



# European Sustainability Berlin 07 (ESB07)

Linking Policies, Implementation, and Civil Society Action.

Berlin, June 3-5, 2007

## Short Documentation

- handed out at the conclusion of the conference -



supported by the

European Sustainable Development Network





### Preliminary remarks

This Short documentation was produced during the conference and handed out at the conference. The tables shown in the document show the voting results and the statements that were condensed by the editing team in real time. Due to time constraints it cannot accurately reflect the entire wealth of ideas and arguments in detail that were produced during the breakout session. Therefore a comprehensive documentation will be published with the conference proceedings. The documents will be available at [www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de](http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de) and [www.sd-network.eu](http://www.sd-network.eu)

The breakout session used the so-called "citizens' summit" format which can be summarised as follows:

- Working group discussions take place in parallel and along the same format.
- Each working group has 8-10 participants and a table facilitator.
- On each table, there are laptops for the facilitator and voting keypads.
- Facilitators enter the participants' statements into a prepared mask on the laptop. All entries go directly to the editorial team who summarised 10 statements for each topic.
- Concluding each working session, the synthesized outcomes from all tables are evaluated by the plenary using the voting keypads, moving the discussion forward.

The breakout sessions were lead by Felix Oldenburg and Caterine Schwierz (IFOK GmbH). The editing team was lead by Arved Lüth, :response and consisted of Manuel Rivera, Felix Oldenburg, Caterine Schwierz and Miriam Ströbel. Advice was given by Dr. Günther Bachmann, Sustainability Council and Dr. Reinhard Steurer, ESDN as resource persons.

## 1. Breakout 1: SD strategy mechanisms

The first breakout session on “SD strategy mechanisms” focussed on the link between politics and administration. The four topics covered in this session are outlined in the Discussion Paper I on “Linking politics and administration”. They were discussed in 15 groups in the form of round table discussions (3-4 groups per topic). Each group had a facilitator who moderated the discussion of 8-10 participants. Each topic was discussed in two rounds of discussion (45 minutes each).

During the round table discussions, participants were asked to agree on statements that the facilitator submitted to an editorial team. Based on the inputs from the different groups, the editorial team summarised 10 statements per topic that reflected the discussions in the different groups. At the end of each of the two rounds of discussion, all participants were asked to prioritise the statements summarised by the editorial team in a “voting” procedure.

The outcomes of the round table discussions on the four topics as well as the voting results were presented by selected facilitators (one per topic) in the final plenary on 5 June.

### Group 1 **Vertical integration by guiding politicians at other governmental levels**

#### a) Status

How can the new EU SD Strategy guide national politicians and administrations most effectively?	%
1. Integrate the EU SDS into specific debates on national levels.	33
2. Give the EU SDS more importance within the EU itself.	18
3. Update NSDS in line with EU SDS. Coordinate/synchronize reporting.	15
4. Translate the topics into short messages (such as 20-20-20).	12
5. EU and NSDS should refer to each others' targets and deadlines for mutual encouragement.	10
6. Peer reviews help to involve all policy levels.	8
7. Administrators need to raise politicians' awareness of the EU SDS.	6
8. Involve several council formations in the EU SDS process.	4
9. We need a new institution on vertical integration ( <i>disagreement</i> ).	3
10. EU SDS should cover the social dimension within all topics.	2

## b) Outlook

Part two of the first round developed on an outlook (groups 2-4) and examined the co-operation between national and sub-national level. The topics and voting results are presented below.

<b>How can national SD strategies guide politicians and administrators at sub-national levels most effectively?</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Create consciousness nation-wide through: regional SD forums, sets of indicators, demonstration projects.	18
2. Better coordination/implementation at local level (LA 21) ◊ communicate to higher levels; build on this when reviewing NSDS.	16
3. The NSDS must agree on targets and timetables with sub-national levels.	16
4. Make a performance ranking of sub-national SD strategies.	10
5. Sectoral linkages between national and sub-national levels i.e. planning.	10
6. Innovative institutional arrangements with the sub-national level.	8
7. Share best practice between regions; tool kits for Member States.	7
8. SD Councils with actors from sub-nat. levels foster mutual learning.	6
9. Need to have tools for sharing information vertically, incl. new media.	5
10. It helps when regional and local authorities meet and stay in touch.	4

Group

2

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

<b>Which structures and mechanisms work best to involve politicians in your country's SD strategy process?</b>	<b>%</b>
1. <u>One</u> institution to coordinate government ministries	28,4
2. Overcoming sectoral „tunnel vision“ of ministers in office	18,6
3. Defining SD for different ministries to increase ownership for integrated policy-making	17,6
4. Involving parliamentarians early in elaborating SDS to commit them	17,6
5. Formal cooperation between ministries to foster informal cooperation	8,8
6. Inter-ministerial networks to spark new and streamline SD thinking	8,8



<b>What is the most effective way of improving the link between politicians and administrators in the context of SD strategies?</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Creating stable legal and institutional framework (e.g. through act of parliament) for SD programming	24,3
2. Improving information exchange between ministries, create formal strategic alliances on SD topics	16,5
3. Using decision tools (analytical frameworks, sustainability impact assessments)	14,6
4. Creating dialogue platforms for SD vision/strategies to unite and build trust	9,7
5. Involving ministries in parliament reviews and committees (force to participate)	7,8
6. Increase level of information through training for civil servants, politicians, parl.	6,8
7. Using peer reviews to involve government and parliamentarians at high level	6,8
8. Using positive competition between ministries to mainstream / create new ideas	5,8
9. Linking to parliament with inter-ministerial monitoring/implementation task force	5,8
10. Civil servants use SD to give politicians a stage	1,9



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

<b>What do you think is currently the most convincing value added of SD strategies for politicians in your country?</b>	<b>%</b>
1. SDS help create a coherent set of objectives, targets and indicators	28,4
2. SD reporting and monitoring forces ministries to communicate and to work together	16,7
3. SDS help to integrate topics into sectoral strategies	15,7
4. SDS create win-win-win opportunities on higher level of complexity	11,8
5. Sectoral politics usually are short term, SDS more long term.	9,8
6. Value added is often only potentially as long as politicians don't pay enough attention	6,9
7. SDS as important point of reference for councils, NGOs and others	3,9
8. SDS help raise attention among the public and politicians	3,9
9. SD advisory bodies foster the long term perspective.	2,9

<b>What will increase the „political visibility“ of SD strategies most effectively?</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Linking SD issues to topical political themes (climate change, population development) and to other words (e.g. responsibility)	37,7
2. Establishing coherent indicators for regional and national comparison	17
3. Integrating parliaments through regular reports, annual SD debates, scrutiny mechanisms	12,3
4. Attract politicians to SD issues via the media/ public opinion	12,3
5. Stop calling it SD and find a new phrase (disagreement)	5,7
6. Exposing unsustainable development attracts public attention.	5,7
7. Pursue long term-issues with projects also relevant short-term.	3,8
8. International events and developments are important.	3,8
9. SD policies and implementation fosters new ways of policy making in general	1,9

**Group**  
**4**

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

<b>In the context of SD, what is the most common practice of dealing with conflicts between political stakeholders?</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Responsibility for SD should not be in ONE ministry (eg Environment), but on higher level	32,4
2. Focussing on positive aspects (competiveness) is helpful for integrating stakeholders	18,1
3. Integrating SD into legal framework and the constitution guarantees continuity	13,3
4. Integration of political actors in a wider sense is difficult, but important ...	10,5
5. Focus on one issue – but don´t forget SD as an umbrella	7,6
6. Conflict of targets have to be overcome (subsidies coal/agriculture)	7,6
7. Integration of political actors in a wider sense is difficult, but important ...	5,7
8. The level of action (global, EU, national, business) is decisive for focussing (single issue vs. integration)	4,8



<b>What is the best way to involve „political actors in a wider sense“ in SD strategies?</b>	<b>%</b>
1. ALL Actors have to be integrated in the debate – but mind the different languages and political cultures.	18,4
2. The SDS public profile has to be raised formally and informally – use best practices as well as Bono, Al Gore and others as ambassadors.	16,5
3. More coherence between Lisbon & SDS is needed, SD impact assessments might help.	15,5
4. Integrate SD into government / EU programmes to mainstream SD.	14,6
5. Economic instruments have to be used (e.g. intern. of external costs).	12,6
6. Ensure that SDS is relevant/interesting by addressing trade-offs & synergies.	6,8
7. An open forum or permanent dialogue should be established.	5,8
8. Use SD councils as facilitator for early stage engagement.	4,9
9. Civil society has to force commitments by high level officials.	2,9
10. Economic competition will not promote SD.	1,9

## 2. Breakout 2: The roles of SD Councils

The second breakout session focussed on the role of SD Councils as organised form of societal debate. The three topics included in this session were outlined in Discussion Paper II on “Stimulating informed debate: Sustainable Development Councils as an organised form of civil society” provided by the EEAC.

Topic 1 addressed SD Councils as “advisors” (sections 2.1 and 3.1), topic 2 as “agents” (sections 2.2 and 3.2) and topic 3 as “communicators” (sections 2.3 and 3.3). Each topic was discussed in two rounds of discussion (45 minutes each). The first round focussed on status issues (status quo, experiences, current issues). The second round developed an outlook (trends, recommendations, desirable developments etc.). For the outlook format the participants voted on the respective feasibility and impact of each topic. The topics and results of the summarized votings are presented below.

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.**

Which statement describes best the kind of advice your government receives by your country's SD council?	%
1. Act as think tank for government, provide long-term perspective	28,4
2. Set agenda for new topics and create dialogue in early SDS phases	16,8
3. Organize participatory processes to create and share ownership	14,7
4. Give advice on SD issues during legislative process	12,6
5. SD council not set up as an advisory body	7,4
6. Involve different stakeholders and sectors in fora – build trust	6,3
7. Build capacity and provide mix of information by inviting experts	5,3
8. Not one SD council but other/several advisory councils for SD issues	4,2
9. Coordinate work of SD councils across Europe	2,1
10. Function as a laboratory for new alliances outside of bureaucracy	2,1



**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.**

FOR SD COUNCILS, WHAT KIND OF ADVICE TOWARDS GOVERNMENT ...	A	B	SUM
<b>A) ... WILL BE THE MOST FEASIBLE IN THE FUTURE?</b>			
<b>B) ... WILL HAVE THE MOST IMPACT IN THE FUTURE?</b>			
1. Combining environmental, social and economic targets in global context	24,2	16,1	<b>40,3</b>
2. Watch dog function for SD process, monitoring ex ante and ex post	20	10,3	<b>30,3</b>
3. Quality scientific advice on cross-cutting issues (lifelong learning, consumption)	17,9	14,9	<b>22,8</b>
4. Give better timing to advice: early warning, political/hot topics ...	10,5	11,5	<b>22</b>
5. SD councils should be representative, also include underprivileged	7,4	11,5	<b>18,9</b>
6. Give SD councils more power than other councils, a framework for all	3,2	13,8	<b>17</b>
7. Use peer review/benchmarking to increase performance	2,1	10,3	<b>12,4</b>
8. Serve as (social) learning and public participation forum (also internet)	6,3	3,4	<b>9,7</b>
9. Act as a forum for informal mediation (environmentalists vs. agriculture)	5,3	3,4	<b>8,7</b>
10. Make advice process more transparent (also on knowledge gaps)	3,2	4,6	<b>7,8</b>



## The roles of sustainable development councils as **agents between sectors, institutions, interests** [STATUS]

**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.**

Which statement describes best the current work of your country's SD council as an agent?	%
1. Make contributions to the NSDS process (action plans, forums, visions...)	34,7
2. The "watchdog" function enforces commitments	12,6
3. Clear mandate for fulfilling agent function is missing	11,6
4. Get opinion leaders together to produce lines of action	8,4
5. Help bridge the gap between elected politicians and civil servants	7,4
6. Communication sometimes gives only "cosmetic" results in govt. action	7,4
7. Key target groups are the decision makers (different Govt. departments,..)	7,4
8. Make the translation between long term and short term actions	5,3



9. Facilitate the peer review process (NL) - as agent and communicator	3,2
10. Composition of the Council is not always in line with the tasks (i. e. business not sufficiently involved)	2,1

**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.**

WHEN WORKING AS AN AGENT BETWEEN SECTORS, INSTITUTIONS AND INTERESTS, WHAT KIND OF ACTION ...	A	B	SUM
<b>A) ... WILL BE MOST FEASIBLE?</b>			
<b>B) ... WILL HAVE THE MOST IMPACT FOR SD COUNCILS?</b>			
1. Address gaps or problems of governmental policies	25,8	25,3	<b>51,1</b>
2. Help align sectoral strategies with SD concept	15,1	18,7	<b>33,8</b>
3. Take up the „watchdog“ function; assess government's SD performance.	9,7	15,4	<b>25,1</b>
4. Find workable organizational structure; develop working methods that are attractive for stakeholders	12,9	7,7	<b>20,6</b>
5. Include different government levels (regional, local, international) in the Council	11,8	8,8	<b>20,6</b>
6. Monitor the SDS implementation, incl. assessing targets	10,8	8,8	<b>19,6</b>
7. Broaden the Councils' composition; including and/or addressing business	3,2	6,6	<b>9,8</b>
8. Organisation of research programs for SD (joint efforts with funding bodies)	5,4	3,3	<b>8,7</b>
9. Take care of the local activities; encourage municipalities	4,3	4,4	<b>8,7</b>
10. Globalise the thematic perspective; more experienced SDCs to share their knowledge with new countries	1,1	1,1	<b>2,2</b>



### The roles of sustainable development councils as **communicators to the public** [STATUS]

**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**

Which statement describes best the current role of your country's SD as a communicator to the public?	%
1. Address different target groups with different formats of communication	18,4
2. Raising public interest and knowledge about SD strategies and themes	14,3
3. Main issue is to communicate to federal ministries and politicians.	14,3
4. Councils need to be independent from governments (although they might get a funding) to ensure credibility in the public	13,3



5. Councils reach only a part of the public.	11,2
6. Developing tools for communication to the public (e.g. websites, reports)	10,2
7. Council members often address their „home institutions“ rather than the public	9,2
8. Councils transfer complex ideas into living action but sometimes fail when the message is too complex	5,1
9. Prepare an easy-to-read brochure about "what can I as individual do for SD"	4,1

**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 communicators to the public.**

WHAT KIND OF COMMUNICATION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC ...	A	B	SUM
<b>A) ... WILL BE MOST FEASIBLE FOR SD COUNCILS?</b>			
<b>B) ... WOULD HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT?</b>			
1. Pick specific topics for communication (e.g. climate change) and make them as concrete as possible (e.g. brochures for individual action)	35,3	24	<b>59,7</b>
2. Raise awareness for the costs of non-action	13,7	22	<b>35,7</b>
3. Use politicians and public figures as communicators (SD ambassadors)	11,8	14	<b>25,8</b>
4. A website with really high quality is the most efficient tool for communication	11,8	8	<b>19,8</b>
5. Contribute to education for sustainable development (e.g. UN Decade)	5,9	8	<b>13,9</b>
6. Tailor communication and incentive tools to different target groups and share experiences among the ESDN members	4,9	7	<b>12,6</b>
7. Use positive messages and find new attractive terms	4,9	5	<b>9,9</b>
8. Promote regular public fora/discussions on the regional/local level	2,9	7	<b>9,9</b>
9. Not the councils should be the main communicators but the politicians	4,9	2	<b>6,9</b>
10. Highlight long-term visions when communicating short-term projects (continuity)	3,9	3	<b>6,9</b>

## Example: Extract from one 45 min session ...

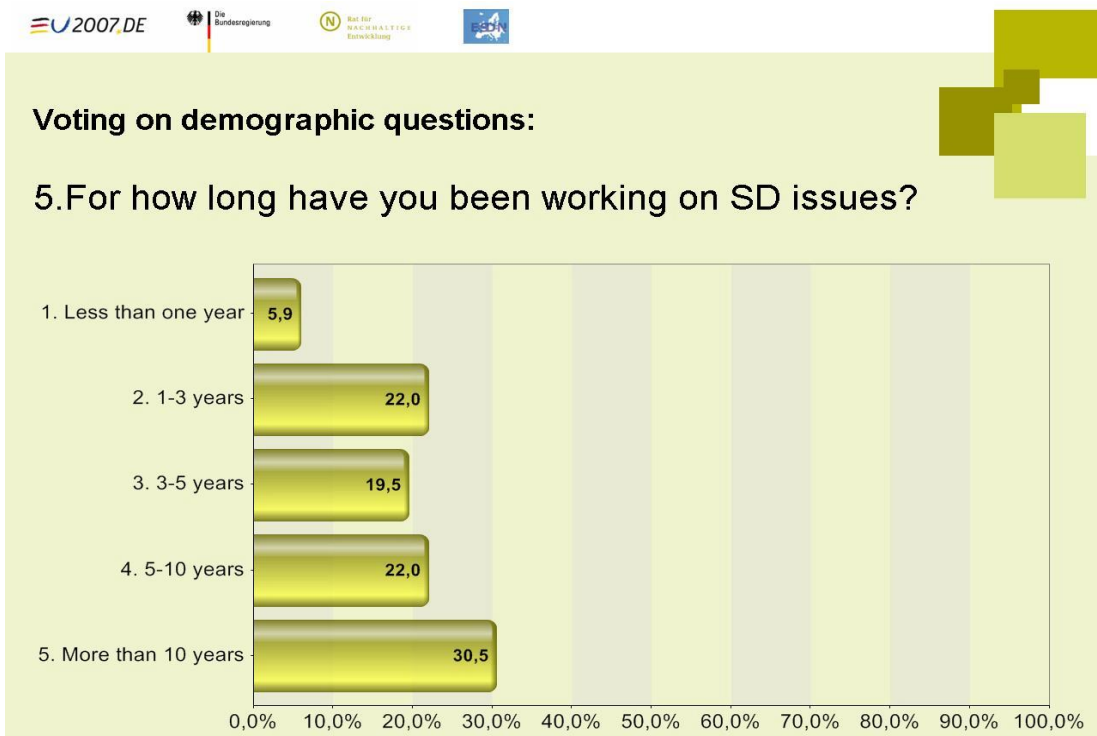
The content of the votings delivered a whole universe of statements and ideas that deserve to be worked through more intensely. To give an impression of the wealth of these ideas an extract of the statements from the tables – as they came in – is presented below.

### **Group 1**      **The roles of sustainable development councils as advisors for governments**

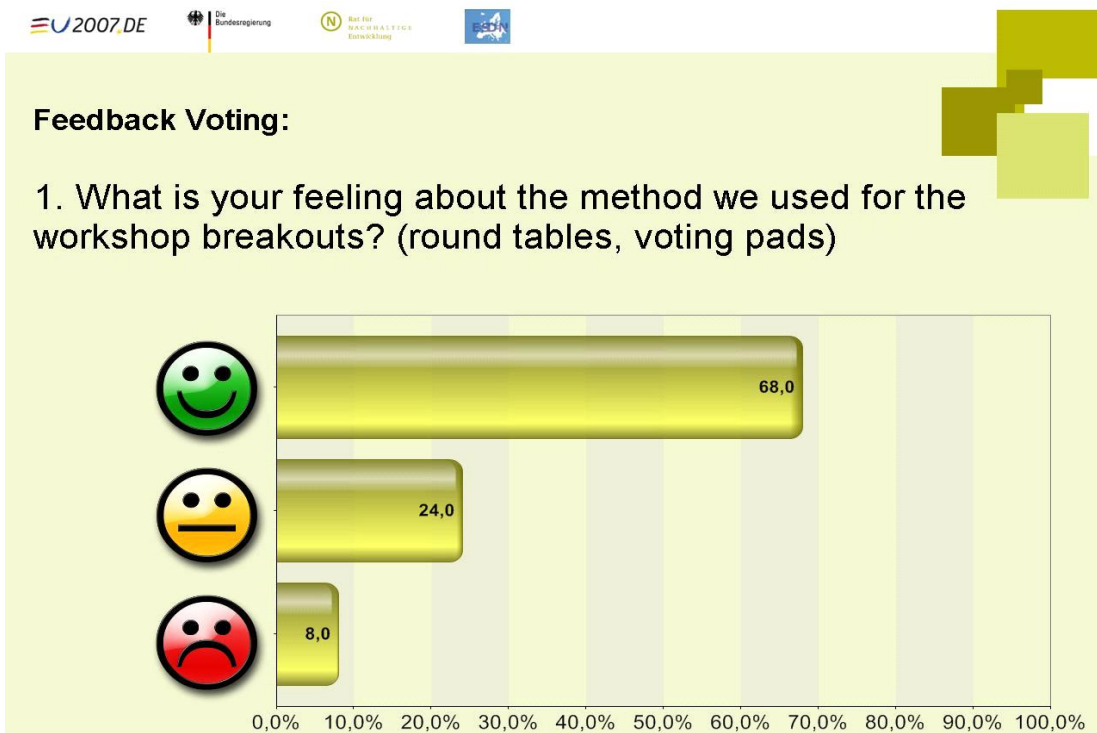
- Belgium: receive inquiries for their opinion from many Ministries (not from the finance Min.) on many SD topics -  
- give advise on a lot of issues
- Belgium: develop a set of indicators in a participatory process
- Belgium: capacity building by inviting experts to discussion groups
- Government is 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

## Screenshots from the voting sessions



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## Impressions from the Conference, Day 1

