



The Food and Environment
Research Agency

Sustainable Development Action Plan

April 2009 – April 2011



Foreword from the Chief Executive



I am delighted to introduce The Food and Environment Research Agency's first Sustainable Development Action Plan. As a newly established Government agency, we can highlight the importance of sustainable development to our customers, partners and staff, from inception.

The Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) was formed on 1 April 2009, from the merger of two former agencies, the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) and the UK Government Decontamination Service (GDS), with former divisions of Defra, the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI), the Plant Varieties Rights Office and Seeds Division (PVS) and the Plant Health Division (PHD).

This new body benefits from the existing sustainable development programmes of our merger partners, with the most successful initiatives implemented and improved alongside new proposals throughout this action plan.

We've synergised our policies, science and emergency response capabilities, creating a more effective organisation through collaboration. The merger has also increased the strength, breadth and depth of our scientific capabilities.

We want this plan to be an exemplar to other organisations, producing innovative solutions to benefit our staff, local communities, and society at large. We've designed it as a roadmap for embedding sustainable development into our activities and values. It is a 'living' document, which is subject to review and adaptation in response to new challenges.

Throughout our work in the areas of wildlife, plant life, the food chain and the environment, it is essential that sustainability forms the bedrock of our organisation. So with this action plan, Fera has the opportunity to display leadership in sustainability, which we hope others will be inspired to follow.

Adrian Belton
Chief Executive

About The Food and Environment Research Agency

The Food and Environment Research Agency's overarching purpose is to support and develop a sustainable food chain, a healthy natural environment, and to protect the global community from biological or chemical risks. We do this by providing robust evidence, rigorous analysis and professional advice to Government, international organisations and the private sector.

Fera brings together expertise in:

- Policy issues – particularly relating to seed, plant and bee health.
- Inspection services – necessary for ensuring the protection of seeds, crops and horticulture.
- Multi disciplinary science – to rapidly diagnose threats, evaluate risk and inform policy in food and environmental areas.
- Responding to, and recovering from, unforeseen or emergency situations.

Fera has over 40,000 customers and 1,000 collaboration partners, spread over 102 countries. Our stakeholder base is made up from Government, academia, industry and commerce. While a significant proportion of Fera's work is UK based, it has European and global reach.

We embrace a broad range of scientific disciplines, and uniquely seek to integrate science with policy, regulation and inspection functions. This combination of functions gives rise to three distinct areas of responsibility:

- **Regulation, policy and risk**
Fera carries statutory responsibilities for delivering policy and inspectorate functions in relation to Plant Health, Bee Health, and Plant Varieties and Seeds. We also support policy development across Government, working closely with the lead authorities and agencies.
- **Research and assurance**
Fera provides robust scientific evidence and thorough analysis to support its public and private sector stakeholders. This research assists with both the strategic and day-to-day decisions they face.
- **Response and recovery**
Fera is an essential element of the country's capability to respond to, and recover from, emergency situations. We provide advice, guidance and support to those responsible for dealing with the consequences of an accidental or deliberate release of hazardous materials or chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials.

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Section 1: Our commitment to sustainable development

Fera wants to be an exemplar for sustainable development. The decisions and actions we take now can affect the future of our environment, food chain, wildlife and plant life. Consequently, this action plan supports the Government's sustainable development strategy *Securing the Future*.

As a new organisation, we have devoted considerable effort to defining our purpose, vision, strategic direction and values. A key part of this has involved looking ahead to future challenges, so that we contribute to sustainability, and are ourselves sustainable.

Our vision is that Fera both contributes to the Government's sustainable objectives, and factors sustainability into everything we do. By focusing on the five guiding principles and four shared priorities, as outlined in *Securing the Future*, we will endeavour to be a role model for sustainable development.

WORKING WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Fera's range of skills and expertise means we can benefit other Government departments by assisting them to meet new challenges. We are in a strong position to facilitate in a number of areas, given that our remit covers policy, regulation and risk, research and assurance, and response and recovery. Through our scientific work, we can help the following organisations build on their priorities and objectives, particularly in the areas of:

- Climate change (Department for Energy and Climate Change).
- Safer communities (Home Office).
- International poverty reduction (Department for International Development).
- Innovation and skills (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills).

FOUR SHARED PRIORITIES

As part of Defra, and in line with their Sustainable Development Action Plan, we are striving to make significant contributions to all their strategic priorities. Furthermore, as a major contributor to Defra's carbon footprint, we are also dedicated to improving our operational performance. In so doing, we adhere to the four shared priorities for sustainable development, as set out in *Securing the Future*:

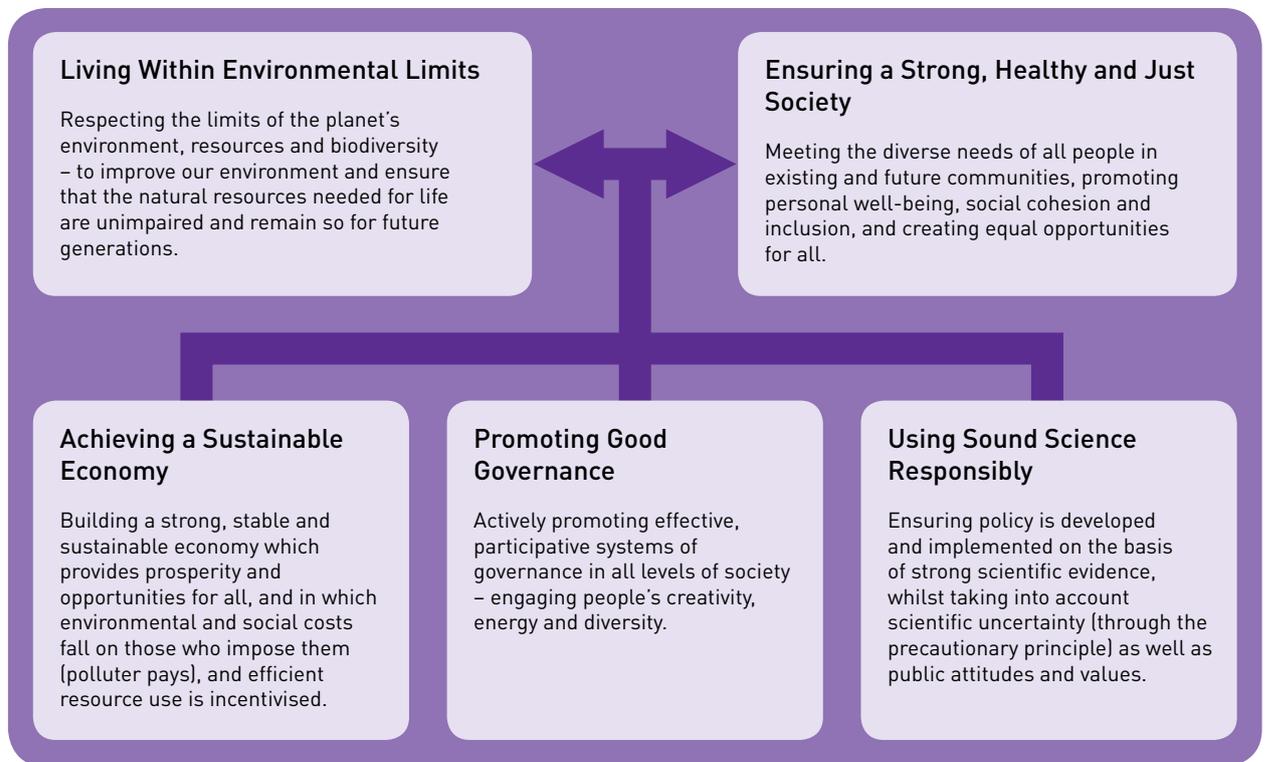
- Sustainable consumption and production.
- Climate change and energy.
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement.
- Creating sustainable communities and a fairer world.

In particular we endorse Defra's strategic priorities to:

- Secure a healthy natural environment for us all, and deal with environmental risk.
- Promote a sustainable low carbon and resource efficient economy.
- Ensure a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply.

FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The five guiding principles, as outlined in *Securing the Future*, are fundamental to many of Fera's activities, including the environment, food, communities and public safety.



All five principles are addressed through our work with other Defra agencies and Government departments. For example, in addressing the principle of 'using sound science responsibly', we have strengthened links through various networks, including the 'Inter Lab Forum'. This is a network composed of top laboratories and agencies, such as the VLA, CEFAS, Health & Safety Executive, Health Protection Agency, and Animal Health. By collaborating on scientific work and sharing knowledge, we hope to increase expertise and sustainability.

Fera is also working with other Defra agencies to enhance sustainable procurement. We participate in monthly Defra estate meetings as part of the Sustainable Workplace Management contract. Furthermore, we have established communication networks between the CEO's of Defra's agencies and departments in line with the principle of 'promoting good governance'. Each is committed to working together to promote best practice and develop ways of embedding sustainable development throughout the organisation.

ABOUT THIS ACTION PLAN

Fera was formed from the merger of the Central Science Laboratory, Government Decontamination Service, Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate, Plant Varieties Rights Office and Seeds Division and Plant Health Division. As a result, this action plan has emerged from extensive work on sustainability undertaken by all these units. It builds on previous Sustainable Development Action Plans, and recognises the unique challenges of our new organisation.

