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**EU Sustainable Development Networking Event
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Proceedings

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1 Introduction

The EU Sustainable Development Networking event was held in Windsor on 14-15 July 2005, under the banner of the UK Presidency of the EU Council. This was the fourth in a series of annual meetings of policy makers, coordinators and advisers on sustainable development at the national and EU levels. Previous sustainable development (SD) networking events were held in The Hague (2002), Vienna (2003) and Kinsale (2004), with support also from a number of additional countries.

The event came at a time when most EU Member States were facing the daunting task of taking forward implementation – moving from words on paper to action on the ground. Engaging national environmental and SD authorities, as well as other government departments, local and regional authorities, and other stakeholders is a major challenge. **Improving delivery**, and **engaging the public and evaluation** were therefore selected as two of the main themes for the event. The third theme chosen for the event was the **revision of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS)** given the Commission's ongoing work, and the timely opportunity that Windsor provided to inform this work.

The event was informed by a series of background papers corresponding to the three themes. These highlighted examples of good (or interesting) practice, including case studies selected on the basis of suggestions made by network participants as well as by additional experts and relevant studies. Each of the three themes was the subject of keynote presentations designed so as to frame the workshop sessions. Discussions were then taken forward in dedicated workshop sessions to highlight comparable or contrasting experiences in other Member States; and to identify approaches that might usefully be applied elsewhere.

While the particular approach and themes for 2005 were new, the 2005 event sought to build firmly on the previous meetings. Attendance at the event again extended well beyond Member State officials to include the European Commission, Economic and Social Committee (EESC), European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Environmental/SD Advisory Councils, several non-governmental organisations and the UN. A particular feature of the Windsor event however was to extend participation to include representatives from finance ministries, enriching discussions in particular in relation to the use of budgets and financing for SD.

The event was led by Defra - the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - with support from a project steering committee including representatives from several national SD and environment departments, the European Commission (DG Environment) and the European Environmental Advisory Council (EEAC) sustainable development working group. The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) provided help in developing the programme and is also responsible for this final report of the meeting.

The focus of this report is on the main points arising from the three workshop themes – in total eighteen workshop discussions. Plenary sessions from days one and two are also summarised, and details are provided of a new permanent EU support

mechanism. The summary and conclusions section brings out the main points arising over the two days, drawing on the concluding remarks of Robin Miese (DG Environment) and the Chair.

Supporting documentation related to this event is available from <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/delivery/global-local/european.htm> including:

- ❑ One general background paper and three specific background papers, each covering a different workshop theme.
- ❑ Plenary presentations.
- ❑ Workshop case study presentations and/or notes .
- ❑ A paper submitted to the event from the Austrian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry Environment and Water Management: *European NSSD Network Office – Draft Concept/memorandum for a Permanent Support Mechanism of the European NSSD Network.*
- ❑ A paper submitted to the event from IEEP/DG Environment: *National Sustainable Development Strategies in the EU – Toward a Common Approach for Mutual Improvement and Learning.*
- ❑ A paper developed by the EEAC during the event: ‘The Windsor Momentum: The next push-up’.

2 Introductory Plenary Session

The introductory plenary session of the Windsor networking event consisted of an opening address and three keynote speeches. This was followed by an explanation of the role and organisation of the workshop sessions which provided the main fora for networking and the exchange of lessons.

Elliot Morley MP, the UK Climate Change and Environment Minister, opened the event by drawing attention to the three key themes under discussion: delivering National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), engaging stakeholders, and strengthening the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS). The main challenge is how to make connections between the global and local levels, between the EU, civil society and business, and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability. The Minister presented some of the key features of the UK SDS, which was launched in March 2005. This includes close working between government offices, public procurement decisions, openness and accountability, and taking into account the global dimension.

The UK is making the link between national, EU and global issues a central focus for both its EU Council and G8 Presidencies. The UK will be identifying examples of environmental integration for sustainable development, in support of the Cardiff integration process. Better linkage between the Lisbon Strategy and the EU SDS is desirable, focusing on the mutual benefits they offer rather than the distance between the two strategies. As regards the EU SDS, all three dimensions – social, economic and environmental - must be taken into account. The revision of the EU SDS will be among the priorities for the UK's EU Council Presidency, where it will seek to ensure that the SDS ends up as more than simply an environmental action programme.

It will be important to involve every part of the EU, including the European Parliament and citizens, in the formulation of the EU SDS. The importance of presenting SD in a way that is clear, concise and understandable to people was underlined.

Paul Ekins, Head of Environment Group, Policy Studies Institute and Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Westminster, presented essential elements for the delivery of SD. The basic SD process involves a combination of innovation and implementation of new technology. It also demands changed behaviour that has so far largely proven elusive. There are a number of priority areas in terms of SD policy. Apart from funding, prices influence the long-term structure of production and consumption and if they do not send the right signal, other SD policies will be at best undermined and at worst wholly ineffective. Regulation and planning is essential for information provision, minimum standards and spatial coherence. Institutional coherence is needed horizontally across departments and vertically between different levels of governance. Public and stakeholder awareness or engagement can also involve many different ideas and approaches. Most people will be inspired or even forced to take action locally, eg through the UK's Beacon Councils. There is also a need for partnerships and intermediaries to tackle the issue of trust, buy-in and understanding. Without a much enhanced public awareness/buy-in in the UK, the necessary policies will not be feasible, and necessary behaviour change

will not occur.

Tony Long WWF European Policy Office, presented the concept of ecological footprinting as a communications and assessment tool. In 2005, WWF produced a EU report containing the living planet index (covering freshwater, marine, forests, etc) and the ecological footprint, which relates consumption of resources to biological capacity. The ecological footprint concept serves two main purposes: measuring progress towards SD and engaging the public at the same time. The ecological footprint shows trends over time, potentially comparing countries, regions, organisations and even individuals. It provides a platform for the organisation of sustainable development information, as well as supporting strategic management of and scenario planning for sustainable development. Importantly, it is a visioning, awareness and educational tool. It shows that there are clear environmental limits and that society must either live within these limits - on less than two hectares per capita - or society risks resource based conflicts and geopolitical instability. While there are some weaknesses with the ecological footprint model, such as the way it handles forestry, it is a useful tool and is being applied at the EU, national and city level.

