



Central Science Laboratory

Chief Executive: Professor Mike Roberts

SDC Assessment



Checklist

Sustainable Development Action Plan

1	Does the plan specify the period of time it will cover?	✓	Actions are for 2006.
2	Does the plan specify which organisations it covers?	n/a	
3	Has the organisation articulated what SD means for them?	✓	
4	Does the plan describe the benefits of having an SD approach to the organisation?	✓	
5	Does the plan acknowledge the Government's sustainable development goal?	✓	
6	Does the plan acknowledge the priorities of <i>Securing the Future</i> ? Does the plan mention one or more of the priorities of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✓ ✓	
7	Does the plan identify links to the priorities of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗	Plan acknowledges priorities but does not demonstrate how the Agency's work contributes to them.
8	Does the plan acknowledge the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ? Does the plan mention one or more of the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗ ✗	The plan does not acknowledge or mention any of the guiding principles
9	Does the plan identify links to the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗	
10	Have the organisation's relevant executive agencies produced their own plan?	n/a	
11	Does the action plan contain a work programme?	✓	
12	Does the plan include actions relating to commitments from the SD strategy?	✓	
13	Does the action plan cover government policy?	✓	
14	Does the action plan cover operations?	✓	
15	Was the plan publicly available by 13th January 2006?	✓	
16	Does the plan outline any arrangements for strengthening SD capacity in the organisation?	✓	

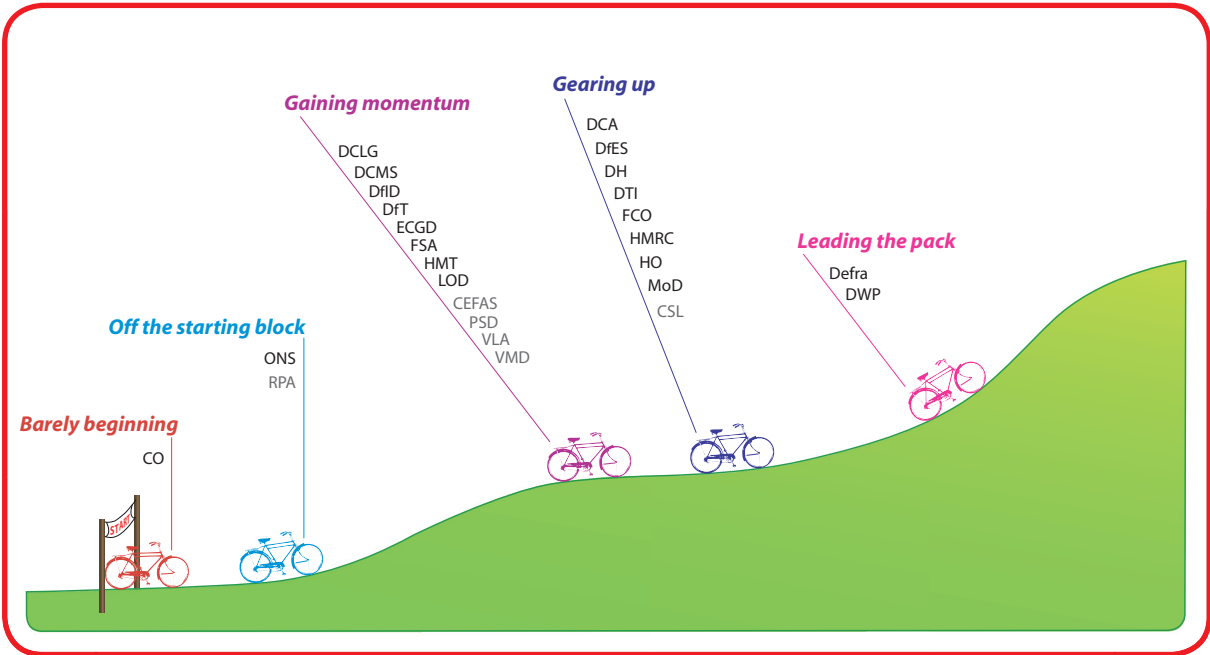
17	Does the plan describe the infrastructure in place to deliver the plan?	✓	
18	Does the plan make it clear who signed it off?	✓	
19	Does the plan designate who is accountable for the delivery of the overall plan?	✓	
20	Does the plan explain how the organisation will monitor progress against the plan?	✓	Quarterly monitoring through the Sustainable Operations Group.
21	Does the plan describe how the organisation will report against the plan?	✓	
22	Does the plan describe how it links in to other reporting mechanisms within the organisation? E.g. the annual report	✓	Will be cross-referenced in the Annual Report and accounts which is published annually.
23	Does the plan commit to reporting against the plan on a defined regular basis?	✓	

Senior Accountable Officer: Professor Mike Roberts, *Chief Executive*.

