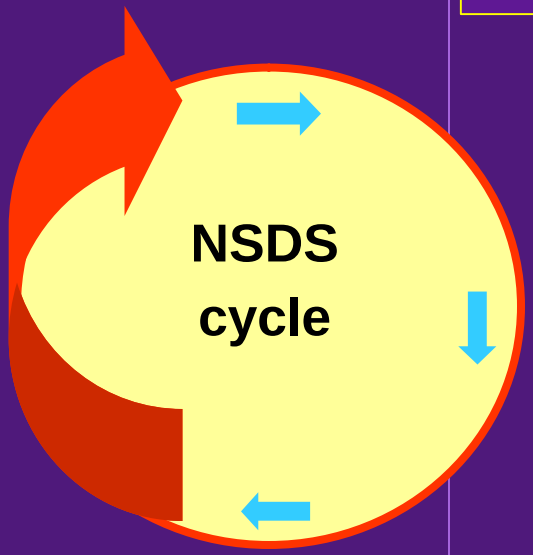
Monitoring NSDSs

An overview of approaches



Barry Dalal-Clayton

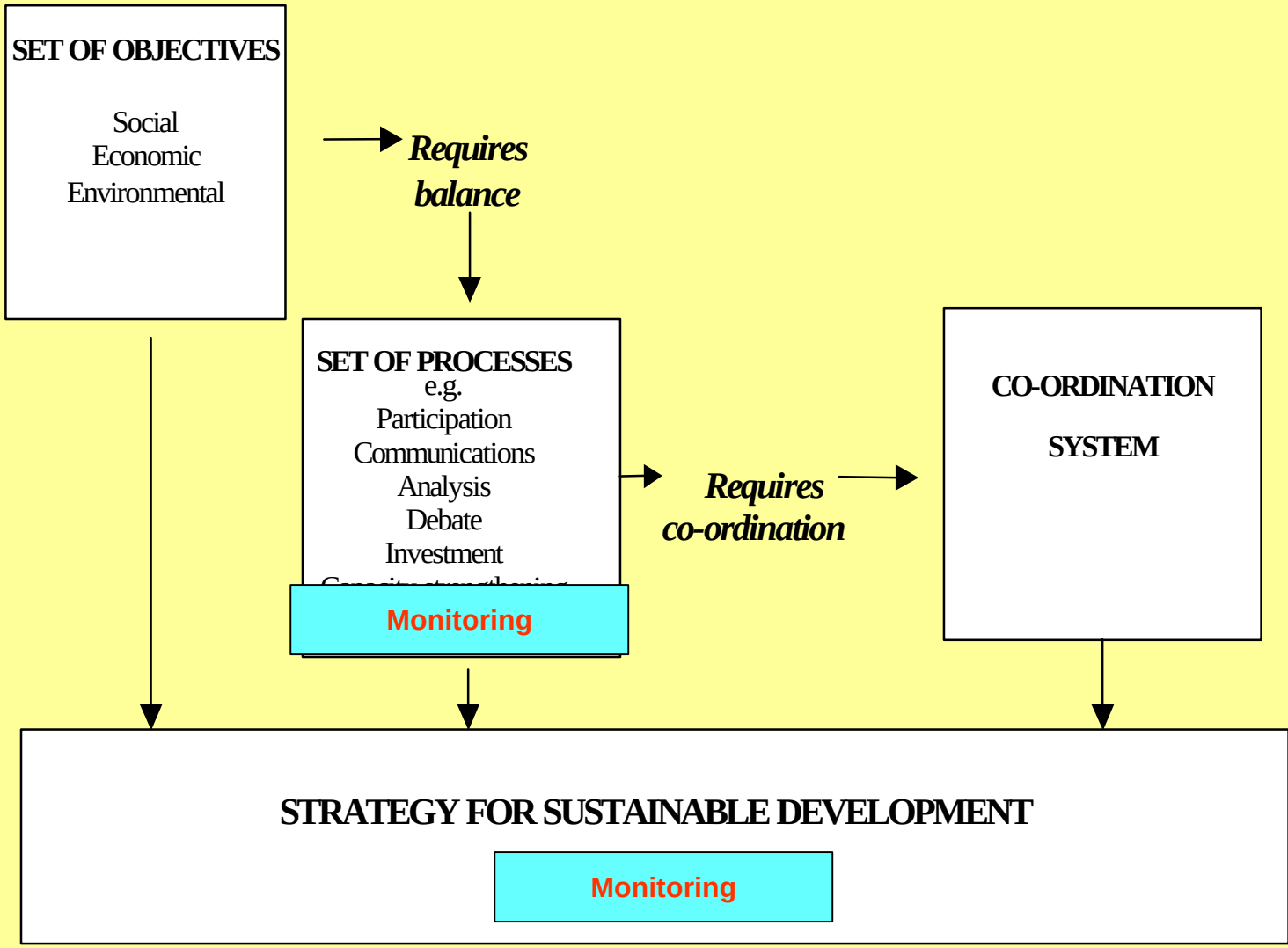
IIED

Scope of presentation