Christine Dalby from the European Commission's Secretariat General (who lead on the review of the EU SDS) presented current thinking on the content of 'EU SDS II'. The new document is likely to focus on the same priority trends identified in 2001, though adding the external dimension, and potentially placing more emphasis on social issues, security and sustainable production and consumption. The document would identify more clearly objectives, targets and milestones, with policy interventions possibly organised around the themes of resources, processes and external policies. Policy making principles might include policy integration, inter-linkages, a better mix of instruments and best available science and technology. A new reporting cycle is under consideration, in addition to a five-year major review cycle. As regards the relationship between the Lisbon and SD Strategies, the former deals with immediate threats to European prosperity and its social model, and the latter with the wider and deeper threats to European prosperity and quality of life. Adoption of EU SDS II is likely in October 2005 with subsequent discussions in different Council formations and final adoption by the European Council in Spring 2006.

David Wilkinson from IEEP concluded the first plenary session. He explained the philosophy behind the workshop sessions where the main 'networking' and sharing of lessons was to take place. The workshops were to provide an opportunity for all delegates to discuss each of the main themes: improving delivery, strengthening engagement and evaluation, and reviewing the EU SDS. In most cases, sessions would begin with case study presentations to stimulate discussions and draw lessons of wider relevance. Discussions were informed by a series of background papers corresponding to the three themes. Workshop sessions were arranged in such a way as to ensure cross-pollination between the groups.

3 Workshop Theme 1: Improving Delivery

Now that most Member States have adopted new or revised national sustainable development strategies, the focus is on delivery, and the ways in which this can be achieved. The aim of workshop theme 1 was to identify concrete examples from EU and Member State experience on how to integrate sustainable development into practical policy-making across government departments and levels of government. A number of relevant case studies were presented by speakers from different Member States, and these initiated discussions around four different approaches to improving delivery:

- government organisation and coordination – vertical (between different levels of governance, i.e. EU, national, regional and local) and horizontal (across government departments) integration;
- the role of advisory councils on sustainable development;
- coordinating and promoting sustainable development in budget and public expenditure procedures; and
- ecological taxation.

Communication with stakeholders and instruments and targets for improving delivery were also discussed.

3.1 Government organisation and coordination – vertical and horizontal integration

The workshop sessions considered several different cases of how national governments have developed their internal structures to improve horizontal and vertical integration of SD. It was recognised that some of the key challenges in this process are **building good relationships** between different government departments, **engaging with stakeholders** and improving **communication** with them.

Micael Hagman from the Swedish Ministry of Sustainable Development explained how the Swedish government is working to bring together all aspects of sustainable development. Notably, SD has support from the highest level: the Prime Minister has announced that SD should be the overall goal for the Swedish government and, in December 2003, a coordination unit for sustainable development was established in the Prime Minister's office. The unit has since moved to the Ministry of SD to reflect the newly appointed SD Minister's mandate. The initial high-level nature of the unit is thought to have contributed to the relatively strong position of SD issues in the Swedish government. However, it is still too early to say what impact the creation of a Ministry of SD and a coordination unit will have in practice, and whether it will actually deliver more sustainability than before.

On institutional structures, it was noted that:

- SD needs institutionalising, and there is a role for education on SD;
- in some cases, fruitful SD debates have started within parliaments; and
- an observatory for SD has been recently created in Spain.

Luc Goeteyn from the Environment and Nature Council of Flanders (MiNa-Council) presented the recommendations it has made, together with the Flanders Social and Economic Council (SERV), to the Government of Flanders Region in Belgium on how to deliver an effective NSDS. The recommendations include: ensuring **political commitment** on the highest level; strengthening mechanisms for **transparency** and **participation**; creating mechanisms for **coordination**; strengthening **knowledge management**; and installing a **multi-stakeholder** forum.

The workshops discussed how to handle instruments and targets for delivering national strategies. It was suggested that **appropriate and targeted instruments and tools** that actually improve the current situation are needed within the strategy. Introducing targets that have already been reached or are soon to be reached should be avoided. Day-to-day **indicator management** must also be improved. Moreover, **evaluation techniques** need to be specified in advance and there is a need for considerable advance preparation if certain instruments are to be used effectively. The use of environmental impact assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is necessary but not sufficient to advance integration. One reflection on this topic was that SDSs have sometimes been built on the basis of a perfect world: strong political commitment, transparency, strategic intelligence, etc. However, the reality is never like that, and therefore there should be a **plan B** in case things do not occur as anticipated.

There was a discussion on how tools and targets could be communicated to stakeholders to encourage their participation. It was largely agreed that **communication with SD stakeholders has to be improved**, in order to achieve transparency, reach the agreed goals and ensure greater SD ownership. The latter would in turn lead to better future negotiations. Importantly, the linguistic aspect must be taken into account. That is, sustainability can have different connotations in different languages, and consequently, in some languages the **concept of sustainability** might be less easy to understand. Levels of public awareness also vary between Member States. There is a need for a stronger link between SDS and day-to-day life, since some tools (eg cost-benefit analysis) are not easily understandable by non-experts. Therefore, an SDS should be translated into concrete actions. For instance, an overall reduction objective for GHG emissions should be broken down into sub-objectives for different sectors, eg practically speaking, what is the required effort in the transport sector? The question of whether the Scandinavian model (SD high on the political agenda, with the very significant involvement of Government bodies and stakeholders) is exportable to other Member States was raised, and to what extent the level of stakeholder involvement is linked to the country's culture.

Advisory Councils

Presentations by Miklos Bulla from the Hungarian Environmental (and SD) Council (OKT) and Ingeborg Niestroy from the network of European Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC) provided input to workshop discussions on the role of SD advisory councils. Amongst other roles, advisory councils generally provide a link between government and stakeholders and contribute to the development, monitoring and review of NSSDs.

One of the roles of OKT, which is comprised of green NGOs, Business and Science (Academy), is to investigate the governmental, sectoral and regional

regulation/development programmes and the consequences for the environment, as well as institutional structures. The Hungarian SD strategy has been delayed and, according to the Advisory Council, some of the main **problems arise from the joint responsibility** given to the Ministry for Environment and the Ministry for EU Affairs and Development. In practice this means that no-one takes full responsibility for the strategy, and in turn this can cause a **lack of political commitment**, and result in less time for real participation and engagement, and a lack of sectoral cooperation.

The EEAC presented its benchmark study ‘Sustaining Sustainability’ and elaborated on the role of SD councils. The benchmark study included nine Member States with **different models of SD councils**. Choices to be made are, for instance:

- Independence versus a high-level political lead (‘Finnish model’) – some councils are independent, comprising of individuals from outside government who do not represent any one organisation (eg, the UK Sustainable Development Commission). Under the Finnish model, on the other hand, the Prime Minister leads the council, making this more of a platform for dialogue between the government and other stakeholders.
- Representing and negotiating versus more deliberate style - the choice normally depends on the tradition and political style of a country. However, wherever there is a socio-economic council, the negotiating style tends to dominate. The independent deliberate style seems to better support the development of an open-minded atmosphere, characterised by trust, self-reflection and creativity.

