

SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

Organisation: Ministry of Defence (MOD)

Title of SDAP: Sustainable Development Action Plan 2007-2012

SDAP Publication date: July 2007

SDC Assessment date: September 2008

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

	Score	Rating
Coverage	4/4	Green
Strategic planning	8/12	Yellow
Actions	6/12	Yellow
Ownership, engagement and delivery	5/6	Green
Monitoring, review and reporting	2/6	Red
OVERALL	25/40	Yellow

ISSUES AND RISKS

Although the SDAP identifies the importance of SD to the "Defence vision", the MOD should set out clearly exactly how it plans to support sustainable development across the full range of its military-related and other overseas activities. This would include ensuring that sustainable development considerations are built into arrangements for reducing potential risks, contingency planning, improving relations with local communities, and also for dealing with the inevitable fall out from emergency events and the effects of climate change. However, it is praiseworthy that the MOD is working to build a greater understanding across the wider international defence community on the links between defence, climate change and the use of natural resources (and presumably food and energy security), and the plans for taking forward this vital work and its potential benefits should be clearly set out.

While the MOD should also receive praise for its huge efforts to improve the sustainability of its departmental operations, these efforts should be contextualised with an explanation of the specific problems it is seeking to address, for example the incompleteness of management information on waste. Last, given the vastness of the MOD estate, and the enormous variety and complexity of its work, there is very little information on how it handles countryside stewardship, heritage sites etc.

MOD'S RESPONSE

"Defence has an extremely important role in progressing sustainable development - we are the third largest landowner in the country, employer of some 280,000 people, a significant consumer of energy (accounting for around 1% of total UK carbon dioxide emissions), and have an acquisition budget of around £18 billion. This makes us a major contributor to meeting the Government's sustainable development targets, which will in turn deliver benefits for Defence. We aim to become a national leader in SD by 2012, but we face a real challenge to embed SD across our entire estate and operations. There are many examples of success and recognised best practice, including in energy reduction and biodiversity and we have won national SD awards for our work in areas such as waste management and estate development programmes in which we take great pride. Progress in some areas has been slower than in others which reflects the difficulty of embedding sustainable development into the business of as large and diverse an organisation as MOD, with a transient military population many of whom are preparing for, on, or returning from operations overseas. We welcome feedback on our 2007 SDAP to help us make even greater progress in SD in the future." (MOD, September 2008)

COVERAGE

	<i>Score</i>			
		0	1	2
1. Does the SDAP state clearly the period of time that it covers?				X
2. It is 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 they 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
11. 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	