

DRAFT PROFILE ON NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Strategy Title: Perspectives for Germany. Our Strategy for Sustainable Development.

Strategy website: www.dialog-nachhaltigkeit.de (Strategy and reports: <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/nachhaltigkeit/DE/Berichte/Berichte.html>), Information in English: <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/EN/Issues/Sustainability/sustainability.html>

Coordinating Body: Federal Chancellery

The Chancellery not only has a coordination role but is also managing the process and providing important inputs to the relevant ministries; see below in Chapter “Horizontal Integration” in Additional Information.

Coordinating Body website: See above.

Strategy Status: Being implemented.

Date of Adoption: The NSDS was adopted by the German government in 2002. The first comprehensive progress report was adopted by the German government in 2004, a shorter document on the NSDS (“Landmark Sustainability”) in 2005. The second comprehensive progress report (title: “For a sustainable Germany”) was adopted by the German government in October 2008. The NSDS is the strategy of the federal government.

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Additional Information:

Germany’s NSDS integrates all three dimensions of SD (economic development, social development and environmental protection) in four guidelines (intergeneration equity, quality of life, social cohesion, international responsibility).

Vertical integration

The current NSDS was adopted in 2002 by the German government after an intensive public consultation with stakeholders, including the federal states and local level, and was presented to the UN Summit in Johannesburg. It is the strategy of the federal government only and is not binding on the federal states with regard to their strategies. Nevertheless, stronger cooperation between the national level and the federal states for NSDS implementation has developed. The federal states are involved in the process of formulating concrete measures based on the NSDS. They participated in the consultation process for the progress report in 2008.

In 2008, the federal states took part for the first time in the formulation of a progress report itself. They provided the progress report with a guest contribution (separate chapter) adopted by the Minister-Presidents of the federal states, in addition to statements from the German Council for Sustainable Development, the Parliamentarian Council for Sustainable Development and a statement from the Association of Municipalities.

In their statement for the progress report, the federal states advocated a stronger cooperation between the federal government and federal states on the NSDS. The concrete result of this were meetings between the Head of the Federal Chancellery and the heads of the offices of the Minister-Presidents of the federal states in 2008 and 2009. Representatives of the Minister-Presidents' offices or environmental ministers of seven federal states participated in December 2008 in a meeting of the Federal State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development. There was consent that the possibilities for stronger cooperation on sustainable development should be explored, especially in the sectors of public procurement, land use and sustainability indicators. A joint Federal States Report from April 2009 – which has been prepared for the federal government under the lead of the Chancellery and for the federal states by representatives of Minister-Presidents' offices or environmental ministers – is now being discussed internally and will be the subject of a meeting between the Head of the Federal Chancellery and the heads of the Minister-Presidents' offices of the federal states once more in 2010.

The involvement of the federal states is also institutionalised in various federal/state working groups involving public administrators of the federal government and the federal states as part of the Conference of Environment Ministers (a forum in which the environmental ministers of the federal states and representatives of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety meet). These working groups are mainly concerned with exchanging experience. SD is currently addressed in the working group, [“climate, energy, mobility sustainability” \(BLAG KliNa\)](#), which has been in operation since January 2008.

Regarding the SD indicators developed at the federal level, federal states were asked to implement and use these indicators. In the environment policy field, there is extensive coordination and adoption of environmental indicators on all political levels.

Additionally there is some general exchange and coordination between the federal and state level on SD strategies. For instance, in November 2007, the German Council for Sustainable Development organised a workshop on the SD policies of the federal states. SD experts from 16 German states discussed the role of the states for SD and implementing the NSDS.

In order to strengthen vertical integration between the national and the European level, the 2008 progress report takes the EU SDS as the outline of a part of the report. The symbols used for national sustainability indicators are in line with the symbols used by Eurostat for the EU indicators. At a meeting in June 2009 the State Secretaries' Committee stressed the importance of the EU SDS as important point of reference for the NSDS.

Horizontal integration

The [State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development](#) has existed since 2000 as a high-ranking coordinating and monitoring body for sustainability. It decides on the strategy and its further development (subject to subsequent formal approval by the cabinet), and keeps a close eye on implementation of the strategy. This “Green Cabinet”, as it is known, consists of state secretaries (representatives of the minister, top level civil servants) from all ministries. It is chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery, who serves as the main leader in the national SD process. The responsibility lies not with one ministry but the Chancellery itself is in charge of the topic. This mechanism is considered as a key factor in the success of SD in Germany. It prevented classic conflicts between ministries and ensured that quantitative objectives have been met. The Chancellery not only has a coordination role but also manages the process and provides important inputs to the relevant ministries. It shows the special

importance the subject has for the federal government and is based on the fact that sustainability is a cross-cutting subject. In terms of political leadership, the NSDS falls under the Chancellery's authority to determine general policy guidelines, and in administrative terms it is implemented by means of a link between the Chancellery and the respective ministries responsible for the specific issue at hand in any one case. A permanent inter-ministerial working group for sustainable development (again chaired by the Chancellery) prepares the meetings of the Committee.

Beginning in December 2008, the [State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development](#) has been dealing on the basis of a working programme with important sustainable development topics at monthly meetings. The topics discussed at the last recent meetings were the future of feeding the world, EU SDS, sustainable consumption and sustainable construction, impacts of demographic change on sustainable finance policy, and the future of research into SD as an innovation policy issue. Experts were invited – scientists, representatives of NGOs or of business associations, or even ambassadors of European member states.