The workshop debate mainly focused on the **scientific contribution of advisory councils** and what is the appropriate degree of **involvement of government** bodies. It was also emphasised that SD councils provide a link between society (stakeholders) and government. The following key comments and questions were raised:

- Government involvement - councils need to be independent in order to provide objective scientific evaluation, but the involvement of Government bodies gives them more political power. How could SD councils be made accountable to society?
- A scientific background is necessary but not sufficient, particularly if the Government is not ready to listen to it. There is also a need for political input. The SD Council can be considered either as an expert forum providing advice, as a negotiating forum, or both.
- Close cooperation between SD councils and socio-economic councils gives, in the countries where they exist, ground for better SD delivery. The two councils must be complementary.
- SD Councils may also evaluate the government’s performance in delivering its NSDS (eg SD Commission in the UK).
- SD Councils create a negotiating space. There are sometimes difficult relationships between ministries and tensions on certain policy areas, and SD needs a neutral ground. For example, on the land use issue in Germany, a general vision and basis for common ground was set up by the SD Council.
- How effective are SD councils in communicating messages to the public?

Budgets and expenditure programmes

Budgets can be used to either promote or to prevent progress on SD. The workshops discussed both the national and EU dimension of this issue, particularly in relation to the UK Spending Reviews, EU Structural and Cohesion funds, and the Italian environmental audit offices.

The HM Treasury, UK, presented their work on **integrating SD into reviews of departmental spending**. SD spending reviews were carried out in 2002 and 2004. The 2004 review required each department to set out how they would they integrate the key social, economic and environmental impacts of their work. The initiative was welcomed by environmental NGOs, but stakeholders also demanded greater transparency. Key lessons from the reviews include:

- Having **sustainable development as a cross cutting theme is a necessary but not sufficient step** towards integrating it into Government's decision making;
- **SD does not always fit well into traditional departmental structures** – there is a need to find innovative ways for cross-government working.

This led to a substantial discussion about how **Public Service Agreements** were determined between the Treasury and spending ministries, the role of external stakeholders, the benefits and drawbacks of joint targets for different ministries and the applicability of the system in other Member States where the economics ministry has less power. The combined role of the economics and finance ministry and the commitment to SD were notable features of the current system in the UK. Elements of the model are potentially applicable elsewhere.

The Environment Agency (England and Wales) together with the Italian National Environmental Authority presented their work on **integrating sustainable development into Structural Funds** programmes through the GRDP project (Greening Regional Development Programmes). The project involves 16 local and regional authorities and agencies from eight Member States, and the aim is to share best practice and to develop a methodology for integrating environmental aspects into regional development programmes. One of the key messages of the GRDP was that **close cooperation between managing and environmental authorities is essential** for integrating the environment. Bearing in mind that the different authorities have different roles, priorities and levels of power, this is something that the GRDP is trying to achieve, and it has had some success.

The Italian Environmental Authorities Network, which is a member of the GRDP project, recognises that Structural Funds are an excellent tool for pushing reforms in environmental sectors. For example, funding for projects may be conditional on meeting certain requirements under EU legislation.

In relation to budgets and the GRDP, participants of the workshops made the following key suggestions:

- **Joint ownership of public sector targets** across Ministries was considered a good idea;
- Need to take the opportunity to **green future Structural & Cohesion Funds**

- (avoid ‘dash for trash’). Specific references should be made between the EU SDS and the future funds;
- Need to link the environmental indicators in the programme to the SD strategy;
 - **Capacity building in the economic sector** to help develop good SD projects should happen at the start of the programme;
 - Match SD strategies to budgetary priorities;
 - Rigorous ex-ante, mid and post evaluation is needed of Structural and Cohesion Funds;
 - **Green accounting** could inform budgets/policymaking to raise awareness;
 - Italy has developed a useful environmental accounting system for public authorities;
 - For better implementation of SDS in the regions, a part of the national budget must be transferred to the regional level. A proper monitoring system must be able to evaluate the impact of regional actions on SD.
 - The French administrative reform – moving from a budget breakdown by ministries to a budget breakdown by tasks and objectives – could be a useful tool and would show more clearly how the SDS priorities are allocated.

Ecological taxation

Christian Hey from the German Advisory Council on the Environment presented some key lessons from German experience on ecological tax reform, which was launched in April 1999. It aimed to advance environmental protection, with particular emphasis on energy consumption, while reducing unemployment at the same time. One of the key lessons was that, because of its high political nature, **eco-tax reform needs a long warming-up phase** to build up broad political support both by the political elites (including a new governing coalition) and by citizens. Warming-up includes robust impact assessment, operational concepts, political alliances and a good selling story. In Germany, the Minister of Finance was supportive of the reform. However, it was more difficult to accommodate the concerns of the Minister of Economics and the Prime Minister, with reduced environmental effectiveness as a result.

The workshop discussion concluded that the role of the EU is important in establishing the **framework to encourage and provide leadership on tax reforms**. Eco-taxes should be part of a **package of instruments** and accommodate economic and social benefits ie double-dividends. The question remains whether eco-taxes should be fiscally neutral, that is, not creating any tax burden.

Improving delivery: Some key messages

- There is a need for high political commitment to drive SD delivery.
- SD does not always fit well into traditional departmental structures. Having it as a cross cutting theme is a necessary but not sufficient step towards integrating SD into government decision making. Building relationships *within* government is important, and there is a particular need for building capacity on SD in economic departments.
- Communication with SD stakeholders has to be improved, in order to achieve transparency, reach the agreed goals and ensure greater SD ownership. There is a need for a stronger link between SDS and day-to-day life, since some tools (e.g. cost-benefit analysis) are not easily understandable by non-experts.
- Appropriate and targeted instruments and tools are necessary to support delivery.
- SD Councils, in their various models, are playing a valuable role in the EU.
- SD strategies and budgetary priorities need aligning. The use of Public Service Agreements in the UK, involving two or more departments, are a good idea and are potentially applicable to other countries.
- The EU is important in establishing the framework to encourage and provide leadership on ecological tax reform.
- NSDSs have sometimes been built on the basis of a perfect world: strong political commitment, transparency, strategic intelligence, etc. However, the reality is never like that, and therefore there should be a ‘plan B’ in case things do not occur as anticipated.

