Metrics, Models, and Public Perception of Sustainable and Inclusive Wellbeing

MERGE Workshop: Towards a European Semester that promotes wellbeing in the medium-long term
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European Policy Centre

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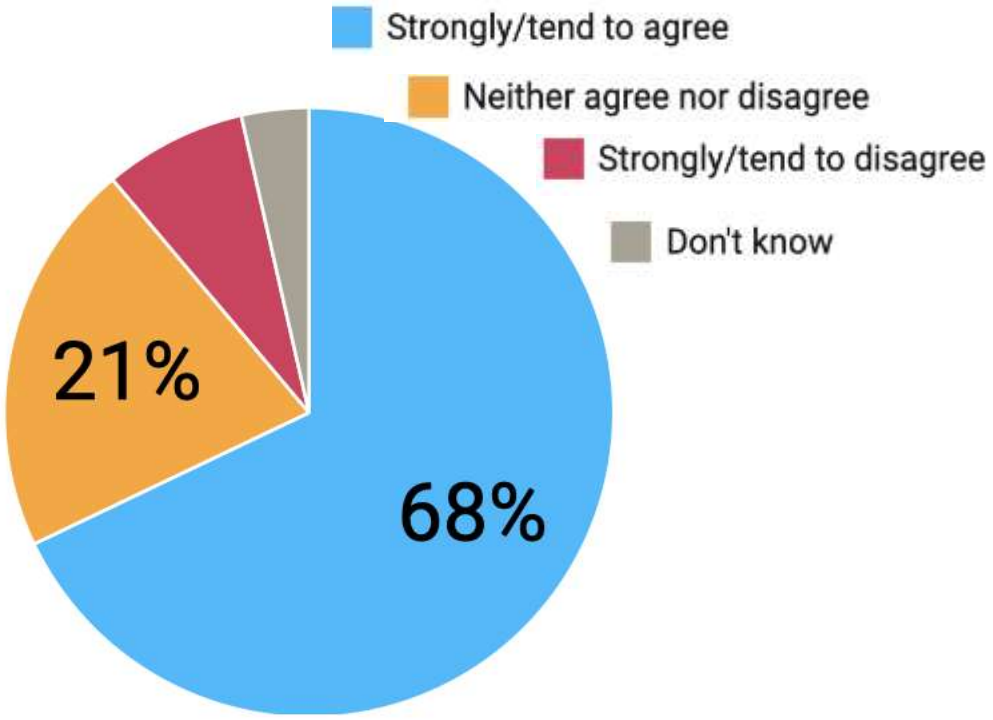
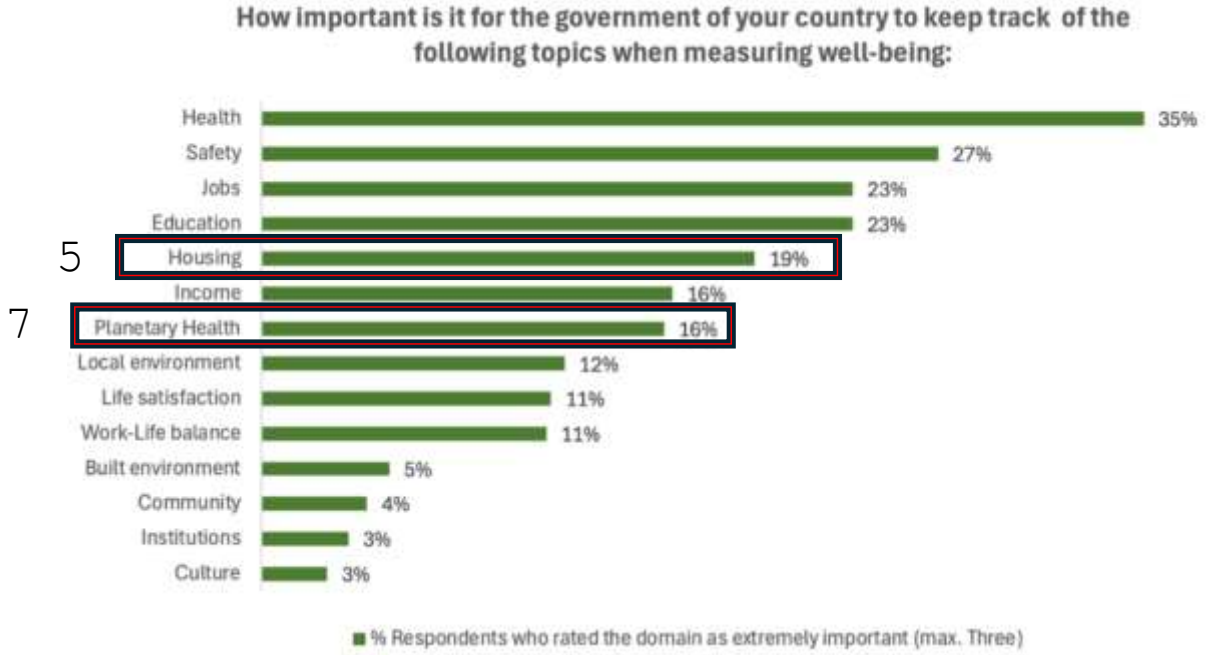
Support for an Expanded Economy



