concentration of contaminant substances in the atmosphere and determines the economic sectors that most influence these emissions. A theoretically useful application model is that of the satellite accounts on atmospheric emissions; these accounts may be defined as an orderly method of presenting economic information with data on emissions of contaminant substances into the atmosphere.

Environmental Protection Expenditure Accounts

35. An analysis of cost-effectiveness is an important element of environment policy proposals, and information demand is high for certain domains: wastewater, waste management, bio-diversity and landscape protection, as well as for the impact of eco-industries on activity and employment.

36. The European System for the Collection of Economic Information on the Environment (SERIEE), is the framework used for environmental protection expenditure accounts.

37. Environmental economic accounts for environmental protection services and products include the production and generation of income accounts for wastewater and waste management, ancillary environmental protection activities, the analysis of financing and the assessment of the net cost for environmental protection.

38. These accounts integrate economic information about part of the environmental sector with other accounts of the system, recording monetary flows linked to environmental protection and its impact on the economy. The core is the environmental protection expenditure account, which monitors policies adopted to prevent, reduce and eliminate environmental degradation.

Forest Accounts

39. Spanish forestland spreads along 26,6 million hectares, nearly 52% of total land. European Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting for forests (IEEAF) provides an efficient framework to satisfy full policy information requirements as well as to integrate socio-economic and environmental matters.

40. IEEAF constitutes an integrated system of accounts related to economic functions of forests, with particular focus on wood supply, as well as to non-economic (environmental and recreational) functions.

41. For economic functions of forests, accounts describe: land and timber assets, in physical and monetary terms, and their changes; forest-related economic activities and products, through supply and use tables, in physical and monetary units.

42. Non-economic functions of forests consist mainly of carbon storage, recreational activities, bio-diversity preservation, and soil and water protection.

43. At present, on the basis of the different information sources available for this subject, we have estimated the main tables of forest timber accounts.

Material Flow Accounts

44. The new concept of sustainability requires taking the factor of natural resources into consideration in economic development frameworks to the same degree as work and capital. Therefore, natural resources use should be measured, like work and capital, through per capita or productivity terms indicators.

45. The economy-wide material flow accounts and balances approach provides indicators to evaluate certain sustainable development aspects, such as use of resources and efficiency, or environmental impacts of the economy.

46. These accounts measure material flows from the environment to the economy and thus to the environment. The right interpretation and analysis of the results requires data expressed in physical units (tons), given that material flows change their shape and composition across production and consumption processes.

Work in progress: Waste Accounts and Energy Accounts

47. In addition to the former set of accounts, already published (and planned to be published on a continous basis), we are working at present on Waste Accounts and Energy Accounts. Results for these two new accounts are expected this year.

48. Environment protection requires the coordination of waste policy measures with economic and territorial ones, and encouraging waste prevention, and re-use, recycling and recovery over other management operations.

49. Waste accounts aim at determining and quantifying in a structured and detailed manner the flows, in physical and monetary terms, which arise between environment and economic systems. The study on production activity of economic units that provide services related to collection and treatment of waste, wholesale trade of scrap and waste and recycling thus becomes important in this field.

50. These accounts constitute a satellite account within the general framework of the national economic accounts and incorporate data on waste generation, recycling, re-use and disposal of waste, which are essential for analysis and following up on public policies. Integrating waste

and economic information makes it possible to achieve a perspective of the current situation and the temporal evolution of waste in Spain, both on a national and regional level.

51. Linked to emission accounts, the energy accounts can be used for the estimation of energy-related emissions, thus providing a consistent system to present economic activity of the different industries, together with energy use and emissions derived from energy production in an integrated way.

ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS

52. Under this label the INE carries out several surveys. All of them are performed on an annual basis and data refer to a whole natural year. The reference period for data is the natural year previous to that in which the survey is carried out. For ease of use and in accord with their internal organization, these surveys are often classified into three thematic blocks, each one aimed at a different target, although some blocks use information provided by surveys within another block. These blocks are: Water Surveys; Waste Surveys; and Environmental Protection Expenditure Surveys. They are described in detail below.

Water Surveys

53. The Survey on Water Supply and Treatment is primarily intended to measure both the water supply to urban areas as well as the treatment of sewage collected through urban networks. Only physical units are collected. The universe to which this survey is addressed consists of the set of units in the NACE-93 Rev.1 codes 41 ("collection, purification and distribution of water") and 90.01 ("sewage collection and treatment"). The first reference year for this survey was 1998.

