

SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

Organisation: Department for International Development (DfID)
Title of SDAP: Sustainable Development Action Plan 2007/08 – 2008/09

SDAP Publication date: June 2007 (reviewed October 2008)
SDC Assessment date: 24/01/2010

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

Coverage

Strategic planning

Actions

Ownership, engagement and delivery

Monitoring, review and reporting

OVERALL

Score	Rating
2/2	GREEN
8/12	AMBER
4/12	RED
2/6	RED
1/6	RED
17/38	RED

ISSUES AND RISKS

DfID’s current SDAP has set out a very strong case for how and why SD is integral and beneficial to its work. However, this SDAP is more a culmination of all DfID’s activities that contribute to sustainable development rather than a focussed plan for tackling the challenges it faces in fully embedding sustainability through specific and measurable actions. The SDAP is a tool and should be utilised as such. To improve its next SDAP, DfID needs to set itself more ambitious actions that address the challenges it identifies focussed through a dedicated team, and identify more appropriate appraisal and reporting procedures. While this SDAP clearly showed that DfID recognises the importance of building the capability of its staff in general, it is not clear how building capability around SD is prioritised across the Department. The next SDAP should make clearer links between DfID’s business planning processes and corporate documents to DfID’s sustainable development aims, demonstrating how SD is being embedded right across the Department. Finally, the next SDAP should strike the right balance between external and internal policy, to ensure effective delivery of DfID’s SD objectives.

DfID’S RESPONSE

DFID notes the rating assessment for the 2008-2009 SDAP. This identifies important issues and DFID will respond in a revised plan later this year. DFID would like to highlight that the rating applies to an action plan first developed in early 2007. Considerable progress has been made since – both in DFID’s delivery of development assistance – and on internal performance. DFID seeks to ensure that sustainable development lies at the heart of our work. Since 2007, DFID substantially scaled-up investments on climate change and sustainable forest management. We have also established a Sustainable Operations Board comprising senior managers from across DFID. A newly-established ‘green team’ feeds ideas into the board and thus into business planning and decision-making at senior management level. DFID was one of the first departments to sign up to cutting its emissions by 10% by 2010 – and we remain committed to cross-Whitehall targets on emissions reductions. DFID has supplemented its UK emissions baselines with those from overseas offices, reduced our air miles by 8% last year (despite a growing ODA spend) and has introduced various measures to improve broader sustainability. DFID is preparing a revised, action-oriented SDAP with specific measures for annual reporting. We will use this as an opportunity to engage broadly with staff on our sustainable development plans and performance.

COVERAGE		GREEN		
	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?	N/A		

STRATEGIC PLANNING		AMBER		
	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		RED		
	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

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

RED

	<i>Score</i>		
	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

RED

	<i>Score</i>		
	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		