G20 Average 'my economy should prioritize the health and wellbeing of people and nature.'

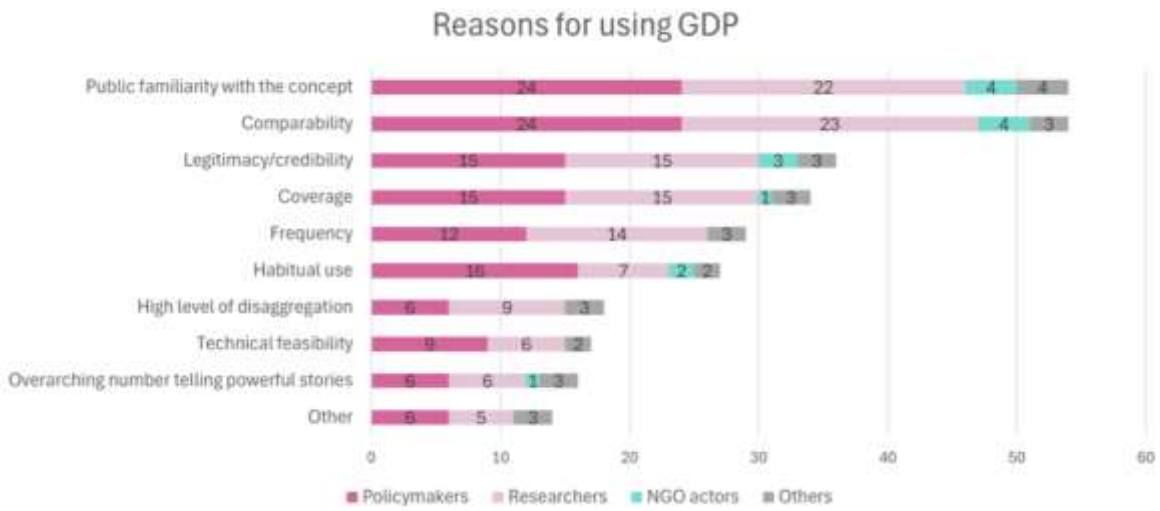
81% support the adoption of beyond GDP measures to some extent

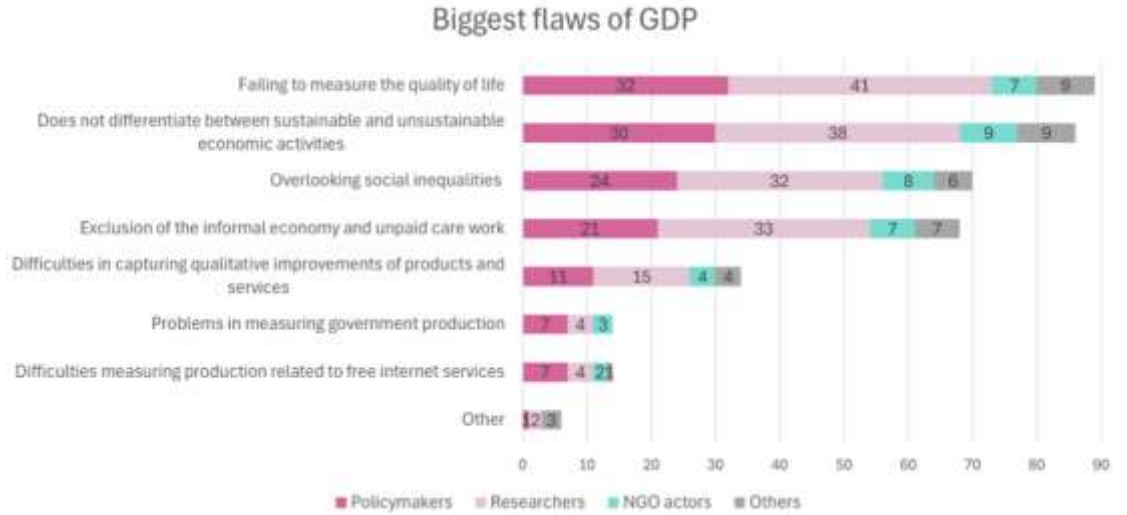
Public support for beyond-GDP indicators (Silvi and Bleys, 2024)