This current action plan is a key strategic document, providing a framework for us to embed sustainability into our processes and our thinking. The plan for 2009-11 reflects our views at our foundation, as work on developing Fera as an agency is still underway. Consequently, this action plan is a living document, subject to continual review.

Fera's Sustainable Development Action Plan has been developed alongside other key strategic documents, to ensure that sustainability informs the actions, principles and priorities of our organisation. Those documents created in conjunction with this plan are:

- Business Plan 2009/10.
- Framework Document 2009.
- Strategic Direction and Corporate Plan 2009/10 – 2011/12.

SUPPORT

This document has been produced through the collaborative efforts of Fera's leadership, a wide pool of Fera staff, and Defra's sustainability team. We have worked together to ensure that our action plan supports and enhances Defra's approach to sustainable development, and the principles of *Securing the Future*.

A prime example of a sustainability programme we have already initiated is the Sustainable Workplace Management (SWM) facilities contract. It commenced in April 2009 and is delivered by Interserve Facilities Management, who work with Fera to support this action plan. It is a Defra-wide contract, which will allow a co-ordinated approach to facilities management across all the organisation's estates.

An action group on sustainable development, including Fera staff and business representatives, will facilitate implementation of this action plan by promoting sustainability and initiating improvements. The CEO and Directors will demonstrate consistent commitment to the plan by constantly monitoring its progress and addressing any issues that reach board level.

Section 2: Why enhance sustainable development?

Fera's approach to sustainable development can make a significant contribution to the future, particularly through our work with food, the environment, wildlife and plant life. There are also clear benefits to increasing our sustainability in line with the Government's proposals in *Securing the Future*. These include:

- Meeting Government commitments.
- Supporting Defra.
- Improving competitiveness.
- Enhancing our reputation.
- Reducing operating costs.
- Engaging staff.

By embedding sustainable development, Fera will adhere to the criteria outlined in *Securing the Future*, and meet Government targets. Our work in this area will also support our sponsor department, Defra, with their own sustainability commitments.

A positive approach to sustainability will enable us to make effective policies, which increases our competitiveness in the eyes of our customers. It will also enhance our reputation, particularly as the Government agency responsible for areas such as the environment and food.

Furthermore, increased sustainability will have a positive impact on our operating costs, as it will enable us to work more efficiently. It will also encourage greater staff engagement, endorsing a better work-life balance, flexible working practices and staff well-being.

Were we to ignore the significance of integrating sustainable development within Fera, we risk Government objectives, Defra's strategic priorities and our own ability to make useful contributions to the future.

Section 3: Building upon previous action plans

The aims, ideas and actions outlined in this plan have developed out of the considerable work on sustainability undertaken by our merger partners. In particular, this document proceeds from the previous two Central Science Laboratory Sustainable Development Action Plans (2006-07 and 2007-09).

The current document has been fully realigned to meet the exact needs of the new Fera agency. We have learnt from the challenges and successes of previous actions plans, and utilised the experience of our merger partners to enhance sustainability throughout Fera. We are committed to modifying earlier plans in order to create the most effective guidelines for embedding sustainable development throughout our new organisation.

The 2007-09 Central Science Laboratory Sustainable Development Action Plan provided Fera with a sound basis upon which to develop our approach to sustainability. This document has been reviewed twice. The summaries below are from assessments by the Sustainable Development Commission in November 2007, and the internal Central Science Laboratory review undertaken in March 2009, respectively:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REPORT – NOVEMBER 2007

	Score	Rating
Coverage	3/4	Yellow
Strategic Planning	9/12	Green
Actions	9/12	Green
Ownership, Engagement and Delivery	2/6	Red
Monitoring, Review and Reporting	3/6	Yellow
OVERALL	26/40	Yellow

The Sustainable Development Commission rated the Central Science Laboratory's 2007-09 action plan as a positive **26 out of 40**. In the light of this assessment, Fera's Sustainable Development Action Plan 2009-11 addresses areas where we can improve on previous plans and become a role model for sustainability. In particular, the present document aims to stress the Chief Executive's ownership of the plan and commitment to delivering its measures.

CENTRAL SCIENCE LABORATORY'S 2007-09 INTERNAL REVIEW – MARCH 2009

A summary of the internal review follows, with the full report available on Fera's website:

Progress against actions

Percentage of actions completed or on target: **80%**

Average impact rating of all the actions that are complete or on target: **3 = Good impact**

The impact rating (1-4) is a self-assessment of the contribution to sustainable development priority areas.

Embedding sustainability

This chart indicates the extent to which sustainable development is embedded (*out of: 'Starting out / Some Progress / On Course / Fully Integrated'*):

Policies	People	Operations	Governance, Monitoring and Reporting
On Course	On Course	On Course	On Course

Sustainable Procurement

Establishing the level of sustainability the organisation has reached against the five themes of the **Flexible Framework**:

People	Policy, Strategy and Communications	Procurement Process	Engaging Suppliers	Measurements and Results
Level 2: EMBED	Level 2: EMBED	Level 2: EMBED	Level 2: EMBED, (some Level 3)	Level 1: FOUNDATION

Present aims

Sustainable development has been progressed in the past year through the following initiatives:

- A number of key scientific projects have been completed with outstanding contributions to sustainable development.
- Mechanisms for identifying impact on sustainable development have been implemented in all new scientific projects.
- Technology for significant carbon reduction has been implemented across the estate.
- Awareness of sustainability and the action plan has been increased throughout the organisation, especially at board level.

Future challenges

By implementing the following changes, we hope to embed sustainability further:

- Establishing a fully integrated sustainable development structure within the new Fera agency.
- Effectively measuring the sustainability performance of the procurement process.
- Promoting internally and externally the positive work on sustainable development being undertaken by Fera.

Key issues

The work Fera undertakes has been positively affected by the following:

- Enhanced support from the Chief Executive and the Board, encouraging Fera to be a leader in sustainable development.
- Familiarity among Fera staff of the importance of sustainable development, as sustainability already affects much of the scientific work undertaken by our organisation.

Lessons learned

We hope to take the following forward in the next action plan:

- Targets will need to be SMARTer (see section 5.6), with more milestones in place.
- Objectives and targets will be more overarching and set at a strategic level, to facilitate more wide-ranging schemes.



Section 4: Fera's Sustainable Development Management Programme

Fera is committed to being a leader in sustainable development. We will achieve this by embedding sustainability through all areas of our organisation. By effectively designing the structure and responsibilities of the agency from its foundation, we will implement clear accountability and reporting mechanisms for sustainability throughout all levels of Fera.

These initiatives will be led by the Chief Executive and the Executive Directors, who recognise the importance of their roles in increasing sustainability within Fera. These aims will also be reflected in the newly created Fera Sustainable Development Management Programme, with the responsibilities and reporting lines for progressing sustainability depicted in the organisational chart below.

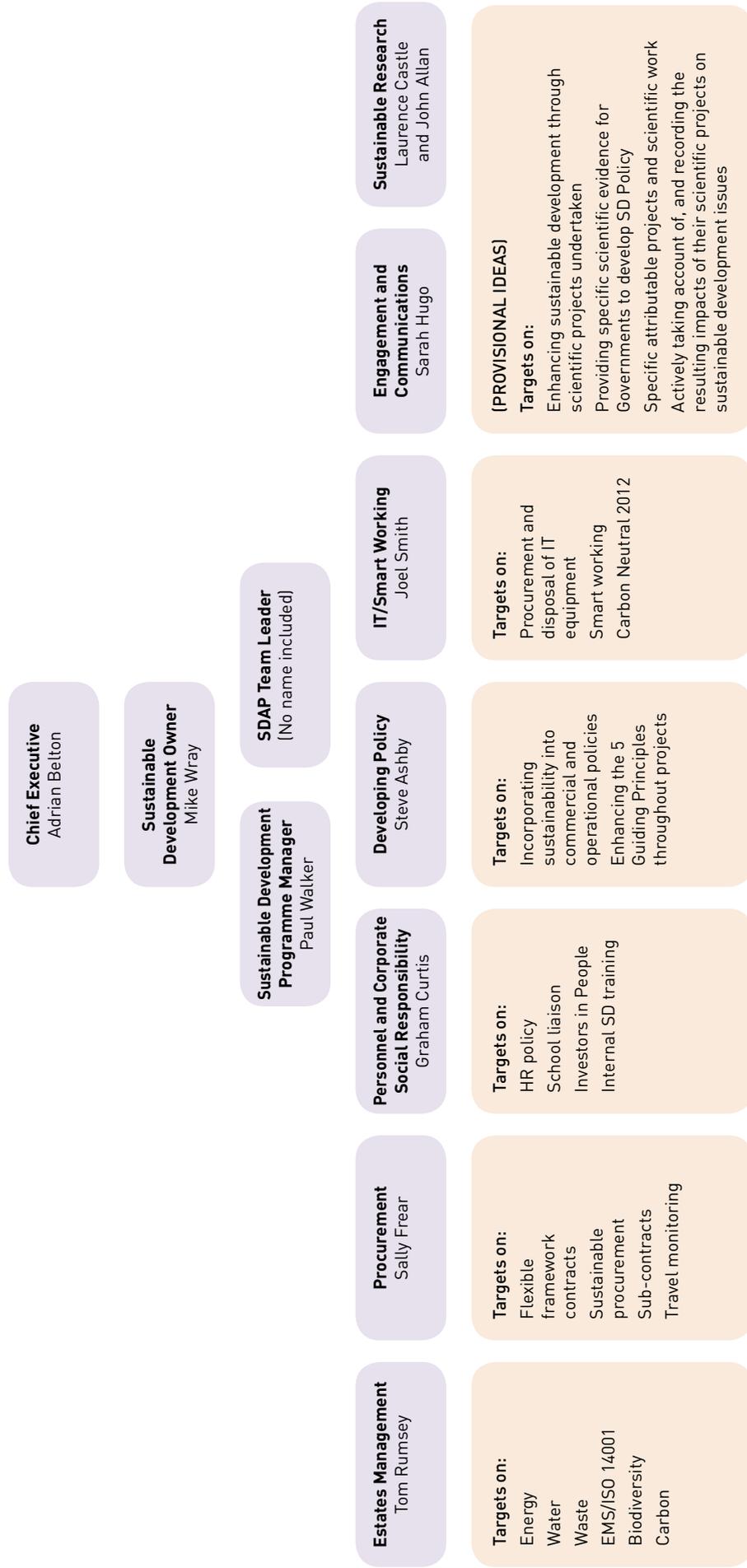
The key roles are:

- **Chief Executive:** The Chief Executive is fully committed to embedding sustainable development throughout Fera and taking a proactive lead in ensuring the action plan is followed.
- **Fera's Sustainable Development Owner:** Also the Fera Director of Operations, this role requires overseeing sustainability across all areas of the agency.
- **Sustainable Development Programme Manager:** Responsible for overseeing collaboration between the Sustainable Development Action Plan Team Leader and Project Managers.
- **Sustainable Development Action Plan Project Managers:** Specific to each section of this action plan, they have responsibility for reaching the targets established, and putting measures in place to achieve these. They can request resources from the Programme Manager and Sustainable Development Owner when necessary, and are responsible for progressing and embedding sustainable development in their specific areas.
- **Sustainable Development Action Plan Team Leader:** They work across Fera to generate internal and external reports on sustainable development performance, and monitor progress on this action plan.

As well as these internal roles within Fera, we will contribute to, and progress, work in all the sustainable development areas of Defra and other organisations. In particular, this will involve working closely with the Sustainable Development Commission, non-departmental public bodies, Defra's new Sustainable Workplace Management contractor, European committees, key suppliers and clients.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
01	Designate Specific individuals for each of the SDAP Target Areas, in order to provide clear roles and responsibilities to progress sustainability.	Sustainable Development Owner	August 2009	The appointment of responsibilities to specific individuals.	Establishes the structure and responsibilities within Fera to increase the impact and progression of sustainable development as a whole throughout Fera, encompassing all of the 4 Shared Priorities.

Fera's Sustainable Development Management Programme



Section 5: Embedding sustainable development throughout Fera

This action plan sets out how Fera can become an exemplary agency within Government for enhancing sustainable development. By establishing the following processes through all areas of our organisation, we hope to take account of, and advance, sustainable development in proactive and effective ways.

In this document we have provided detailed aims, targets and objectives for each of the main business sectors of Fera. The areas addressed include:

- Developing policies and sustainable research.
- Sustainable operations on the Fera estate.
- Sustainable procurement.
- Corporate social responsibility.
- Fera as a sustainable employer.
- IT and smart working.
- Engagement and communications.



5.1: Developing policies and sustainable research

Fera is responsible for providing expert scientific research for developing Government policy, particularly in the areas of the environment, wildlife, food chain, plant and bee health. Much of the work we currently undertake already addresses issues of sustainable development inherently. But by implementing further changes, we hope to ensure that our research and policy development will proactively progress sustainability.

The following sections focus on how Fera will develop policies in the light of the four shared priorities and five guiding principles, established in *Securing the Future*. By highlighting specific examples, we hope to show how the scientific work that we undertake in the future can more clearly promote sustainable development.

5.1.1: DEVELOPING POLICY

Fera has a key role in developing policies that directly affect the sustainability of the rural economy, food production, and the environment throughout the UK and EU. Our policy process is evidence based, and always includes an impact assessment founded upon an economic evaluation. This means that all policies are designed to protect and encourage economic activity and minimise burdens on industry. In addition, we are striving to improve our performance in this area by better use of risk assessment.

It is essential that all policies are properly monitored in line with this action plan. To guarantee this, we will ensure that key members of staff attend vital committees and meetings. They will be required to attend:

- EU Standing Committee.
- Chief Officers of Plant Health Services Meetings.
- European Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO).

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
02	Have influence in key policy fora and provide advice on pests and diseases associated with trade facilitation.	Head of Policy Programme	April 2011	Pest Risk Analyses developed and used to promote policy decisions.	Improves protection of Natural Resources and the Environment (4SP) through policies that allow more efficient targeting of activity and that support sustainable communities by reducing burden on industry.
03	Use evidence from risk assessments to avoid the need for regulatory actions.	Head of Inspectorates Programme	April 2010	Evaluation of impact of risk assessment. Examples of better targeted activity.	Improves protection of Natural Resources and the Environment (4SP) through more efficient targeting of activity and supports sustainable communities by reducing burden on industry.

5.1.2: ADDRESSING THE SHARED PRIORITIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Fera is currently implementing new initiatives designed to keep the four shared priorities and five guiding principles to the fore in our scientific projects. For example, every new research project now requires a Project Initiation Document, completed by the Project Manager and signed off by the Senior Responsible Officer.

This document contains all high-level requirements for specific projects, and has to be completed before any work can be undertaken. It references the shared priorities and guiding principles directly, as the Project Managers must state which ones the project impacts before it can be signed off.

All personnel involved in completing the Project Initiation Documents will be provided with training on the key areas of sustainable development. These include the Programme Managers, Senior Responsible Officers and the Project Assurance Officers. Regular completion of these documents ensures that the significance of sustainable development is consistently revisited by Fera staff.

To further emphasise the importance of sustainability throughout the lifetime of our scientific projects, we are currently looking to implement a system of post-project evaluation. This will assess whether the shared priorities and guiding principles have been addressed in line with Project Initiation Documents. An electronic means of monitoring these evaluations is in development. It will enhance sustainability by assessing the impact of Fera's scientific work, and highlighting how we can progress in future projects.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
04	Provide training on the 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles in context of Sustainable Development and the Project Initiation Document (PID) to all Project Managers, Senior Responsible Officers and Project Assurance Officers that are involved in creating and signing off the PID's.	Head of Organisational Development	November 2009 March 2010	Identify all relevant individuals to be trained. Completed Training Records.	Training will provide effective consideration and implementation of all of the 4 Guiding Principles and 5 Shared Priorities throughout projects undertaken by Fera.
05	Adapt the electronic Project Initiation Document (PID) to ensure that the 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles are included as a required field of entry before it can be submitted for sign off. Aiding SD to be embedded throughout Fera's science work.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	December 2009 April 2010	Generation and issue the specification of changes for the PID to IT, in order to integrate into the PID software. Initiation of the updated electronic records in the PID.	Will impact on sustainable development by ensuring that the 4 Guiding Principles and 5 Shared Priorities are directly considered and included in new projects.
06	Embed a post project evaluation process for assessment of completed scientific work on the 4SP and 5GP.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	April 2010	Creation of post project evaluation reports including lessons learned.	Will enable Fera to assess how effective its projects have been in enhancing the specific areas of sustainable development and its direct impact on the 4 Guiding Principles and 5 Shared Priorities.

5.1.3: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

Fera is undertaking significant scientific research to address the challenges facing the UK and international communities from climate change. Our research will be funded internally through our 'Seedcorn Programme', and will enable us to obtain a better understanding of climate change adaptation in terms of land use across the country.

This project contributes to Defra's departmental strategic objectives and the shared principle of adapting to climate change. It will study which crops can most effectively be produced as a result of differing environmental conditions caused by changes in the climate. In making a positive and necessary contribution to research in this area, the programme enhances Fera's role as an exemplar on sustainable consumption and production.

We are also in the process of developing a Climate Change Network, which will draw together all expert scientific evidence and knowledge from across Fera on climate change and adaptation. This action plan has set a target whereby the Climate Change Network will support project proposals for at least two climate change adaptation bids. By collating this information we can support further projects in the future, which in turn will progress sustainable development in this area.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
07	Invest Seedcorn funds in a Project on Climate Change Adaptation and its resulting land use.	Head of Evidence and Analysis	April 2010	Provision of a final report for a project that helps to address the effect of climate change.	Results of the project will provide strong scientific evidence and knowledge on which to base strategies (5GP) for UK and international Climate Change Adaptation and Energy (4SP) policies or techniques.
08	Develop further the Climate Change Network and provide evidence for supporting bids for 2 new climate change adaptation projects.	Climate Change Network Co-ordinator	April 2011	Project Proposals Workshops Website Generated Reports	Promoting and developing scientific knowledge to further advance the strong scientific evidence on which to base strategies (5GP) for UK Climate Change Adaptation and Energy (4SP) policies or techniques.