54. The frame of this survey comes from two major sources: the Central Business Register (CBR) complemented with operating units under contract with local entities. This frame is extended to those City Councils directly managing the water supply.

55. All units in the population are selected, so that no sampling is performed. The seventeen autonomous communities plus the two autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla are represented as the geographic areas relevant for the statistical information release purposes. Each firm in the survey must reply to questions regarding directly collected water as well as purchase and sale of water from/to other companies. In both cases, the provenance of the water is identified, i.e. soil, underground, desalinated or other type. In addition, questions related to water distribution to different types of users as well as to the collection and treatment of sewage are included in the survey. As of 2002, 243 out of 289 units responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 84.08%.

56. The main target of the Survey on Water Usage in Agriculture is to quantify the volume of water used in the Spanish holdings for irrigation purposes. Both monetary and physical units are considered. The units in the survey consist of those supplying water to holdings

(known as irrigators associations), which are included in the NACE-93 Rev.1 code 01.410 ("Agricultural Service Activities"). The first reference year was 1999.

57. The frame for this survey is the Irrigators Associations Central Register, published by the Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Environment since 1994. All irrigators associations supplying water to a total of 501 hectares or above are covered in the survey, while sampling is performed otherwise, this sample being a fixed panel since the beginning of the survey. As of 2002, the survey covered a 37.7% of the whole area subject to irrigation and the response rate was 88.92% of the surveyed units.

58. The surveyed irrigators associations must provide data related to their balance sheet, such as current income and expenditures as well as investments. The latter includes purchases of new land, improvements in the distribution networks and equipment purchases for irrigation-under-pressure. In addition, they provide data on employment, water availability and water supplied to holdings according to both the crop type and the irrigation technique.

Waste Surveys

59. The Survey on the Collection and Treatment of Urban Waste is primarily intended to measure the production of those units whose main activity is related to the collection and treatment of solid waste coming from the cleaning of public ways or both urban and residential areas. Thus, solid waste from households and small companies is also included. The population under study consists of those units whose main activity lies under the NACE-93 Rev.1 code 90.02 ("Collection of solid and selective waste"). The frame has been built from the CBR along with the local or regional Mancommunities and Consortiums, whose functions include the cleaning of public ways and the collection and treatment of urban waste, according to the Mancommunities and Consortiums Directory. The first reference year was 1998. All these units are surveyed, so that no sampling is performed and both monetary and physical units are considered. The survey is designed to supply information for each one of the regions (autonomous communities).

60. Surveyed units are to provide data on current purchases of merchandise to resale and raw materials. They also provide data on expenditures related to external services such as rents, insurance and utilities as well as on personnel. The surveyed units provide, in addition, data on the collection of urban waste according to their final destination and also to their origin. Moreover, they provide information about the treatment of waste according to both the type of treatment and its regional distribution. As of 2002, the survey yielded a 70.33 % response rate.

61. The main objective of the Survey on the Recycling and Treatment of Waste is to measure the production-related activity, both in monetary and physical terms, of those units the main activity of which is waste management. The survey focuses on transportation, elimination and recycling of waste. The population under study consists of those units under 37, 51.57 according to the NACE-93 Rev.1 codes. The frame has been built from the waste management Licences Directory, as provided by each one of the autonomous communities. The first reference year for this survey was 2001.

62. The licensed waste managers must respond to questions regarding purchases and expenditures (including that of merchandise for resale, raw materials and external services),

rents, insurance, utilities and personnel. In addition, the surveyed units provide data on their revenue figures. Regarding waste data, units are required to supply information on waste collection and management, in tons, according to the European Waste List as aggregated by substance (i.e. three-digit level). In the case of waste collection, the distinction of dangerous vs. non-dangerous waste is to be made. Managed waste is further classified according to the type of treatment, including recycling. As of 2002, the response rate was 80.09 %.

63. This block also contains surveys on waste generation, namely, the surveys on the generation of waste in both the industrial and the service sectors. In addition, pilot surveys on waste generation in the agricultural and energy sectors were included in 2004, with reference year 2003 and a new pilot survey on the generation of waste in the fishing sector is planned to be included in 2005 with reference year 2004.

