

# “European Sustainability Berlin 07”

## Annex

to the Proceedings for the  
ESDN Conference 2007

Hosted by the German Presidency of the EU  
June 3-5, 2007 in Berlin, Germany

Documentation of the Statements Submitted  
by the Working Groups to the Editorial Team

and

List of Participants



German Council for  
S U S T A I N A B L E  
Development



Die  
Bundesregierung

European Sustainable Development Network



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## **Introduction**


This Annex to the Proceedings of the ESDN Conference 2007 “European Sustainability Berlin 07” that took place in Berlin on 3-5 June in the context of the German Presidency of the EU Council documents all statements that were submitted from the working groups to the editorial team. Thus, the Annex serves mainly two purposes:

- It provides further details about the discussion that took place in the breakout sessions, and
- It makes the work of the editorial team transparent.

Please note that the statements are mostly in the original and may contain typos. We thank IFOK and Arved Lüth from “response” for putting the statements together.

Furthermore, this Annex also contains a list of participants.

## **Statements submitted in the 1<sup>st</sup> breakout session on “Linking Politics and Administration” (ESDN Discussion Paper I)**

 <p>Group 1</p>	<p><b>Vertical integration</b> by guiding politicians at other governmental levels</p>
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### **How could the renewed EU SDS guide politicians and administrators in the Member States (and vice versa)?**

- Update national strategies in line with EU SDS, and coordinate/ synchronise reporting.
- make it better known at national and local levels
- for example by raising the issue in several debates on national levels - the strategy can be "solved" best by pushing specific topics such as climate change
- Politicians are still focussed on traditional economic priorities. Administrators tend to be more aware of SD, and so need to raise politicians' awareness of sustainable development (there is some feeling that, even though the EU SDS was adopted by heads of state, this was essentially a rubber stamping and Heads were not really aware of the SDS)
- give the EU SDS more importance within the EU itself - it will then be quoted more often and become important in the member states as well
- push the important SD topics through the EU SDS and vice versa (don't just try to push the EU SDS paper -- the relevant topics must be discussed and pushed)
- EU- and national strategies should be based on the same principles; ambitious targets could encourage the other level (both ways).
- Peer review is a good tool for vertical (and horizontal) integration - regional administration much more involved as a consequence (to note that not all people on the table have experience of peer review, but this was consensus among Member States who have been involved)
- At the moment only Heads of State receive SDS (national) reports - all the Councils should be involved (and therefore all the ministries at home)
- We need a template for national strategies - national and sub-national levels take over EU content - communication necessary (also role for media) - also from ministry to local governments
- there is a role for Councils and Parliamentary Committees - politicians have to be involved
- communication between Councils/Committees and politicians to raise politicians awareness
- administrative structure of the country is important - some freedom for regions is needed - the more freedom they have the more they have to be convinced from federal level- respect

- subsidiarity !
- translate the important topics into short, concrete messages which can be handled and dealt with by politicians and which can be evaluated (such as 20-20-20)
  - It is important to involve regional government in the EU SDS. There should be coherence between the different levels of government (without impeding competence).
  - There is no sense of urgency among politicians - climate change could be the driver for change, but unlikely to be 'sustainable development' per se. Need to carefully consider how to label SD so that politicians are interested (social regeneration, climate change, Better Regulation and impact assessment, etc)
  - EU SDS should cover the social dimension within all topics (it is sectoral now)
  - Politicians want to be (re)elected and therefore they do not care about sd - this is a short-sighted view - sd difficult to explain - concrete issues like climate help - there should be a closer linkage in the discussion but we have to be careful
  - we should integrate the most important SD principles into other policies
  - We need a new institution on vertical integration (disagreement)
  - The process is very different in the member states,
  - In many countries the EU SDS has proven to be useful for the development of the national SDS, the national and the EU SDS should be bind together.
  - give the EU the power to require national SD strategies from each member state
  - goals and deadlines are very important on national and EU level
  - the condition for joining the EU should be the existence of a national SD strategy (= is the same statement as my previous one, but maybe more precise)
  - SD is also about improved governance - about making decisions in a more integrated way. One job for administrators is to help politicians to make decisions in a more joined up and 'SD proofed' way.
  - Information from administration to politicians
  - better coordination on local level is taking place - administration that is doing implementation - should be communicated to higher levels and integrated into strategies
  - The commission should check nat. strategies against the concrete EU objectives Issue send out clear messages
  - Policy evaluation
  - Education