4 Workshop 2: Strengthening Engagement & Evaluation

The aim of this workshop was to share views on how to inform, engage and involve stakeholders and the public in sustainable development; and to discuss different approaches to monitoring, evaluating and reporting on national strategies.

Seven case studies were presented: two on the theme of communicating sustainable development covering the use of indicators in Wales and awareness raising in Austria; two on involving stakeholders within the framework of national sustainable development advisory councils, using examples from Finland and Germany; and three case studies on evaluation, looking at the new ‘watchdog’ role of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, and recent experience of evaluating national strategies in France and Austria. In addition, the European Commission outlined its preliminary thinking on a common approach to reviewing national SD strategies.

4.1 Strengthening Engagement

Communicating Sustainable Development

Sustainable development messages need to be communicated to a range of audiences, including stakeholder groups, the general public, and different parts and levels of government itself. All discussions on this theme emphasised the **urgent need to communicate SD better**, and suggested ways in which this could be achieved. There is a need to develop and promote indicators as a means to communicate and popularise the messages. For instance, to promote media attention, and to make messages easier to digest, **sustainable development should be broken down into sub-themes**, such as climate change. It should be conveyed as a bridge to more concrete issues, and be given a ‘face’ and an emotion. **We need to rethink, and start from where people are.**

Governments have an important role to play in promoting SD, through better use of the media, but also in acting as ‘front runners’. Governments should also work closely with stakeholder groups to **encourage the promotion of SD messages on the ground**. Equally, governments have a responsibility to provide a framework conducive to behaviour changes, through, for example, the use of economic instruments (see Workshop 1).

It was suggested that an **independent advisory body**, such as a SD Commission, might have a stronger chance of attracting media attention and public support on an ongoing basis. **Sharing success stories** of SD at, for example, product or service levels, is another way that SD can be communicated in a more meaningful way.

An interesting case was presented by Rita Trattnig of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Environment, and Water Management, on ‘Sustainable Weeks’. This initiative is based on a partnership between government and major retailers, and is aimed at **raising consumer awareness of SD issues**, and thus encouraging the uptake of more sustainable products, such as organic food, fair trade and energy efficient goods. Launched in 2004, Sustainable Weeks will now be held on an annual basis. By focusing efforts over a short period of a few weeks each year, it seeks to heighten the visibility of SD issues and sustainable consumption and

production. Promotional work includes point of sale (POS) information, press conferences, flyers, a website, and a round tour by the Environment Minister. Rita Trattng shared lessons from the first year, including the need for more POS visibility, more stakeholder communication and closer working with marketing departments in the retail chains. In preparation for the 2005 weeks, there have been educational workshops with retail chain staff on how to explain the campaign to consumers. There is also work to concretise the definition of 'regional sustainable products' with the aim of promoting SD at local and regional levels in Austria (*'from the region for the region'*). One continuing problem is that evaluating the effectiveness of the initiative has been constrained by the reluctance of participating retailers to release sensitive sales information.

Different approaches need to be taken when communicating SD, depending on the audience and purpose. Simon Bilsborough from the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) presented two methods applied in Wales. The first is the ecological footprint, which is used to communicate to the general public the impact that the average Welsh person places on the natural environment. The approach is well developed in Wales and elsewhere, and is expressed as global hectares per person (gh/p). Global availability is 1.92 gh/p; the average global use is 2.02 gh/p; and the Welsh footprint is 5.25 gh/p. This translates to the clear message that three planets are needed to sustain Welsh lifestyles. Furthermore, the methodology can be used to identify 'high footprint' trends, such as eating out, so that messages can be more targeted. Research in Wales indicates that people will only change consumption habits if the solutions were 'clever, cool or smart'. In Wales, a campaign was run called '**small clever changes**', ie concentrating public attention on areas of consumption where they can make improvements at little cost to their lifestyles.

Though the footprint is useful as a public communication tool, a more sophisticated indicator is needed to inform policy decisions. The Welsh Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) has been developed to serve this purpose, and responds to the shortcomings of GDP by taking into account equity and environmental costs. This composite index is used alongside GDP to monitor the gap between wealth and welfare over time. If, for example, economic growth increases while ISEW remains static or falls over the same time period, we need to ask why. Closer analysis of the components of ISEW can indicate where policy attention needs to be focused, for example improving air quality or reducing inequality in income distribution.

The group focused on the technical aspects of ISEW and the difficulties of gaining acceptance for new economic approaches. It is important that economists receive training on how to incorporate SD into economic theory, and understand the need to accept new approaches that do more than just concentrate on the economic performance of an economy. Economists in government finance departments are particularly important people to bring on board in relation to SD thinking. More generally, 'skilling for sustainable development' is essential. The National School of Government in the UK now incorporates training on integrating SD into all policy making, as part of courses for newly-appointed civil servants.

Engaging Stakeholders

Across Europe Sustainable Development Advisory Councils or Commissions are providing a valuable mechanism for engaging stakeholders in the development,

delivery and evaluation of national strategies. The remit of these fora varies, and can include: policy advice; self-assessment; monitoring progress; watchdog function; dialogue platforms; communication; and outreach.

Sauli Rouhinen from the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development (FNCSD) presented details of the approach taken to stakeholder engagement in Finland – a case often highlighted as a good example. The FNCSD was established to promote SD in Finland, and comprises a mix of government ministers and stakeholders. It has an inter-ministerial secretariat, and is chaired by the Prime Minister, thus showing commitment from the highest political level. Stakeholder engagement in SD, through the FNCSD, is based on a holistic approach, where people are encouraged to feel part of the process within a bottom-up structure. The approach is characterised by open dialogue, participation, joint initiatives, stakeholders' own SD strategies and commitments, involvement in evaluation, partnership programmes, and, more recently, the creation of a multi-stakeholder SD Strategy Group. Although the FNCSD is looking for common ground, constructive dialogue and mutual learning over the long-term are considered more important than consensus. Lessons from the Finnish case include the need for high-level political support; continuity of the process and of the Commission itself as a constant focal point; good management of engagement; and participation, as opposed to consultation. However, it was accepted that its cohesive political culture and small population make constructive dialogue more effective than it might be in more divided societies.

