

indico

The Coherence Index

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*A global look
at the urgent
transformation
today's world
demands*



5. The tool

5.1. The Coherence Index (Indico).

The Coherence Index is an indicator designed to explore, analyse, and compare countries' policy coherence with sustainable development.

According to the index, policies coherent with sustainable development put the well-being of people (human development approach) and the sustainability of the planet (sustainable development approach) at the centre, consider the effects of policies within and outside the borders of the country that applies them (cosmopolitan approach), promote gender equality (feminist perspective) and uphold human rights for all people (human rights approach).

The Coherence Index approaches

The Coherence Index is based on a broad and transformative development approach, starting with five interrelated approaches that expand and complement one other²²:

Human development. According to the Coherence Index, policies coherent with sustainable development are aimed at expanding capabilities. Thus, the index includes indicators to assess the extent to which countries implement public policies that put people's well-being at the centre.

Sustainable development. The Coherence Index is based on the recognition that people are eco-dependent beings and that public policies must consider the biophysical limits of the planet we inhabit. Hence, in its analysis of policies (economic, social, environmental, and political), the index explores four dimensions of sustainable development and their interactions.

Cosmopolitan development.

In a globalized and interdependent world, countries' responsibilities cannot be limited solely to the territory within their geopolitical borders. From the PCSD standpoint taken by the Coherence Index, public policies must be designed and implemented with due consideration for their effects on other territories and people.

Gender approach. No public policy is gender neutral. For that reason, the Coherence Index is designed to assess the extent to which public policies guarantee women's rights while combating inequality and ensuring that they do not contribute to gender inequality.

Human rights approach.

In the Coherence Index, people are entitled to rights. This implies, among other things, that countries need robust institutions that protect and safeguard these rights for the entire population, free from all discrimination, with mechanisms that facilitate citizens' empowerment and participation in developing public policies incorporating transparent and effective accountability systems.

²² Martínez Osés P. J., Gil Payno M.L., Martínez I., Millán N., Ospina S., Medina J., Sanabria A., García H. (2016). *2016 PCDI: Another way to grow*. Editorial Plataforma 2015 y más.

In this third and revamped version based on these approaches, the Coherence Index rests upon two main pillars: **transitions and planetary pressures**.

The **transitions** pillar represents the major changes that public policies coherent with sustainable development must promote to evolve towards other fair and sustainable ways of life, organization, and social reproduction. These changes are broken down into four interrelated transitions that the following aspects of the PCSD evaluate:

Democratic transition: the extent to which countries are committed to public policies designed to build democratic and peaceful societies that safeguard and protect (civil and political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental) human rights, and freedom of association, assembly and the right to protest (civic space).

Feminist transition: the extent to which countries pursue public policies that safeguard women's rights, promote equality between men and women and recognize and respect diversity, and contribute to a new social organization that revives and places caregiving in its centre.

Socio-economic transition: the extent to which countries promote strong welfare states with public services and social protection that safeguards social rights for all, incorporating redistributive fiscal and social policies that reduce the many existing inequalities.

Ecological transition: the extent to which countries are striving to protect the environment and are committed to renewable energy.

Each transition, in turn, is broken down into several dimensions that reflect the main priority areas in which progress needs to be made in the transformation process towards public policies coherent with sustainable development, which are evaluated by a set of 50 indicators ([Table 5. 1](#)).

The **planetary pressures** pillar measures the impact and ecological pressures that countries exert on the planet and is built on two indicators: material footprint per capita and CO₂ emissions per capita, both in terms of consumption, with a view to incorporating the ecological pressures that countries put on other territories via globalization in production and international trade.

Indicators and sources.

The 2023 Coherence Index is built on the 52 indicators shown in [Table 5. 1](#): 50 indicators evaluate the 13 dimensions of the four transitions, and the remaining 2 are designed for the planetary pressures index.

Half of these 52 indicators assess elements related to the design and direct results of certain public policy measures, while the other half measure final results arising from the interaction of different public policies also potentially influenced by contextual factors or those not exclusively controlled by governments. Moreover, 31 of these 52 indicators (60%) are designed to assess the extent to which public policies incorporate a feminist perspective, a major improvement over previous edition. Of these 31 indicators, 21 measure aspects related to the status of women and gender gaps and 10 evaluate more general aspects that significantly affect their quality of life such as access to water and electricity, among others.

As in previous editions, information is mostly drawn from official sources, although statistical information from unofficial organizations and institutions is also used to evaluate aspects of public policies pertinent to the PCSD for which official sources do not provide information.

The Coherence Index seeks to provide information on how countries are currently performing in terms of PCSD. However, statistics take time to publish and public policy shifts do not have an immediate impact on the data. This means that it is not always possible to fully show the most recent PCSD performance of the countries analysed. We should note that the 2023 Coherence Index's statistical information basically reflects the period between 2019 and 2022.