### **How could national SD strategies guide politicians and administrations at sub-national levels (and vice versa)?**

- Share best practice between different regions - but need to have space to make strategy specific to demands/ needs of regions that will have big differences between them. Could develop tool kits that could be shared between Member States.
- There is a role for SD Councils in facilitating mutual learning.
- it helps when regional and local authorities meet and stay in touch
- Politicians from the sub-national level should be involved at national level
- Administrators should be involved as well
- Councils where national and sub-national levels are represented are important - lead by national level
- Need to have mechanisms for sharing information about the national SDS with regional/ local levels.
- make a performance ranking of the development of sub-national SD strategies
- the nat. SD. must include targets and timetables agreed with the sub nat. levels
- A strong link between the regional and national level is not necessary (Slovakia), since they should focus on regional needs (regional ownership)
- Make clear links between NSDS and local problems, eg refer to regional initiatives and what can be done at a local level in the NSDS. Make sure that central government learns from the local level too.
- When drafting national strategies we need to involve regions and local authorities in order to get ownership.
- whether specific sub-national Targets are useful is different by countries
- target senior politicians at the regional level
- start citizens dialogues at regional and local levels
- Involve regional/ local levels in development of national SDS.
- Communication and information from national to sub-national level

- LA 21 increases interest - information has to come back to national level - coordinating ministry or other body necessary/helpful
- the UK has SD forums at regional levels to create an national consciousness for SD: they challenge citizens and exchange experiences amongst each other
- create innovative institutional arrangements with the sub-national level to encourage SD thinking and new ideas (you need the leadership by a strong major)
- Sectoral specific linkages between national and sub-national levels, for example through education.
- There is a need for evaluating local and regional implementation to take into account on national level.
- stakeholders and citizens must be involved in building the strategy (active ownership) supporting and strengthening the capacity building on the sub-national level
- National law on integrating sustainable development into planning processes can be helpful to foster local discussions and decisions.
- Government should involve local and national NGOs in any step of the SD process.
- Need some sort of societal consensus between national and sub-national levels. Must be clear from the outset what monitoring is going to take place so that implementation can focus on desired outcomes.
- focus on a limited number of priorities, but cover all dimensions of the SDS
- use new media and citizen dialogues in order to activate other groups such as young people
- clear governance mechanism on the national level - like in the EU - could include discussions on the local level (politicians and administrators)
- when the national strategy is reviewed participation of local level or NGO's is easily possible; reporting to EU is another possibility
- Cooperation between officials and politicians by organizing (regional) seminars
- Need to make stronger links between economic and social and environmental indicators at a local level, and other subnational policy processes, so that policy links can be made.
- we need demonstration projects which shall help people to understand and experience, that SD is important for their quality of life
- actually send the national SD strategy to all regional and local politicians and administrators (so that they get a chance to follow it)
- SD objectives should be reflected in the nat. and the sub-national budgets
- Linking globalisation in the NSDS to regional and local levels (eg to concerns about jobs)
- ask the local level for their opinions and inputs when developing the national SD strategy to get them engaged in the topic
- National and regional budgets should only finance projects that are proven to be sustainable.
- Involve groups and individuals in the NSDS to help make the links between national and sub-national - eg, create voices on a regional/ sub-national level, through NGOs, community leaders, education authorities.
- Organized bodies - governmental or non-governmental - are necessary to involve sub-national administration
- Money should make sustainability go round.
- Need to clearly link NSDS priorities to the national budget, and how that is devolved to local levels.
- UK: the institutions which audit the general performance of local authorities are now asked to include an "SD assessment" in their audit
- Sustainable impact assessments need to be applied on all political planning documents - all levels.
- there should be a easily to understand document for the citizens

## Group 2

## Horizontal integration by involving politicians across ministries/departments and parliamentarians


### Which structures and mechanisms help to involve politicians (including parliamentarians) in SD strategy process?

- Progress report discussion as a tool to increase awareness and involvement of the parliamentarians.
- Members of parliaments are informed too late about latest developments on international SD issues. Generally, reporting mechanism to MP is necessary to keep them updated.
- Timing is important, information should be distributed on time.
- Make it trendy
- Use a celebrity
- Life-long learning on SD (also for politicians)
- Show as civil servants to politicians the impact of SD
- link it to the future of politics in the global debate (left|right)
- Inter-ministerial departmental commissions on sustainable development
- Parliamentary advisory councils
- Informing and involve parliamentarians through the parliamentarian committees in order raise awareness and create a same vision.
- Inter-ministerial networks important to spark new thinking on SD and keep SD on the agenda (streamlining activities in the context of NSDS).
- Formal cooperation between ministries can also foster informal cooperation.
- Sustainable development needs to be defined for the sectoral ministries and make it politically relevant. Ownership for integrated policy-making is important.
- In spite of different political culture and tradition what is important is, that the politicians (parliament) are involved early in the processes of SD and elaborating the SDS. should be highly committed.
- Governments politicians have in general a focus on their specific sector when they are in office (tunnel vision). This is a barrier for working on SD
- Good structure for cooperation between different ministries is necessary, including all sectoral ministries. One institution should coordinate the process, e.g. Government's office (like in Germany) or Ministry of Finance (like in Norway) depending on responsibility and commitment.

