

Time distance monitoring of implementation of targets

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Test application for EU2020 targets by countries and free software tool

Monitoring implementation of targets is an integral part of policy making at many levels and in many domains. The innovation is that implementation of targets is described in two dimensions: static deviation from the line to target at a given point in time and S-time-deviation at a given level of the indicator. Describing the implementation of targets as leading or lagging in time against the line to well-known targets is a very useful application in the policy debate that enhances knowledge, giving data a value beyond spreadsheets. Expressed in time units, S-time-distance is easily understood by policy makers, managers, media and general public thus being an excellent presentation tool for policy analysis and debate. It can help us to form a new perception of the magnitude of the gap between the implementation and proclaimed targets for a given indicator as well as across more indicators.

We measure deviations in two dimensions. Firstly, one can measure the difference in variables at a given point in time. And secondly, discrepancies in time (either time lead or time lag) are measured. Monitoring implementation in time is like comparing train or bus arrivals with the timetable provided for each mode of transport. The statistical chart uses the same identifiers as Formula 1 on TV: drivers who score a minus at time distance are shown in green to signify that they are ahead in time.

The table for EU 28 countries for 2013 (or 2012) shows the results from 2010 on. Yet the summary results confirm the earlier conclusions. For the headline indicator employment rate 20 countries are behind the schedule, 11 of them had in 2013 values below those in 2010 starting year. For 11 countries there was no progress in the 2010-2013 period for employment rate. The earlier graph that contained also the worse years of the financial crisis showed even a more serious situation. The time distance method, either for monitoring or for benchmarking in the time perspective, brings the second dimension of deviations or disparities that the present state-of-the-art is neglecting.

For early leavers nine countries were in 2013 already better than their 2020 targets, this holds true for tertiary attainment for 10 countries; with only six countries being behind the schedule for both indicators. The headline indicator renewable energy also more countries are ahead of schedule than behind it, but with fewer cases that already reached the 2020 targets. R&D in GDP indicates a different picture, with 9 countries ahead and 16 countries behind the schedule; overall it is closer with the employment rate situation than with the other three indicators.

The average for EU28 S-time-distance deviations express the situation with being ahead or behind the track to 2020 targets in simple terms: employment rate is more than 3 years behind, R&D 1.2 years behind, renewably energy 0.6 years, early leavers 2.1 years and tertiary attainment 2.4 years, ahead of the line to the 2020 target.

Software for time distance monitoring of targets from your own data: Free web monitoring tool

For time distance monitoring of implementation of targets, as shown for examples of indicators for EU2020 and UN Millennium Development Goals, SICENTER developed on www.gaptimer.eu a software tool to facilitate interested users to use the method for their own data. The tool can be accessed on http://www.gaptimer.eu/s-t-d_monitoring_tool.html

- FULL TEXT: Time_distance_monitoring_of_implementation_of_targets.pdf