Status of Plan: Published 15.12.05

Please note that the SDC rating is based on a competency framework and not straight addition of the scores in the table above. Please see main report for full explanation of the methodology.

How is CSL doing?



Background

Background: CSL is an Executive Agency of Defra which specialises in the sciences underpinning agriculture for sustainable crop production, environmental management and conservation, and in food safety and quality.

Context

Context: The Agency sought contributions to their plan from across the organisation and actively engaged with all the heads of science groups as well as the operations managers and personnel to identify key areas of work and possible actions. The Chief Executive, who is ultimately responsible for sustainable development, attended the Sustainable Operations Group meeting to discuss the priorities for the plan. In parallel to developing the plan, CSL were going through a review of ISO 14001, which meant that the general awareness of sustainable development issues across the organisation was high and that the Agency had established a comprehensive system of monitoring and review.

Organisational view of Sustainable Development

The SDAP explains that through its work to 'provide reliable scientific information and research, CSL supports Defra's sustainable development objectives and assists economies and industries to prosper, while promoting sustainable ways that are also beneficial to

societies and the environment.' CSL views its position as aiding the progression of sustainable development by providing evidence-based policy advice and sustainable options to Government policies and industries.

Benefits of taking a sustainable development approach

The SDAP recognises that sustainability is an increasingly important aspect of business and current conventional methods of operations will have negative, irreversible impacts on future generations. By taking a sustainable development approach internally, CSL's plan

states that it expects to gain a competitive edge by reducing their running costs and increasing their reputation by being able to respond positively to customer enquiries about the sustainability of the agency.

Link to *Securing the Future*

Guiding Principles

The plan does not acknowledge or refer to the five guiding principles as set out in *Securing the Future*. CSL explained in the bilateral that the five principles do not affect how they carry out their work, but reinforce what the Laboratory is already doing. For example, 'Using Sound Science Responsibly', one of the guiding principles and the means to achieving the sustainable development goal, is a core area of CSL's work. The Agency also contributes to 'Living Within Environmental Limits' through its research on sustainable crop production and the promotion of sustainable options.

However, the plan should actively articulate how the principles have been taken into account. The SDC would expect to see future plans indicating how the Agency is accounting for, and using, the five guiding principles in its work.

Shared priorities for UK action

CSL's plan acknowledges the four priorities set out in *Securing the Future* and explains that the Agency is addressing them through its work. However, the plan does not indicate how nor set out its actions in this context. It is therefore not always clear how the Agency is contributing to the shared priorities and whether its work supports any priorities in particular.

Bilateral discussions revealed that the Agency feels it impacts on all four priorities through various strands of its work. For example, operational activity impacts on climate change and energy, and much of the work of its science groups relates to natural resource protection. It was explained that in past years the CSL had made progress in expanding the scientific base in order to provide broader support. In particular, the Agency is increasingly focusing on conservation of biodiversity through wildlife management and control of invasive species.

In future plans the SDC would expect CSL to clearly set out how it is contributing to the four priority areas of *Securing the Future* with corresponding actions.

Policy priorities

CSL's policy priorities include actions in the following work streams: Wildlife Ecology and Management, Plant Health, Agricultural and Rural Strategy, Food Science and Environmental Biology. The Science Groups' actions, specified in the plan, range from ensuring that wind farm assessments are economically and environmentally sustainable to developing sustainable methods of pest control. Bilateral discussions revealed that CSL chose their priority areas for actions based on the work of its Science Groups. The sustainable operations

team met with the heads of the Science Groups to explore the links between their work and *Securing the Future* and how projects could be expanded in the future. They identified many possible actions but selected those that were achievable in 2006. This was an excellent approach which should help to ensure that CSL's plan has ownership across the Agency. Future plans should indicate how priority areas were selected so that staff and stakeholders understand the rationale.

Leading by example

CSL prioritised its operational targets by identifying the Agency's major environmental impacts and by setting targets which could be delivered in 2006. The Agency will be able to identify impacts more efficiently in the future through its Environmental Management System (ISO 14001). It was explained in the bilateral that this is now in place and the EMS priority scorecard rates all of the Agency's operational areas. The score is automatically doubled if it relates to a Defra objective.

