Rat für
NACHHALTIGE
Entwicklung

Which lights are on red?

Update on the 21 indicators in Germany's Sustainability Strategy—based on the 2006 indicator report of the Federal Statistical Office

A translation of extracts from a position paper submitted to the Federal Government by the German Council for Sustainable Development in May 2008

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What is sustainability?

Sustainable development means that economic and social development is shaped to maintain the natural foundation for life and achieve economic and social well-being for current and future generations—here at home and around the world.

The idea behind a "traffic light report"

Sustainability aims to provide a guiding principle for a wide range of areas, including energy and environmental policy, business and finance, social welfare and research, all of which relate in one way or the other to issues of global responsibility.

In a globalised world, any national or domestic policy is linked to multilateral issues. This is especially true for Germany's export-oriented economy. On the other hand, any national government that tries to establish some global political case is well advised to build up its credibility on the issues. It is better to make sure that the domestic policies are proof for "walking one's talk." This, again, is true for Germany and e.g. for any ambitious climate policies that are challenging the continued trends of global carbon emissions.

The German Federal Government compiles the German sustainability objectives in the National Sustainability Strategy, which was presented in 2002 and was updated regularly since. The 21 objectives that have been laid out by the Federal Government play an important role in sustainable development. Introducing measurable criteria is a new way of policy-making. Management by objectives is a governance concept that, at first, was predominantly perceived as a concept for the private sector following the saying, **"You can only manage what you can measure."** With the rethinking of approaches and concepts for a more transparent and reliable public management, the management-by-objectives concept entered the public policies.

National Sustainability Strategy

2002 National Sustainability Strategy
2004 First Progress Report
2005 Sustainability Roadmap
2007 2006 Indicator Report
2008 Second Progress Report

Progress reports are compiled regularly. These provide updates on reaching the targets of the sustainability-strategy-based indicators for the 21 targets. At the same time, the strategy itself is further developed.

The German government published the Road Map for Sustainability back in 2005 under German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Afterwards, the European Union established a sustainability strategy in 2006 that also introduces quantifiable indicators and progress reports.

In 2007, the German Federal Government published an indicator report that was compiled for the first time by the Federal Statistical Office as an independent institution. It provides an update on the indicators for the 21 targets. This data forms the basis for our assessment.

This year, German Chancellor Angela Merkel will present a second progress report. This position paper is intended to contribute to public debate on the issue.

Furthermore, quantifiable objectives and indicators make it possible to underpin what is meant by "sustainability." Without quantifiable goals and indicators, "sustainability" would be in great danger of becoming merely an empty phrase which opens all sorts of greenwashing or window dressing. The indicators serve as a means of assessing the development of the economy and society.

Indicators are a core element of any sustainability strategy because they invite people to ask the tough questions: Are we on the right track to achieve our medium-term sustainability targets? Or have we failed to change direction quickly enough? Or could it even be that real developments are heading in a totally different direction than the one that we have targeted?

The German Council for Sustainable Development encouraged the Federal Government to develop **quantified indicators, timetables and clear targets**. Sustainability strategies have to challenge the old way of policy-making that all too often reduces itself to programmatic announcement with only little delivery. The Council follows closely the statistical record on what the trend data deliver towards the indicated targets and timetables.

As an advisory board, the Council relies on the official statistics independently put together by specialised agencies, such as the data of the German Statistical Office from 2006. With this background data, the Council issued a review on

progress using red, yellow and green **traffic lights that symbolise a general indication of whether we are on track to achieve sustainability goals, or not**:

- **Red:** The target cannot be attained without fundamental political changes. Here, the trend is going in the wrong direction. Indicators are also rated "red" when things are headed in the right direction, but the interim objective clearly cannot be achieved.

- **Yellow:** A heightened level of awareness is necessary because the goal cannot be reached without additional measures. For instance, the indicator for climate protection has a yellow light because additional measures are still required to attain the targeted limits of greenhouse gas emissions, despite the fact that there is a broad consensus that this objective can be achieved.

- **Green:** The trend is positive, interim goals have been achieved and thus it is possible to attain the targets.