Since January 2009, departmental reports have been filed on the implementation of sustainable development in specific policy fields. They are presented to the States Secretaries' Committee and [published on the internet](#) (available only in German). A major reform helping to strengthen the implementation of the strategy in daily policy was the introduction of sustainability as a criterion for the impact assessment of new laws or regulations. In May 2009 sustainability was included permanently in the Standing Orders of the federal government ("Geschäftsordnung der Bundesministerien", GGO) in the section dealing with impact assessment. A [guideline published by the Federal Ministry of the Interior in June 2009](#) advises using the indicators and management rules of the strategy in this context.

Evaluation and Review

In 2004, the German government reported for the first time on the progress made on the NSDS and the statistical progress made towards the 21 targets and indicators which were designed to make sustainability quantifiable. This is the link to the [Progress Report 2004 \(in German\)](#).

A shorter document on the NSDS was published in 2005 ("[Landmark Sustainability 2005](#)" (in German)).

In October 2008 the progress report ("[For a sustainable Germany](#)") was adopted by the State Secretaries' Committee and the Cabinet. It states that sustainability is a guiding principle for the political activities of the federal government.

For the first time, the report explains in detail the governmental organisation underlying sustainability policy and strengthens the management of sustainable development in German policy-making. The sustainability management concept of the strategy contains the following elements:

- management rules: The ten management rules summarise the guiding principle and the requirements relating to sustainable development,
- indicators and goals: 35 indicators with mostly concrete goals in 21 areas,
- monitoring: Every four years a progress report presents in detail the status of sustainable development. The progress reports are complemented by an indicator report, which is prepared by the Federal Statistical Office every two years, with the next one due in 2010.

To improve sustainability management, the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development was strengthened. The management rules for sustainable development have been in part revised in the light of changed global conditions and the experience gained since the NSDS was adopted in 2002.

In further developing the NSDS, the report covered four key topics (climate/energy, resources, demographic change/social opportunities, international food crises) and assessed the progress of the strategy in a broad range of subjects.

In 2009 the German government initiated a Peer Review on national sustainability policies, organised by the [Council for Sustainable Development](#) on behalf of the government. In June 2009 the group of independent peers, comprising in total seven peers from Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, the UK, Canada, the USA and India, chaired by Mr. Björn Stigson, President of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, met in Berlin and discussed the status of the NSDS. The final report of the Peer Review with conclusions, findings and recommendations was presented on 23 November 2009 during the annual conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE). For further information see <http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en/projects/projects-of-the-council/peer-review-2009/?blstr=0>.

Indicators and Monitoring

Monitoring reports are prepared independently every two years by the Federal Statistical Office to assess development on the basis of SD indicators (first one: [Indicator Report 2006](#)).

- The latest 2008 indicator report forms part of the 2008 progress report (also available as a single publication). For the first time, it includes, in addition to the detailed description of the 35 indicators for sustainable development in 21 areas and the trends in those areas, a brief statistical evaluation regarding how much progress is needed before the target can be met. This evaluation is depicted using weather symbols, e.g. “sunny” or “cloudy”, in line with the Eurostat Indicator symbols.

Participation

Since 2002 several stakeholder groups, e.g. social partners, NGOs, local communities, science community, etc. have been involved in the formulation and further development of the NSDS. The methods used for this ranged from traditional consultation processes to the possibility of delivering opinions on drafts, to internet chat sessions with ministers and state secretaries.

The German government initiated a broad public consultation process to accompany work on the 2008 NSDS progress report. Citizens were invited to contribute to the progress report by making comments and suggestions between November 2007 and January 2008, based on a consultation paper, and in May and June 2008 on a draft version of the 2008 NSDS progress report; both have been published on the internet. The Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) invited selected stakeholders from groupings and associations to discuss the draft report in hearings or conferences. Documentation of the consultation process in 2008 is available as a [download](#) (in German).

Since 2004, a Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development of the German Bundestag has been supporting the process of sustainable development in Germany. The Council submits proposals for the NSDS and provides recommendations on individual subjects relating to sustainable development. The Council has provided the Progress Report with a guest contribution (separate chapter). The Council now comprises 20 parliamentarians from all parliamentary parties, who can incorporate the results of the Council's work into the work of the parliamentary parties and special committees.

The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) was established by the German government in April 2000. Its members are appointed by the Chancellor. Currently it is composed of 13 members from various social groups as well as from the field of science and research. Its mission is to give advice to the government on its SD policy and, by presenting proposals on targets and indicators, to contribute towards the further development of the NSDS as well as to propose projects designed to implement the strategy. A statement by the RNE is published as a chapter in the progress report.

Sub-national activities

Currently, about half of the German federal states have regional SD strategies in place (e.g. Baden-Württemberg and Hesse), others have Agenda 21 or environmental strategies. It is the aim of the federal government to strengthen cooperation between the federal level and the federal states (see above).

At the local level, SD is addressed with LA 21 processes that emerged in the mid-1990s. Currently, more than 2600 local authorities (20% of all German local authorities) have initiated an LA 21 process. The federal government has strengthened cooperation with the local level in the context of the progress report 2008. Accepting an invitation by the federal government, the German municipal umbrella organisation (consisting of the German Association of Cities, the German County Association and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities) presented their priorities and views on the NSDS in a chapter in the progress report. There it stressed that sustainability is increasingly becoming a central guiding principle of municipal politics. In February 2009 delegates from the German municipal umbrella organisation discussed questions of land use for housing and infrastructure with the federal government in a meeting of the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development.