

SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

Organisation: Department for Transport
Title of SDAP: DfT Sustainable Development Action Plan 2008-09

SDAP Publication date: 17/07/2008
SDC Assessment date: 06/01/2009

Please see "SDAP assessment methodology paper" for background to the assessment process, and for full details of how the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) has assessed, scored and rated this SDAP at the following webpage: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/sdap-tracker.html>.

SUMMARY

Coverage

2/4

Rating

Strategic planning

7/12

Actions

5/12

Ownership, engagement and delivery

3/6

Monitoring, review and reporting

1/6

OVERALL

18/40

ISSUES AND RISKS

The overall rating of this SDAP indicates that the document has not fully articulated DfT's contribution towards the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy and the impacts DfT's business has on sustainable development more generally, although good links are made between the five sustainable development principles and DfT's core business. There is also some interesting work occurring around procurement in which DfT intends to look at categories of procurement spend in terms of sustainability risk, an example of good practice that should be shared with other departments.

A key area, which was not fully discussed in the SDAP, is the huge potential DfT has in influencing reductions in carbon emissions. While the SDC is aware of DfT's ongoing work around this agenda, this SDAP could have been used to highlight more specific examples, from encouraging the introduction of electric/low carbon vehicles to increasing the electrification of the rail network. The SDAP could also have explained further how their overarching approach to influencing carbon emission reductions is being targeted towards where the greatest impacts can be made.

DFT'S RESPONSE

"The Department is obviously disappointed with the overall 'Red' rating. The SDC assessment only reviews the content of the SDAP rather than the wider policy work of the department. DfT recognises the importance of reducing carbon emissions and has a substantial programme of work to help achieve the UK's climate change goals. This was not discussed in detail in the SDAP in order to avoid duplication with other published documents. The initiative SDC refer to in their summary on increasing rail electrification was not announced until after the SDAP was published so unfortunately could not be included. A Carbon Reduction Strategy for DfT will be published later this year which will provide further information on the actions DfT will undertake to reduce carbon emissions.

DfT will publish a new SDAP in 2009 and will take into account the comments in the assessment when drafting the new plan. In particular we will ensure that the extensive work DfT is doing on climate change is fully articulated". (DfT, March 2009).

| COVERAGE | | | | |
|---|--------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | <i>Score</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 1. Does the SDAP state clearly the period of time that it covers? | | | X | |
| 2. Is it clear how the SDAP relates to the wider departmental family, and is SDAP coverage of the departmental family adequate? | | | X | |
| STRATEGIC PLANNING | | | | |
| | <i>Score</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 3. Does the SDAP set out the organisation's strategy for contributing to the aims, objectives and commitments of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy? | | | X | |
| 4. Does the SDAP articulate the relevance of the five sustainable development principles to its core business, and set out how they are/will be mainstreamed and inform work? | | | X | |
| 5. Is it clear how the SDAP will contribute to the organisation's high-level strategic objectives, including any Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs)? | | | X | |
| 6. Does the SDAP have clear objectives, and does it articulate clearly how these objectives were selected and provide a rationale for any gaps e.g. in the coverage of core business areas? | | | X | |
| 7. Does the SDAP link to other corporate plans or strategies? | | | | X |
| 8. Does the SDAP include any commitment to work with other organisations or government bodies to deliver joint commitments, actions or initiatives? | | | X | |
| ACTIONS | | | | |
| | <i>Score</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 9. Does the SDAP articulate how the sustainable development principles and priorities are/will be integrated into its policy and decision making, set out specific actions to achieve this, and explain how these actions have been selected? | | | X | |
| 10. Does the SDAP include explicit actions to improve the sustainability of the organisation's procurement activity (linking to SPAP commitments where relevant), and explain how they have been selected? | | | | X |
| Does the SDAP contain specific actions which demonstrate how the organisation will drive forward the sustainability of its operations (linking to SOGE commitments where relevant), and explain how they have been selected? | | | X | |

| | | | |
|---|----------|----------|--|
| 12. Does the SDAP contain actions relating to people, such as actions to engage staff in sustainable development, develop their skills and capability to support delivery of the SDAP, and to improve their general well-being in the work place? | X | | |
| 13. Are the actions outcome-focused? | X | | |
| 14. Are the actions SMART? | | X | |

OWNERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

| | <i>Score</i> | | |
|--|--------------|----------|----------|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 15. Is it clear how the SDAP will be communicated to staff and stakeholders, and how the organisation will ensure they have the capability to put the SDAP's key messages to work? | | X | |
| 16. Are the governance arrangements for supporting delivery of the SDAP clearly identified (e.g. boards, working groups), and is it clear who has overall responsibility for its delivery? | X | | |
| 17. Has the SDAP been signed off by a Minister, Permanent Secretary or Chief Executive, and has s/he provided a foreword? | | | X |

MONITORING, REVIEW AND REPORTING

| | <i>Score</i> | | |
|---|--------------|----------|----------|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 18. Does the SDAP present links to the previous SDAP (where relevant) or to the historical context of sustainable development in the organisation (if this is the first SDAP that the organisation has produced)? | | X | |
| 19. Are the methods and structures for monitoring and reviewing the SDAP clearly identified (e.g. boards, working groups, stakeholder engagement), and is it clear who the findings will be reported to? | X | | |
| 20. Is it clear how the outcomes of internal SDAP monitoring/review will feed back into the SDAP process, including a commitment to update the SDAP within its period of coverage, where required? | X | | |