

Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Task Force for Measuring Sustainable Development  
First meeting  
Geneva, 23-24 September 2009  
Session V of the Provisional Agenda

## **SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CONTRIBUTION BY NEW ZEALAND**

Prepared by Statistics New Zealand

### **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This paper summarises the conceptual work of the WGSSD to date and examines the influence of social capital on the conceptual framework and indicator selection for *Measures of New Zealand's Progress Using a Sustainable Development Approach: 2008*.
2. Social capital is an important addition to sustainable development and Statistics New Zealand would like to examine the concept further, in particular whether monetary measures are possible for social capital for inclusion in the small set of recommended international indicators.

### **II. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL FROM THE WGSSD**

3. In 2005 Statistics New Zealand, on behalf of New Zealand, joined a number of countries and international organisations as part of the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD) which was established to identify good concepts and practices to assist in the design of sustainable development indicator sets. The group's mandate was to test the capital approach as a theoretical foundation for measuring sustainable development.
4. From the WGSSD, the total wealth of a nation includes all types of capital, both tangible and intangible. Total national wealth can also be divided into financial, produced, natural, human and social capital components, given in the equation below:

$$TNW = p_f F^* + p_r R + p_n N + p_h H + p_s S$$

where TNW denotes total national wealth,  $F^*$ ,  $R$ ,  $N$ ,  $H$  and  $S$  are financial, produced, natural, human and social capital, respectively, and the  $p$ 's are associated theoretical accounting prices defined as the well-being effects of marginal changes in the corresponding types of capital.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Financial capital is denoted  $F^*$  to reflect the fact that not all financial assets existing in a country count towards its national wealth. At the level of the whole economy, most financial assets drop out of the accounting because for every asset there exists somewhere else a liability of an exactly offsetting size.

5. The different types of capital can also be categorised according to the following taxonomy of capital benefits.

<b>Taxonomy of capital benefits</b>	Private benefits	Public benefits
Economic benefits	I	II
Wider social benefits	III	IV

6. All categories of capital can provide all of these benefits, though to a greater or lesser degree depending on the type. Thus, benefits from produced capital will probably reside mainly in quadrant I while social capital perhaps provides most benefits of type IV.

7. The following text discussing the theoretical foundations for social capital is taken directly from *Measuring Sustainable Development* which was the title of the final report of the WGSSD.

8. “The notion of social capital is the most recent addition to the capital approach. As social capital has its origins in sociology, the focus has been on identifying the positive elements of society to be conserved and further developed. This has led to a number of theoretical approaches for conceptualising social capital being proposed. These are highly overlapping, and range from the distribution of basic goods to the maintenance of social peace, to social protection and constitutional goals, to networks and associated norms.

9. Although there has been a considerable amount of research and attention devoted to social capital in recent years, there remains a lack of agreement around a precise definition of the concept (see Box 2). However, there is a growing consensus around the idea that it is social networks and their associated norms that have value and like other forms of capital, social capital that generate benefits. The most widely adopted definition in this conceptualisation of social capital is the OECD definition: “networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings which facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (OECD, 2001).

10. Like other forms of capital, social capital generates benefits that improve well-being. The benefits can be grouped into those associated with institutions and those associated with culture. The former include the rule of law and administration of justice, universal suffrage, transparency of political processes and international conventions and agreements. The latter include language, religion, sports and, arguably, fashion.

11. Social capital, defined in terms of networks, was described independently by sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman in the 1980s. Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as an individual asset, focusing on the benefits accruing to individuals by virtue of participation in

#### **Box 1**

##### **Some definitions of social capital**

“...*features of social organisations, such as trust, norms (or reciprocity), and networks (of civil engagement), that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions.*” (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993)

“...the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions.” (World Bank 2000)

“...*the rules, norm, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures and society’s institutional arrangements which enable members to achieve their individual and community objectives.*” (Narayan, 1997)

groups. Coleman (1988 and 1990) focused on the more collective characteristics of networks, emphasising social capital as the collective benefit derived from social interaction.

12. Although social capital has its roots in sociology, it has also become an important topic for economists and political scientists (Putnam, 1983 and 1995; Fukuyama, 1995). In the late 1990s, the concept became more reputable than previously, with the World Bank devoting a research programme to it and a successful book by the political scientist Robert Putnam *Bowling Alone* (2000), which traced the decline of group membership in the United States.