Countries.

Through 52 indicators, the Coherence Index evaluates the behaviours of 153 countries in terms of their policy coherence for sustainable development

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The Coherence Index assesses 153 countries, i.e. all those for which sufficient data is available for at least 80% of the indicators. According to the World Bank's regional classification, 46 countries belong to the Europe and Central Asia region, 38 to Sub-Saharan Africa, 25 to Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 to East Asia and Pacific, 18 to East and North Africa, 6 to South Asia and 2 to North America. Regarding income level, 48 are high income countries, 40 are upper-middle-income, 42 are lower-middle-income and 22 are low-income. As for human development, 62 countries have a very high HDI, 32 high, 31 medium and 28 low²³.

²³ The classification of countries by geographical area, income and HDI is available in the [2023 Indico methodology document](#).

Table 5.1. 2023 Coherence Index indicators and sources.

(Continued on pages. 113, 114 and 115)

	DIMENSION	CODE	INDICATOR	SOURCE
Democratic	Civil society and transparency	D-SC1	Civicus Monitor	CIVICUS
		D-SC2	Open government index	World Justice Project (WJP)
	Political commitment to human rights and justice	D-DDHH1	Abolition of the death penalty	Amnesty International
		D-DDHH2	Ratification of UN Human Rights treaties	United Nations Human Rights. Office of the High Commissioner
		D-DDHH3	Ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	UN Treaty Collection
		D-DDHH4	Ratification of Fundamental ILO Conventions	International Labour Organization (ILO)
		D-DDHH5	Participation in international weapons treaties and conventions	UN Treaty Collection
		D-DDHH6	Women's access to justice	World Bank
		D-DDHH7	Existence of an action plan to implement Resolution UNSCR 1325	Security Women
	Militarization	D-MILIT1	Military spending (% GDP)	World Bank
		D-MILIT2	Nuclear and heavy weapons capabilities	Vision of Humanity Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)
D-MILIT3		Exports and imports of the main conventional weapons (TIV million constant dollars per 100,000 inhabitants)	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)	

Table 5.1.
(Continuation)

	DIMENSION	CODE	INDICATOR	SOURCE
Feminist	Legal and regulatory framework	F-LEG1	Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol	UN Treaty Collection
		F-LEG2	Legislation on violence against women	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
		F-LEG3	Abortion legislation	Center for Reproductive Rights
		F-LEG4	Legislation on sexual orientation	ILGA World – the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
		F-LEG5	Legal recognition of LGBTBI families	ILGA World – the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
		F-LEG6	The law requires equal pay for women and men for work of equal value	World Bank
		F-LEG7	Ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (C-189)	International Labour Organization (ILO)
		F-LEG8	Women and men have equal legal rights and opportunities in the workplace	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
		F-LEG9	Women and men have equal rights as citizens and the ability to exercise those rights	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
	Social situation of women	F-SOC1	Percentage of women who have suffered physical or sexual violence at the hands of their partner	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
		F-SOC2	Average number of years of education (women)	World Bank
		F-SOC3	Percentage of population with at least a secondary education (women)	World Bank
		F-SOC4	Maternal mortality rate	World Bank
		F-SOC5	Adolescent birth rate	World Bank
	Political participation	F-POL1	Seats occupied by women in National Parliaments (%)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
		F-POL2	Women in ministerial positions (%)	World Bank
	Gender gaps	F-BRECH1	Gender gap in labour force participation rates (% men -% women)	International Labour Organization (ILO)
		F-BRECH2	Account holders in financial institutions or mobile money service providers (% male - %female)	World Bank
		F-BRECH3	Average years of education: Difference between men and women (%)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Table 5.1.
(Continuation)

	DIMENSION	CODE	INDICATOR	SOURCE
Socio-economic	Social situation	S-SOC1	Completion rate of upper secondary education	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
		S-SOC2	Healthy life expectancy at birth (years)	World Health Organization
		S-SOC3	Number of physicians per 10,000 inhabitants	World Health Organization
		S-SOC4	Population exposed to levels exceeding WHO reference value for PM2.5 (%)	World Bank
		S-SOC5	Public spending on social protection (% GDP)	International Labour Organization (ILO)
		S-SOC6	Population covered by at least one social protection benefit (%)	UN Statistics - SDG Indicator Database
	Employment	S-EMP1	Unemployment rate	International Labour Organization (ILO)
		S-EMP2	Vulnerable employment (% of total employment)	World Bank
	Taxation	S-FIS1	Government revenue (% GDP)	International Monetary Fund (IMF)
		S-FIS2	Variation rate of the Gini Index before and after taxes and transfers (%)	Harvard Dataverse
		S-FIS3	Financial Secrecy Index	Tax Justice Network
	Basic services	S-SSBB1	Access to electricity (% of population)	World Bank
		S-SSBB2	Internet users (per 100 people)	World Bank
		S-SSBB3	Improved water sources, rural sector (% of the population with access)	World Bank
	Inequality	S-DESIG1	Palma Index	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Table 5.1.
(Continuation)