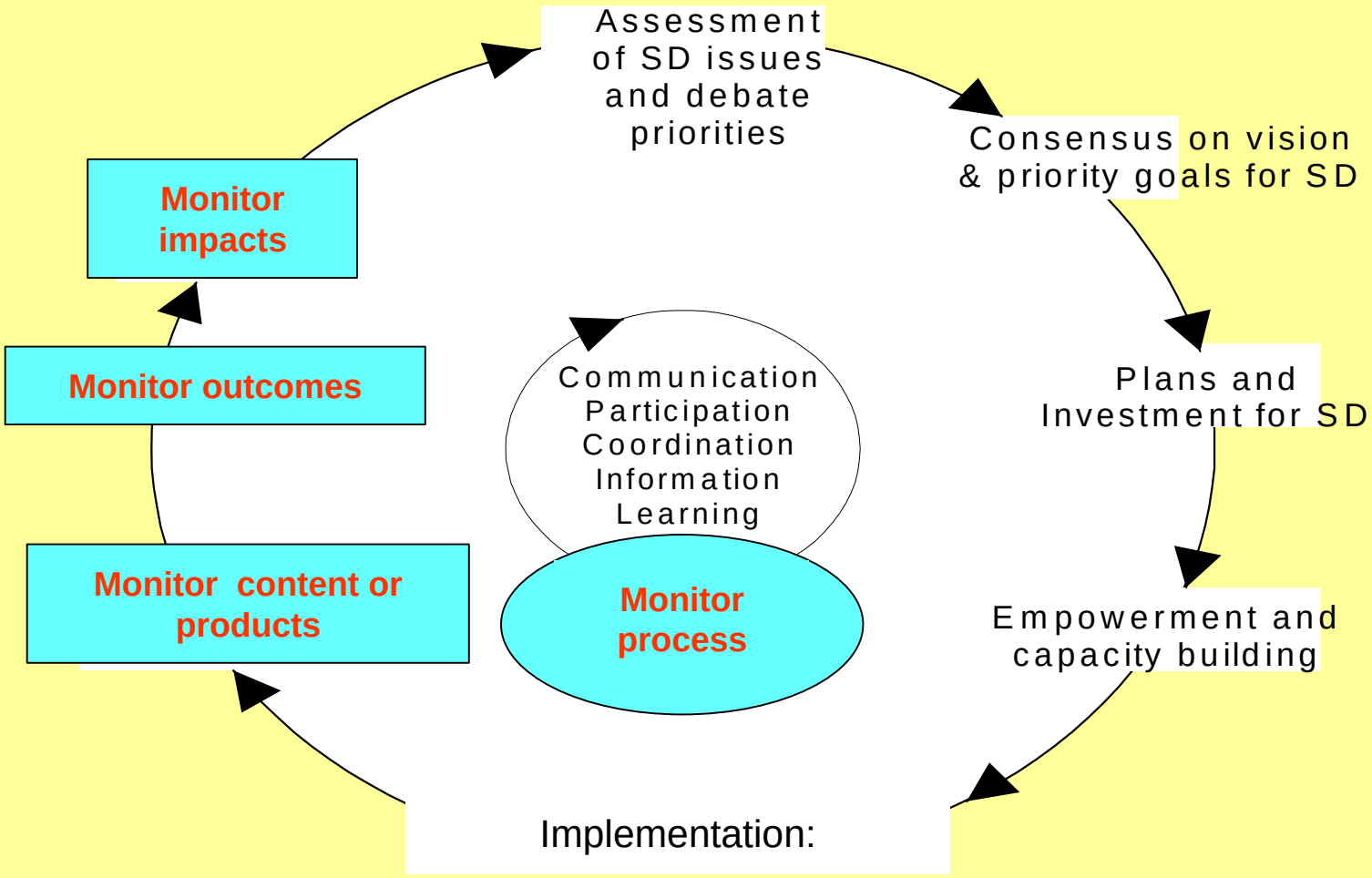
- Rationale for NSDS
- Monitoring in the NSDS cycle
- Selected approaches to NSDS monitoring
- Pros and cons of approaches
- Criteria for good monitoring
- Conclusions