The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) differs from the FNCSD in that it does not include government representatives, and that its 19 members representing civil society are appointed for their individual contributions rather than as stakeholder delegates. The RNE's Director, Gunter Bachmann, presented details of how the Council seeks to engage with the public. Raising awareness is one of the RNE's key functions, although it has a much wider remit including advising government on SD policies. As in Finland, the focus for RNE is on dialogue, rather than consultation. It has carried out a very wide range of initiatives, including annual public conferences covering a range of SD issues, workshops, a talk-show series on the eve of the WSSD, organising a dialogue process on the issue of land-use and land consumption for housing and construction from which advice was presented to government; a marketing competition for teenagers producing free cards; and a school literature competition *Focus on tomorrow* to improve awareness. The RNE also initiated a seed-money fund provided by the Federal Government, open to local groups engaged in sustainability issues.

Remaining problems include the difficulty in strengthening vertical integration between levels of government in Germany, reflecting the constitutional powers and differing political cultures of the Länder. It was also observed that the resources of the RNE might be stretched too thinly over too wide a range of issues, and that a stronger strategic focus could help make its contribution more effective.

Discussion of the two case studies concluded that there is no 'blueprint' for success in strengthening stakeholder engagement through SD advisory councils, but there are a number of factors that can help:

- **Leadership** ie political support and good management;

- ❑ **Continuity** - of Councils/Commissions as a focal point for SD, regardless of changes in government;
- ❑ Moving from formal consultation towards a **participatory approach**.
- ❑ **Transparent**, open processes.
- ❑ Developing **skills** (process management).

In relation to engaging with the public, one suggestion was the use of well-known figures (eg pop stars) to popularise SD. More education is needed, on a general level, but also in certain sectors and throughout all levels of government.

The idea of establishing a EU level SD advisory council was discussed. This would need careful consideration of which model to follow, ie what responsibilities such a council would have and whether it would be independent of the Commission and/or Council; and which stakeholders to engage to ensure it is truly representative of diverse opinion across all Member States. It was agreed that an EU SD advisory council could not be expected to take responsibility for communicating directly with the EU's 400 million citizens.

4.2 Evaluating national strategies

Evaluation offers the opportunity to take stock of progress, and to feed lessons into the next stage in the NSDS cyclical process.

Peer reviews – developing a common approach

Andre-Jean Guerin from the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development shared experiences from the peer review of the French NSDS launched in 2004. The review aimed to develop and test a methodology for peer review and shared learning on NSDSs. The methodology was designed to be flexible and could be replicated in other countries. It consisted of four main stages:

- ❑ preparation of a background report, based partly on interviews with key actors;
- ❑ a methodology workshop;
- ❑ a one week peer review workshop involving Belgium, Ghana, Mauritius and the UK, and leading to a report and recommendations;
- ❑ a presentation of outcomes and revising the methodology for future application.

The process was very participative, bringing together governmental and non-governmental actors from France and four peer review countries.

The French peer review was considered an excellent example and discussions focussed on how this could be built upon and applied elsewhere. The European Commission is currently reflecting on options, with a view to structuring and facilitating the sharing of experience and lessons on developing, implementing and evaluating NSDSs. The idea is to develop a voluntary common approach, involving involving peers from at least three other countries, and drawn from both government and civil society. Representatives from the review country would include government, local authorities, civil society and business. A practical handbook is being developed by DG Environment based on lessons from existing NSDS evaluation approaches; and interviews with selected governmental and NGO actors. The handbook should be

available in the autumn.

The Commission initiative was broadly welcomed by the network, although a number of points emerged from the discussion, as follows.

- Political commitment to a review is needed from at the highest level.
- Reviews should be voluntary, but countries should be obliged to *report* on their review experience to ensure shared learning. Experience emerging from reviews should be shared systematically, for example at SD network events.
- A person responsible for the review needs to be identified in the review country, possibly an independent actor.
- External actors, whether independent commissions, scientists, experts or peers, should lend credence to the review and promote media attention.
- A common EU approach should be a ‘framework’ rather than a ‘handbook’.
- Recommendations from the peer reviews should be seen to help the country, providing advice and suggestions for the future, rather than something that the country is obliged to act upon.
- A participatory approach that involves civil society is important. It also provides an opportunity for horizontal networking.
- The costs and benefits of undertaking peer reviews should be weighed up and evaluated over time, given the potential cost for review and peer countries.
- Peer reviews provide an opportunity for North-South/East-West exchange of experience, and to strengthen the external dimension.
- International responsibilities need to be included as a theme in the review.
- The approach needs to be flexible and should evolve over time as lessons from undertaking peer reviews are fed back. In developing a common approach, lessons should be drawn from existing evaluation methodologies.
- Peer reviews should be beneficial for all countries involved, due to the shared learning opportunities. Access to expertise from other countries can also be an incentive to participating in a review.

Scientific evaluation

Elizabeth Freytag from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Environment and Water Management outlined Austria’s approach to evaluating its NSDS, which began in May 2005 and is due to conclude by the end of the year. The focus of the evaluation is primarily on the implementation *process*, with a distinction made between implementation mechanisms (institutions and instruments) and implementation activities (measures and projects to reach milestones), rather than evaluating the strategy and policy goals themselves. A scientific approach is being taken, comprising assessment on the basis of questionnaires, on-site interviews and detailed research into the Sustainability Strategy’s specific mechanisms and instruments. It is structured around a participatory process, involving internal and external representatives.

The Austrian approach was considered to be a very good example of a national evaluation of delivery – scientific, methodological and thorough with clear objectives and follow-through. It was noted that peer review and scientific evaluation are very different, but are not mutually exclusive, and can be married together.

Institutionalising evaluation

Emma Downing from the UK Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) presented details of its new role as a 'watchdog' for sustainable development. Its tasks now include monitoring departmental SD action plans and supporting departments in their preparation, reporting on the government's progress on the UK strategy, and considering the adequacy of institutional and accountability arrangements. The SDC takes on its new role in spring 2006, and is currently considering its approach, including the production of regular thematic reports on major issues, a 'State of SD' report every three years, and the use of expert advisory panels and/or a 'people's panel'.

The group considered that there was value in moving the watchdog function out of Government, although transferring this approach to other countries would not always be feasible (eg Germany). It does present the challenge of how to combine the roles of advocate, adviser and watchdog, in terms both of internal organisation and public perception. One option would be for the SDC to *manage* the watchdog function, rather actually doing it itself. The SDC also needs to consider how to promote itself to its audience, for example is it now mainly a watchdog but with other roles including an advisory function? It is important that by having the additional watchdog responsibilities, the SDC does not lose its existing strengths.

An added advantage of the watchdog role is the media attention that the SDC could attract. The need to better communicate SD messages was highlighted, and breaking the messages down into thematic areas – as suggested by the SDC – was considered a useful approach. The SDC has an important role to play in communicating SD.