	DIMENSION	CODE	INDICATOR	SOURCE
Ecological	Ecological	ECO1	Participation in international agreements on the environment	UN Statistics - SDG Indicator Database
		ECO2	Terrestrial and marine protected areas (% of total area)	World Bank
		ECO3	Water stress level: Freshwater extraction as a proportion of available freshwater resources	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
		ECO4	Electricity generation using renewables (excluding hydropower)	Global Change Data Lab University of Oxford

	CODE	INDICATOR	SOURCE
Planetary pressures index	ECO-IMP1	Material footprint per capita (Consumption)	Eora MRIO database
	ECO-IMP2	Carbon dioxide emissions in terms of consumption (metric tonnes per person)	World Bank

Source: own data.

Interpreting the Coherence Index.

The Coherence Index ranges from 0 (worst score) to 100 (best score). Transition and dimension scores are also on a scale of 0 to 100 where 0 is the worst score and 100 is the best.

The planetary pressures index ranges from 0 to 1. The closer the value is to 1, the lower the pressures that countries exert on the planet.

Thus, according to the Coherence Index calculation system, a score of 100 would be awarded to a country with the highest marks in both indicators, i.e. a score of 100 in “transitions” and a score of 1 in the “planetary pressures index”.

5.2. How it was built.

The 2023 Coherence Index is the fruit of an intense conceptual and methodological review of the tool. As a result of this process, the structure of the Coherence Index differs from that of previous editions. Its set of indicators has been modified significantly as has its calculation method. Following is a summary of the most important elements used to build the tool²⁴.

Selecting the indicators.

The indicators were selected by combining a theoretical-conceptual analysis of the suitability of the indicators according to the initial approach of the Coherence Index and statistical methods and criteria. This involved a participatory analysis process verified with representatives of the organizations pioneering the tool (The Spanish Development NGO Platform, Futuro en Común, and the Spanish Network of Development Studies (REEDES)), other environmental and social organizations advocating for human rights, and academia and experts in the building of composite indicators.

²⁴ Detailed information on how the tool was built is available on the Indico website: <https://www.indicedecoherencia.org/en/open-data>

Calculating the Coherence Index.

Having selected the indicators, the Coherence Index is calculated in five steps²⁵:

Step 1.

Each dimension is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the indicators comprising it once standardized and missing values have been imputed²⁶.

$$Ip_j = \sum_1^N \frac{X_i}{N}$$

Step 2.

Each transition is calculated as the geometric mean of the dimensions comprising it. This does not allow for completely offsetting good scores on one dimension with poor scores on others.

$$It_k = \left(\prod_{j=1}^n Ip_j \right)^{\frac{1}{n}} = \sqrt[n]{Ip_1 \cdot Ip_2 \cdots Ip_j}$$

Step 3.

The aggregate of transitions is calculated as the geometric mean of the transitions (democratic, feminist, socio-economic and ecological). As with the dimensions, this does not allow for completely offsetting good scores on one transition with poor scores on others.

$$T = \sqrt[4]{It_{DEM} \cdot It_{FEM} \cdot It_{SOCIECO} \cdot It_{ECO}}$$

²⁵ The 2023 Coherence Index calculation method is based on the HDI adjusted for planetary pressure. For more information on the methodology underpinning the 2023 Coherence Index see: <https://www.indicedecoherencia.org/en/open-data>

²⁶ Standardisation is done using the Min-max method and missing data imputation by means of a "nearest neighbours" algorithm. For more information, see: <https://www.indicedecoherencia.org/en/open-data>

Step 4.

The planetary pressures index is the arithmetic mean of the two indicators comprising it once they have been standardised and the missing data has been imputed: the material footprint per capita and CO₂ emissions per capita, both in terms of consumption²⁷. The direction of the indicators is adjusted as part of the standardisation process such that the greater the material footprint and emissions, the greater the pressures on the planet and the closer the index moves towards 0. The value of this index ranges from 0 (worst score) to 1 (best score).

$$I_{pp} = \frac{(ECO-IMP1 + ECO-IMP2)/2}{100}$$

Step 5.