13. In thinking about social capital, the following simple model can be asserted. There are sources, assets and outcomes associated with social capital. The sources are individuals, groups and institutions. The assets are the networks and associated norms, such as shared understandings and informal rules that influence behaviour. Networks link individuals, groups and institutions. They occur in a variety of different modes and forums, including face- to face meetings, legislation and technology-assisted transmission of information. The outcomes are the positive and negative effects that come from social capital and can include identity and sense of belonging, increased knowledge and understanding, community resilience, lowering of transaction costs, conflict resolution, social exclusion or intolerance of difference, reduced family functioning and corruption.

14. It is widely considered that social networks serve an important purpose in generating well-being. The creation of social networks may have a different well –being effect as individuals who are strongly embedded in societal networks tend to be happier and more satisfied with life than those who are less well integrated in society. Also, social capital may increase the value of other types of capital; for example, social networks can aid in the search for a new job and, in so doing, help build human capital. The stimulation of innovation when there are strong knowledge networks may increase the value of produced capital. The effects of network externalities such as trust and the creation of commonly shared norms result in informal checks on behaviour which are far less costly than formally institutionalised transactions based on contracts, formal sanctions and legal systems.

15. Social network analysis is not a recent arrival in the sphere of sociology or other disciplines. The composition, density and connectedness of various networks are thought to constitute important characteristics of social interaction with implications for society at large (Granovetter, 1973). In fact, network analysis is an area of research well rooted in theory and uses research techniques and measurement tools that have proven particularly useful in the study of social capital (Franke, 2005)."

16. Statistics New Zealand has tried to apply these concepts within its sustainable development framework.

### **III. MEASURES OF NEW ZEALAND'S PROGRESS USING A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

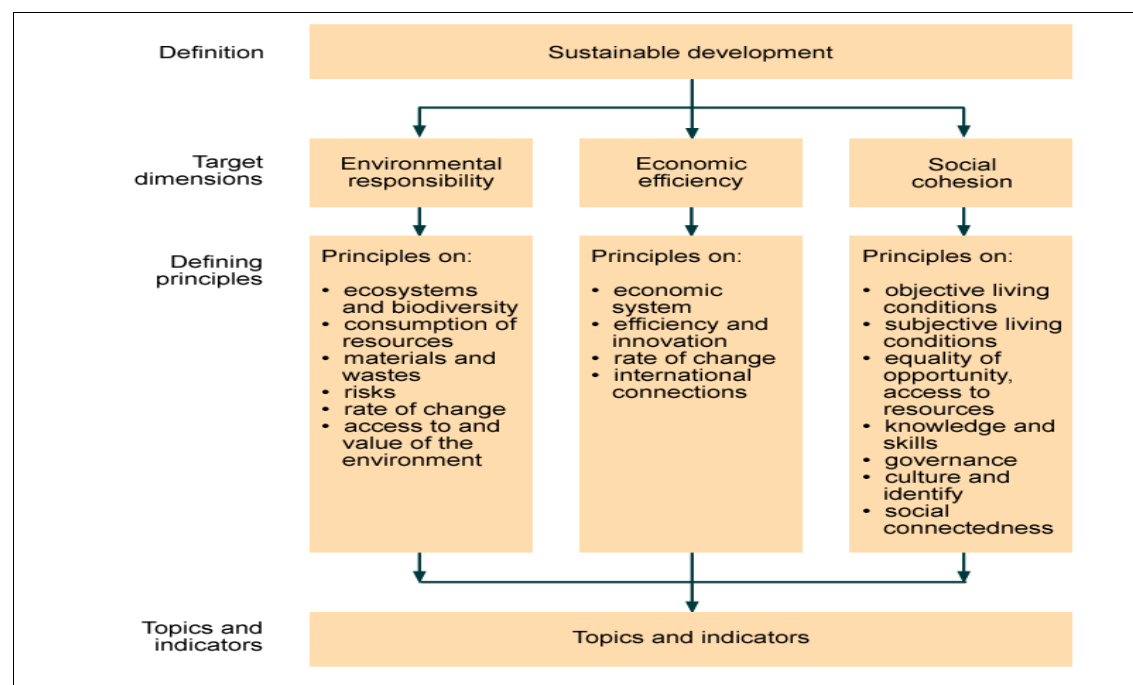
17. In July 2009 Statistics New Zealand released its first official report titled "Measuring New Zealand's Progress Using a Sustainable Development Approach:2008". In constructing the conceptual framework for the publication Statistics New Zealand drew on a number of key sources, namely the WGSSD work, the MONET framework from the Swiss Federal Statistics Office (SFSO), commissioned research and public workshops.

