

## SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

**Organisation:** Food and Environment Research Agency  
**Title of SDAP:** Sustainable Development Action Plan April 2009

**SDAP Publication date:** June 2009  
**SDC Assessment date:** January 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

	Score	Rating
<b>Coverage</b>	4/4	GREEN
<b>Strategic planning</b>	7/12	AMBER
<b>Actions</b>	11/12	GREEN
<b>Ownership, engagement and delivery</b>	5/6	GREEN
<b>Monitoring, review and reporting</b>	6/6	GREEN
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>33/40</b>	<b>GREEN</b>

### ISSUES AND RISKS

This is an excellent SDAP that demonstrates high ambition levels and is a great achievement for FERA as a relatively new agency. The Plan contains the majority of the criteria that the SDC would expect to find in an SDAP and indicates that FERA's aim to be an exemplar in sustainability is off to a good start.

A crucial next step for FERA is to identify how it can promote its work on sustainability outside the agency. The SDC is aware of several initiatives FERA is undertaking, such as the Healthy Bee Plan which makes a major contribution to the debate on what constitutes a sustainable food chain, which are not as visible within government as they should be. FERA needs to ensure it promotes its research across government and that it is feeding into cross-government debate and decision-making, including actively contributing to recent initiatives such as the Food 2030 Strategy.

### FERA'S RESPONSE

Fera is delighted with the Sustainable Development Commission's positive feedback and valuable comments on this, our first Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP). These and the high score awarded are extremely encouraging, and will help bolster our efforts to be an exemplar with regards to sustainability. Given that so much of the work Fera conducts links directly to the principles of Sustainable Development, we take our responsibilities very seriously and are committed to making our SDAP a reality. As an organisation committed to continuous improvement, we are grateful for the guidance that this assessment provides, and will act upon all recommendations. Indeed we have continued to review our sustainability plans and are already taking actions in some of the areas identified for improvement. We will continue to implement the SDAP and monitor progress, while also focusing our efforts upon those areas requiring greater attention. These include, creating SMARTer targets, aligning strategic documents, and communicating the importance of the SDAP, both within Fera and across all government departments and agencies. Having achieved green ratings across the majority of areas, Fera will by no means become complacent. Rather, we will continue to improve upon existing actions, while striving to develop new initiatives. The invaluable suggestions within this assessment will help us continue to keep sustainability at the heart of all we do.

<b>COVERAGE</b>				
	<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>
<b>STRATEGIC PLANNING</b>				
	<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>	
<b>ACTIONS</b>				
	<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>