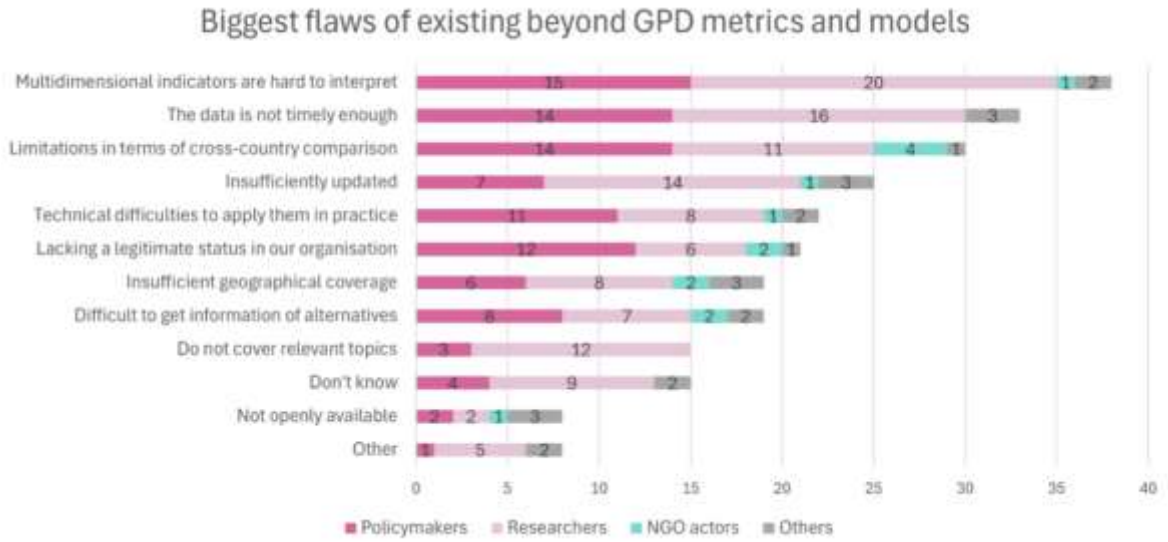


Ranking beyond-GDP domains based on popular preference (Silvi and Bleys, 2024).