18. Statistics New Zealand has taken a broader approach to measuring sustainable development than just the long-term dimension of sustainable development, by adapting the MONET framework for New Zealand. In public workshops that Statistics New Zealand conducted<sup>2</sup>, this decision was validated by feedback from participants who felt that meeting current needs and fairness were important aspects of sustainable development as well as maintaining capital stocks. New Zealand's definition which is based on the Brundtland definition is as follows:

19. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development means ensuring that well-being is at least maintained over time. The principle of fairness within and between present and future generations should be taken into account in the use of environmental, economic, and social resources. Putting these needs into practice requires living within the limits of the natural environment.

20. An overview of the framework is provided in Figure 1 and further detail about the conceptual framework can be found at [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz).

**Figure 1: Statistics New Zealand's framework for measuring sustainable development**



#### IV. SOCIAL CAPITAL WITHIN NEW ZEALAND'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

21. The concepts underpinning the importance of social capital in a sustainable development context were applied within the target dimensions, defining principles<sup>3</sup> and topics covered in the indicator set.

<sup>2</sup> The workshops were held in conjunction with a non-government organisation AnewNZ.

<sup>3</sup> Defining principles are referred to as postulates in the english translation of MONET.

22. Within the framework, the social cohesion<sup>4</sup> target dimension, refers to “how well people can meet their needs within society and maintain levels of unity and harmony. Social cohesion is about how a society holds together rather than falls apart. Levels of unity and harmony within society will be influenced by the perceptions of fairness and this has implications for the ability of a society to work together to achieve long-term goals. Culture, which is often described as a fourth dimension of sustainable development, is included as an element of social cohesion”.

23. In the conceptual framework, defining principles were added to the definition and target dimensions to determine in more detail what sustainable development means in practice. The defining principles for social cohesion related to eight different aspects:

- (a) Objective living conditions;
- (b) Subjective living conditions;
- (c) Equality of opportunity, access to resources;
- (d) Knowledge and skills;
- (e) Governance;
- (f) International assistance;
- (g) Culture and identity;
- (h) Social connectedness.

24. The defining principles were also discussed at two public workshops along with other aspects of the conceptual framework, to ensure that the concepts, principles and topics were relevant for New Zealand. There were three key objectives of our public workshops:

- (a) To get input on the topics from a diverse group of participants;
- (b) To test the concepts and language of the framework on a broad audience to guide the writing of the text for the publication; and
- (c) To increase the visibility of the project and help generate interest in the final report.

25. At the workshops we had participants from government –central and local, non-government organisations, school and university students, and businesses – big and small alike.

26. From the workshops, we compiled the following list of topics, (in no particular order):

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<sup>4</sup> Social cohesion is referred to as social solidarity in the english translation of MONET.

population	economic resilience	innovation
biodiversity	air and atmosphere	land use
water	work knowledge and skills	energy
waste	social connection and governance	transport
health	culture and identity	living conditions

27. There were two topics specifically related to social capital but overlaps with other topics such as work, knowledge and skills and living conditions. The topics were social connection and governance and culture and identity. Although the concepts guided our indicator selection for these topics, there were data gaps which affected our degree of choice and these gaps were noted in the report. A comparison of the suggested social capital indicators from *Measuring Sustainable Development* and those incorporated into New Zealand's set of sustainable development indicator set is provided in Appendix 1.

## V. SOCIAL CONNECTION AND GOVERNANCE

28. The introduction to the topic in *Measuring New Zealand's Progress* notes:

*"Maintaining a well-functioning society is important for sustainable development. At an individual level, people's connections to each other, their sense of belonging, and their ability to contribute to society affects their well-being. Across society, unity and harmony affect the ability to work together to achieve long-term goals and respond to changing conditions. Trust in society can be built up through networks, and threatened by crime, corruption, or discrimination"*

29. As described in the introduction, this topic covered two aspects of social capital. Firstly, people's connections to each other and unity and harmony across society. Secondly, civic participation, connection between government institutions and society, and the extent of trust in government institutions.

30. To be selected indicators had to be measurable and statistically sound, relate to the framework we had used, and be accessible. Specifically, the key requirements for each indicator were that it:

- (a) Adequately and consistently reflects the phenomenon that it is intended to measure;
- (b) Responds rapidly and reflects changes in the phenomenon;
- (c) Is unambiguous with regard to evaluation (not applicable to context indicators);
- (d) Is derived from high-quality, methodologically sound data;
- (e) Is relevant to the New Zealand context;
- (f) Can be directly related to at least one of the defining principles;
- (g) Is easily understood and provides information useful for decision making.

31. A number of indicators were assessed including those suggested in the *Measuring Sustainable Development* publication. The list of indicators selected for New Zealand for social connection and governance is given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Social connection and governance indicators – key results**

Indicator	Indicator type <sup>(1)</sup>	Target trend	What has happened	Actual result
14.1 Formal unpaid work outside the home	Stock	↑	Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of those aged 15+ years engaged in formal unpaid work outside the home has changed little.	≈
14.2 Rate of death from assault	Level	↓	Between 1987 and 2005, the rate of death by assault per 100,000 people decreased, but there was little change since 2000.	✓
14.3 Impact of fear of crime on quality of life	Level	↓	In 2006, 40% of respondents reported that fear of crime had a moderate to high impact on their quality of life.	≈
14.4 Voter turnout at general and local elections	Flow	↑	The proportion of the population voting in both general and local elections has decreased.	✗
14.5 Representation of women in Parliament and local government	Structural	↑	The proportion of women elected to Parliament and selected local authorities has increased.	✓
14.6 Trust in government institutions	Stock	↑	In 2007, 78% of people surveyed reported they either trusted or were neutral about public services.	≈

(1) See 'Types of indicators' in part C.

32. The relationship of the indicators to the defining principles is given in Appendix 2: Table 1.

33. There were four key data gaps identified from the analysis of indicators for the topic, namely trust across society (stock indicator), perceptions of loneliness (level indicator), corruption (level indicator) and the degree of Māori involvement in government decision making (structural indicator). The formal partnership between Māori and government is an integral aspect of governance in New Zealand, as recognised by the Treaty of Waitangi.

## VI. CULTURE AND IDENTITY

34. The other specific topic relating to social capital was culture and identity. Statistics New Zealand looked at this topic in more detail following feedback on an earlier experimental report in 2002, the importance of the topic at the public workshops, work on an information plan for Culture and Identity by our Social Statistics colleagues and from our work on social capital as part of the WGSSD.

35. Statistics New Zealand commissioned research as part of the Official Statistics Research (OSR) programme partnering with the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU) at Lincoln University for a joint research project. One of the areas of collaborative research was

cultural capital and its relationship to sustainable development. The research highlighted three strands of the literature relating to cultural capital;

36. The first strand treats cultural capital as a distinctive form of social capital available to members of minority cultural groups. The second strand focuses on the potential created by culture for generating economic wealth, especially when seeking to persuade public authorities to invest resources in culture-based activities. A third strand of the literature seeks to go further by analysing whether members of a community can be said to possess a stock of cultural capital in a similar way in which they possess a stock of physical capital.

37. The AERU research picks up on the third strand of the literature. The first person to suggest a separate type of 'capital' termed 'cultural capital' was Pierre Bourdieu in 1983, translated into English in 1986. Bourdieu explained that the 'cultural capital' concept presented itself to him while he was undertaking research on why children from different social classes obtain systematically different scholastic achievements. The answer lay in the cultural capital transmitted to the children within their families from infancy, which depends on the cultural and economic capital of the parents.

38. David Throsby is the economist who has written the most about cultural capital. Like Bourdieu, Throsby pays attention to the fact that cultural capital is transmitted across generations; "Culture in this sense is expressed in a particular society's values and customs, which evolve over time as they are transmitted from one generation to another." "Neglect of cultural capital by allowing heritage to deteriorate, by failing to sustain the cultural values that provide people with a sense of identity, and by not undertaking the investment needed to maintain and increase our stock of intangible cultural capital, will likewise cause cultural systems to break down, with consequent loss of welfare and economic output."

39. The definition of cultural capital proposed in the AERU research was:

*"Cultural capital is a community's embodied cultural skills and values, in all their community-defined forms, inherited from the community's previous generation, undergoing adaptation and extension by current members of the community, and desired by the community to be passed on to its next generation".*

40. In the research cultural capital was differentiated from social capital in the following way; social capital is the networks that exist within a generation and the norms and values that bind the current community together. In contrast, cultural capital results from the connections *between generations* of the community through which the current generation receives cultural heritage from the previous generation, adapts and extends it, and seeks to pass it on, transformed, to the next generation.

41. The definition of cultural capital suggests two sites where it might be possible to design measures that will indicate its contribution to sustainable development:









(a) At points where a community's cultural capital is being adapted and extended by the current generation; and

(b) at points where the transformed cultural capital is being transmitted to the community's next generation.



