



Pesticides Safety Directorate

Chief Executive: Dr Kerr Wilson

SDC Assessment



Checklist

Sustainable Development Action Plan

1	Does the plan specify the period of time it will cover?	✓	
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?	✗	The section on benefits outlines PSD's objectives but does not articulate the benefits of a sustainable development approach.
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> ?	✓	PSD aims to contribute to sustainable consumption and natural resource protection.
8	Does the plan acknowledge the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗	The plan does not explain that <i>Securing the Future</i> sets out five guiding principles.
	Does the plan mention one or more of the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✓	Plan mentions three of the five 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?	✗	SDAP only contains a list of key commitments.
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?	✗	Explains that PSD will ensure scientific staff have the appropriate skills but does not relate this to sustainable development.

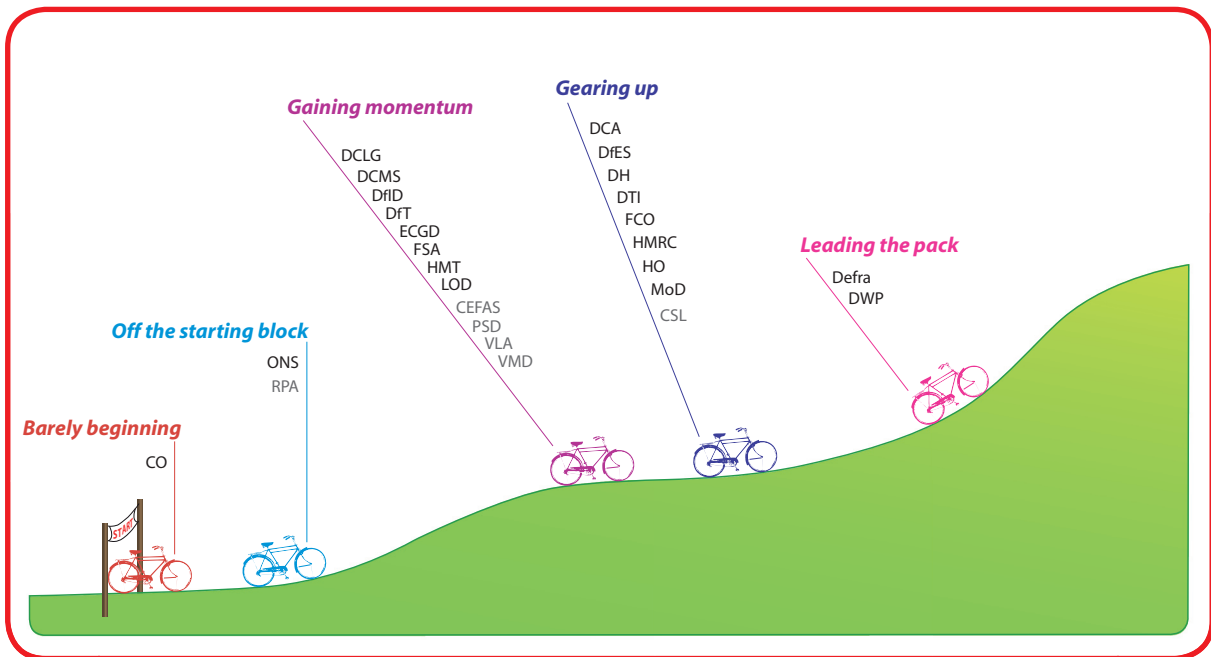
17	Does the plan describe the infrastructure in place to deliver the plan?	✓	
18	Does the plan make it clear who signed it off?	✗	PSD explained in bilateral discussions that the Senior Management Team signed off the plan.
19	Does the plan designate who is accountable for the delivery of the overall plan?	✓	
20	Does the plan explain how the organisation will monitor progress against the plan?	✓	
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 include progress report in PSD Annual Report.
23	Does the plan commit to reporting against the plan on a defined regular basis?	✓	Explains that subsequent plans will be reported on annually.