Evaluation has also been institutionalised in Belgium. There is a legal obligation for a task force to report on progress towards objectives every year, using indicators, and to report on the process, using specific criteria from the Rio Principles.

Strengthening engagement & evaluation: Some key messages

- There is an urgent need to communicate SD better. It should be broken down into sub-themes, such as climate change, and be conveyed as a bridge to more concrete issues. It needs to be given a ‘face’ and an emotion. We need to rethink, and start from where people are.
- Need to make ‘small clever changes’, ie concentrating public attention on areas of consumption where they can make improvements at little cost to their lifestyles.
- There is no single way to strengthen stakeholder engagement through advisory councils, although leadership, continuity, a participatory approach, transparency in proceedings and development of appropriate skills are all helpful.
- There is potential to use peer review to support mutual improvement and shared learning on NSDSs. Such review should have high level political support, involve stakeholders from the start, and engage external actors to politicise and publicise the process. Reviews should generate advice and suggestions for the future.
- Involving peers from third countries provides an opportunity to reinforce the global, including footprint, dimension of NSDSs.
- NSDS evaluation can be relatively scientific, based on a sound methodology with clear objectives and follow-through. Such a scientific approach can be built into peer reviews or complement them.
- There is scope to further institutionalise evaluation of NSDSs. As appropriate, watchdog functions can be moved outside of government, not least because of the increased media attention and communication benefits that this might generate.

5 Workshop 3: Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy

5.1 Basic principles underlying the EU SDS

The link – actual and desired - between the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy on growth and jobs is taxing many policy practitioners. Although Heads of State and Government have twice stated that sustainable development is the EU's overarching goal, there has not been a similar statement regarding the hierarchy between the two strategies. Nor have there been attempts to link the two strategies more directly to ensure they are mutually supportive.

The Commission's view is that the strategies go 'hand in hand', with the EU SDS dealing with the longer term and the other with more immediate issues of growth and jobs. The creation of a joint taskforce located in the Secretariat General and drawn from across the Directorates Generals is intended to improve the coherence of the two strategies and enhance coordination from within the Commission.

However, delegates meeting at Windsor emphasised the **need for respective relationships to be clarified**, recognising moreover that both strategies have short and long term implications and needs. Employment creation and growth is not a short term challenge, and quality of life issues such as health and a clean environment cannot simply be set aside until the EU has solved its social and economic problems. **Both strategies demand action now**, as well as long term planning. To avoid long-term or irreversible deterioration in environment and quality of life, environment and SD demand urgent action and cannot be delayed while EU policies focus on the Lisbon goals.

Ideally, there should be just one integrated EU strategy, with sustainable development objectives also guiding the Lisbon Strategy. At the very least, the two strategies should take full account of each other, be mutually supportive and potentially even overlap. Interaction is particularly relevant, for example, in relation to sustainable production and consumption, environment and resources, and eco-efficient innovation supportive of social objectives. These interlinkages – which need to be initiated from both the Lisbon and SDS, ought to be reflected at the Community and national level, with national Lisbon reform programmes also developed and assessed from a SD perspective.

The challenge for the EU SDS II is to support the introduction of mechanisms that underpin better linkage between the two strategies, at EU and national levels. The use of **common indicators**, eg reflecting green competitiveness, growth and job creation, or the link between decoupling and resource use, is one option. There are diverging views about whether the same indicators should be used to follow both strategies, however. It is noteworthy here that the EU SDS does not benefit from equivalent political processes that have been established for the Lisbon Strategies, in terms of real engagement of Heads of Government and State, a dedicated Council formation, relevant policy committees and a quite formal (if changing) 'open method of coordination' (OMC).

5.2 Monitoring and Reporting

Impartial **monitoring of the implementation of the EU SDS is important**, as are indicators so that the results of monitoring can be communicated. Indicators are only really of value if they are clear and transparent and are just one part of the monitoring process. The Commission could produce an explanatory booklet for stakeholders. The possibility of developing indicators of Green National Product should also be considered (as a means of linking SD and Lisbon), as should further use of the footprint indicator which is a useful political communication tool.

Strong and innovative reporting mechanisms are needed to support the EU SDS II. These could include private sector approaches, ranking of best practice and/or good practice elements, reporting focused on certain thematic issues or sectors, and peer review. **Benchmarking** was identified as a useful tool for identifying best practice.

Although there are some diverging views, there is considerable **support for separating out the reporting cycles for the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy**, with progress on SD to be reported to and discussed at a summit other than the spring summit (October, December or June). The SDS reporting cycle should take the lead, with LS reporting aligned to broader and overarching SD objectives.

The **approach to reporting adopted under the Lisbon Strategy could be replicated for the EU SDS**. This includes the use of guidelines for Member States on implementing and reporting on progress, as well as identifying those areas where reporting should be done at the EU level only. EU reporting requirements could also be a way of streamlining the content of national SDS. That said, it is important to limit the reporting burden on Member States. Furthermore, time should not be lost in establishing complex new reporting cycles.

5.3 Governance

There has been some criticism of the governance of the EU SDS, including and going beyond reporting arrangements. At the institutional level, there are a number of roles that need to be filled, with Eurostat, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Sustainable Development Councils (ESDACs) identified as potential candidates (see also below). As concerns the main EU institutions, the following points were made:

- European Parliament - one of the main institutions whose roles *vis a vis* the EU SDS should be enhanced, whether in terms of adopting the EU SDS II itself, or oversight or monitoring of its implementation and further development.
- Heads of state and government – need to remain involved on a continuous and meaningful basis in order to demonstrate leadership, vision and direction and political priority.
- Within the Parliament, Council and Commission, responsibility and capacity for the SDS needs to be located at the highest level, even if environment departments continue to be important drivers in SDS development and implementation.

5.4 New approaches to policy making

The Commission's system of impact assessment (IA) has been and continues to be presented by the Commission as the central tool for securing environmental integration and sustainable development. IA does indeed have the potential to be a neutral tool that brings to the fore issues and conflicts, both through written assessments and the involvement of stakeholders. However, practical experience in using the IA suggests that its neutrality can be undermined, particularly given pressure to use IA as a 'competitiveness proofing' tool.

External and independent quality control is needed to secure the independence, reliability and credibility of IAs. Even if imbalances in the system are addressed, IAs will not solve conflicts and identify acceptable trade-offs which are political questions. Moreover, it is important to focus on the system, rather than separate sectors, pillars and projects: SD adds value by providing a cross-sectoral focus for analysis. In developing the EU SDS II, the potential for **other tools to supplement IA** in enhancing sectoral integration could be explored.