We base our assessment on the year 2006 or earlier, depending on the data available from the Federal Statistical Office. Statistical reports on the sustainability strategy are an important tool that should be enhanced. Our evaluation simplifies today's often complex trends. However, the traffic lights draw attention to the enormous need for action that is revealed by a transparent and clear analysis of the 32 sub-indicators for the 21 targets for sustainable development:

- Only ten indicators have a green light.
- Two-thirds of the indicators have either a yellow or a red light.

Meanwhile, the 2008 relaunch of the Federal SD Strategy will feature a renewed indicator assessment. The assessment is based on new data as of 2007 and a more thorough in-depth analysis with four instead of only three assessment categories (differentiating the red into two categories). Nevertheless, the new assessment confirms the bottom line of the Council's assessment. It underscores that politicians are called upon to boldly enhance the effectiveness and commitment of their own steps toward sustainable development, and to create operational fields for those that are not yet, or insufficiently, addressed by political leaders.

The sustainability strategy can only become effective if the German states and communities actively participate and put sustainability on the social agenda. The German Council for Sustainable Development recommends that the Federal Government places greater emphasis on the activities of the individual German states.

In addition to focusing on the average value for Germany as a whole, it is important to examine the different developments in each German state. This draws attention to the fact that significant developments can be primarily or solely driven by state policies.

The Council gave the federal states an opportunity to provide a self-assessment of the indicator performance in their particular region that deviate positively from the national average. State and regional governments have reacted differently to this offer. The German Council for Sustainable Development would like to thank all of them for the attention that they gave to this matter.

The positive trends that were cited by the states reveal the extensive options available to state policy-makers and they show the diverse nature of the overall picture in Germany. They are an invitation to enhance regional sustainable development approaches in an enriching atmosphere of competition. Positive deviations from the national average concerning certain indicators were cited by the states of Berlin, Bremen, North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein. North-Rhine Westphalia also illustrated additional comprehensive practical approaches for sustainable development. Other states did not take part. Bavaria indicated that the efforts of the German Council for Sustainable Development to include the states were a positive move, at least in principle. However, the Bavarians referred to the upcoming contribution of the German states to the 2008 progress report, which was still work in progress at the time the Council started the assessment. A number of states rejected the offer to participate on grounds of political or data processing reasons. Due to concerns of what they perceived as a comparison or “ranking” of the sustainability policies of different states, and after pointing out that statistical and methodological data from the Federal Government and the states could not be compared, the states of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, along with the Berlin Department for Health, Environment and Consumer Protection, declined to provide a response. Thuringia also referred to

statistical difficulties, yet emphasised that, in a comparison of different regions within the state, it had made particularly good progress in some areas, such as climate policies and agriculture.

The German Council for Sustainable Development sees the lack of data comparability as a serious problem. This situation prevents the required coordination at the various state levels and is a bottleneck for any commitment to the sustainability strategy. This lack of coherence has to be taken seriously, but, at the same time, does not provide a valid reason for refusing to take ambitious measures on the topic of sustainable development.

Furthermore, the German Council for Sustainable Development also surveyed 16 state capitals on their local sustainability strategies and energy efficiency. The Council feels that cities play a key role in positive competition and in the search for ways and concepts for sustainable development. This became clear during the "Local Agenda 21," which was formulated as a follow-up to the UN conference in Rio de Janeiro. Nowadays, important activities to promote sustainable development have become firmly anchored in city policies. The challenge for cities remains, however, to establish a coherent and comprehensive strategy.

The quality of life in the cities of the future will depend on how we shape the dynamic forces of the economy, our social and cultural coexistence, and the environmental conditions. A dedicated sustainability strategy in the cities can make a considerable contribution to the prosperity of an entire region. The state capitals have a very special appeal. Their role as a model has been totally underestimated by politicians. In actual fact, cities and their initiatives within their respective states constitute an extremely important driving force, even at a national level.

Overview: Which lights are on red?