Based on desk review commissioned by OECD

Monitoring and the systematic rationale for sustainable developmen t strategies



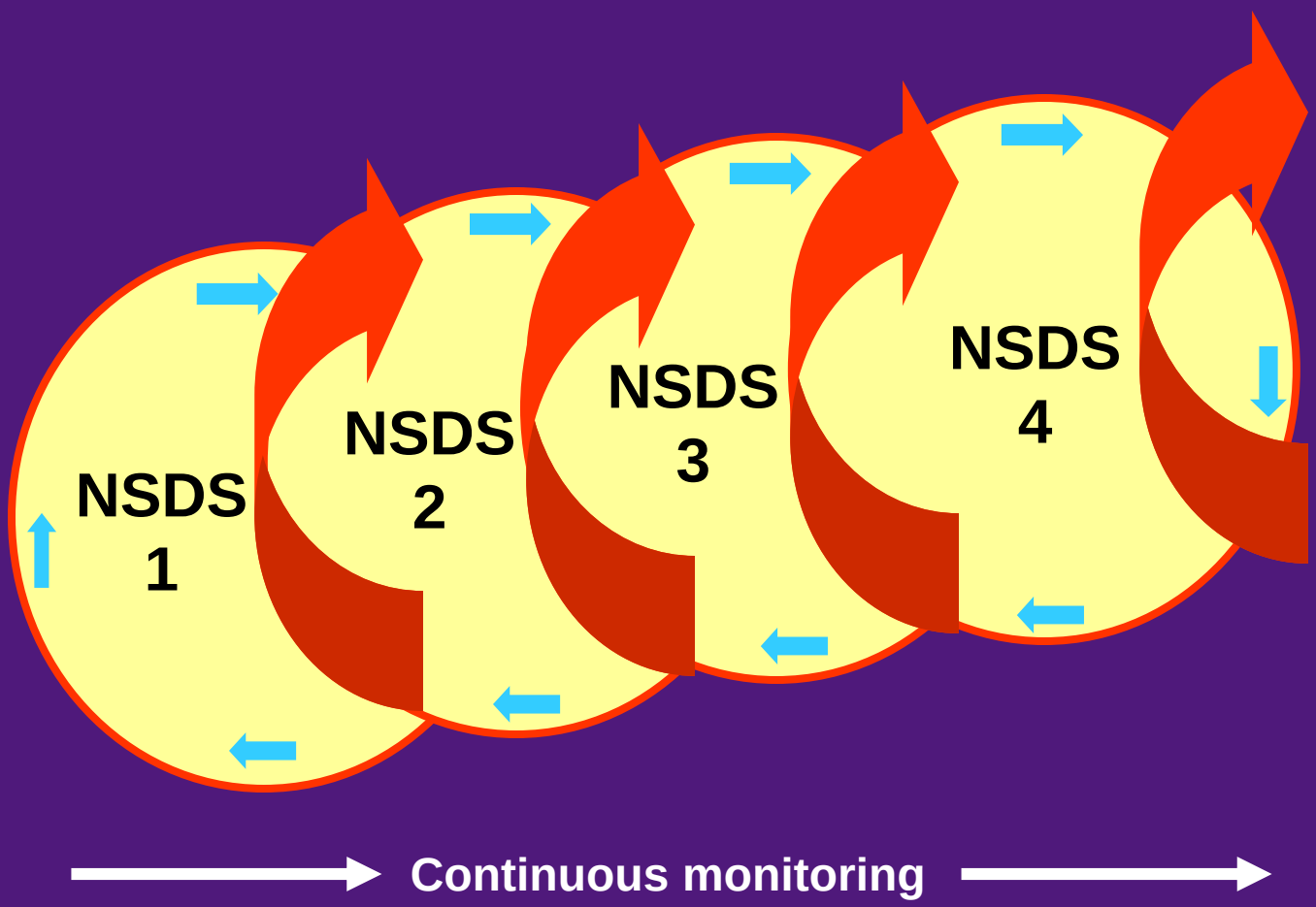
Four key elements in monitoring the NSDS cycle



