MEASURABLE TARGETS FOR ENFORCEMENT PERFORMANCE

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SUMMARY

One of the minimum criteria for a professional environmental enforcement process in the Netherlands is having a set of measurable targets for enforcement performance. It is a subject of continuous, but useless, debate whether these targets should be in terms of input (time, money), throughput (projects, procedures), output (inspections, enforcement actions) or outcome (compliance, environmental results). All these types of target have their own field of application. Quite what is the best type of target depends on the sort of activity and on the stakeholder, so in practice an inspectorate will combine all (four) types of target. Whatever target is set, it should be monitored in the performance phase, and it should be evaluated and improved so that new actions, priorities and targets can be set in the next planning phase.

1 INTRODUCTION

The minimum criteria for a professional enforcement process that have been agreed in the Netherlands require, amongst other things, that measurable targets be set for enforcement performance.

There are several different types of target and they are generally classified as either input, throughput, output or outcome targets. Often there is discussion about which type of target is best. Whilst politicians and the public are often only interested in the outcome, inspectorate managers feel they can only influence their own input and performance and so believe they should be judged on these criteria alone. How should this discussion be handled? This paper sketches a general approach to this issue. It is based on the report (available in Dutch only) “Meetbare doelstellingen” (Measurable targets) (L. Rings and M. Scholten).

2 THE FUNCTION OF TARGETS

Targets do not exist in isolation. They are part of the management process or management cycle of a professional organisation. That process of professional environmental enforcement is described in detail and set out in terms of minimum criteria in the Dutch project bearing the same name. See W. Klein, “Minimum criteria for a professional environmental enforcement process”. This control process is also described in clear terms in the sub-report entitled “Besturen met kengetallen” (Management by indicators) (J. Tholen and J. Wijnker).

Before an enforcement target can be formulated, the problem must first be defined (on the basis of an environmental analysis and risk analysis). Next, the corresponding enforcement task and activity should be identified. Depending on the type of enforcement task and the preciseness with which it is defined, an input, output, compliance or environmental target can then be formulated. Generally speaking, the more precisely the problem that is the subject of enforcement has been defined, the more precisely the enforcement task can be formulated and, consequently, the
more precise the target.

3 TYPES OF TARGET

The general classification of targets ranging from input to outcome can be specified as follows in relation to environmental enforcement:

- input targets;
- performance targets;
- compliance targets;
- environmental targets.

The first two types of target tell us something about the organisation itself: the effort made (number of hours) and the performance delivered (number of inspections carried out or number of sanctions imposed) by an enforcement organisation. With the aid of these targets, it is possible to measure an enforcement organisation’s efficiency. These targets fit in perfectly with the existing planning and control practice of the government.

The last two types of target tell us something about the effect of the enforcement actions on the target group (compliance behaviour) and on the environment (environmental effect). These targets are an indicator of the effectiveness of the enforcement actions (see Figure 2).

4 TARGET, ENFORCEMENT TASK AND STAKEHOLDER

No single type of target is either more or less important than any other. What is important is that a particular type of target is applied to a particular type of enforcement task and the manner of accountability (most) appropriate to that type of target. It is also important to know for which actor the target is formulated.

- The enforcement body wants to be able to do its work without interference and to a high level of accuracy and quality. This is best achieved by means of an input target specifying how much time and other resources are available.
The manager wants to manage his responsibilities well and as fully as possible with the resources available. This is best achieved with a performance target indicating what needs to be done.

The inspector, the judicial authorities and the minister responsible want to see conformity with standards and do not wish to be confronted with unexpected disasters or breaches of standards. This is best achieved with a compliance target indicating the risk in the event of non-compliance.

The citizens and government want the highest possible quality of living environment. This is best achieved with an effect target indicating the type and level of quality to be achieved.

5 SMART FORMULATION

In order to be effective, every form of (enforcement) target must be formulated in unambiguous terms and only capable of a single interpretation. In order to achieve this, enforcement targets should formulated in “SMART” terms. This means that the targets must be:

- Specific: The target must relate to a specific enforcement task, target group and/or regulation or (selection of) regulations.
- Measurable: The target must be measurable. This means that the target must be formulated in quantitative terms and that it is clear which elements are to be measured.
- Acceptable: The result set out in the target should be sufficiently acceptable to the organisation.
- Realistic: The organisation must be realistically able to meet the target.
- Timed: The target should have a set period within which the effort or performance is to be delivered, or within which the effect (compliance behaviour or environmental effect) is to be achieved.

6 CHOICE OF ENFORCEMENT TARGET

The choice of a particular enforcement target depends on the type of enforcement task and the preciseness with which that task is described. Generally speaking, the more precisely the problem that is the subject of enforcement is described, the more precisely the enforcement task can be formulated and, as a consequence, the more precise the target.

Enforcement tasks include, for instance:

- exploratory survey of current compliance behaviour, or of ways of influenc-
ing that behaviour or performing inspections;
— enforcement of specific laws and regulations, possibly further specified for certain target groups and topics;
— implementation of enforcement projects focusing on sectors, target groups, areas, topics or collaborative projects;
— comprehensive enforcement.

Each task may have a different object, and that object also determines the character of the measurable target. See Figure 3.

The tasks can be identified and specified according to the particular context in each country. In the case of the Netherlands, for example, a card entitled “Measurable enforcement targets” is used. This card provides the following details for each type of target:
— definition of the target;
— practical examples of the target;
— possibilities for use;
— parameters (user requirements) that apply to the definition of that target;
— examples of how the type of target in question can be formulated;
— overview of possible indicators used with the target.

7 REFERENCES

1 See Klein, Minimum Criteria For a Professional Environmental Enforcement Process, 7th INECE Conference Proceed-
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY


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