

Sustainable Development Action Plan



Sustainable
Development Commission

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Sustainable Development Minister:
Ian McCartney MP**

SDC Assessment



Checklist

Sustainable Development Action Plan

1	Does the plan specify the period of time it will cover?	✓	Sets out targets for 2005/06 and objectives for next three years.
2	Does the plan specify which organisations it covers?	✗	No. Needs to be clear about status and relationship of various Executive Agencies.
3	Has the organisation articulated what SD means for them?	✓	Makes clear that SD underpins many aspects of foreign policy.
4	Does the plan describe the benefits of having an SD approach to the organisation?	✗	Highlights links to foreign policy but doesn't describe how an SD approach might be beneficial.
5	Does the plan acknowledge the Government's sustainable development goal?	✓	Yes, and describes it in terms of application internationally. Does not specifically refer to international part of the goal.
6	Does the plan acknowledge the priorities of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗	Acknowledges international priorities only but does refer to key UK priority areas.
	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> ?	✓	
8	Does the plan acknowledge the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗	FCO published before Strategy text was finalised.
	Does the plan mention one or more of the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗	
9	Does the plan identify links to the principles of <i>Securing the Future</i> ?	✗	FCO published before Strategy text was finalised.
10	Have the organisation's relevant executive agencies produced their own plan?	✗	FCO needs to clarify coverage of Strategy and plan.
11	Does the action plan contain a work programme?	✓	Yes, Annex A provides a summary of targets and objectives.
12	Does the plan include actions relating to commitments from the SD strategy?	✓	Yes. International commitments and procurement.
13	Does the action plan cover government policy?	✓	
14	Does the action plan cover operations?	✓	Yes, UK and overseas
15	Was the plan publicly available by 13th January 2006?	✓	Published Strategy/work plan at same time as UK SDS but not in SDAP format.
16	Does the plan outline any arrangements for strengthening SD capacity in the organisation?	✓	UK and overseas

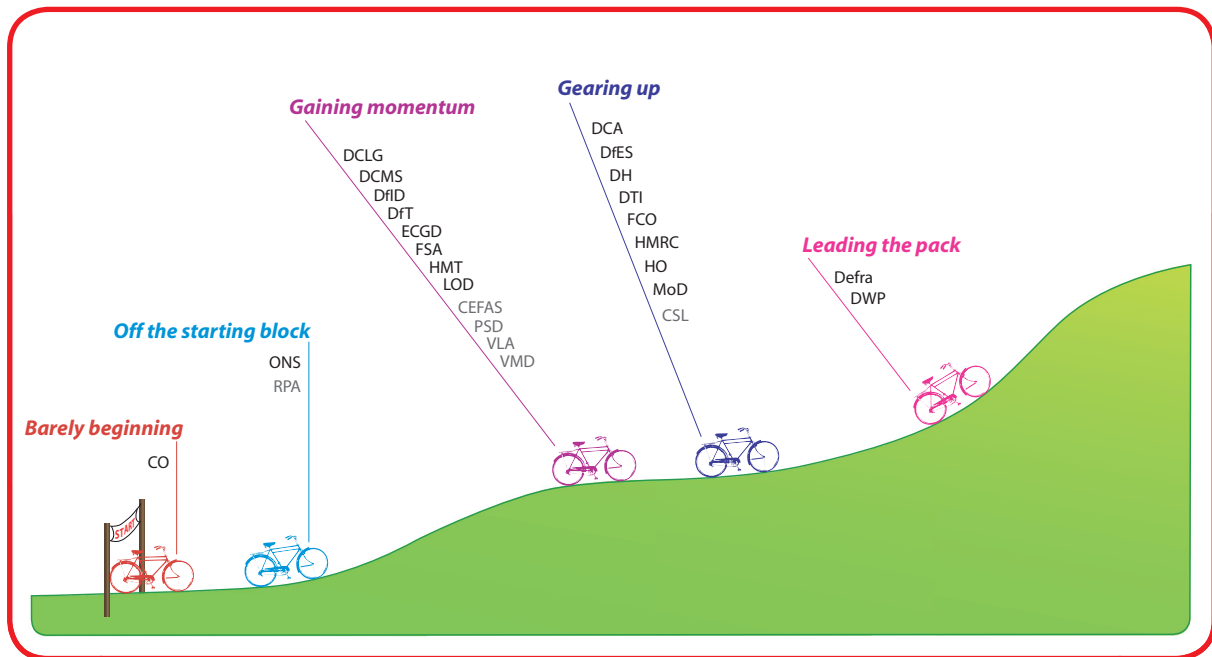
17	Does the plan describe the infrastructure in place to deliver the plan?	✓	
18	Does the plan make it clear who signed it off?	✓	Signed off by Secretary of State at the time.
19	Does the plan designate who is accountable for the delivery of the overall plan?	✓	Yes clearly.
20	Does the plan explain how the organisation will monitor progress against the plan?	✓	
21	Does the plan describe how the organisation will report against the plan?	✓	Annual FCO Departmental report
22	Does the plan describe how it links in to other reporting mechanisms within the organisation? E.g. the annual report	✓	
23	Does the plan commit to reporting against the plan on a defined regular basis?	✓	Annual audit.

Senior Accountable Officer: Director General, *Globalisation*

Status of Plan: Final Strategy/Implementation Plan

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 FCO doing?



The FCO has undergone a separate assessment process. This check list and summary overview have been prepared for indicative purposes only to assist cross-government comparisons.

The SDC agreed a request from the FCO in June 2005 for its March 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy to be regarded as its Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP). The FCO is in the unique position that its Strategy was prepared in parallel with *Securing the Future* – the UK Government’s Sustainable Development Strategy and it articulates how the FCO will contribute to the international priorities identified in the UK Strategy.

However, the Strategy and associated action plan of 2005/06 were not prepared with the benefit of the guidance published by the SDC in August 2005 and the SDC could not assess them on the same basis as other government plans this year. The SDC therefore agreed to carry out a separate, strategic assessment of the FCO’s Strategy and plan to inform the content and priorities of the department’s future SDAPs. The FCO is currently preparing a specific SDAP with targets to 2008 which will be in line with the *Securing the Future* commitment and SDC’s guidance.

The SDC’s strategic assessment is available on the SDC’s website at

www.sdcommission.org.uk/watchdog

and also on the FCO’s website at www.fco.gov.uk

Overall assessment of FCO's Sustainable Development Strategy

(with associated action plan of 2005/06 targets and objectives for 2005-08)

The FCO has set a good standard with its first sustainable development strategy and implementation plan and can point to a wealth of related activity in delivering its objectives this year. The Strategy is clear and comprehensive, links well to core business systems, complements the UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy, and is underpinned by strong accountability structures.

The department demonstrates a good understanding of the impact of a sustainable development approach on foreign policy whether in terms of the potential for resource mismanagement to lead to conflict or as a key tool of public diplomacy. The department also acknowledges the need to lead by example in its own operations around the world.

The SDC is keen to see the department maintain and build upon this excellent start. To do so, the FCO will need to ensure that it sets much stronger targets with clearly specified outcomes that are focused on areas where the FCO feels that its particular role adds value. To ensure that the Strategy continues to provide the strategic direction intended, it will be important that it is owned and supported across the department using the department's highly skilled teams and networks. To date, staff and stakeholders have largely been made aware of the Strategy as a new document; they now need to understand fully the actions they need to take to drive it forward, and should see it constantly reflected and incentivised by the department's policies and activities both at home and abroad.



Sustainable
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