Continuing strategy & monitoring cycles

National Sustainable Development Strategies

NSDS



Selected approaches to NSDS monitoring

- National peer reviews
- Internal reviews
- External auditing
- Parliamentary reviews
- Budgetary reviews
- Indicator-based monitoring
- Public, local monitoring
- International monitoring
  - Reports to CSD, UN conferences, national progress reports
  - Monitoring EU strategy
- Monitoring PRS

NATIONAL PEER REVIEWS

(Voluntary)

eg France, EU

Process:	YES
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	YES
	(4)

- Background report (interviews)
- 2- 4 invited peer countries (govt + NGO)
- Facilitated PR workshop
- Agreed recommendations – report

PROS

- Voluntary
- Tailored
- Facilitates dialogue + sharing experiences
- Covers all 4 elements
- Workshop questions address strategy principles

CONS

- Could be non-judgemental ?
- Resource intensive
- International agreement on PR difficult

INTERNAL REVIEWS

- Information gathering
- Synthesis of report

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	RARE
	(2)

PROS

- Addresses progress on SD commitment & delivering targets
- Tool for change (when based on indicators & targets)

CONS

- Led by Govt officials driving NSDS
- Process exclusive to Govt
- Could be non-judgemental
- Resource intensive

EXTERNAL AUDITING

- By body not involved in developing/implementing NSDS
  - In-country process
  - Non-nationals

PROS

- Independent of strategy drivers
- Can keep Govt accountable for SD commitments
- Engages array of ministries (eg Canadian case)

CONS

- Influence depends on criteria selected as basis for audit; and independence of audit body

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	YES
	(3)

PARLIAMENTARY REVIEWS

- Standing committees to assess performance of govt departments
- Some focus on environment and/or SD

PROS

- Checks & balances between branches of government
- Can raise political awareness of SD goals
- Allows questions of government on SD

CONS

- Short-term perspective
- Mo real ‘measures’ of SD progress (outcomes, impacts)
- Limited to debating a report submitted by government

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	RARE
	(2)

BUDGETARY REVIEWS

- Govt departments account for their work on SD
- Green budgets (eg Sweden, Norway)

PROS

- Involves most powerful ministry (Finance)
- Means to argue/lobby for $ allocations to SD actions
- Can increase SD awareness within ministries
- Generally demands ministries to focus on SD outcomes

CONS

- Difficult to involve finance ministries
- Can be hard to implement without better methodology

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	RARE
Impact:	SOME
	(2)

INDICATOR-BASED & QUANTITAIVE MONITORING

- Numerous indicator frameworks & sets
- Core/headline indicators

PROS

- Can be rigorous if indicators are also targets
- Allows long-term vision when inter-generational indicators included

CONS

- May be hard to agree on short list of core indicators
- How to measure certain SD concepts?
- Data can be unreliable or lacking
- National indicators less relevant at local level