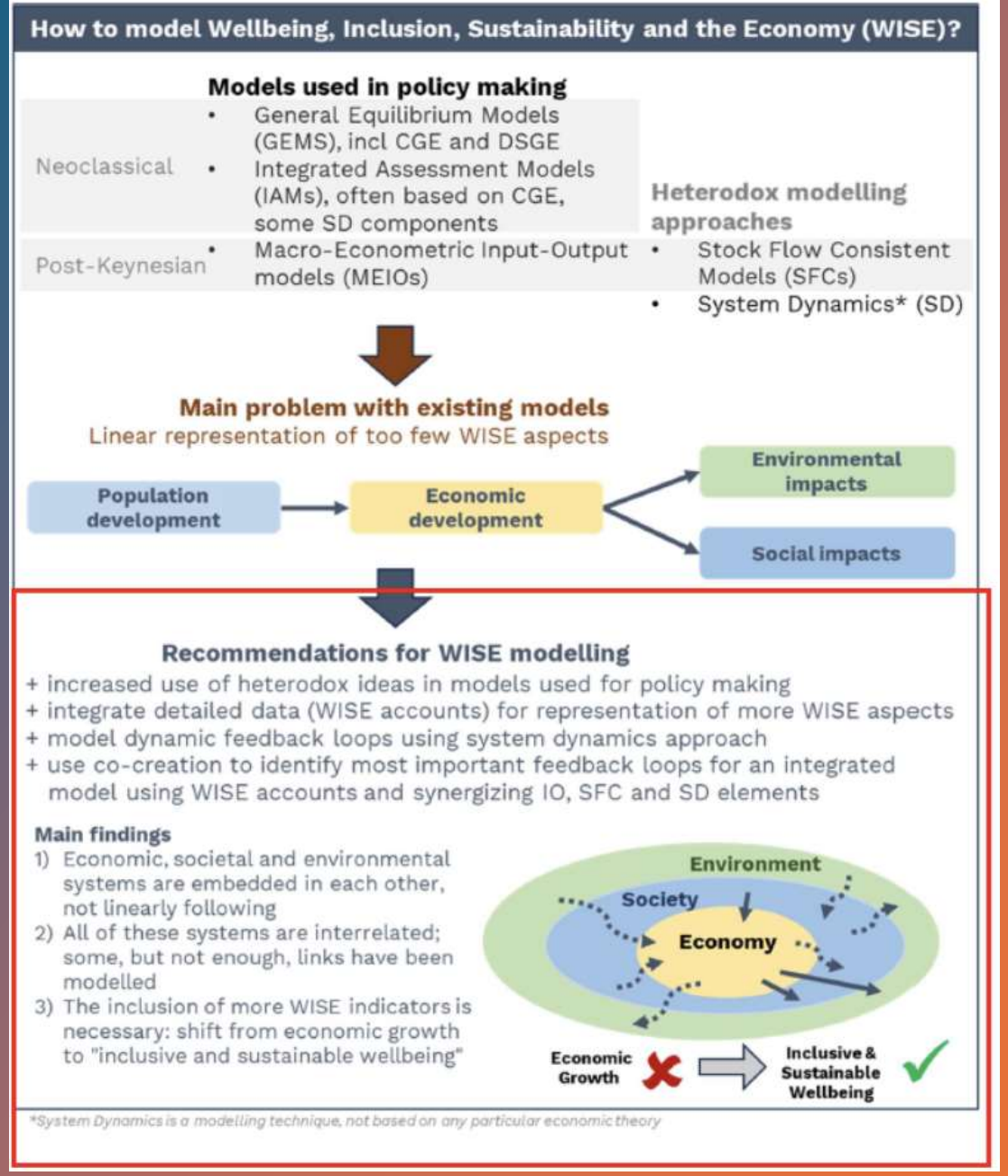
Attitudes towards GDP in Policymaking







Survey Report on the Perceptions on Beyond-GDP Approach (Hirvilammi, T. et al, 2024)



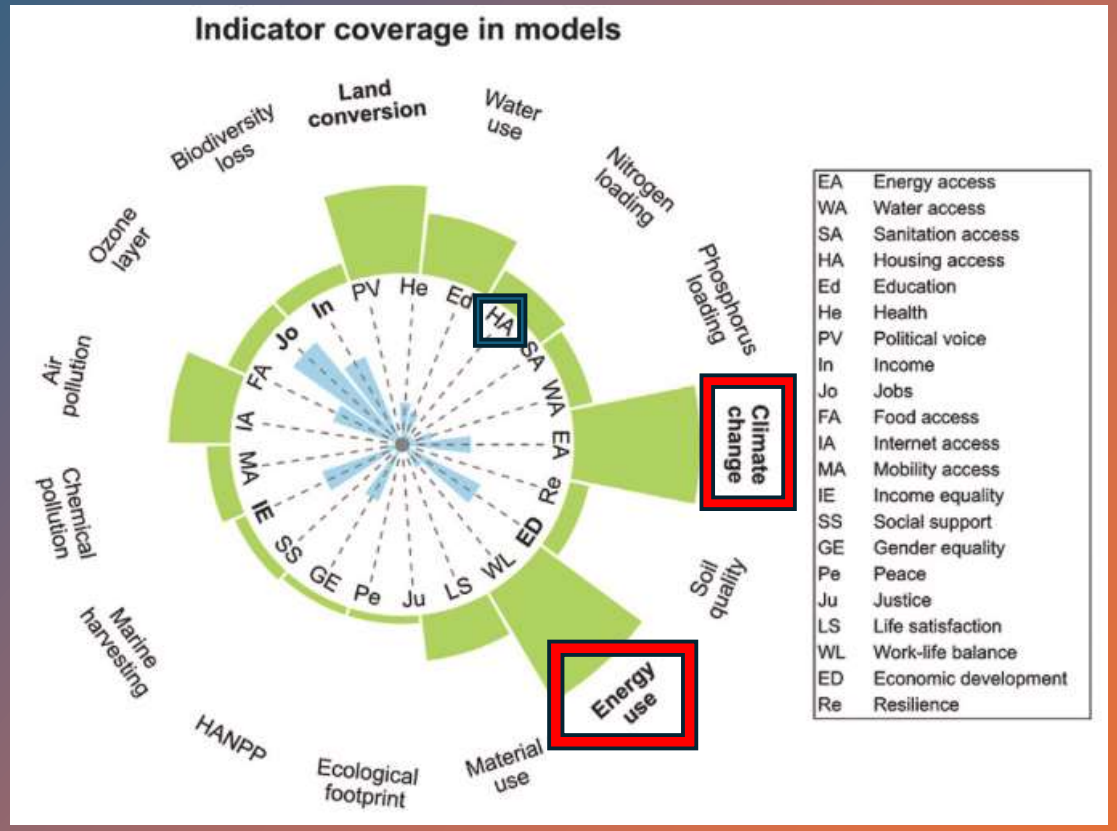
Recommendations for modelling Sustainable and Inclusive Wellbeing

Models

Recommendations from MERGE:

- Need to sufficiently account for biophysical limits.
- Need to include non-linear dynamics and feedbacks.
- Need to represent thresholds or tipping points in biophysical and socioeconomic subsystems.

Models for the future



How do Environment-Society-Economy models include social and environmental indicators? (Van Eynde et al. 2024)

- 50 macroeconomic models assessed on their coverage of 15 environmental and 21 social indicators.
- Representation of biophysical components are limited.
- Representation of social indicators are limited.
- Feedbacks are rarely included.

Metrics

- Research on over 200 metrics.
- Collected domains and components for each.
- Performed cluster analysis using an S-BERT semantic modelling system to produce 10, 20, 40, and 80 clusters.

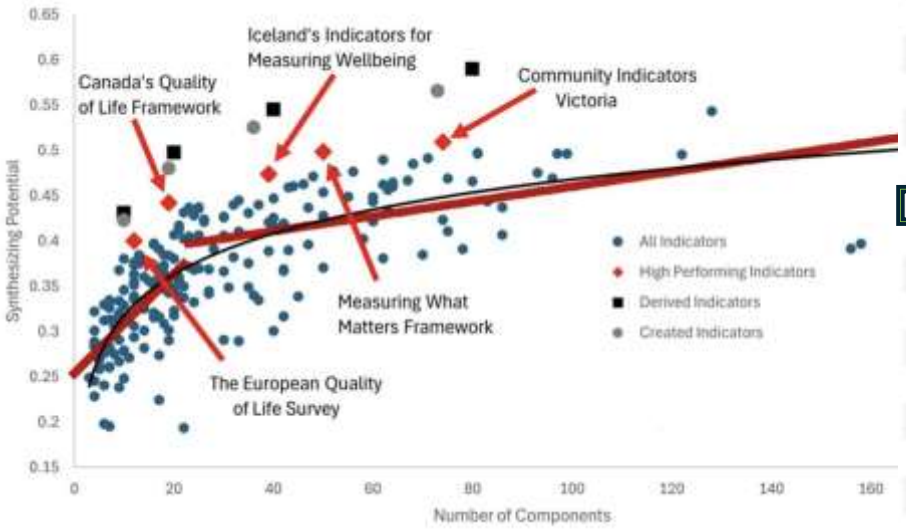
Building Consensus – Metrics: Results

The relationship between synthesizing potential and the number of components breaks down between 22-23.

Highest Performing Existing Metrics

Canada's Quality of Life Framework
Measuring What Matters Framework
The European Quality of Life Survey
Iceland's Indicators for measuring Wellbeing
Happy City Index
Iceland Wellbeing Framework
The Scottish Trends Index of Social and Economic Wellbeing
Sustainable Society Index (SSI)
Multidimensional index of sustainability (EU)
Community Indicators Victoria (CIV)
THE HAPPINESS IN PENANG (HIP) INDEX)
Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand
City Prosperity Index (CPI)
Statistics Portugal Wellbeing Index
OECD Better Life Index (BLI)

Metric Performance by Number of Components



20 Proposed Components

BEST EXISTING COMPONENTS	*PROPOSED COMPONENTS*
Consumption	*(Catch-all cluster. Dropped.)*
Satisfaction with life	Life satisfaction
Health	Health
Life expectancy at birth	Life expectancy
Crime victimization	Crime
Civic and social participation	Civic engagement
Housing conditions	Housing
Financial	Economic situation
Protected natural areas	Natural areas
Water sanitation	Water quality
Air pollution	Air pollution
Government Integrity	Governance
Employment	Employment
Secondary Education	Education
Income poverty	Poverty
Gender equality	Gender equality
Public transport	Transportation
International trade	Industry
Greenhouse gas emissions	Greenhouse gas emissions
GDP (per capita)	Per Capita GDP

(Kubiszewski et al.,