Traffic light status	Indicator	Target
1 Conserving resources		
red	Energy productivity	**Doubling** by 2020, base year 1990
red	Raw materials productivity	**Doubling** by 2020, base year 1994
2 Climate protection		
yellow	Reducing **greenhouse gas emissions** (6 greenhouse gases in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol)	**Reduction of 21** % by 2008/2010, base year 1990
3 Renewable energy		
green	Proportion of renewable energy in overall energy mix	**Increase of 4.2** % by 2010 for **primary energy consumption**
green		**Increase of 12.5** % by 2010 and 20 % by 2020 for **power consumption**

Achieved rates	Proposals and comments by the German Council for Sustainable Development	German states that positively deviate from the national average (self appraisal)
Comparison 1990/2006: 31 % increase	"Information on absolute consumption increases and critical thresholds for individual resources" (see page 28)	
Comparison 1994/2005: 33.5 % increase		
Comparison 1990/2004: 18.6 % reduction	"Long-term per capita CO_2 emissions"	
1990: 0.9 % 2003: 3.1 % 2005: 4.7 % of the primary energy consumption	"Target conflicts" (see page 29)	
1990: 4.6 % of the power consumption (according to 2002 strategy; according to 2006 indicator report: 3.4 %) 2003: 7.9 % 2005: 10.4 %		Schleswig-Holstein

Overview: Which lights are on red?

Traffic light status	Indicator	Target
4 Land use		
red	Increase in space used for **housing and highways**	Reducing daily increase to **30 ha** a day by 2020
5 Biodiversity		
red	Population size of 59 selected **species of birds** as an indicator for biodiversity	**Stabilisation at a high level** in 2015 (target based on the estimated level in 1975)
6 National debt		
green	Budget deficit	**Consolidation of the government budget** based on the Maastricht criterion (budget deficit less or equal to 3 %); (2002 sustainability strategy had the more ambitious goal of continuously paying off debts)
7 Safeguarding our economic future		
red	Ratio of gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) to GDP	Enhancing innovative dynamics
8 Innovation		
red	Private and public expenditure for research and development	Boosting R&D expenditure to **3 % of GDP** in 2010

Achieved rates	Proposals and comments by the German Council for Sustainable Development	German states that positively deviate from the national average (self appraisal)
1992: 120 ha per day 2000: 131 ha per day 2002: 105 ha per day 2005: 118 ha per day	"Implementation at various political levels" (see page 29)	Saarland
Indicator revised! 2001: 68.2% of the target value 100 % in 2015 **2005: 74 %**	"Complemented by differentiated sub-indicator" (see page 29)	Schleswig-Holstein
2002: 3.7 % budget deficit 2003: 3.8 % budget deficit **2006: 1.7 % (meets Maastricht criteria)**	"Quality of debt and debt reduction with regard to sustainability" (see page 30)	Berlin
Gross fixed capital formation (proportion of GDP) 1991: 21.4 % 2000: 21.3 % 2002: 18.6 % 2003: 17.7 % **2006: 19.3 %**	"Indicator is suitable"	Rhineland-Palatinate
1991: approx. 2.5 % of GDP 2003: 2.5 % **2005: 2.5 %**	"Effectiveness" (see page 30)	Berlin, Bremen

Overview: Which lights are on red?

Traffic light status	Indicator	Target
9 Education		
red	**Educational situation** of 25-year-olds	a) Proportion **without a university-level education: 9,3** % in 2010, 4,6 % in 2030
red		b) Increasing the proportion **with a university-level education:** 10 % in 2010, 20 % in 2020
green	**First-year student rate**	c) **Increase to 40** % in 2010
10 Economic prosperity		
green	**Gross domestic product** per inhabitant	Economic growth—"a continuous increase in GDP per inhabitant that is both environmentally friendly and socially acceptable"
11 Mobility		
red	No longer linking economic growth with the amount of private transport and freight traffic	**Freight** traffic: reduction to 98 % by 2010, to 95 % by 2020
yellow		**Private** transport: falls to 90 % compared to 1999 to 2010, to 80 % by 2020

Achieved rates	Proposals and comments by the German Council for Sustainable Development	German states that positively deviate from the national average (self appraisal)
1999: approx. 15 % 2003: 14.2 % **2005: 14 %**		
1999: 5.4 % 2003: 5.8 % **2005: 6.9 %**		
1999: 28.5 % 2003: 35.7 % **2006: 36 %**	"Student dropout rate" (see page 30)	Berlin, North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate
1991: 22.0 1999: 23.3 2002: 24.1 2003: 24.1 2006: 26.5 (in 1,000 euros)	"Take into account the distribution of income and wealth" (see page 30)	Bremen
1999/**2005: rise of 9.9 %**	"Indicator is suitable"	
Comparison 1999/2005: reduced to **95.9 %**	"Indicator is suitable"	

Overview: Which lights are on red?