There is an evident **need for better coordination** of regional and national SDSs, and the EU SDS. The question is what level of coordination is desirable, in terms of linkage between the national and EU levels, and also as regards implementation. National SDSs are generally ahead of the EU SDS in terms of quality. The EU strategy does not yet provide a common framework with core elements (eg targets, indicators, good governance principles, integration) but perhaps this could be the ambition for the EU SDS II. Overall, however, such a framework should not be overly prescriptive and inhibit the natural diversity and innovation of national strategies.

Apart from providing a common framework for NSDSs, there is also scope to strengthen coordination in terms of lessons learned by Member States, including the use of **peer review to support shared learning**. However, there would be some **resistance to 'harder' coordination** involving naming and shaming, ranking and rating and benchmarking exercises. Others find such elements of coordination essential as a means of focusing attention, securing motivation for improvement and adding realism to discussions. Moves towards making the EU SDS II formally subject to the OMC would be contentious.

5.5 Objectives

There is currently a 'crisis of credibility' in SD policy making with public policy engagement with SD in decline. The global SD picture **needs to be better communicated**, to the public and to business and should set the context for SD in the EU. It could, for example, include a preface that sets out the global context, the challenges and drivers, and ways in which the EU can provide solutions within and beyond its borders. This approach should immediately generate a more integrated strategy addressing the internal and external dimensions, as well as identifying means of 'exporting SD'.

On this basis, the EU SDS II can provide detail on the vision, principles (already agreed), priorities, objectives, targets and milestones, delivery mechanisms, timetable and reporting requirements. Overall, the Strategy needs to convey what SD is, be

aspirational in nature and look into the medium future, eg a time frame of 30-50 years. Specific suggestions relating to the content of the EU SDS II include the following:

- it should be broadly framed, but it will be more effective if specific actions are focused on a small number of priorities. Security as a new priority issue demands further discussion, as does education;
- it should largely build on existing objectives, and add targets for these. However, additional work may be needed in the area of economic and social objectives, possibly reflecting the Lisbon Strategy priorities, and sustainable production and consumption;
- consideration should be given to whether objectives should be quantifiable, and potentially even legally binding;
- one of the key objectives of the EU SDS II should be to resolve conflicts between existing policy areas, ie facilitating better integration, cross-sectoral policy making, etc, and providing a model for better implementation and development of action plans; and
- clearer reference should be made to existing delivery mechanisms, eg. the water framework Directive (WFD), Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC), and the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP).

5.6 Stakeholder participation and ownership

There is much **scope for applying experience** with the National Sustainable Development Advisory Councils at the EU level. A European Sustainable Development Council or similar body could be created by reference to existing structures such as the EESC and the EEAC, or by creating a specific body for the purpose. If specifically created, such a council could be established by the European Parliament or indeed as a standing group advising the European Council or Council. It could be made up of recognised European personalities operating at a high level.

There is in addition a need to create a more permanent platform for broad consultation and participation of stakeholders. Public and stakeholder ownership should be supported through broad involvement from the beginning and constant feedback, rather than occasional and *ad hoc* consultations and review exercises. Ideally, participation would seek to secure a broad consensus amongst social, economic and environmental stakeholders that is more difficult for political decision-makers to ignore.

Revising the EU SDS: Some key messages

- ❑ The Lisbon and SD Strategies both have short and long term implications and needs, demanding urgent action. Quality of life issues cannot be put on hold while the problem of jobs and growth is solved. A focus on sustainable consumption and production in both strategies, some common indicators and similar political processes could be helpful.
- ❑ Indicators, including footprint, green GDP and others, are needed so that results of monitoring can be conveyed to the public and politicians. Strong and innovative reporting mechanisms should support the EU SDS, potentially separate from reporting under Lisbon.
- ❑ Responsibility for developing, implementing and overseeing SD process should be anchored at the highest level in the European Parliament, European Council and Commission.
- ❑ The Commission's existing IA process needs to be balanced, and additional tools to support SD explored. For vertical integration, the EU SDS II could provide a common framework containing core elements, such as targets and governance principles, to be taken up at national level.
- ❑ The EU SDS II needs to be aspirational and looking 30 to 50 years hence. It should present a compelling case, including a business case, for SD and how the EU will rise to the challenge. Whilst comprehensive in scope, it should prioritise action on a small number of issues, potentially including security, education and resolving conflicts between policy areas.
- ❑ New integrated objectives may be needed to better reflect the three dimensions of SD and sustainable consumption and production.
- ❑ There is much scope to establish a EU level advisory council, either building on existing structures or creating a body attached to the European Parliament or Council. A platform for ongoing stakeholder consultation and dialogue is also needed, ensuring continuous engagement throughout the EU SDS cyclical process.

6 Strengthening the European NSDS Network: A Permanent Support Mechanism?

The annual meetings of the NSDS network facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge, and have generated a loose network of NSDS coordinators, as well as advisory councils and other experts. However, a key weakness of the network has been that it manifests itself only once a year during annual meetings. While this arrangement is considered to be valuable, intensifying the exchange of experience throughout the year could significantly increase that value.

A concrete output from the Windsor event was the agreement to establish a network office to support activities between annual meetings. Based on a proposal presented by Austria and the UK, such an office is to be responsible for developing and running a website providing an up-to-date 'one-stop-shop' for European NSDS processes, as well as providing a communication platform for the network. The network office would assist network members in finding information on NSDS processes and in making contact with other network members, and in articulating common interests. Membership of the network itself would be restricted to ministries, although the annual networking events would continue to be open to the EEAC/SDACs and NGOs.

A Steering Group will be established to oversee the operation of the network office and to support the organisation of annual network meetings in collaboration with the host country. The Terms of Reference for this Steering Group were agreed at the event and can be found in Annex III.

Further information on the NSDS network office is available from <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/delivery/global-local/european.htm>.

7 Summary and Conclusions

The final session consisted of reports back from rapporteurs of the workshop groups, followed by reactions from Robin Miege (DG Environment, European Commission) and the Chair. The opportunity was also provided for delegates to raise any further points or questions.

As Member States enter the phase of NSDS delivery rather than strategy development, progress is needed across a number of fronts, including strengthening institutions and processes, developing concrete targets and sectoral goals, and establishing suitable monitoring, reporting and indicator arrangements. However, communicating SD issues – whether to the public, stakeholders, amongst SD coordinators and across governments – has arguably been the main recurring theme for the Windsor event.