### How could the link between politicians and administrators be improved across ministries/departments?

- Ministries have to refer to the SDS in the sectoral discussion
- "Formal Strategic alliances" between ministries on certain SD topics, e.g. masterplan for environmental innovation technologies.
- Strengthen the involvement of politicians and administrators in the social dimension of SD (since this matters for politicians)
- Better integration and use of existing networks for SD purposes.
- Peer reviews could foster involvement of government officials and MPs during preparation and public debate.
- improve the level of qualified information in using training courses for civil service, politicians and parliamentarians.
- Encourage decision-makers to attend committee meetings in order to find common solutions which will be implemented. Have the right people at the right place/stage to decide.
- Create platforms for dialogue on LT-vision between the political groups at national, EU and international level
- use the process of SD assessment as an opportunity of enhancing the link and as precondition for successful assessments.
- discuss the review of the SDS in the parliament as a feedback loop to the ministries
- create an inter-ministerial task force as a link to parliament and administration which is

- responsible for monitoring and implementation
- Analytical framework and deciding on different alternatives (solution-oriented alternatives are important).
- Establish mechanisms for horizontal integration such as sustainability impact assessments and regular monitoring of the SD mechanisms (success)
- Build trust between politicians and civil servants and jointly elaborate a communication strategy for SD
- Administrators use SD to give politicians a stage
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- to strengthen interaction between respective institutions ministries should be "compulsed" to participate in the committees discussions
- Competition between different sectoral policies in government (cabinet) could be a driver to mainstream SD, e.g. positive competition between different ministries to come up with ideas to tackle climate change.
- A stable programming, legal and institutional framework (e.g. a parliamentary act), that gives a background for the politicians
- Information exchange between different ministries should be improved.
- Uniting politicians with a common vision of SD as the future of politics in their own country


 Group  
3

## The **value-added** of SD strategies for politicians

### What is the added value of SD strategies for politicians in comparison to policy-making with sectoral strategies?

- SD strategies could be a clear message of societal groups to the politicians (but just if the societal groups are involved in the formulation and implementation of SD strategies)
- A SD strategy usually is in the first step a description of what a government does anyway in sectoral politics. Later on it has the potential to be developed with the help of SD advisory bodies into a long term integrating vision. Sectoral politics usually are short term oriented.
- SD strategies are a kind of point of reference for councils and NGOs as there is a lack of a legal/legislative basis for SD (compared to sectoral strategies where there is a legal/legislative basis)
- SD strategies can play an important role in awareness raising and education (a tool for communication to the general public) - so we have to target the whole society and not just politicians
- SD strategies help to create a coherent set of objectives, targets and indicators
- potential added value stays in the papers as long as the politicians do not have the attitude, spirit, courage, power and authority to implement the task of SD
- SD strategies give politicians the feeling of a long term perspective and help to overcome the short term perspective of election periods
- SD strategies can create win-win-win opportunities on a higher level of complexity and show solutions to politicians
- possibility for networks for getting the ideas to politicians
- a potential umbrella for sectoral strategies
- SD strategies can help to raise attention of topics and show solutions, which might be of great public interest in very short time (e.g. climate change)
- SD strategies increase awareness of long term and integrated visions and perspectives and help against populist simple short term answers
- SD reporting and monitoring forces ministries to communicate and to work together on implementation
- cross-cutting issues
- SD is an internationally understood language and requirement
- opportunity to deal with potential conflicts between sectoral strategies in an earlier stage
- SD strategies help overcome some of the short-termism of the political cycle. This is an added value for the society. It can be a matrix for sectoral politics and a help towards awareness raising of politicians. SD strategies have a positive image.
- A good SD can sustain the political life of a politician. It should be integrated in an institutional process (parliament etc.).
- entry point for broader topics like poverty reduction etc. into sectoral strategies
- to be added to the last statement: there is a different understanding of sustainability and sustainable development even in different languages (e.g. "Nachhaltigkeit" in German is strongly linked to forestry)
- possibility to open the eyes of politicians for potential conflicts of sectoral strategies
- facilitating the involvement of stakeholders, an entry point for stakeholders

### How could the added value of SD strategies be communicated to politicians? How could the political visibility of SD strategies be improved?

- by coherent indicators and comparisons between European countries (best practices, lead tables)
- Parliamentarians can be included into the national councils for SD
- Extract certain issues and make them more concrete for everyday political lives. Exposing negative aspects of unsustainable development attracts public attention.
- Benchmark internationally.