5.1.4: NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

A wide range of scientific projects undertaken by Fera already emphasise the importance of protecting and enhancing natural resources and the environment. During 2009-11, two new programmes are being initiated. The first will research the control and eradication of Phytophthora disease, which will help to protect trees, plants and heath land. The second will implement a 'Healthy Bees' plan to monitor, protect and improve the health of honey bees in England and Wales.

The Phytophthora programme is in its infancy, having just been initiated by the publication of this action plan. Over the five years of its duration, it will significantly benefit natural resource protection and environmental enhancement. The success of this programme will be measured by the number of sites that are cleared of Rhododendron and the Phytophthora disease.

The programme's Critical Success Factors will provide clear and quantifiable targets. Over 2009-11, this will include clarifying precise and measurable annual targets, which will be updated by the time this action plan is reviewed. The success of sustainability impacts can then be fully reported in the light of this information.

The Honey Bee research programme aims to increase the number of healthy bees in the UK. This will in turn have wide-ranging effects upon the country's biodiversity, and is a key factor in environmental enhancement and natural resource protection. Both these new initiatives stress the importance of sustainable development through all aspects of their research and scientific work.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
09	Initiate the Phytophthora Programme by establishing annual targets in the Critical Success Factors, relating specifically to the number of sites surveyed and the number of sites cleared to eradicate Rhododendron.	Head of Policy	April 2010	Target for number of sites surveyed within the Critical Success Factors.	These will directly improve the Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement (4SP) by reducing the presence of the Phytophthora disease that would otherwise be detrimental to UK trees and biodiversity.
10	Implement the first stage of the 'Healthy Bees' plan, in order to enhance the healthy bee population with resulting improvements on the UK's natural environment.	Head of Policy	March 2011	Increasing the number of beekeepers registered on BeeBase. Reducing in-season colony losses.	Through improving conditions for the honey bee population this will beneficially impact on Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement, and also Sustainable Production (4SP) indirectly through the cross pollination that the bees activities have on UK agriculture and biodiversity as a whole.

5.1.5: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

As Fera includes the Government Decontamination Service, our emergency response and recovery role has a key impact on sustainable communities. We provide advice and guidance on the decontamination of buildings, infrastructure, and the environment, affected by releases of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials.

Additionally, in dealing with these incidents we provide access to practical remediation and decontamination services in support of local authorities and the emergency services. This work enables communities to return to being sustainable and prosperous as soon as possible after incidents.

Fera will increase their positive impact on sustainable communities during 2009-11 by investigating how the specialist suppliers and routine business of the Government Decontamination Service Framework impacts the environment. This will enable us to focus on sustainability throughout our emergency response and recovery activities.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
11	Report on how the routine business of GDS specialist supplier Framework impacts on the environment.	Head of Emergency Response & Recovery Programme	April 2010	Annual reports Management Information	Improving Sustainable Communities by ensuring incidents are dealt with effectively so that communities can get back to normal as quickly as possible.

5.1.6: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Fera is already leading the way with regards to sustainable consumption and production. We currently manage the CropMonitor® website. This is an externally accessible website which provides collated information from in-season monitoring of pests and diseases. CropMonitor® identifies specific locations, and provides data and results from wider expert scientific research into crop pests and disease.

This website provides valuable information to farmers and other land users on incidence and severity of pests and diseases. They can then make informed decisions based on current risk, and the response to threats can be proportionate, optimising commercial and environmental outcomes. This provides a clear example of how Fera is leading the way in providing expert advice to external parties to aid sustainable consumption and production.

In order to make this programme more effective, Fera aims to improve the user-friendliness and capabilities of CropMonitor®. To assess whether this is successful, we will monitor the usage rate of the website, and target an increase of 36% on the previous year by April 2010. This will enable more farmers and other end users to generate sustainable yields, improving development in this area of sustainability.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
12	Increase uptake of the CropMonitor® website by 36% on April 2009, through developing further and making user-friendlier for farmers, advisors and other users.	Head of Crop & Food Security Programme	April 2010 March 2011	Improvements in place. Usage increased by 36%.	This will result in an improvement in the efficiency of crop production due to wider knowledge and information on current pests and diseases, which in turn has a direct impact on Sustainable Production (4SP).

5.2: Sustainability on the Fera estate

With offices and laboratories located across the country, Fera has responsibility for the sustainability of an extensive estate. We are aware that our estates and operations have a significant impact on sustainable development, from the business travel of our Inspectors, to the water usage within our laboratories. By promoting new sustainable technologies and enhancing the biodiversity of our estate, we can have a positive impact on sustainability.

Significant work was already underway prior to the formation of the new Fera agency, enhancing sustainable development on the estates of each individual merger partner. Fera will continue this good work by implementing stepped progression and setting even more challenging targets.

We are working in close partnership with the new Sustainable Workplace Management contractor and Defra's Built Environment Sustainability Team. Fera aims to pro-actively enhance sustainable development in the running of all our estates and operations. We will strive to achieve, address and surpass the targets set in the Sustainable Operations on Government Estates Targets.

These targets can be found at: www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/gov/estates/targets.htm

Each of the following sections will outline how we will exceed the required targets, enabling Fera to become a leader of sustainable development on Government estates. We recognise the need to progress sustainability across all areas of the estate's management. For example, we are striving to make operations as efficient as possible with regards to energy performance and natural resource protection, as outlined below (see section 5.2.2).

Fera recognises that our estate accounts for a significant proportion of the sustainability impacts of the Defra agencies. This is particularly due to the resulting carbon emissions from energy and water usage in our analytical laboratory processes. Fera will prioritise these significant areas of estate management.

We will also focus on areas identified as requiring improvement in connection with performance against the Sustainable Operations on Government Estates Targets. Within this current plan we will prioritise areas that produce high impact results, including waste and carbon emissions, in order to achieve greater improvements in our sustainable performance. By monitoring these developments, Fera can continually identify the next significant actions to improve sustainability.



5.2.1: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Fera has been striving to improve our estate management from our inception. Our sites at Cambridge, York and Gloucester already have fully established Environmental Management Systems that are certified to ISO 14001. These systems ensure environmental performance is monitored, measured and controlled across the sites. They are the driving force for many of the sustainability issues affecting the running of Fera estate operations.

There are currently two separate environmental systems, one for the Cambridge site, and one for the York and Gloucester sites. These were specific to the Plant Varieties Rights Office and Seeds Division and Central Science Laboratory before they merged to form the new Fera agency.

To achieve a more cohesive and effective Environmental Management System, Fera will amalgamate and extend the scope of its current systems. This will facilitate operations on all Fera's independently owned sites, and also take account of environmental impacts resulting from field workers and out-station activities.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
13	Amalgamate the previous PVS and CSL EMS's into a single Fera EMS certified to ISO 14001.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	ISO14001 Certification for single joined up EMS.	Effective system for identifying, monitoring and improving impacts on site sustainability (Mainly Climate Change & Energy, Natural Resource Protection and Sustainable Consumption & Procurement).
14	Expand the scope of the EMS to include for all outstations and field-workers activities.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	September 2010	EMS documentation and procedures covering all Fera activities.	Effective system for identifying, monitoring and improving impacts on site sustainability (Mainly Climate Change & Energy, Natural Resource Protection and Sustainable Consumption & Procurement).
15	Externally certify the Fera EMS, with expanded scope, to the ISO 14001 Standard.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2011	ISO14001 certification for EMS with scope covering all Fera activities.	Effective system for identifying, monitoring and improving impacts on sustainability (Mainly Climate Change & Energy, Natural Resource Protection and Sustainable Consumption & Procurement).

5.2.2: CARBON MANAGEMENT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Fera is dedicated to making a positive contribution to reducing Defra's carbon footprint and using energy more efficiently. As a result, we are working closely with the new Sustainable Workplace Management contractor, and have developed a comprehensive plan for improving the energy efficiency of our estate operations.

Our latest initiatives build upon the positive work that is already in place across Fera. We are in the process of identifying the most beneficial opportunities for investment, and establishing a new phase of carbon management improvements. As a result, the actions listed for carbon management in this plan are a combination of long-term and short-term targets, which will be added to and updated during 2009-11.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
16	Confirm location strategy to reduce overall estate by 2010.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	Location Strategy in place.	Strategy will establish the foundations to reduce carbon emissions and therefore the UK's Shared Priority of Climate Change and Energy. It will also impact on the SOGE target of striving to become Carbon Neutral.
17	Formulate space utilisation strategy and review flexible / modern working solutions in conjunction with location strategy.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	Space utilisation strategy in place.	Reduced estate and rationalisation will have a significant impact on the reduction of carbon emissions generated and therefore the UK's Shared Priority of Climate Change and Energy. It will also impact on the SOGE target of striving towards becoming Carbon Neutral.
18	50% increase in the supply of electricity from renewable sources used in the Defra Lab estate to help reduce the impact climate change associated with electricity use.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	March 2011	50% increase in the supply of electricity from renewable sources used in the Defra Lab estate.	Will have a significant impact on reducing Fera's carbon emissions, helping to address Climate Change & Energy (4SP). Also aiding the Energy Efficiency / Carbon Neutral areas of the SOGE Targets.
19	Implementation of behavioural change programme to improve staff awareness and encourage positive environmental change.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	December 2009 April 2010	Programme implementation plan in place. Behavioural change programme in place.	Increased knowledge of sustainability issues and attitudes by Fera staff will impact on all areas of the 4SP's, especially Climate Change & Energy, Sustainable Consumption, and Sustainable Communities.
20	Implementation of large site energy efficiency programme.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	Large site energy efficiency programme in place.	Direct improvements and reduction on Climate Change & Energy (4SP) and Energy Efficiency / Carbon Neutral (SOGE).
21	Implement roll out of voltage optimisation technology at highest electricity consuming sites to reduce unnecessary energy use.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	March 2011	Voltage optimisation technology in place at highest electricity consuming sites.	Improved efficiency of electrical usage will result in reduced carbon emissions resulting from savings on electrical generation. This will directly impact on Climate Change & Energy (4SP) and Energy Efficiency / Carbon Neutral (SOGE).