CSL explained that the Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) targets also influenced the priority areas chosen. CSL's plan includes actions on energy, EMS, water, waste and procurement with the main priority areas being energy – due to pressure from Government – and water – due to the high

consumption of their labs. They are also looking at the technical solutions they might use to reduce energy, such as CHP and renewables.

The SDAP includes an action relating to quantifying hazardous waste streams. It was explained in the bilateral that the Agency currently monitors the number of bins, but it does not have figures for the weight or the exact content. The Agency is therefore running a pilot to measure the amount of hazardous waste with the intention of introducing incentive schemes to reduce it.

Transport is generally a difficult issue for CSL due to the nature of their work and the vehicles required. Being based on a rural site also creates problems for commuting. However, the Agency is encouraging car share and cycling.

Securing the Future commitments

Departmental commitment

CSL has no specific commitments from *Securing the Future* for which it has the lead across government.

Cross-government commitments

The plan refers to two relevant areas: procurement and skills, but does not set these in the context of contributing to the cross-government commitments of *Securing the Future*. CSL's contribution to sustainable procurement will be made by developing a sustainable procurement policy, ensuring formal

external training on sustainable procurement is given to all the Procurement Team and by incorporating environmental issues and standards into the supplier Terms & Conditions of current and prospective suppliers.

Target setting

CSL have allocated timescales and indicated accountability lines for all of the targets included in the plan. Most targets also specify the outcomes expected to be achieved indicating how the Agency will measure success. However, many of the targets do not have milestones.

Policy making

Sustainable Development 'proofing'

CSL provides evidence-based policy advice and as such does not formulate policy. However, the Agency has developed a project tool kit and checklist for scientific project proposals which includes sustainable development. Currently, policy advice is not formally assessed against a sustainability criteria.

The SDC would expect future plans to address the internal mechanisms for policy advice appraisals, and set actions that will ensure the effective integration of the sustainable development principles into the policy advice which the Agency provides.

Sustainable Development Skills

CSL's SDAP explains that 'it has always sought to engender a culture of continuous learning and development within the organisation' and that 'the future of the organisation is dependent upon their ability to gain new knowledge and apply it to the issues of the day'.

The Agency has set out several actions relating to skills in the SDAP and plans to use Professional Skills in Government and revised CSL competencies to integrate the sustainability agenda into Training and Development activities. The Agency will provide awareness raising opportunities for existing staff through training such as the Environmental Management course and will review the induction provision to ensure that new starters are made aware of the role of CSL and Defra in supporting the sustainability agenda. The Agency will also ensure that staff are clear where CSL's business aims fit with sustainable development.

Achieving Sustainable Development outcomes

Infrastructure

The plan sets out the basic infrastructure which is in place to support the plan. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for sustainable development and this is delegated through the Leadership Team to key operational managers. The Sustainable Operations Group will meet quarterly or more frequently to review all the actions in the plan.

Engagement

The SDC is pleased to note that CSL, through its Sustainable Operations Group has engaged with staff across the organisation to produce the plan, and has actively sought contributions from all its Science Groups.

It was explained in the bilateral that the plan was launched in December on the intranet, website and in the newsletter which is distributed to both staff and customers. There was a follow up article in the newsletter in March 2006 and another article is due in the next issue. CSL ran a sustainable development week in November 2005, which included seminars and lectures on sustainable development. These sought to cover the bigger picture issues as well as making the links to ISO 14001 and the plan. The agency created a sustainable development PowerPoint presentation which will be used for future events. CSL explained that as the Agency has a high staff turnover of about 100 per year, it must have regular awareness raising initiatives.



Monitoring and reporting

The Sustainable Operations Group will meet quarterly to review all the actions in the plan. The team has just completed a six month review, which involved gathering formal feedback on all the actions from across the agency.



Their commitment to ISO 4001 means that formal reviews will be taken in all areas.

CSL will report on progress against its plan in its Annual Report and Accounts, produced at the end of Each Financial Year.

Strengths to build upon

	All targets to include milestones and an indication of how the outcome can be achieved.
	Continue engagement and awareness raising initiatives for sustainable development and ensure that future plans specify particular outcomes/indicators of success which the Agency expects from this activity.
	Specify how priority areas for the plan have been selected.

Challenges for 2007

	Ensure that the plan makes relevant links back to the UK Sustainable Development Strategy – <i>Securing the Future</i> . E.g. indicate how the Agency is accounting for and using the five guiding principles in its work and how far it is contributing to the four priority areas for immediate action.
	Investigate mechanisms for assessing policy advice against a sustainability criteria.



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