

## SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

**Organisation:** Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)  
**Title of SDAP:** Investing in our Future: Sustainable Development Action Plan 2008-09

**SDAP Publication date:** July 2008  
**SDC Assessment date:** 04/02/2009

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
<b>Coverage</b>	2/4	
<b>Strategic planning</b>	9/12	
<b>Actions</b>	8/12	
<b>Ownership, engagement and delivery</b>	4/6	
<b>Monitoring, review and reporting</b>	1/6	
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>24/40</b>	

### ISSUES AND RISKS

This SDAP is very much an assembly of existing work, brought together in a helpful narrative. This is acceptable for a first plan, but should now develop in a more strategic, proactive direction. DIUS should now be focusing on what kind of innovation Government believes is necessary to underpin sustainable consumption and production; what skills base is needed to drive the sustainable, low-carbon economy; what the Department’s vision should be for 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education? These sorts of questions should lead the policy commitments in the next SDAP.

One area of concern is that the SDAP more or less equates the SD principle of ‘living within environmental limits’ with ‘low carbon’ neglecting a broader focus which should include reducing natural resource use and protecting and preserving biodiversity. Regarding the low carbon aspect of environmental limits, DIUS could have outlined how it plans to ensure the low carbon measures it has in place are effective e.g. through carbon accounting. Moreover, the SDAP says little about the wider environmental performance of the economy. A broadening of DIUS’ approach to SD will ensure a more comprehensive SDAP in future.

### DIUS’S RESPONSE

“DIUS welcomes the SDC assessment and is looking forward to continuing to work with them over the next year as we continue to embed Sustainable Development into everything the Department does. Since writing this, our first SDAP, we have already taken some positive steps to strengthen our contribution and see the next year as an exciting one in this field” (DIUS, March 2009).

**COVERAGE**

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

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

	<i>Score</i>			
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
3. Does the SDAP set out the organisation's strategy for contributing to the aims, objectives and commitments of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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)?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
7. Does the SDAP link to other corporate plans or strategies?			<b>X</b>	
8. Does the SDAP include any commitment to work with other organisations or government bodies to deliver joint commitments, actions or initiatives?				<b>X</b>

**ACTIONS**

	<i>Score</i>			
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>

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?			<b>X</b>
13. Are the actions outcome-focused?		<b>X</b>	
14. Are the actions SMART?	<b>X</b>		

**OWNERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT AND DELIVERY**

	<i>Score</i>		
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
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?		<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>	
17. Has the SDAP been signed off by a Minister, Permanent Secretary or Chief Executive, and has s/he provided a foreword?			<b>X</b>

**MONITORING, REVIEW AND REPORTING**

	<i>Score</i>		
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
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)?	<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>	
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>X</b>		