5.2.3: WATER

Fera is aware that we use a large amount of water, particularly within our laboratories. Therefore, we are dedicated to reducing water usage within all our projects and across our estate. We will assess and reduce our use of potable water over 2009-11, in order to have a positive impact on sustainable consumption and production, and on natural resources.

We are currently investigating a range of new initiatives for managing water consumption across the Fera estate. These include reducing water usage from the washroom facilities, and installing and utilising rainwater harvesting systems.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
22	Implementation of large site water efficiency programme focusing on laboratory operations and activities to reduce water usage.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	Water efficiency programme in place.	Reduced water usage will impact on improving Sustainable Consumption and Production (4SP), and also Water Consumption SOGE Targets.
23	Implementation of washroom in a box concept, resulting in generic water efficient fittings utilised in washrooms.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	August 2009 April 2010 March 2011	Completed wash room survey. Completed scoping study report. Roll out across Fera.	Reduced water usage will impact on improving Sustainable Consumption and Production (4SP), and also Water Consumption SOGE Targets.
24	Implementation of low water cleaning solutions to reduce water use associated with cleaning activities.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	June 2009	Cleaning solutions implemented.	Reduced water usage will impact on improving Sustainable Consumption and Production (4SP), and also Water Consumption SOGE Targets.
25	Implementation of estate wide rainwater harvesting strategy and programme.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	March 2011	Strategy and programme in place.	Reduced mains water usage will impact on improving Sustainable Consumption and Production (4SP), and also Water Consumption SOGE Targets.
26	Set up water saving technology forum with suppliers.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2009	Forum in place.	Reduced water usage will impact on improving Sustainable Consumption and Production (4SP), and also Water Consumption SOGE Targets.
27	Active participation in the design process of projects to ensure water minimisation technologies are incorporated.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	Ongoing	Participation where appropriate.	Reduced water usage will impact on improving Sustainable Consumption and Production (4SP), and also Water Consumption SOGE Targets.

5.2.4: WASTE

Fera is aware of the detrimental impact the use of non-sustainable resources have on our environment. We are committed to improving our approach to waste disposal, by reducing the quantity of waste generated and utilising sustainable methods of disposal. This will have wider benefits, as it will decrease costs and reduce negative impact on surrounding communities and landscapes.

Due to the scientific work undertaken at our Fera laboratories, the nature of the waste generated differs from that of other Defra and Government department sites. There are also specialist disposal requirements enforced on us by science project licences. These points have been considered in our current initiatives for reducing waste across the Fera estate.

The various scientific processes and general estate operations undertaken across the Fera estate results in over thirty separate waste streams, containing a complex mix of materials. These range from plant and food specimens, to fluorescent tubes and chemical agents. Currently there is a significant percentage of waste being disposed of as hazardous material through unsustainable disposal methods, due to requirements of scientific licences or the nature of the material.

These processes and requirements result in complex waste procedures. However, they also provide opportunities for Fera staff to integrate the waste management system into scientific procedures. This in turn will help to identify and progress more sustainable routes of waste treatment and disposal.



No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
28	Conduct a waste analysis exercise to identify major waste streams, and the implementation of a waste strategy, particularly concerning laboratory produced hazardous waste streams.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	March 2010	Waste analysis completed and strategy in place.	Identifying potential avenues for waste minimisation across Fera will benefit Sustainable Consumption and Production and also Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement through using less raw materials and requiring less land for disposal. Also impacts on the Waste Arisings & Recycling within the SOGE Targets.
29	Implementation of product packaging strategy to reduce unnecessary waste arisings associated with packaging materials.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	March 2010	Packaging strategy in place.	Benefits Sustainable Consumption and Production and also Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement through using less raw materials and requiring less land for disposal. Also impacts on the Waste Arisings & Recycling within the SOGE Targets.
30	Utilise waste in 'waste to energy' Micro CHP initiatives where appropriate to help reduce waste sent to landfill.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	December 2010	Waste to energy initiatives in place.	Benefits Sustainable Consumption and Production and also Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement by directing waste away from landfill. Also impacts on the Waste Arisings & Recycling within the SOGE Targets.
31	Review national Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) and implement MRF strategy to increase proportion of waste recovered.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	Review completed and strategy in place.	Benefits Sustainable Consumption and Production and also Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement by directing waste away from landfill. Also impacts on the Waste Arisings & Recycling within the SOGE Targets.
32	Investigate recycling routes for any streams which fall outside MRF system.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	March 2010	Recycling routes identified.	Benefits Sustainable Consumption and Production and also Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement by directing waste away from landfill. Also impacts on the Waste Arisings & Recycling within the SOGE Targets.
33	Installation of additional composting facilities at suitable sites.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2012	Composting available in all suitable sites.	Benefits Sustainable Consumption and Production and also Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement by directing waste away from landfill. Also impacts on the Waste Arisings & Recycling within the SOGE Targets.

5.2.5: TRAVEL

Fera's carbon footprint is significantly affected by commercial, business, or commuting travel. This area offers a major opportunity for improving sustainability, through utilising sustainable methods and strategies for travel.

The Sustainable Workplace Management contractor and Fera are targeting a number of key areas this year. These include a green travel plan, and supporting the use of alternatively fuelled cars. They are also encouraging a reduction in business travel by utilising alternative meeting methods. These initiatives will have the added benefit of supporting the sustainable communities' principle and increasing employee well-being (see section 5.5).

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
34	Review profile of road vehicles used for Government administrative operations to identify inefficient vehicle replacement programme.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	June 2010	Vehicle replacement programme in place.	An increase of efficiency in Fera's transport fleet will reduce the carbon emissions generated by Fera's vehicles and will therefore have a beneficial impact on Climate Change and Energy (4SP) and also the Carbon Emissions from Road Vehicles (SOG E Targets).
35	Undertake travel surveys at each main site to identify travel work routes and patterns in order to facilitate car sharing (and business travel sharing) databases.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	June 2010	Travel surveys undertaken.	A reduction in total car travel will reduce the carbon emissions generated from travelling, which will have an impact on Climate Change and Energy (4SP), and also Carbon Emissions from Road Vehicles (SOG E Targets).
36	Implementation of green travel plan to encourage uses of alternative modes of transport.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	December 2009	Green travel plan in place.	Greener travel methods resulting from travel plan will reduce carbon emissions resulting from Fera's commuting, impacting on the Climate Change and Energy (4SP), and also Carbon Emissions from Road Vehicles (SOG E Targets).
37	Facilitation of walking, supporting safe pathways; cycling, supporting safe cycle-ways and the provision of cycle bays and showering, locker and changing facilities if appropriate.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	Ongoing	Investigations completed on facilitating green travel methods.	These methods of commuting will reduce carbon emissions resulting from Fera's commuting, impacting on the Climate Change and Energy, and also Sustainable Communities (4SP), as it will benefit Fera staff in their health and well-being.

5.2.6: BIODIVERSITY

The Fera estate incorporates substantial grounds, particularly at our Sand Hutton, York site. Consequently, there are opportunities to significantly improve the sustainability of biodiversity within our estate. Targets set here for the York site will enhance biodiversity within the woodland, and around the Fera grounds. They will also increase the sustainability and well-being of Fera employees by contributing positively to the woodland and interlinked courtyards.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
38	Investigate new opportunities to enhance biodiversity across Fera sites through liaison between the Biodiversity Group, and the new Sustainable Workplace Management contractor, and update the Biodiversity Action Plan for all sites.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	Revision and update of Biodiversity Action Plan.	The updated action plans will set the foundations for increasing biodiversity on site and promoting well-being of staff through the recommendations implemented. These have direct impact on the UK's Shared Priorities of Environmental Enhancement, as well as enhancing Sustainable Communities.
39	Develop the courtyards in between the blocks on York site into themed areas, to promote certain habitats of flora and fauna, and engage the staff to utilise them.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2010	Physical development of the courtyards at York.	The redeveloped courtyards will enhance biodiversity on site and promoting well-being of staff that can enjoy the pleasant surroundings. These have direct impact on the UK's Shared Priorities of Environmental Enhancement, as well as enhancing Sustainable Communities.
40	Develop the adjoining Woodland at York site to remove the invasive non-native species and incorporate various walkways and 'trim-trails' for staff to use. Inclusion of picnic benches. Etc. to be considered.	Head of Estates, Security and H&S / Sustainable Workplace Management	April 2011	Development of York Woodland on site.	The developed woodland will enhance biodiversity on site and enhance well-being of staff that can enjoy the pleasant surroundings. These have direct impact on benefiting the UK's Shared Priorities of Natural Resource Protection & Environmental Enhancement, as well as enhancing Sustainable Communities.