- annual general debate in parliament on SD (similar to debate on budget; in Hungary already established)
- political visibility is improved when there is a clear link into other broad policies e.g. SIA
- stop calling it SD and find a new phrase (disagreement), e.g. "education for a sustainable future" could be one of the keywords
- By SD policies and implementation processes we are inventing a new way of policy making
- link the SD debate to population development (politicians are aware of this problem much more than of SD)
- regular reports to the parliaments (e.g. in Luxembourg starting 2009 an annual report on public finances and SD)
- Focus attention on delivery and failure of delivery of targets in the different fields of government actions.
- continuous societal dialogue on SD and its meaning(s)
- to convince that they keep their competencies and the possibility for implementation and that the output will be improved
- addressing cross-cutting issues
- link SD with other words (responsibility, future, awareness, ...)
- Develop mechanisms for parliamentary scrutiny.
- Institutionalize a parliamentary body for SD.
- Focus on comparative performance for national SD strategies.
- Make the strategies interesting for the media and politicians will be interested in the SDS.
- combine a long term perspective with short term actions - "we have to start right now" is the message !
- don't communicate SD to politicians, but to businesses and consumers - if they adopt it, politicians will follow automatically (not agreed!)
- Connect the SD themes with currently vitally discussed themes as climate change.
- to find long term-issues with short term projects where they can be in lead and not only the environmental ministry is in charge
- impact assessments can be used to communicate SD to politicians and to show the consequences of their decisions (incl. cost and benefits, trade-offs, ...)
- to give them the possibility to have media attention by raising awareness of media
- by showing politicians that SD can be a versatile communication tool and be tailored according to different target groups
- Create an enemy (examples oil industry, currently: Bush admin). This can motivate to become leader in SD.
- indicators can be useful (e.g. help the parliamentarians to check the actions of the government, country comparisons), but it is not clear if we should focus on a selection of headline indicators or give politicians a broad set of indicators and by doing so give them the opportunity of picking out the ones they like
- to show the grade of innovation (social and eco) which is immanent in SD
- to show the influence of the international dimension
- politicians pay attention, when a lot of money is spent - we have to prove that SD helps to save money - politicians still use SD in an environmental context but rarely in an economic or social context
- Build coalitions with business leaders as pressure groups towards improvement in SD policy.
- Shareholder activism and public opinion should urge politicians towards action.
- regional co-operations would be helpful (e.g. cross-border indicator sets for central eastern Europe similar to the Nordic Countries)
- to get them involved with their hearts by meeting pioneers of SD and by communicating not only with words but with values
- Keep the stories in the media.
- the decoupling debate / arguments can be used as a message towards politicians
- link SD to competitiveness and globalisation debate
- we have to integrate SD into education as early as possible
- External factors for politicians' attention can be for example Demographic change and the question how to finance the social security system.
- In the long run: Questions of cultural identity and education towards a change in the people's mindset and attitudes.
- Make the win-win-situations clear that result from SD policies. Make clear that it's a question for

national competitiveness.

- is a question of knowledge management of politicians - how can we link to existing forums (e.g. World Economic Forum)
- SD work has to be visible on EU Council level in Brussels
- Foster market demand for more sustainable products with taxation for un-sustainable products.
- regular hearings in the parliament

## Group 4

## SD strategies and the engagement of **political actors in a wider sense**

### How do SD strategies deal with conflicts between relevant political actors in a wider sense?

- Involving political actors in a wider sense in strategy development is important, more important in the implementation phase.
- Advocacy coalition: bring SD into media (public awareness raising) in the course of the climate change discussion.
- SD strategy provides the framework for orientation - development of SD strategy goes hand in hand with national political culture of discussion - it can not overcome the political culture of discussion - process related capacity building (mediation e.g) is needed
- we need a forum for political discussion and to follow the implementation of policies and guaranteeing integration across policies and dealing with conflicts (multi-stakeholder)
- Advocacy coalitions work demand driven, i.e. interest groups want to link up with the SDS, if the interest groups are sure, it is going to be reported (e.g. banks - sustainable loans; construction sector - energy efficient construction).
- procedures are necessary to ensure that the existing resources are used in favour of SD - SD Councils can play a role
- SD strategies should bring trade-offs and choices to the surface and not focus mainly on synergies and win-win-options.
- political debate: competition should be on "who is more sustainable" and not a race to the bottom
- SD to be integrated in legal framework and possibly in the Constitution - providing continuity
- Integration of political actors in a wider sense is usually / sometimes weak, but important .
- Building up a dialogue with political actors in a wider sense would be a pre-condition, but is hard work
- SDS to focus more on positive aspects, including opportunities for competitiveness
- SD Council stimulate GOV and keep SD on agenda
- if responsibility for SD strategies lies within the environment ministry barriers occurs when tackling issues outside the environmental related fields - therefore high political leadership is necessary
- the maturity of the political system helps in providing a stable ground for SD
- SD is about long-term while election is short-term: continuity should be guaranteed by the SDS
- SDS should also guarantee generational continuity / fairness arising from political dilemma (long/ short term)
- Environment versus other issues: subsidies shouldn't work against sustainable development (e.g. coal subsidies, subsidies for agriculture)
- conflicts arise in SD Strategies when concretising timeframes, quantitative targets, indicators
- using evaluation as core element of strategies: problem if little culture for monitoring as policy tool; even if there is such a culture, effects of evaluation are not sufficiently integrated in the policy cycle (e.g. EU)
- Environment versus environment: The solving of one environmental problem creates another one (bio-fuels: CO2-emissions vs. agriculture, biodiversity; wind-power: clean energy vs. impacts on landscape)
- sometimes, focusing on 1 issue is better to create momentum (without losing overall perspective - an umbrella is needed)
- dependent on the level (from world to company) the need to focus on specific issues vs integration is variable
- impact assessment / indicators and other tools needed to make SD more tangible but politicians should not be constrained when deciding (but rather informed)

