

SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

Organisation: HM Treasury

SDAP Publication date: November 2008

Title of SDAP: Delivering Sustainable Development: HM Treasury Action Plan 2008

SDC Assessment date: February 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

Coverage

4/4

Rating

Strategic planning

6/12

Actions

5/12

Ownership, engagement and delivery

1/6

Monitoring, review and reporting

1/6

OVERALL

17/40

ISSUES AND RISKS

The focus of this SDAP is largely concerned with the Treasury's environmental impacts (both the internal and external) and there are some good examples of the work going on here, including the use of the tax system to deliver environmental objectives.

However this has meant that there is little explanation of how the Treasury will use this SDAP to deliver on sustainability more broadly i.e. through consideration of the economic and social aspects of sustainability that the department's work impacts on. This more balanced approach could have included an explanation of how the inequality gap (in terms of income, health, well-being and overall prosperity) between affluent and deprived areas is being closed, with some key actions in place to drive forward this part of the Treasury's remit which also forms part of its contribution to the UK SD Strategy *Securing the Future*.

HMT'S RESPONSE

"The Treasury is proud of its record on sustainable development, in terms of policy, capability and operations. On policy, our sustainable development action plan makes clear the close links between the Treasury's strategic objectives and public service agreement targets and the principles of sustainable development. It also shows how the Treasury works to embed the principles of sustainable development throughout Government, for example in its approach to spending reviews (in which the Treasury worked closely with the SDC) and to policy appraisal using the Green Book. On capacity, the Treasury has also worked with the SDC in focussing staff on the principles of sustainable development and has focussed on developing staff capacity on the environment, which cuts across a number of Treasury objectives. On operations, the Treasury was delighted to be ranked top in the SDC's recent annual assessment of Sustainable Development in Government. It is disappointing that these achievements are not recognised in the process of assessing the Treasury's Sustainable Development Action Plan. The Treasury will reflect with the SDC on how to ensure that the writing and assessing future reports better reflects the department's achievements." (HM Treasury, June 2009).

COVERAGE				
	<i>Score</i>	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				
	<i>Score</i>	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				
	<i>Score</i>	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

	<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

	<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		