5.3: Sustainable procurement

Fera's procurement initiatives will build upon the positive approaches already instigated by our individual merger partners. The proposals outlined in this action plan are based on the Sustainable Procurement Task Force's flexible framework. This ensures that we are working in the same strategic direction as Defra and rest of Government. Our primary aim will be to increase expertise in our contracts from Level 1 to Level 5, particularly in the key areas of:

- People.
- Policy, strategy and communications.
- Procurement process.
- Engaging suppliers.
- Measurements and results.

Existing primary suppliers have already been reviewed for their sustainability impact with regards to the goods and services that they provide to Fera. Furthermore, 'high impact' suppliers have been identified, and in-depth analysis will be undertaken to determine their effect on sustainable development. Using this information, we will work with Defra to monitor and measure our suppliers' performance. Our ultimate aim is that all contracts reach Level 5 in all areas by 2012.

Fera's initial objective for 2009-11 is to engage staff, and develop their understanding of the significance of our strategic aims and operational objectives in this area of procurement. With this in mind, we will request constructive feedback and positive suggestions for this part of the action plan from staff across the agency. By adhering to our latest set of initiatives, Fera hopes to achieve Level 5 against the flexible framework.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
41	Engage all staff in the sustainable aspects of procurement either through site events, or specific projects where they might make a contribution via a focus group/evaluation team.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	March 2011	Evidence of Engagement. Undertake at least 2 procurement events a year.	Through increasing awareness of sustainable procurement issues to Fera staff they will be more likely to chose sustainable products and services, which will affect the any of the UK shared Priorities.
42	Ensure that, as each new contract is let, suppliers are working to Level 5 of the SPTF Flexible Framework and that all 'legacy' suppliers are reviewed with a view to meeting these criteria by 2012.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	June 2010 March 2011	In-depth analysis of sustainability undertaken on suppliers identified as 'High Impact'. All new suppliers to complete questionnaire detailing their current position on the SPTF Flexible Framework.	By taking account of suppliers sustainability performance, and attempting to improve this performance, these will impact on enhancing Sustainable Consumption & Production, and Creating Sustainable Communities and a Fairer World, as detailed in the UK's 4SP's.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
43	Via the initiation of the 'Collaborative Procurement Hub', work with Defra and OGC to jointly identify and progress sustainable suppliers in line with the SPTF Flexible Framework, through establishing a set procedure, tool or mechanism for monitoring.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	June 2010 March 2011	Devise and generate a collaborative mechanism for sustainability measurement. The developed mechanism to be implemented for joint suppliers.	Working with Defra and other Government departments to collaboratively improve processes will enhance the sustainability of procurement to improve Sustainable Consumption & Production, and Creating Sustainable Communities and a Fairer World (4SP).
44	Implement a software system (BIP) to allow suppliers to self assess themselves against the sustainability requirements of Fera prior to officially tendering. This will act as a pre-assessment to filter unsustainable suppliers and make them reconsider their impacts.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	December 2009	Implementation of developed system for self-assessment.	Will make potential suppliers consider their sustainability impacts in more depth, thus impacting on enhancing sustainable development external of Fera's direct operations, especially areas of Sustainable Consumption & Production and Natural resource Protection & Environmental Enhancement (4SP).
45	Monitor and reduce number of deliveries from 10 main suppliers, encouraging improved efficiency and reduce carbon emissions associated with transport.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	October 2009 March 2010 March 2011	Identify 10 main suppliers, by delivery numbers. Establish benchmark number of deliveries for 10 main suppliers. Reduce number of deliveries from 10 main suppliers by 20%.	This will impact significantly on carbon emissions generated as a result of suppliers travelling to site, therefore will impact on Climate Change & Energy, and Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement (4SP).
46	Monitor and reduce quantity of product packaging from 10 main suppliers, encouraging improved efficiency, and reduce waste arisings and minimise resource usage.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	October 2009 March 2010 March 2011	Identify 10 main suppliers, by delivery numbers. Establish benchmark quantities of packaging for 10 main suppliers. Reduce quantities of packaging from 10 main suppliers by 20%.	Benefits Sustainable Consumption and Production and also Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement (4SP), through using less raw materials and requiring less land for disposal. Also impacts on the Waste Arisings & Recycling within the SOGE Targets.
47	Provide quick link to 'alternative sustainable products' via our e-Catalogue to encourage sustainable supplies purchasing by Fera staff, and monitor usage.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Management Accounts	September 2009 March 2010	Incorporation of green product indicator link on the e-Catalogue. Established mechanism for monitoring green product usage and sales to obtain benchmark.	This will make it easier for Fera staff to choose sustainable options and, depending on the specific product, will contribute to of the 4 UK Shared Priorities with varying impacts.

5.4: Corporate social responsibility

Fera wants to lead by example. As a newly founded Government agency, we are able to promote clear corporate social responsibility guidelines from the outset. Through the appointment of a Champion for Corporate Social Responsibility, we will establish a range of innovative sustainability practices.

By implementing practical and useful measures, including education, employment and charity work, we aim to have a positive sustainable impact upon the local community. Furthermore, we will introduce initiatives that will provide wider benefits nationally and globally by encouraging greater participation in our scientific work.

5.4.1: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Building on the work of our merger partners, Fera has developed a pioneering education liaison programme. This endeavours to make science relevant and interesting to children and the general public.

By participating in Science Enrichment and Discovery Days, compiling research resources, and encouraging expert participation, we're increasing our involvement with local schools and colleges. We are committed to fostering the next generation of scientists, providing a variety of work placements for local secondary school students, and inviting pupils to visit our sites to experience our work first hand.

Fera is also exploring the possibility of providing a comprehensive education package, which can be distributed to schools both locally and nationally. Through communicating clearly and effectively with different age groups, we hope to highlight the significance of our projects, and increase understanding of sustainability.

Improving the lives of individuals within local communities is vital. As a result, Fera is examining the viability of developing apprenticeships for local unemployed or unskilled workers. This scheme could be implemented by April 2010, and would enable individuals to retrain and develop new sustainable skills, and make significant contributions to our scientific projects.

5.4.2: CHARITY WORK AND DONATIONS

We encourage our employees to take an active part in contributing to, and increasing the sustainability of, their communities. That's why we offer paid leave for staff to undertake a broad range of public service duties as, for example, magistrates or school governors. These contributions will be recorded by a central electronic database, currently in development. This will enable us to chart the positive impact of our social corporate responsibility plan more effectively.

Fera employees are also able to make direct contributions to a range of charities. We actively encourage the 'Pay as you Earn' scheme, allowing staff to have a portion of their wages paid out as a tax-free donation. With the addition of Gift Aid paid by the Government, this enables our employees to make greater contributions to a range of charitable causes.

By putting corporate social responsibility at the heart of our organisation, Fera hopes to improve the quality of life of our employees, and make a positive impact on the sustainability of local and global communities.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
48	School Science Events: Attend the 'Discovery Days' during National Science Week.	Head of Organisational Development	April 2010	Attend at least 3 science events in local schools. Science Enrichment Days, and host at least 6 school visits to Fera sites.	Enhancing sustainable communities and long term advance of the other 4 shared priorities.
49	Student placements for secondary school students	Head of Organisational Development	April 2010	Minimum of 10 student placements across Fera provided throughout 09-10.	Enhancing sustainable communities and long term advance of the other 4 shared priorities.
50	Identify a 'Champion' for Corporate Social Responsibility throughout Fera to enhance CSR further.	Head of Organisational Development	November 2009	Appointment of Champion to be completed November 2009.	Enhancing sustainable communities and long term advance of the other 4 shared priorities.
51	Develop a science information package for local schools to promote scientific knowledge.	Head of Organisational Development	December 2009 April 2010	Draft package by December 2009. Publish package by April 2010.	Enhancing sustainable communities and long term advance of the other 4 shared priorities.
52	Consider provision for apprenticeships for unemployed and unskilled workers to benefit local communities and knowledge.	Head of Organisational Development	February 2010	Viability investigation to be completed by February 2010.	Enhancing sustainable communities and long term advance of the other 4 shared priorities.
53	Record the number of staff that are provided paid time off to do public service.	Head of Organisational Development	April 2010	Establishment of central database. Use analysis of data to enhance engagement within the local community.	Enhancing sustainable communities.
54	Promote the 'Give as you Earn' salary sacrifice scheme.	Head of Organisational Development	March 2010	Minimum of 10 people using the 'Pay as you Earn' scheme by March 2010.	Enhancing sustainable communities.

5.5: Fera as a sustainable employer

Fera wants to become a role model for sustainable employment. We will continue the extensive initiatives already established by individual merger partners, encouraging well-being of staff and increasing the potential for career progression. We will also introduce additional initiatives and schemes to make Fera a better place to work for its employees.

We will establish a 'volunteering day', whereby all Fera employees are entitled to one day a year paid leave to undertake voluntary work. Through liaison with Defra, we hope to link up with schemes and organisations that they currently have in place. We will then encourage further volunteering for local organisations and charities. This will aid sustainable development of well-being for staff, and help local communities by providing willing volunteers.

By introducing fully flexible operational hours, Fera hopes to improve the work-life-balance of its employees. We will remove the core hours that need to be worked, with the only requisite being that employees complete their contractual hours.