64. The Surveys on the Generation of Waste in the Industrial Sector are primarily intended to measure the waste generated within sections C, D and E of the NACE-93 Rev.1 codes. Thus, the activities covered under these surveys are mining, manufacturing and production and supply of gas and electricity.

65. From 2002, this survey was divided into a Survey on the Generation of Waste in the Industrial (non-metal) Sector and a Survey on the Generation of Waste in the Metal Sector. The reason for this separation is to meet the need to collect further information regarding the metal industries. In 2004, a further split was considered, consisting of a Survey on the Generation of Waste in the Energy Sector, with reference year 2003. For the survey addressed to the industrial (non-metal) sector, the population under study is the set of local economic activity units, with ten or more employees, whose main activity is comprised under the codes 10 to 26 and 28 to 36. A stratified random sample is drawn from the CBR (local units). Strata are defined by the crossing of NACE codes (at two-digit level) with local unit sizes as measured by the number of employees. Both monetary and physical units are considered.

66. The surveyed units are required to provide data on generated waste, in kilograms, according to the European Waste List as aggregated by substance (i.e. three-digit level). The distinction of dangerous vs. non-dangerous waste is also included. In addition, respondents supply information on water collection, both in cubic meters and euros, as classified according to its origin. They also provide data regarding the treatment of sewage, in physical units, as classified according to the type of treatment. As mentioned earlier, data regarding water and sewage is used in the water statistics block. Finally, each surveyed unit provides information about its energy consumption, in both monetary and physical units, distinguishing the energy source. As of 2002, a 14.71 % sampling rate of local activity units was selected for this survey, yielding a 96.24 % response rate.

67. The population under study for the metal sector is the set of local economic activity units, with ten or more workers, whose main activity is comprised under the code 27. The frame for this survey and sampling design is similar to that of the non-metal sector survey.

68. The surveyed units are required to provide the same type of data. . In 2002, 32.40 % of local activity units were selected for this survey, yielding a 93.61 % response rate.

69. The population under study for the Survey on the Generation of Waste in the Service Sector is the set of enterprises, with ten or more employees, whose main activity corresponds to NACE sections G to O. Thus the observation units are enterprises in this case. The frame for this survey consists of the CBR. A stratified random sample is drawn from it. Strata are defined by the crossing of NACE codes (at two-digit level) with enterprise sizes as measured by the number of employees. Both monetary and physical units are considered.

70. Questions in the survey refer to the amount of generated waste, in kilograms, according to the European Waste List as aggregated by substance (i.e. three-digit level). The distinction of dangerous vs. non-dangerous waste is also included, as well as information on water collection, in both cubic meters and Euros and on energy consumption, in both monetary and physical units, distinguishing the energy source. Finally, respondents must provide information about environmental protection actions, specifying both current and investment expenditures in Euros. As of 2002, the survey yielded a 86.70 % response rate.

Environmental Protection Expenditure Surveys

71. This block consists solely of the Survey on Environmental Protection Expenditure. It is addressed to the set of local economic activity units, with ten or more employees, whose main activity lies within sections C, D and E. Divisions 37 and 41 are excluded from this survey, since a specific survey is carried out for them. The observation units are the local economic activity units and sampling design is similar to that of surveys referred to above. In this case, only monetary units are considered.

72. The surveyed units must provide data on investment expenditure, distinguishing investment made on integrated equipment from that made on other equipment. In addition, respondents provide information about both current revenues and expenditures related to environmental protection. As of 2002, the survey yielded a response rate of 84.96 %.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES ON SD STATISTICS

73. SD Statistics in INE will develop in the following direction:

- consolidation of the systematic production of the group of indicators of the European project, with constant improvement of the diverse aspects of quality in their inputs and processes, and extension as far as possible to the NUT II level;
- integration of the production of indicators with the elaboration of environmental accounts and the analysis of results of specific surveys;
- promotion of the availability with high quality standards of administrative sources useful as input for the elaboration of SD indicators;
- maximizing the interaction among and with producers and users of SD indicators (i.e. Environment Ministry, Observatory of the Sustainable Development, Ministry of Agriculture…);
- monitoring the relevance, coherence and other quality dimensions of the eventual new sets of SD indicators which are being produced as part of the system of public statistics in

Spain;

- provision of easy access and expert advice in the use of indicators not strictly environmental but relevant for SD, produced by INE.

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