The importance of securing strong and continued political engagement is underlined, in order to provide a clear signal and leadership around SD issues. Sustainable development must remain on the agenda of Heads of State and Government at the European Council, ensuring buy-in right at the top at the national level. It is also essential to spread the messages up and down all levels of government. SD practitioners also look to Heads of State and Government to clarify the uncertain relationship between the SDS and Lisbon, and ensuring that synergies are found between the two strategies. This is not just an ‘EU problem’ but is something that must also be addressed at the national level, not least within the context of national reform programmes due to be submitted in October 2005.

Securing a place for SD on the political agenda would be facilitated by enhancing the role of national and EU parliaments. Identifying a body like Spain’s recently created observatory may also be useful, both at the national and EU levels. Reflection is also needed on the role of existing national SD advisory councils and the European Economic and Social Committee in communicating and politicising SD issues.

There is also much scope to enhance communication between SD coordinators and practitioners, with a particular emphasis on learning and exchange of experiences. A concrete output of Windsor has been the agreement to strengthen the SD network by establishing a permanent secretariat. At the same time, the Commission is developing a common approach to peer review of NSDSs, aimed at facilitating shared learning. A peer review handbook will be launched in September 2005, together with a proposal to initiate a first series of reviews. An approach that supports shared learning through a voluntary peer review process is considered preferable to a ‘harder’ naming and shaming or benchmarking approach. The idea of a EU level peer review mechanism is widely supported, including by the EEAC network.

Dialogue between different government departments is critical and there are examples where efforts are proving particularly fruitful. The Windsor event provided an opportunity to showcase the potential role of finance ministries in injecting sustainable development considerations into core government thinking. Finance Ministers from across the EU could be encouraged to explore possibilities in this area. The UK’s experience in developing joint Public Service Agreements between

government departments that links departmental objectives with budgetary priorities is one promising approach. It is hoped that future network events can build on this broader audience.

Across both national and EU SD strategies, there is a need to enhance reporting. Annual reporting on the EU SDS II is important as a means of maintaining its political profile, and should be seen as additional to more in-depth three-year reviews. The annual reports could focus on different themes, similar to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development approach. The precise details of annual and more in-depth reporting, and how this links into other reporting cycles, needs some further reflection.

The importance of having outward facing strategies was highlighted. Whether in relation to evaluating national strategies, reporting at the EU level, the EU's own policies, etc – the outward component is essential. There is wide support for having a single document, encompassing both the internal and external dimensions of sustainable development. The Member States should also reflect on the fact that the world looks to the EU for experience and best practice in sustainable development. The NSDS network and the annual events provide an opportunity to share experiences with third countries and international organisations, as well as to enhance the external dimensions of national strategies.

The next SD networking event is scheduled for 1-2 June 2006, with Austria hosting the event in Salzburg. There is a clear opportunity to build on previous meetings, and in particular the conclusions of Windsor, to further strengthen learning between SD practitioners and advisory councils, but also widening the exchange of lessons to key sectors and to actors from outside the EU. It will also provide an early opportunity to assess the EU SDS II and to identify concrete ways of ensuring its delivery over the coming years.

The EEAC has also produced a paper reflecting on the Windsor event. This paper – *'The Windsor Momentum: The next push-up'* is available from <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/delivery/global-local/european.htm>.

Annex I: Event Programme



Sustainable Development Networking Event

**Windsor, UK
14-15 July 2005**

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 13 July (evening)

Arrival of first delegates, and start of registration

Thursday 14 July

9.30–10.00 Remaining registration

PLENARY SESSION

10.00–10.05 Welcome from Chair, Helen Marquard, Head of Europe Environment Division, DEFRA

10.05–10.30 Opening address – UK Minister for Climate Change and the Environment Elliot Morley MP

10.30–10.55 Improving Delivery of National SD Strategies
Prof. Paul Ekins, Policy Studies Institute (UK), and Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

10.55–11.20 Strengthening Public and Stakeholder Engagement
Tony Long, Director WWF European Policy Office, Brussels

11.20 – 11.50 Coffee

11.50–12.20 The Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy; Key Issues
Christine Dalby, Secretariat-General, European Commission

12.20–12.30 Introduction to the workshop sessions - David Wilkinson, IEEP

12.30–14.00 Lunch

WORKSHOPS

14.00–15.30 First workshop break-out – six parallel groups

15.30–16.00 Coffee

16.00–17.30 Second workshop breakout – six parallel groups

18.15 Evening visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, including an overview of Kew's scientific work by Professor Sir Peter Crane FRS, the Director of Kew, plus a walk around the gardens, and dinner. Coaches will return to Beaumont House at 22.00 and 22.30

Friday 15 July

08.45–09.00 Welcome back by Chair

WORKSHOPS

09.00–10.30 Third workshop breakout: Six parallel groups

10.30–11.00 Coffee

PLENARY SESSION

11.00–11.15 Strengthening the European NSSD Network: A Permanent Support Mechanism? Elisabeth Freytag (Austrian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management) and Philip Stamp (DEFRA)

11.15–12.00 Report back from the three workshops

12.00–12.20 Response from the European Commission – Robin Miege, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG Environment

12.20–12.50 Concluding discussion and agreement on future of the Network

12.50–13.00 Chair's concluding remarks

13.00 Lunch

14.00 Conference ends

Optional excursion to Hampton Court Palace

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Annex III: Terms of Reference for EU Sustainable Development Network Steering Group

The following terms of reference were agreed at the EU Sustainable Development Networking Event, Windsor 14-15 July 2005:

1. The role of the Steering Group is to:

- establish and maintain an EU sustainable development network of Member State administrations with the aim of promoting the effective sharing of experience and knowledge on sustainable development in Member States and at EU level;
- support the organisation of annual network meetings in collaboration with the host country;
- develop the terms of reference and a work programme for a network office to be established, providing a permanent contact mechanism and a one stop information desk on NSDS to network members.

2. Membership of the Steering Group:

Renewal of membership of the steering group will happen every two years during the annual network meetings.

The chairman will be taken from the host country for the following year's meeting.

Annex IV: Glossary

CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK
DG Env	Directorate General Environment, European Commission
EEA	European Environment Agency
EEAC	European Environmental Advisory Council
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESDACs	European Sustainable Development Advisory Councils
EU SDS II	The second EU SDS (in development)
GHG	Greenhouse gases
IA	Impact assessment
IEEP	Institute for European Environmental Policy
MP	Member of Parliament
NGOs	Non governmental organisations
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
SD	Sustainable Development
SDS	Sustainable Development Strategy
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
UN	United Nations
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature