

## **12<sup>th</sup> Conference ACN, June 2008, Session 3, ( Thursday June 5 morning)**

### **Session 3 : Beyond GDP, searching for composite indicators - Taking into account environment and sustainable development (thursday 5 June morning)**

#### **What are Public Statistics doing in the field of sustainable development ?**

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In developed countries, the state of environment is part of the central concerns about sustainability. Environmental accountancy provides an analytical framework for linking economic development and its impact on the environment. The first step in France was to bring the effort on measuring the state of environment and the recording of expenditures. Nowadays, work has been extended to the analysis of material flows, as well as to environmental accounting matrices (such as NAMEA) in order to allocate environmental pressures (on air, water or waste) to contributing industries. This work is fully part of the international framework of SEEA.

The Governmental roadmap which stemmed from the "Grenelle de l'environnement" meetings includes also the wish to improve sustainable development indicators. Through its IFEN agency, France is producing 12 indicators that have been selected at European level. Little is currently known by the public about these indicators that will be made available on the INSEE website.

Another concern arises presently from considerations about integrating well-being and/or withdrawals from environmental assets in the calculation of economic growth. At international level, several alternative ways have been explored so as to gather synthetic indicators (adjusted GDP, genuine progress indicators, net adjusted saving, ecological footprint) whose implementation is sometimes difficult. Although it is not much participating to the debate yet, France joins the international reflection by first exploring the limitations of those indicators (arbitrary nature of selected items, choice of weighting, etc..).