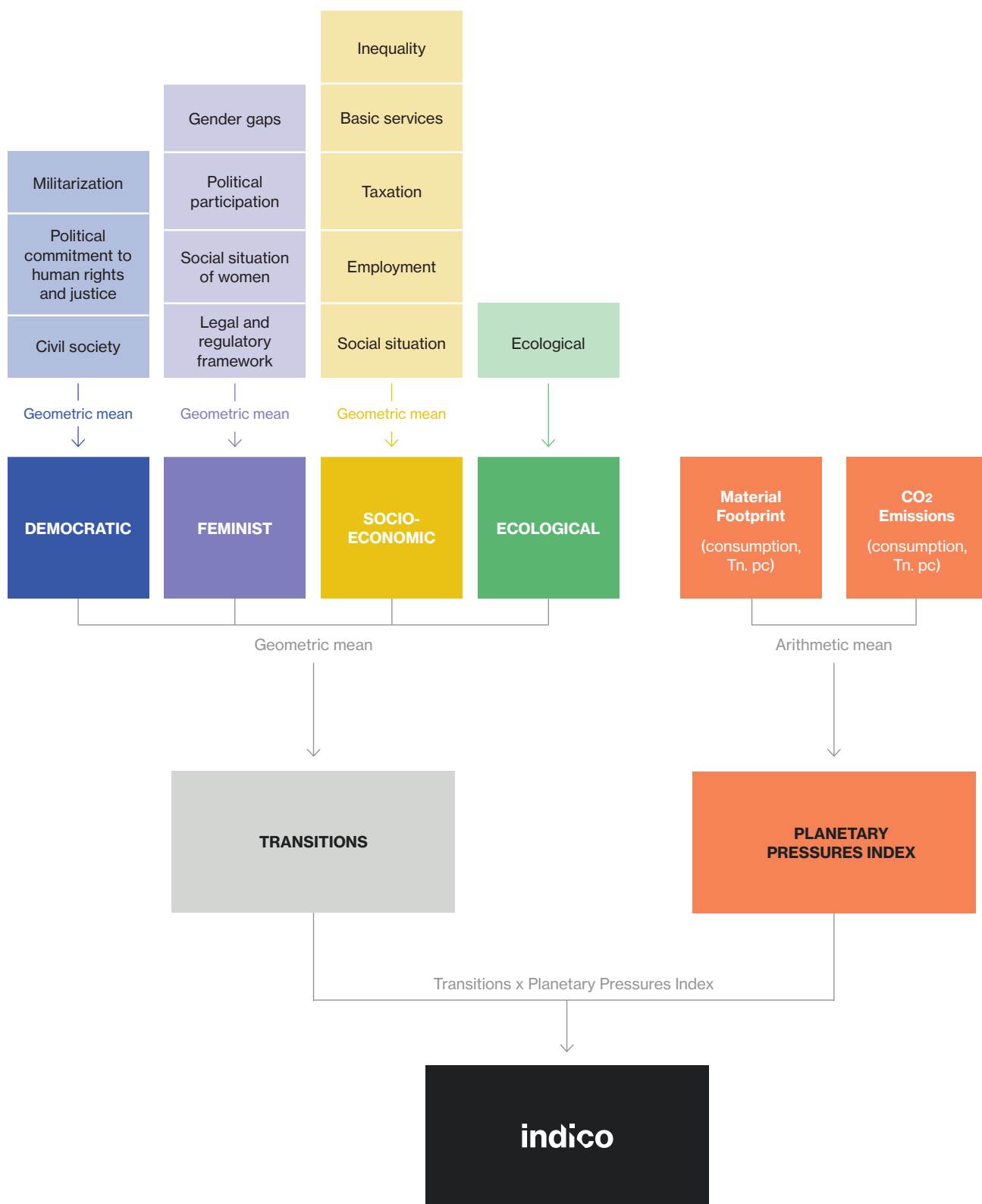
The Coherence Index is calculated by multiplying the aggregate of the transitions by the planetary pressures index. The higher the ecological pressures that countries exert on the planet, the higher the planetary pressures rate and, therefore, the lower the penalty they receive.

$$Indico = T * I_{pp}$$

As for weighting, the balanced weighting criterion has been maintained at all instances of Coherence Index aggregation (indicators, dimensions, transitions and planetary pressures index).

²⁷ This entails taking international trade into account, i.e. the material footprint and emissions associated with imports are included while those for exports are excluded.

Figure 5.1. Construction of the 2023 Coherence Index.



Source: own data.

The Coherence Index (Indico) is a tool designed to measure, evaluate and compare countries' commitment to sustainable, fair and equitable human development. We propose an alternative to the limited, hegemonic view of the indicators typically used to measure progress and development, particularly gross domestic product (GDP).

This is the third Coherence Index report, and this new version evaluates the performance of 153 countries.

This tool is intended to transform our way of understanding the world and guide the urgent transformations that today's world demands.

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