A further example of our commitment to sustainability is the 'Bike to Work' scheme. Fera will loan an employee the whole cost of a new bicycle to get to work. This will be paid back through instalments directly from their wages via salary-sacrifice. However, they will not pay tax on the purchase or interest on the loan. This attractive package should encourage more employees to cycle to work.

Fera is also developing a system of 'total reward statements'. Each employee will receive a specific statement, detailing the rewards that they can benefit from. These include a Government pension, salary-sacrifice opportunities, allocated leave, nursery provisions, staff catering and gym subsidies. This scheme will highlight the sustainable benefits that Fera provides, and will encourage employees to make the most of them.

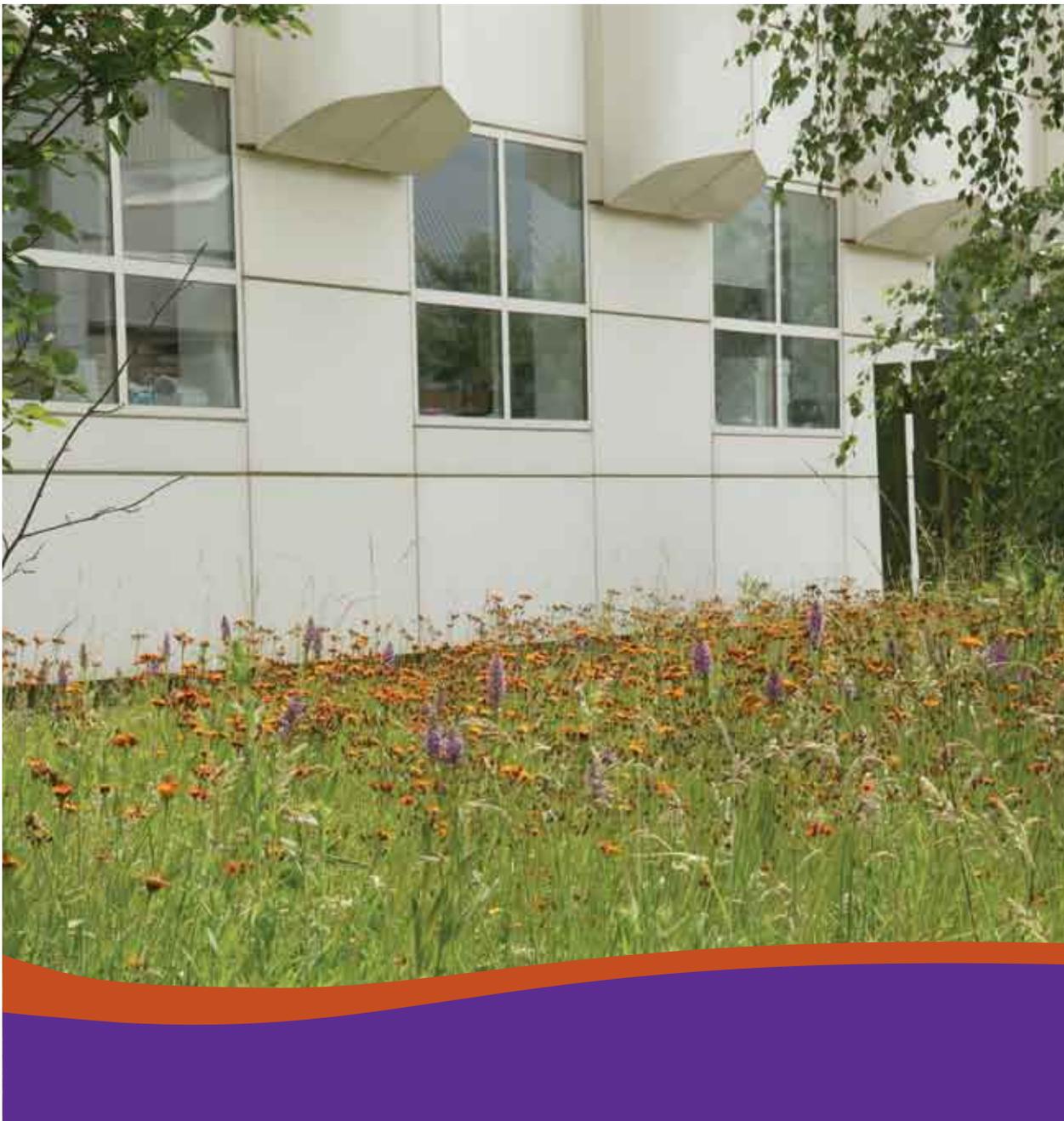
No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
55	Implement a 'Volunteering Day' initiative for all Fera employees to help benefit both employees and the volunteering projects within communities.	Finance and Corporate Director	By April 2010	Inception of the formal initiative.	Enhancing sustainable communities and a fairer world through improving staff well-being.
56	Introduce policy of removing core times, to allow fully flexible time for Fera staff, which will have a positive influence on quality of life for Fera staff.	Head of Organisational Development	Completed in April 2009	Inception of the policy in 2009. Quarterly Monitoring of changing work patterns throughout 2009 to 2010.	Enhancing sustainable communities and a fairer world through improving staff well-being.
57	Introduce the 'Bike to Work Scheme' for staff to help encourage healthier lifestyles and reduce carbon emissions.	Head of Organisational Development	Implemented June 2009	Inception of scheme Quarterly monitoring of scheme uptake to April 2010.	Enhancing sustainable communities and a fairer world through improving staff well-being.
58	Provide the 'Total Reward Statements' to all individual Fera staff members, to show staff how Fera's schemes are benefiting them personally to promote staff engagement.	Head of Organisational Development	Planned delivery for October 2009	Provision of Total Reward Statements. Monitor impact through staff survey in 2010.	Enhancing sustainable communities and a fairer world through improving staff well-being.

5.6: Information technology and smart working

Fera aims to be carbon neutral in our information technology energy usage by 2012. This would bring us in line with requirements of central Government departments. To achieve this, we are investigating opportunities for improving the sustainability of our systems across the agency. The sustainability of Fera's information technology systems is also being developed to improve the effectiveness of flexible and smart working. This brings wider benefits to employees and business operations, and also contributes to staff well-being.

From 2009-11, Fera will continually develop and integrate various technologically advanced systems as they become available and feasible. Therefore, this section of the action plan is truly a living document that will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. We will include additional updates, as the actions currently documented in this plan are targets for the initial year.

Fera is also improving the sustainability of our information technology by reducing our carbon footprint through upgrading hardware, analysing more effective cooling processes for server rooms, and developing instant messaging technologies.



The three main actions for the initial period are:

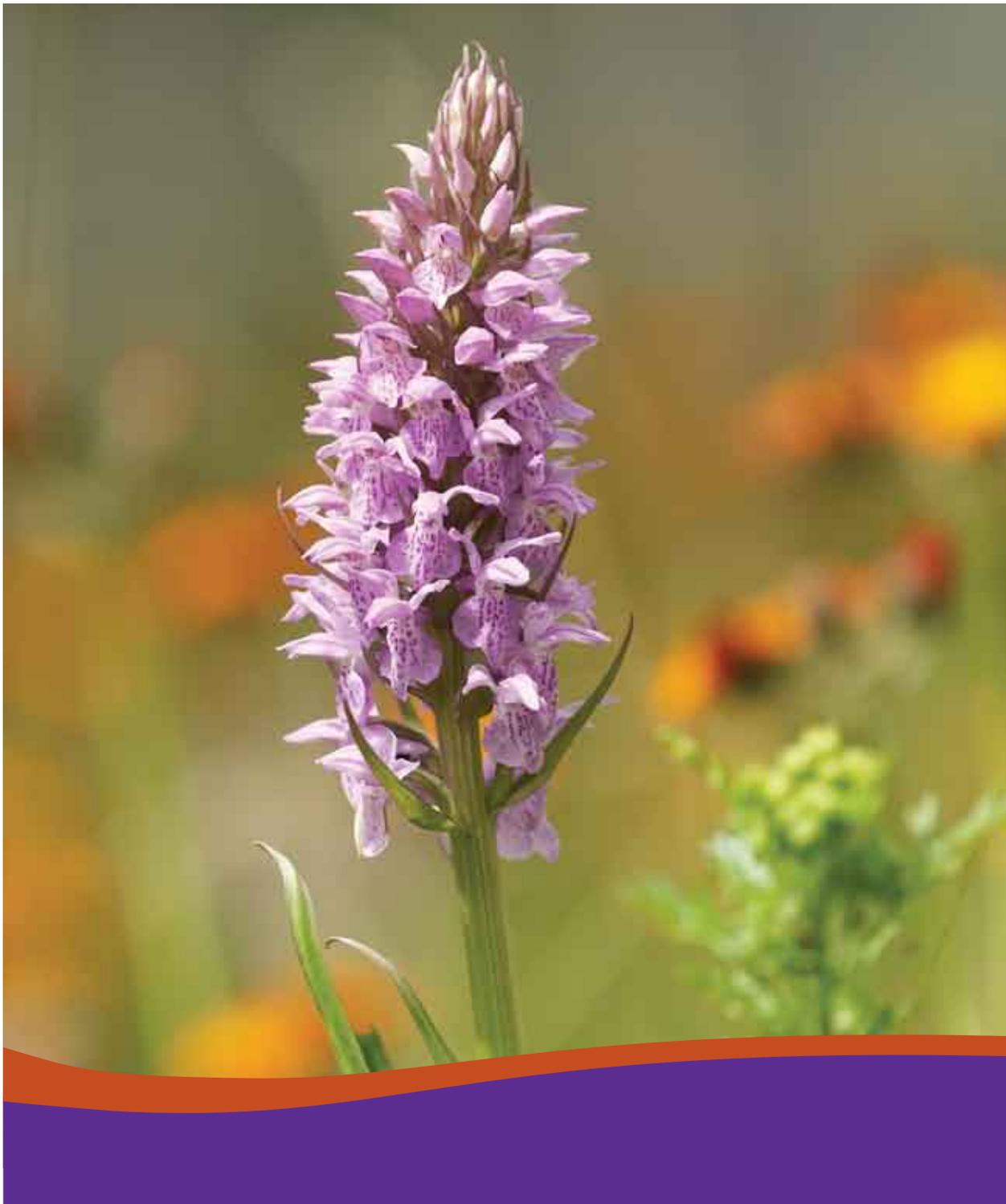
- Increasing web conferencing capabilities**
 Fera will purchase and allocate specific software licences in order to promote web conferencing. This will improve smart working, so that effective meetings can be held across the agency and with external parties. The benefits include reducing carbon emissions, and savings on travel expenditure, printed presentations, and time costs incurred travelling.
- Implementing server virtualisation**
 Fera will rationalise the physical box servers that are currently located on the Sand Hutton site into more sustainable 'virtual servers'. These house a number of servers in one collective system, which results in more effective energy input usage and also reduced hardware. Energy usage will be monitored and analysed for effectiveness.
- Investigating voiceover internet protocol**
 Fera encourages flexible working, and is therefore investigating the feasibility of establishing voiceover internet protocol for staff working away from the main office estates. This would enable integrated links between the headsets and computers of Fera employees located onsite, and those of mobile or home-workers. These secure, integrated communication channels enables work to be undertaken effectively without having to travel to a main office. This would result in reduced carbon emissions, more effective commercial business and a better work-life-balance by reducing commuting.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
59	Roll out web conferencing across the Fera Programmes, so that each Programme is allocated their own web conferencing licence and monitor its usage.	Head of IST Programme	March 2010	Purchasing and allocation of Web Conferencing licences.	Reduced travel (Climate Change & Energy & Natural Resource Protection).
			March 2011	Monitoring results of usage specific to each Fera Programme.	Work-life-balance, less travelling (Creating Sustainable Communities).
					Reduced travel costs and better real-time communication (Creating Sustainable Communities).
60	Increase use of Server Virtualisation by rationalisation of 20 physical box servers into virtual servers, saving energy and natural resources.	Head of IST Programme	March 2010	Actual number of physical box servers that have been removed and rationalised into virtual servers.	Increased energy efficiency for power reduction (Climate Change & Energy). Cooling power reduced (Climate Change & Energy). Less hardware (Natural Resource Protection).
61	Investigate feasibility of expanding deployment of the Voiceover IP system across the Fera Agency to include more mobile-worker, or home-workers and fieldworkers, to increase flexibility and well-being for Fera staff and reduced emissions from travel.	Head of IST Programme	January 2010	Business Case Report for expanding Voiceover IP.	Reduced travel (Climate Change & Energy & Natural Resource Protection). Work-life-balance, less travelling – Home working (Creating Sustainable Communities). Do not need to live close to large urban areas for main office access – Home working (Creating Sustainable Communities).

5.7: Engagement and communication

A good deal of the sustainability work Fera undertakes is inherent in our everyday operations. To ensure we continually progress, and can fully embed sustainable development throughout our organisation, we must raise awareness of the positive work that is currently being undertaken. This has to be effectively publicised to all Fera personnel and external stakeholders, and will be facilitated through the establishment of a successful communication strategy.

To further promote the positive sustainable work that Fera does throughout our estates, we will hold at least two 'sustainability exhibits' during 2009-11. These will highlight the work currently underway, and encourage greater awareness, participation and engagement in sustainability.



Leading by example, the Chief Executive will update his quarterly open forums to include details of progress towards sustainability initiatives and the Sustainable Operations on Government Estates targets. The slides developed for the open forum will be made available to the general public and interested parties on the Fera website.

We will create clear lines of communication for all Fera staff with regards to this action plan. They will be encouraged to feedback comments on any sustainability issues they may wish to address. Staff will be proactively engaged through sustainability events and other avenues identified in the forthcoming communication strategy. Furthermore, employees will be consulted when the action plan is reviewed, so that their comments can be incorporated into its later revisions.

Fera will work closely with the new Sustainable Workplace Management contractors, and continue close links with Defra and the Sustainable Development Commission. For example, the behavioural change campaign, which will run during 2009-10, will compliment the actions outlined in this plan. In addition, the Defra-wide Sustainable Workplace Management contract (commenced in April 2009) will provide opportunities to discuss best practice, and share ideas and resources with other Defra agencies. These actions will enable Fera to develop internal and external communication strategies for further embedding sustainable development.

	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
62	Hold at least 2 'Sustainability Exhibits' promoting sustainability of the estate operations and personnel initiatives.	Sustainable Workplace Management's Area Sustainability Manager	March 2011	Evidence of 'Sustainability Exhibits'.	Providing scientific knowledge and awareness on sustainable issues to Fera staff will aid 'buy-in' to Fera's initiatives and schemes to significantly impact on all of the UK 4 Shared Priorities, in particular the Climate Change & Energy and Sustainable Consumption & Production.
63	Generate and implement a Communication Strategy for promoting Fera Sustainable Development internally and externally. The communications work will also include a behavioural change campaign aimed at Fera staff.	Sustainable Workplace Management's Area Sustainability Manager	April 2010	Generation of Communication Strategy and evidence of promotions.	This behavioural change and communication strategy will impact on all 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles, as Fera staff increase in awareness of these issues and proactively input into enhancing these, and embedding further throughout Fera.
64	Provide internal feedback to Fera staff on progression towards SOGE Targets and other Sustainable Development progression at a quarterly Chief Executive Open Forum.	Communications Manager	April 2011	Slides at the monthly Chief Executives Open Forums.	Increases 'buy-in' of Fera staff to the sustainability work Fera are undertaking, helping to embed sustainable development throughout the Agency, increasing the impact that Fera has on all of the UK's 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles.
65	Publish the slides from the quarterly Chief Executive Forums to highlight Fera's progression towards the targets on the Fera internet site for external communication.	Communications Manager	April 2011	Presence of slides on the Fera internet site.	Increases 'buy-in' of Fera staff to the sustainability work Fera are undertaking, helping to embed sustainable development throughout the Agency, increasing the impact that Fera has on all of the UK's 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles.

Section 6: Governance and accountability

Fera wants all our sustainable development initiatives to benefit from transparent and effective governance. In accordance with the Fera Sustainable Development Management Programme (see section 4), we will establish accountability for implementing, and reporting on, sustainability action points. We will also instigate regular reviews, to continually monitor progress.

The board's quarterly review, the 'Fera dashboard', includes sustainable development indicators, which means issues of sustainability are brought to board level on a regular basis. They are also reviewed at Fera's strategic advisory board, chaired by our Defra corporate owner. Furthermore, the Sustainable Workplace Management contractor will provide regular reports of progress against key performance indicators.

In addition to these actions, the Fera Executive will review the Sustainable Development Action Plan on a six-monthly basis. An in-depth annual report will be created and published on the Fera website, and submitted to Defra and the Sustainable Development Commission for review. This will increase our commitment to sustainability through regular monitoring and assessment.

This action plan is a living document. Once the six-monthly reviews have been undertaken, individual actions will be amended as necessary to continually advance sustainable development. All changes will be co-ordinated by the Sustainable Development Action Plan Team Leader, through consultation with all other responsible persons, as outlined in the Fera Sustainable Development Management Programme. Changes will be noted and highlighted in each interim revision of this action plan.

The 2009-2011 Sustainable Development Action Plan is to be fully reviewed against all final targets in April 2011. A new, evolved action plan will then be generated to continue enhancing and embedding sustainable development in line with strategies at the time. Fera are committed to all the initiatives outlined in this document, and are moving towards the future with sustainable development firmly embedded at the heart of our organisation.

No.	Summary of Action	Responsibility for Action	Target Date	Measure of Achievement (Evidence)	How does it impact on the 4 Shared Priorities of UK Sustainable Development
66	Implement accountability for progressing and reporting on SD into Programmes.	Sustainable Development Project Board	March 2010	Presence of Sustainable Development reporting in Programme Review.	Embedding SD into business activities and accountability increase the effective impact that all of Fera's activities have on the 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles.
67	Fera Executive review SDAP progress at least every 6 months.	Sustainable Development Director Owner	March 2011	SDAP included in organisational performance measures.	This will highlight the impact that Fera is currently having on the 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles, and identify the opportunities for improving sustainable development further.
68	The SDAP Programme Office to produce an in-depth annual review report on SDAP target progression.	The SDAP Programme Office	May 2010	Fera SDAP Review Report.	This will highlight the impact that Fera is currently having on the 4 Shared Priorities and 5 Guiding Principles, and identify the opportunities for improving sustainable development further.

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