Senior Accountable Officer: Steve Milner, *Director of Finance, IT and Corporate Services*

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 PSD doing?



Background

PSD is an Executive Agency of Defra. Their main role is to ensure that pesticides in the UK are safe for users, consumers and the environment.

Context

PSD took an active approach to preparing the plan, and selected high level commitments in areas which the Agency felt they could make the most significant impact in the period covering December 2005 to March 2007. The Agency has made a commitment to appoint a Sustainable Development Enthusiast in each of the Agency's management groups to promote sustainable development activity amongst staff.

Organisational view of Sustainable Development

PSD's aims are to ensure the safe use of pesticides and detergents for people and the environment, reduce negative impacts of pesticides on the environment and help to ensure pesticide residues in food are not at levels which may cause harm. PSD's plan explains that their aims and responsibilities link directly to Defra's strategic priorities on sustainable food and farming, natural resource protection and sustainable consumption and production.

Benefits of a sustainable development approach

The plan does not specify the internal benefits which taking a sustainable development approach will bring to the organisation. However, nationally, PSD believes that fulfilling its aims and objectives will contribute to achieving the Government's sustainable development goal.

It is important that future SDAPs make it clear how a sustainable development approach supports and links to core business and where the department recognises that it reduces risk.

Link to *Securing the Future*

Guiding Principles

PSD's plan sets out how the Agency's role as a science-based regulator of chemicals with a remit to protect people and the environment (without losing sight of the economic benefits of pesticides) is consistent with the five guiding principles set out in *Securing the Future*. The agency explains that Living within Environmental Limits, Using Sound Science Responsibly and Achieving a Sustainable Economy are of particular relevance and importance to the organisation. Protecting the environment is core to the Agency's business and it recently published the National Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection

Products, which takes environmental limits into account.

The Agency has included a commitment in its plan to ensure that all business cases for new projects include a paragraph assessing the approach that has been taken against the five guiding principles.

Shared priorities for UK action

PSD's plan explains that the Agency contributes to Natural Resource Protection and Sustainable Consumption and Production through its work to reduce the negative impacts of pesticides and the development of alternative control measures.

Policy priorities

The policy priorities identified in the plan relate to:

- sustainable use of plant protection products
- carrying out RIAs on all new legislation being developed
- a commitment to ensure all business cases for new projects will be assessed against the five principles

- incorporating the sustainable development principles and Defra's priorities into recommendations when negotiating changes to EU legislation.

Bilateral discussions revealed that the commitments were chosen on the basis of where the Agency felt it could make a significant impact in the timeframe of the plan.

Leading by example

The SDAP commits the Agency to reducing paper usage, following Defra's lead on sustainable procurement, producing a green transport plan, increasing recycling and investigating offsetting the carbon emissions from business travel.

Bilateral discussions revealed that the commitment to investigate offsetting carbon emissions will apply to air travel only. PSD is currently unsure of the costs this will involve

or where the funding would come from as the Agency operates on a cost-recovery basis. Those paying for the Agency's services may therefore not find price increases related to off-setting acceptable.

The priority areas were selected on the basis of where they felt they could make the most significant impact.

Securing the Future commitments

Departmental commitment

There are no specific *Securing the Future* commitments for which PSD have a lead across government.

Cross-government commitments

The plan refers to some of the relevant areas but does not set these in the context of contributing to the cross-government commitments of *Securing the Future* such as procurement, sustainable development skills and policy appraisal.

The Agency is taking steps to ensure the integration of the guiding principles into its work by using the principles when assessing project work, and through work in the EU. The SDAP also includes a commitment to ensure that packaging is recycled and that electrical equipment is disposed of in accordance with the EC Directive – which will contribute

to the Government's goal on sustainable procurement.