### How could SD strategies become “more strategic” by better engaging political actors in a wider sense?

- regional level can put pressure on national level to go forward

- Integration of SD should take place at the sectoral level (controversial)
- Include SD in education on all levels, including formal / non formal / informal
- coalition building within civil society
- use the media
- use education
- caution is needed regarding the methodology as cost benefit analysis tends to dominate while this is not appropriate for many impacts (SD)
- avoid top-down approach: create dynamics instead
- Use and show best practice to motivate actors, including multiplying / mainstreaming successful pilot projects
- focus on putting into practice instead of staying at "conference level"
- coalition building: namely with corporate world - ex: social standards along the supply chain
- ex ante assessment facilitates thematic integration right from the start
- Develop tools and mechanisms to foster strategic policy integration
- better align EU / National level
- creating synergies cannot be equivalent to standardise
- (EU) SDS should recommend sustainable impact assessment for all plans, programmes, policies and legislative action on all levels
- Specify and customize SD communication (the private sectors speaks another language than the churches, e.g.), while not neglecting the need to bring together all the various stakeholders
- Raise awareness by bringing SD into the media through "famous" people (e.g. Al Gore, Bono (U2))
- all interests and parties must see their concerns respected, this is the way to bring them in
- specific instruments: thematic and cross-sectoral action plans
- foster dialogue between different groups (ex. SD clients Vs Development clients)
- internalisation of external costs is key - implies scope for public sector
- Ensure that SDS is relevant and interesting by bringing trade-offs and synergies to the surface.
- reporting is a tool for making SDS actions plans more strategic
- involvement of people at early stage - a facilitator is needed, this is the role of ex. SD Councils
- SD integrated solution is the guiding principle - can be used systematically to identify fields of cooperation, that could be more concretised
- increase ownership: the process must be open and transparent - should not be closed shop
- Bring SD into the mainstream by integrating it into main government programmes and budgetary processes.
- Involve actors by providing a platform for presenting projects, that meet SDS goals.
- Act quickly to address concerns
- economic instruments have to be used but opposition is fierce
- ideological conflict: competition will deliver the solution (disagreement)
- as more concrete and definitive SD strategies are and linked with efficient and successful instruments more and more actors will take part in the strategy formulation and implementation
- high level commitment is essential to make it happen
- political cultures do form development of sustainable strategies, which might change in turn political cultures
- Involve as many stakeholders as possible in the preparation process of the SDS.
- civil society has a role in "forcing" official commitment
- consultation VS concertation : concertation is more demanding but necessary
- need more coherence between Lisbon & SDS
- merge Lisbon / SDS: in the long-term (contentious)
- Actors, that hinder SD policies, have to be integrated in the debate early on / continuously. A forum or permanent dialogue structure could support that.
- SDS should be the umbrella but is not taken as such in reality - profile has to be raised formally and informally
- do they need to be MORE strategic ? (disagreement)
- concrete strategic actions VS comprehensive approach: both needed

## **Statements submitted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> breakout session on “Stimulating informed debate in society” (EEAC Discussion Paper II)**

**Group  
1**

### **The roles of sustainable development councils as advisors for governments**

#### **What are the tasks and capacities assigned to Councils, and what do they deliver? When and how can SD councils assume these roles particularly well or particularly poorly? – Discussed in parallel groups focusing on SD councils as advisors for governments.**

- Belgium: receive inquiries for their opinion from many Ministries (not from the finance Min.) on many SD topics -- give advise on a lot of issues
- Belgium: develop a set of indicators in a participatory process
- Belgium: capacity building by inviting experts to discussion groups
- Government is asking for advice from Councils on projects on specific themes
- combining social and environmental and economic targets should be improved
- Belgium: create trust and social cohesion amongst stakeholders (for example between NGOs and industries) by involving them in the council
- France: very similar to Belgium
- France: coordination of all Councils across Europe very important
- most important contribution in the conceptual and setting up phase of an SD strategy (targets, indicators, monitoring)
- initiating dialogue on government level about different and new topics
- Germany: Council is not set up as a advisory council
- Council is giving advice during the legislative process (Slovenia)
- Some Councils are mandatorily asked for advice on environmental ,SDS issues
- constraints: resources, timing.
- very important to distinguish between councils which have a mandate to advise or not (Germany no; France and Belgium yes)
- more clarification needed to develop a balanced position; well balanced information for decision should be included
- Belgium: Ministers deliver a report on how they proceeded the advises they had received the year before
- Value added of advice by SD council depends on timing, new subject
- timing of an advice is a very crucial point
- Norway: discussion fora between government and important stakeholders
- Council is preparing a memorandum for the government on important matters before the election (Belgium)
- Competences of Councils for SD have to be well defined.
- advice by own initiative (agenda-setting) of Council is important: take up relevant/"hot"/emerging policy issues and provide "new thinking" to government.
- ES: most ministries are represented in a council which developed the Spanish SD strategy -- very problematic -- the final writing was done by the financ. office of the prime minister
- SD Council advices on own initiative are usually more effective than mandatory ones
- Councils act as think tank for government; resource to help government to think issues from the point of sustainable development ("sustainability twist")
- SD councils would be ideal for the watch dog function as they are usually not integrated in the "normal bureaucratic machinery"
- but in most cases have not been mandated this function so far
- SD councils could "as a kind of laboratory" be a platform to build new alliances (including business and industry) and then advise governments on how to build new alliances
- SD Councils are a mixture of interest groups and expertise, input to the government is also a mixture

- of interests
- informed discussions in order to develop an advice. Advice should trigger a discussion process with different stakeholders on various levels (sustainable land use (RNE)) / implementation side should also be looked at in an advice
- There might be several Councils giving advice to government on SD issues but are not called SD council (Netherlands)
- ES: there is an environmental council which will probably follow the SD strategy further
- The influence of the Council depends on the vis-a-vis (openness of government; knowledge and willingness of sectoral ministries...)
- developing an advice should rely on a dialogue between scientists
- SD Councils add value due to their long term, multi-sectoral perspective
- Councils are looking for political influence, not scientific (especially Germany)
- to work well: the members should be representative of the stakeholders of the community
- it is crucial to provide SD councils with sufficient resources and personnel if they are asked to deliver credible results
- SD councils should give advice if asked by the government AND in cases the SD councils it appropriate (freedom to advise)
- councils try to create ownership both on high governmental level and civil society level
- advising the advisers of ministers or other advisory bodies of government (potential role of SD Councils)
- advice should be formulated in a way that it is helpful for all levels of implementation (national, sub-national, local)
- Financial independence of the Council is v. important
- equity of the participants
- SD Councils point out synergies and win-win potential to improve integration
- acceptable description of tasks and conceptions
- The Council should be consisted of all relevant groups in the society
- workable size with the best expert advice
- regularly refreshing of the members
- process of identifying areas of advice should be organised so that all actors involved can participate

**What's the trend? What ought to be done? What would be a successful path?  
What is the challenge ahead? – Discussed in parallel groups focusing on SD  
councils as advisor for governments.**

- SD Councils should have a more cross cutting perspective rather than focus on sectors (e.g. environment)
- more policy makers and multipliers need to know that the SD council exists by approaching them actively and through personal contact and many discussions
- To provide the government with the capability to think in the direction of SD (training people in government; senior policy officials...); capacity building
- More discussion about real objectives and indicators of SD in long term
- Peer reviews way of getting new ways of perform!!
- providing advice in a comparative way (benchmarking)
- communicate the ideas and opinions of the council (which is quite academic) to the public better
- Council gains importance as it picks up political issues
- timing is crucial; give advice on hot topics to the right time
- watch dog function: fulfilment of targets and evaluation of the quality of the process
- bridging the gap between different actors
- acting as a role model on how governments should proceed
- Use internet (e.g. blogs) as a mutually supportive "learning tool" exchanging views with the public (members of SD Councils learn as well as hopefully the public)
- improving cross cutting advice by seeking input from a broader range of experts
- Create expert groups on thematic basis under the auspices of the Council
- Promote "social learning" to gap the bridge or better to build bridges between the different logics and interest (strengthen the capacity to negotiate for SD...)
- Role as a forum for informal mediations (environmentalists vs agriculture)
- Trend: Council is articulating propositions on more politically hot topics in an integrated way

- to develop criteria to select those advises which are strategically important for the future and only communicate those (be more selective about which advise to publish)
  - making the process of developing the advice more transparent / open visible process including lack of knowledge
  - invite the highest possible level of people from the major groups who can deliver timely and to the point policy interventions
- 
- SD Councils should remind, that the three dimension of SD are of equal importance - not to forget the "social dimension" (!!)
  - ex ante and ex post monitoring instruments are needed (monitoring as constant learning loop) at the level where the policies acting
  - challenge ahead: getting to the interface of national and EU levels by providing advice on added value through the EU level
  - The importance of transparency is increasing!
  - put sds council on a higher level than other specific advisory councils
  - SD should pay more attention to the "underprivileged" people in society - give them an appropriate statement on SD
  - permit politicians as observers on invitation
  - Representativeness of the Council is important for the civil society and for the legitimacy in the eyes of the government
  - SD Councils provide appropriate (scientific) knowledge to meet sustainability needs (to government etc.)
  - have a systematic framework and make the SDS as the overall thematic framing for all advisory councils
  - challenge ahead: advice on a substantial change of consumption patterns including the sufficiency issue
  - Input to sustainable impact assessments (some reservations)
  - try to organise a mutual discussion between advisory council and government (it is easy to give advice but that is sometimes one-way)
  - advice on a alternative understanding of growth (= measurable qualitative growth)
  - Quality in advice, strong chair, some level of independence
  - SD Councils as "sounding board " or "sparing partners" for reflexion about lifestyles and cultural patterns ("ask the right questions")
  - credibility of the members by a strong mandate from different origins
  - Have more courage to say no to bad proposals
  - council also a platform for voluntary commitments of stakeholders
  - SD councils are becoming more routined and a normal feature of the SD policy cycle
  - how t integrate SD into the lifelong learning
  - make SD councils more powerful



Group  
2


## Horizontal integration by involving politicians across ministries/departments and parliamentarians

### **What are the tasks and capacities assigned to Councils, and what do they deliver? When and how can SD councils assume these roles particularly well or particularly poorly? – Discussed in parallel groups focusing on SD councils agents between sectors, institutions, interests.**

- There are chances for communication an SD council has that a government does not have.
- Right level of independency (including funding) is important (not too close and too far away from the government).
- Transparency is important: who pays
- The ESDN ESB07 conference is a good example - a possibility to create partnerships
- A SD council needs to look at and stand for the long-term approach.
- to bring the local level to the national level depending on the consultation process
- A proper status, mandate, divers knowledge and civil society representation is required, which needs to provide for continuity.
- Permanent secretary, independent budget, research funding.
- The good knowledge of (database) of experts, influential opinion leaders etc. can be used when drafting programs, initiatives etc
- Important is that the SD council does things that are a gap in or a problem for governmental policy.
- The SD council can organize - or bring together different parties from the society (churches, sports and outdoor unions, health and social NGOs etc. - so, not only the environmental and development NGOs)
- Councils do not always have the mandate to play the role of an agent.
- Mandate for the council crucial: assess governmental SD policies; opinions/advice on SDS; regulatory basis could help (like in Belgium). If no clear mandate, no real impact of Councils.
- An SD council is good for the agent capacity. It needs to be clear that it is not THE single agent, but there might and should be others.
- Councils should take up advocacy role to promote concept of sustainable development.
- The members of the SD councils have been asked to make their contributions for the national SD strategy process in a form of action plans, forums, visionary statements etc
- Composition of the Council is not always in line with the tasks of the Council
- Tension between long term approach of Councils and short term interests of politicians. Councils have to make the translation between long term and short term actions.
- Size of Council, inclusion of stakeholders: different approaches (either representing institutions or personal opinions), different number of members. Therefore, broad variety of councils. But important/major societal stakeholders should participate. (Controversial: inclusion of governmental representatives).
- the most relevant target groups are the decision makers (different Government departments,..)
- An example of a role as an agent is a facilitator of the peer review process (NL) - that is the role as agent and communicator
- The balance between being critical and constructive
- The biggest challenge is to change the role of SD councils from advisers to agents
- The "watchdog" function is important as an instrument to enforce commitments
- There are a lot of dialogues between different stakeholders. but the business is not interested to take part
- SD council can communicate in many ways, but the results in government action can be very cosmetic
- Instead of paper you should get opinion leaders together to produce lines of action
- Councils play an important role bridging the gap between elected politicians and civil servants
- the question of continuity is important

**What's the trend? What ought to be done? What would be a successful path? What is the challenge ahead? – Discussed in parallel groups focusing on SD councils as agent between sectors, institutions, interests.**

- Better cooperation with the two networks (ESDN and EEAC) on an equal footing is desirable. Both networks are necessary, but they can unite some of their resources to help the national SD processes and councils.
- SD councils should assess government policies and plans, which would then link different sectors and actors.
- To become more concrete, regional and local experiences should be taken into account. Currently, there is no interface for this.
- International cooperation, adding to exchange of experiences (best-practices).
- Organisation of research programs for SD (joint efforts with funding bodies).
- The Council should remain independent
- Clarifying the mandate of the Councils (the focus should be on future developments)
- Producing brochures, information material for civil society. Addressing national media about SD issues.
- Addressing relevant civil society and business actors, e.g. selecting most sustainably friendly enterprise, promoting CSR, organising competition in this field.
- The challenge is also domestic, on the local level - there are hundreds of municipalities that need encouragement and feedback. The national councils should take care of the local activities.
- Councils need flexibility and fast decision-making to do their tasks properly
- The council members should communicate SD to their constituency and vice-versa.
- Broad function of NSDCs as agents: also inclusion of government officials and MPs; but limited discussion might be problem. Solution: NSDC could invite government reps in discussion when needed.
- The challenge is that the global SD process gets into trouble (CSD 15 as an early warning) - the national SD councils need also the global political packing. Can the EU help in that? Now the EU SDS has a too low status!
- Environment Councils should increase cooperation with socio-economic councils to have more impact.
- Councils should link and harmonise all relevant actors of society, taking into account the objectives of SD.
- Quality, independency and communication skills
- There should be rules to have a balanced composition of the Council.
- A positive trend can be seen by using more media, more SD councils..
- You have to develop the working methods of the SDC to keep the process interesting for the stakeholders and to guarantee the ownership
- Provide opinion on the overall government's budget - in terms of SD.
- Every Council should have a watchdog function
- A good role for the SDC is to monitor the SDS implementation
- Regular assessment of government's SD performance. Particularly, the long-term vision of SD should be addressed.
- The Councils should be more "aggressive"
- Contribution/comments to sectoral strategies/plans if they are in line with SD concept (coherence).
- The monitoring should be strategic - also the targets can be criticised
- Council should fill complementary role to government and challenge the government.
- The Council composition should become wider
- An SD council should be forward looking and show complexity, the real interlinkages.
- Many countries are just having new SDS:ies. The more experienced SDC:ies have to share their knowledge with these new countries.
- High profile chair person for each Council
- Include different government levels (regional, local, international) in the Council.
- In many countries the SD councils are in a very early phase - they have to find workable organizational structure
- An SD council should pick up topics governments have difficulties with.
- The watch dog function should be taken up more.
- Councils should take up the advocacy role to promote sustainable development.


