# SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

**Organisation:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office
**Title of SDAP:** Sustainable Development Action Plan 2008-09

**SDAP Publication date:** December 2008
**SDC Assessment date:** May 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 |
|---|---|---|
| **Coverage** | 3/4 | |
| **Strategic planning** | 6/12 | |
| **Actions** | 5/12 | |
| **Ownership, engagement and delivery** | 3/6 | |
| **Monitoring, review and reporting** | 0/6 | |
| **OVERALL** | 17/40 | |

## ISSUES AND RISKS

The FCO has a vital role in promoting sustainable development internationally and this SDAP indicates that the FCO recognises and is working to fulfil this role. The department's continuing work on the Sustainable Development Dialogues and the expansion of its sustainable estate management models to its overseas posts are clear evidence of this.

The SDC recognises the huge influence of such initiatives but the actions in place to achieve FCO's international sustainable development goals, as set out within this SDAP, are not sufficiently SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ccountable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-related). In particular, milestones are missing to track progress and ensure that the actions will be achieved. For example, in ensuring that the key economies recognise the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation in long-term growth policies, what steps and engagement processes does the FCO have in place, and how will the individual complexities and priorities of these key economies be considered, to ensure this objective is achieved? Setting out clear milestones against which progress can be measured will ensure actions are achieved successfully.

## FCO'S RESPONSE

Consideration of the impact on the environment, the people we work with, and on local society overseas is at the heart of the way the FCO is run. We are very disappointed to receive a red rating, not least as we developed the plan with advice from the Commission. The red rating is based largely on failings of measurability, monitoring and engagement rather than the Plan's overall strategy and content. We are pleased the SDC recognises the work we do to promote sustainable development, by embedding it in each of our departmental strategic objectives and through our estates management. We have changed our approach to embedding SD in the FCO since the plan was drawn up. We are putting in place a network of SD Champions, have expanded our Sustainability Operations Board, appointed a Chief Scientific Adviser, and our Greening the FCO programme has established a route map to meeting the SOGE targets for FY 2010-11. We have also done a lot of work to improve the measurability of outcomes for SD actions identified in our Business Plans. We look forward to reporting on our experience of this, and to working with the SDC to ensure our next SDAP illustrates the performance measurement techniques behind our objectives, and addresses the other governance and programme management weaknesses identified.

| COVERAGE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

| | *Score* | 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 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

| | *Score* | 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 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

| | *Score* | 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 | |

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Development Commission

| | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 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**

| | *Score* | 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**

| | *Score* | 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 | | |

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