

## SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

**Organisation:** Ministry of Justice

**Title of SDAP:** Ministry of Justice Sustainable Development Action Plan

**SDAP Publication date:** February 2008

**SDC Assessment date:** October 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: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/sdap-tracker.html>.

### SUMMARY

	Score	Rating
<b>Coverage</b>	1/4	
<b>Strategic planning</b>	6/12	
<b>Actions</b>	5/12	
<b>Ownership, engagement and delivery</b>	4/6	
<b>Monitoring, review and reporting</b>	1/6	
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>17/40</b>	

### ISSUES AND RISKS

While the MoJ is a new department, it does incorporate the former Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) which produced an SDAP in 2006. An overview of the restructuring is given but no reference is made to this previous SDAP. At least some contextual information relating to the SDAP process to date is required here.

The MoJ needs to be able to demonstrate that it is embedding sustainability into everything that it does. One of MoJ’s key remits is to strengthen democracy yet the relation between sustainable development and democracy is not explored within the action plan. There is already some progress towards active participation in government taking place within the department (for example the Democratic Engagement Branch and the Governance of Britain team’s work on a national framework for citizen engagement); however the potential benefits of a more participatory democracy need to be better communicated across Government and beyond.

### MoJ’s RESPONSE

“When the Ministry of Justice was created in May 2007 it became one of the big 4 central Government departments. It worked in legacy teams which bore no relation to our overall objectives. We have overhauled this structure. Now it is aligned behind clear strategic objectives providing clarity on what each Business Group must deliver. Following internal discussions on to how to make use of the DCA and Home Office SDAPs, it was decided referring to redundant documentation would be misleading and not accurately reflect the MoJ as a new department. The focus of the SDAP was on meeting the Sustainable Operations on Government Estate targets and mandates as the department’s structure and objectives were yet to be decided.

MoJ takes sustainable development seriously. With our policy focus we help set the framework for sustainable development through high-level legal and policy work on elections, and on innovation and good practice in engagement methods (together with other government departments) which helps support citizen involvement in decision making. The publication of the National Framework for Greater Citizen Engagement was a contribution to this process, and we continue to work with other Government Departments in this area. However the main responsibilities and resources for engagement in individual policy areas lies with those bodies responsible for the delivery of the relevant policies and services. We thank the SDC for their feedback and will use it to inform our new plan.” (MoJ, January 2009).

**COVERAGE**

	<i>Score</i>	0	1	2
1. Does the SDAP state clearly the period of time that it covers?	X			
2. Is it clear how the SDAP relates to the wider departmental family, and is SDAP coverage of the departmental family adequate?			X	

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

	<i>Score</i>	0	1	2
3. Does the SDAP set out the organisation's strategy for contributing to the aims, objectives and commitments of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy?				X
4. Does the SDAP articulate the relevance of the five sustainable development principles to its core business, and set out how they are/will be mainstreamed and inform work?	X			
5. Is it clear how the SDAP will contribute to the organisation's high-level strategic objectives, including any Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs)?			X	
6. Does the SDAP have clear objectives, and does it articulate clearly how these objectives were selected and provide a rationale for any gaps e.g. in the coverage of core business areas?			X	
7. Does the SDAP link to other corporate plans or strategies?				X
8. Does the SDAP include any commitment to work with other organisations or government bodies to deliver joint commitments, actions or initiatives?	X			

**ACTIONS**

	<i>Score</i>	0	1	2
9. Does the SDAP articulate how the sustainable development principles and priorities are/will be integrated into its policy and decision making, set out specific actions to achieve this, and explain how these actions have been selected?			X	
10. Does the SDAP include explicit actions to improve the sustainability of the organisation's procurement activity (linking to SPAP commitments where relevant), and explain how they have been selected?			X	
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?
- 13. Are the actions outcome-focused?
- 14. Are the actions SMART?

	<b>X</b>	
<b>X</b>		
	<b>X</b>	

**OWNERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT AND DELIVERY**

- Score*
- 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?
  - 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?
  - 17. Has the SDAP been signed off by a Minister, Permanent Secretary or Chief Executive, and has s/he provided a foreword?

	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
		<b>X</b>	
		<b>X</b>	
			<b>X</b>

**MONITORING, REVIEW AND REPORTING**

- Score*
- 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)?
  - 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?
  - 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?

	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>X</b>		
		<b>X</b>	
	<b>X</b>		