Target setting

PSD's plan contains high-level commitments with no specific targets, timescales or milestones. PSD explained in the bilateral that at the time of writing the plan, the Agency was only able to identify the areas where most impact could be made by March 2007. PSD has now recruited volunteers to be Sustainable Development Enthusiasts from across the Agency, of which there are now five. Their remit is still in development but will include developing and expanding the plan and setting more discreet targets, based on their understanding of what could be achieved and delivered in the timeframe of the plan. The SDC welcomes this inclusive approach to target setting.

Policy making

Sustainable development filters

The SDAP makes a commitment to ensure that RIAs are carried out on all new legislation being developed and assessed against Defra's 'Stretching the Web' model. PSD explained in the bilateral that it hopes that the 'Stretching

the Web' tool will encourage staff to think more widely when carrying out an RIA.

PSD regards sustainable development to be, to some extent, already embedded in the way the organisation works. For example, the process of carrying out a risk assessment of a pesticide product involves weighing up various

impacts, and sustainable practices have already become part of the way the Agency works on the operational side.

Whilst the organisation does not make policy, it does provide policy advice to Ministers and takes the lead on pesticide issues for Defra. The Agency has therefore committed to assessing all business cases for new project work against the five principles. It was explained in the bilateral that a business case template for new project work which includes sustainable development criteria has been put together. It is currently being used by the IT department and is expected to be extended across the whole organisation. The Sustainable Development Enthusiasts will assess how well it is being applied.

Sustainable development skills

The plan commits to ensuring that scientific staff have the appropriate skills and expertise to deliver sound scientific decisions. However, the SDAP does not specify what actions the agency needs to take to ensure this. The Agency explained in the bilateral that it is currently holding discussions internally about suitable training.

PSD is still not sure whether staff will require extra support or training in using the new project template. The Sustainable Development Enthusiasts will monitor how well it is being applied and will assess whether there is a need for further training.

Achieving Sustainable Development outcomes

Infrastructure

The plan sets out the basic infrastructure in place, but does not describe the SDAP delivery roles. It was explained in the bilateral that the plan will be delivered through the Enthusiasts Group, which will report to the Board and Management Team through the Director of Finance, IT and Corporate Services. The plan was signed off by the Senior Management Team, including the Chief Executive.

Engagement

The plan explains that staff will have an opportunity to comment on the plan before it is published. However, it was explained in the

bilateral that not all staff had an opportunity to comment on the plan due to lack of time. The Agency intends to have a consultation period before the next revised plan is published.

The Agency may include a question on sustainable development in its next customer satisfaction survey but is still not clear on when this might be or what the question will refer to.

In launching the plan, an email was sent to all members of staff. This was followed up with an update on progress. PSD explained that the sustainable development Enthusiasts will play a role in ensuring that staff know how they can support and contribute to delivery of the plan. They are currently considering running seminars with external speakers.

Monitoring and reporting

The plan does not set out how the commitments will be monitored. However, it was explained in the bilateral that the Agency will devise a method of monitoring the plan once all the commitments have specific and discrete timescales. The agency has devised a template





to track progress against commitments.

The Agency will report on progress against its plan in its Annual Report which will be published in July 2007. It will cover progress against the commitments up until March 2007.

Strengths to build upon

	Fully develop the role and remit of the Sustainable Development Enthusiasts.
	Review how far existing 'learning' programmes equip staff with the right skills to 'Use Sound Science Responsibly' and develop new programmes or reconcile existing ones accordingly.
	Extend the business case template for new project work across the whole organisation and set out steps to assess how well it is being applied by staff.

Challenges for 2007

	Make clear how a sustainable development approach links to and supports core business and where the department recognises that it reduces risk.
	Set SMART targets for all commitments based on what could be achieved and delivered in the timeframe of the plan.
	Monitor the quality and application of the new business case template which assesses sustainable development implications.
	Consider how to introduce carbon-offsetting in a cost-recovery environment.



Sustainable
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