Process:	NO
Content:	NO
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	YES
	(2)

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PUBLIC, LOCAL MONITORING

- Eg COS Netherlands – **Local Sustainability Metre**
  - Benchmark info for most municipalities
  - 4 questionnaires- yes/no answers, points, total score
  - Website

PROS

- Engages publics/civil society
- Participative / transparent
- Indicators agreed by range of stakeholders
- Builds links between NGOs and local officials

CONS

- Bias towards local authority SD action: risks of neglecting national strategy elements

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	YES
	(3)

INTERNATIONAL MONITORING (A)

Reports to CSD, UN Conference, national progress reports

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	RARE (2)

- CSD reports – every 2 yrs
- 14 page format focusing on NSDS / thematic country info
- Future emphasis on case studies

PROS

- Creates peer pressure – promotes SD reforms
- Official commitment to report – can be used by stakeholders to push for action

CONS

- 'Box filling' approach (completing questionnaire)
- Emphasis on successes, failures downplayed

INTERNATIONAL MONITORING (B)

Monitoring the EU strategy

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	POOR
	(2)

- Spring Council progress reviews – not effective
- Future – SD indicators, forecasts, scientific data-based
- 2004-2006: review process
- Revised strategy (June 06)

PROS

- Regional (European) perspective
- Future monitoring based on SD indicators (12 headline)

CONS

- Inadequate attention to external dimensions
- Lacks comprehensive assessment of ESE impacts
- Inadequate stakeholder engagement
- Process run by strategy drivers)
- Process buried in EU bureaucracy

POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY MONITORING

- Poverty monitoring system
- Annual PRS progress report
- PRS Credit/Budget Support Performance Assessment Framework

PROS

- Address 4 elements (increasingly re: MDGs)
- Performance assessment triggers tranches of donor $
- Basis for capacity development

CONS

- Annual progress reports focus on donor needs
- Mainly to support donor-client government relationship
- Strategic value of monitoring not yet fully realised
- Poor links with existing national monitoring processes
- Inadequate stakeholder participation

Process:	NO
Content:	YES
Outcomes	YES
Impact:	YES
	(3)

CRITERIA FOR GOOD MONITORING

- Adequate policy priority for monitoring
- Addresses strategy principles
- Constructed and developed as a system
- Effective utilisation of existing monitoring systems
- Stakeholder participation
- Timely and influential
- Driven by strategy objectives
- Clear, but flexible SD reference framework
- Range of assessment criteria
- Building key datasets
- Adequate resourcing
- Measures real progress
- Visibility and transparency

SOME CONCLUSIONS (A)

- Approaches seldom used in isolation
- Articulated very differently in individual countries, and often used in combination
- Issue is fitness for a specific purpose – rather than inherent pros & cons
- Each approach may have a role to play (individually/ in combination) - depends on needs and circumstances.

SOME CONCLUSIONS (B)

- No real objective basis for judging approaches

  (serve different purposes; evidence from limited examples/countries)

- Difficulties for external reviews
  - most monitoring systems not yet producing reports accessible to external reviewers;
  - Strategy docs say little about monitoring;
  - Available info partial; insufficient depth

- Countries could carry out own assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of strategy monitoring

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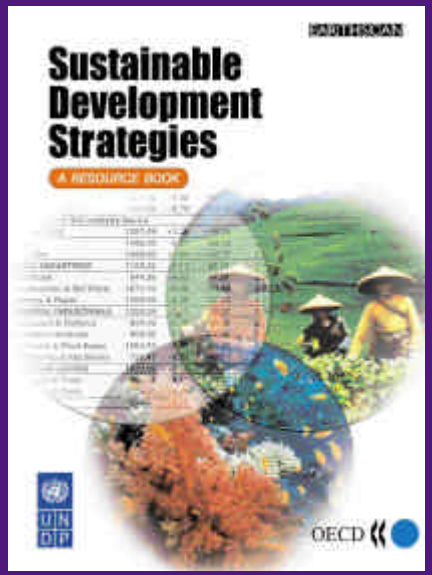
Strategies Website