 Group  
3

## The **value-added** of SD strategies for politicians

### **What are the tasks and capacities assigned to Councils, and what do they deliver? When and how can SD councils assume these roles particularly well or particularly poorly? – Discussed in parallel groups focusing on SD councils communicators to the public.**

- Task: auditing and commenting SD strategies. Raising public interest and knowledge about SD strategies and themes. Transfer of complex SD issues into everyday lifes.
- Councils deliver ideas for living action - this is a problematic communication aim, because failure is much easier communicated than good practise. Failure when communication is still too complex and stratospheric.
- Concretization is difficult, when sensitive personal decisions of people are touched.
- Long-term visions should be in the background of short-term projects to make communication easier.
- Councils should contribute to education for sustainable development.
- Broaden communication activities to reach various members of society (businesses, media, public, internet)
- Councils should promote regular public fora/discussions on the regional/local level
- Main issue in SD councils is to communicate towards federal ministries and politicians. To strengthen the communication towards the public could strengthen the pressure on politicians.
- Communication is problematic if councils only reach a part of the public.
- before summarizing all statements we must highlight, that NONE of the workshop participants is member of a SD council - so our perspective is an "outside" one and not insiders' knowledge !
- There are different levels of communication for different target groups, that requires different formats of communication and to adapt the way of communicating it. Exemplary target groups are business and social sector, science, schools and target
- tools for communicating to the public: reports and publications
- tools for communicating to the public: websites,
- councils need very well known persons on top to be recognized by the general public
- the councils bring together experts from different societal groups - the main communication task of these representatives is towards their "home institutions" and not towards the general public
- councils need enough money and staff to fulfil their communication tasks !
- To prepare an easy-to-read brochure about "what can I as individual do for sustainable development"
- If indicators are clear and e.g. politicians understand them, they can communicate them better towards the public.
- councils need to be independent from governments (although they might get a funding) to ensure credibility in the public

### **What's the trend? What ought to be done? What would be a successful path? What is the challenge ahead? – Discussed in parallel groups focusing on SD councils as agent between sectors, institutions, interests.**

- themes on strategic level should be made very concrete (what can I do?), so people can understand (also when they do not understand SD)
- Promote the preparation of an easy-to-read brochure "what can I as individual do for SD" by the European Commission.
- communication must fit to different target groups (e.g. mass media, experts, children) - we could prepare communication tools and modules to be shared between the ESDN members
- councils should NOT address SD as a whole, but pick out specific topics and communicate them (e.g. climate change)
- for using mass media specific themes need to be selected and presented incl. background information, policy briefs, press releases

- it is necessary to persuade politicians and to integrate them into the communication of SD
- Preparing short communication papers about SD for different target groups
- use positive messages (not take up the problems all of the time)
- Councils should have a role in promoting the "Decade of education for sustainable development"
- Commitment of the public towards SD targets should be risen. People say they want to have sustainably produced products, but they don't buy them yet, because they believe that means to lower the standard of life.
- Councils should raise awareness about controversial/difficult issues (e.g. nuclear power)
- Strengthen the role of the councils by appointing well-known members as communicators to the public
- awards should be established for different target groups (e.g. ISO14000 for businesses) and promoted in cooperation with selected actors from these target groups (who share the interest of being presented)
- Show how people can act in a sustainable way. When you see the positive opportunities for your own life, you will change behaviour. Show the opportunities of SD in a positive way especially for future generation.
- The understanding of the meaning of SD has to be risen - it has to be made operational, then the meaning is understandable.
- an internet site with a really high quality is the most efficient tool for communication
- credibility and integrity are the main assets of the councils
- SD councils should search for credible V.I.P. ambassadors for SD. Find and create icons then you can become trendsetter for your issues.
- Create a Sustainability Impact Assessment!
- Warning people by making clear the consequences of inaction
- Find a new language (different terms/wording) for communication
- not the councils should be the main communicators but the politicians (ministers, parliamentarians, opinion leaders)
- PR professionals should support SD councils in their work to communicate their findings and advice in a media friendly way. Write it "sexy".
- To build a European group high level ambassadors for SD
- SD councils should strengthen their communication activities.

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