42. The AERU research provided a basis for selecting and interpreting indicators, however this topic was particularly affected by a lack of data.
43. The introduction to the topic in *Measuring New Zealand's Progress* noted:  
*“Culture and identity affect the way people perceive and express themselves in relation to others, and how they engage in social interaction. Expressions of culture are often closely related to the way people form, maintain, and strengthen their identity (sense of self).”*
44. Table 3 contains the indicators that were chosen for this topic.

**Table 3: Culture and identity indicators – key results**

Indicator	Indicator type <sup>(1)</sup>	Target trend	What has happened	Actual result
15.1 Speakers of te reo Māori	Stock		The proportion of Māori able to hold an everyday conversation in the Māori language decreased slightly between 1996 and 2006.	
15.2 Children attending Māori language immersion schools	Flow		Between 1997 and 2008, the number of children attending Māori immersion schools increased 55%.	
15.3 Number of historic places	Stock		Between 2006 and 2008, the number of registered historic places increased from 11,633 to 11,867.	
15.4 Local content on New Zealand television	Flow		Between 1988 and 2008, the proportion of local content on prime-time television increased.	

45. The relationship of the indicators to the defining principles is given in Appendix 2: Table 2.
46. The key data gap within this topic was in relation to experiencing discrimination. Filling this gap would indicate whether New Zealand is an inclusive society in which people are able to express their identities and culture. Information on people's experience of discrimination, ability to express their identity, and attitudes towards diversity will be available from the General Social Survey, to be published in October 2009.

## VII. SOCIAL CAPITAL INDICATORS WITHIN NEW ZEALAND'S KEY INDICATOR SET

47. A set of key indicators was also selected for *Measuring New Zealand's Progress* from the complete set of 85 indicators. The role of the key indicator set was to answer four key questions related to sustainable development and to enable a summary of the key findings. The four questions were as follows and reflected the broad definition adopted:

- (a) Meeting needs – How well do we live?
- (b) Fairness – How well are resources distributed?

(c) Efficiency – How efficiency are we using our resources?

(d) Preserving resources – What are leaving behind for our children?

48. The fourth question looked across the different capital stocks – physical, natural, human and social to make an assessment. Only one indicator was selected which represented cultural capital - *Speakers of te reo Māori*, on the basis that language is intrinsic to expressing and sustaining culture as a means of communicating values, beliefs and customs. As the indigenous culture of New Zealand, Māori culture is unique to New Zealand and forms a fundamental part of the national identity. Māori language is central to Māori culture and an important aspect of cultural participation and identity.

**Figure 5: What are we leaving behind for our children – summary of key indicators**

Indicator		Target trend	What has happened	Actual result
2.2	Distribution of selected native species	↑	Since the 1970s, the distribution of all seven indicator species has continued to decline.	✗
3.1	Net greenhouse gas emissions	↓	New Zealand's net greenhouse gas emissions have grown since 1990, although there has been little change since 2002.	✗
4.2	Nitrogen in rivers and streams	↓	Levels of nitrogen at monitored river and stream sites have increased since 1989.	✗
10.5	Educational attainment of the adult population	↑	The proportion of adults with at least secondary qualifications has increased between 1990 and 2008.	✓
11.1	Real net stock of total assets per person	↑	Net capital stock per person rose 29% from 1988–2008.	✓
15.1	Speakers of te reo Māori	↑	The proportion of Māori able to hold an everyday conversation in Māori language decreased slightly between 1996 and 2006.	≈

49. In future, Statistics New Zealand will assess the inclusion of an indicator of generalised trust, sourced from our General Social Survey.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

50. Social capital is important to sustainable development and Statistics New Zealand has incorporated the concept into its framework for measuring sustainable development. In the compilation of *Measuring New Zealand's Progress using a Sustainable Development Approach* Statistics New Zealand included the findings from its commissioned research and examined a number of the social capital indicators suggested in *Measuring Sustainable Development*. Statistics New Zealand would like to examine social capital further, in particular whether monetary measures are possible for social capital for inclusion in the small set of recommended international indicators.

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## Appendix 1 – Comparison of social capital indicators

1. Indicators for *Measuring New Zealand's Progress Using a Sustainable Development Approach: 2008* had to be measurable and statistically sound, relate to the framework we had used, and be accessible. Specifically, the key requirements for each indicator were that it:

- (a) Adequately and consistently reflects the phenomenon that it is intended to measure;
- (b) Responds rapidly and reflects changes in the phenomenon;
- (c) Is unambiguous with regard to evaluation (not applicable to context indicators);
- (d) Is derived from high-quality, methodologically sound data;
- (e) Is relevant to the New Zealand context;
- (f) Can be directly related to at least one of the defining principles;
- (g) Is easily understood and provides information useful for decision making.

2. Below is a comparison of the indicators and the reasons for including or excluding the suggested WGSSD indicators into New Zealand's indicator set.

Suggested WGSSD indicator	Measuring NZ's Progress	Discussion
Resident populations and sub-populations	Indicator 1.1: Population size and growth Indicator 1.4: Ethnic diversity	Population was treated as a contextual topic within <i>Measuring New Zealand's Progress</i> .
Number of people actively involved in clubs, organisations or associations	Not included	The suggested indicator proved difficult when assigning a target trend. Data on numbers of people involved in sports clubs was available. However, this was not included as an increasing number of people involved in sports clubs (as compared to other types of associations) doesn't necessarily increase social cohesion and therefore the indicator did not meet the criteria 'unambiguous with regard to evaluation.'
Number of partnerships among government, academia and business involved in research and development	Not included	There was a lack of data available in the area of networks and partnerships in R&D. The innovation topic included indicators on personnel involved in R&D, and rate of innovation by businesses.
Level of generalised trust	Identified as a data gap	Information on levels of trust within society may be available in the future

		from the General Social Survey.
Level of victimisation	Identified as a data gap	Information on levels of discrimination will be available from the 2009 General Social Survey.
Level of social exclusion	Identified as a data gap	Information on loneliness will be available in the future from the 2009 General Social Survey.
Level of unemployment	Indicator 10.2: Unemployment rate	Included in the work, knowledge and skills topic.
Level of organised crime	Not included because of data quality issues	The only indicator included on actual levels of crime was rate of death by assault. The reason other crime data was excluded was because it is difficult to identify whether an increase in reported crime is due to increased reporting or an increase in actual crime.
Level of government effectiveness	Not included	Several indicators were investigated but ruled out on data quality grounds and Indicator 14.6 was included instead.
Level of institution trust	Indicator 14.6: Trust in government institutions	The level of trust was included based on a survey of public satisfaction with service quality across 42 broadly representative services provided by central and local government, tertiary education institutions and kindergartens.
Level of corruption	Identified as a data gap	No comparable time series data was available.
Number of human rights violations	Not included	Not included because of data quality issues. In the 2002 experimental report, the level of complaints made to the Human Rights Commission was used as an indicator of discrimination. However, it was note that “care must be used in interpreting the indicator, as changes in the number of complaints can be affected by changes in the propensity to register a complaint.”

## Appendix 2

**Table 1: Social connection and governance indicators – defining principles**

Indicator		Defining principles
14.1	Formal unpaid work outside the home	Promoting civic and political participation (15b) Promoting social participation (18a)
14.2	Rate of death from assault	Basic needs met with options to meet needs beyond that (11a) Protecting and promoting human health (11b) Promoting satisfaction and happiness in life (12a) Ensuring equal opportunities and access to resources (13a) Limiting individual freedom where it impinges on well-being of others (13b) Promoting social participation (18a)
14.3	Impact of fear of crime on quality of life	Basic needs met with options to meet needs beyond that (11a) Promoting satisfaction and happiness in life (12a) Ensuring equal opportunities and access to resources (13a) Limiting individual freedom where it impinges on well-being of others (13b) Promoting social participation (18a)
14.4	Voter turnout at general and local elections	Promoting civic and political participation (15b) Ensuring government functions openly, fairly, and accessibly (15c) Promoting social participation (18a)
14.5	Representation of women in Parliament and local government	Protecting civil and political rights (15a) Promoting civic and political participation (15b) Ensuring government functions openly, fairly, and accessibly (15c) Promoting social participation (18a)
14.6	Trust in government institutions	Promoting civic and political participation (15b) Ensuring government functions openly, fairly, and accessibly (15c) Promoting social participation (18a) Integrating disadvantaged groups into society (18b)

**Table 2: Culture and identity indicators – defining principles**

Indicator		Defining principles
15.1	Speakers of te reo Māori	Ensuring New Zealanders have a sense of identity (17c) Valuing and recognising Māori culture (17d)
15.2	Children attending Māori language immersion schools	Valuing and recognising Māori culture (17d)
15.3	Number of historic places	Protecting and promoting New Zealand's historic heritage (17a)
15.4	Local content on New Zealand television	Ensuring New Zealanders have a sense of identity (17c) Valuing and recognising Māori culture (17d)

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