Traffic light status	Indicator	Target
11 Mobility (cont.)		
red	Proportion of **total freight traffic** that is moved by rail and inland shipping	Proportion of **rail** traffic by 2015: 25 %
red		Proportion of **ship** traffic by 2015: 14 %
12 Nutrition		
red	**Nitrogen balance surpluses** of the agricultural sector	**80 kg** discharge/ha agricultural land by 2010
red	Development of land for **organic farming**	Proportion of agricultural land by 2010: **20** %
13 Air quality		
red	**Air pollution levels** of the following pollutants: SO_2, NO_x, VOC, NH_3	Reduction to **30** % compared to 1990

Achieved rates	Proposals and comments by the German Council for Sustainable Development	German states that positively deviate from the national average (self appraisal)
1999: 16.5 % 2002: 15.6 % 2003: 16.2 % **2005: 17.2 %**	"Indicator is suitable"	Saarland
1999: 13.5 % 2002: 13.3 % 2003: 12.0 % **2005: 11.5 %**	"Indicator is suitable"	North-Rhine Westphalia, Saarland
1990: 115,6 kg/ha 1999: 126.2 2002: 105.0 **2004: 103.9**	"Nutrition: number of obese children" (see page 31)	North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland
1994: 1.6 % 2000: 3.2 % 2003: 4.3 % **2005: 4.7 %**		Saarland, Bremen
2001: 49 % 2002: 47 % **2004: 46.2 %**	"Particulate pollution" (see page 31)	

Overview: Which lights are on red?

Traffic light status	Indicator	Target
14 Health		
green	**Premature mortality** (deaths under the age of 65)	**Decrease**
green	**Satisfaction with health** (survey, scale of 1 = very dissatisfied **to 10 = very satisfied**)	**Stabilisation** at a high level
15 Crime		
green	**Home burglaries**	**10 % decrease** in case numbers by 2010 (117,000), base year 2002
16 Employment		
red	**Employment rate**	**70 %** in 2010

Achieved rates	Proposals and comments by the German Council for Sustainable Development	German states that positively deviate from the national average (self appraisal)
1991: 155 **women** and 355 **men** per 100,000 inhabitants 2001: 142 **women** und 283 **men** **2005: 119 women and 243 men**	"Preventing illness" (see page 31)	
1990: women 6,4; men 6,7 2002: women 6,5; men 6,7 **2005: women 6,4; men 6,5**		
1993: 227,000 recorded cases 2002: 130,000 2003: 123,000 **2005: 110,000**	"Offences involving bodily injury" (see page 31)	Berlin, North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate
1993: 65 % total 2000: 65.4 % total 2003: 64.9 % total 70.9 % of the men 58.8 % of the women **2005: 65.4 % total** **71.2 % of the men** **59.9 % of the women**	"Indicator is suitable"	Schleswig-Holstein, Bremen

Overview: Which lights are on red?

Traffic light status	Indicator	Target
17 Perspectives for families		
red	**All-day child care** facilities in the former West German states	**30** % in various age groups by 2010
yellow		
red		
18 Equality		
red	Average **women's wages** in % of the average men's wages (35-to-39-year-olds)	**85** % in the year 2010 (former West German states)
19 Integration of immigrants		
red	**Foreign school leavers** without a lower secondary education certificate	Reducing the gap between the proportion of foreign school leavers without a degree and the proportion of German school leavers without a degree, which was **5.6** % in 2005

Achieved rates	Proposals and comments by the German Council for Sustainable Development	German states that positively deviate from the national average (self appraisal)
0–3 years: 2002: 2.0 %	"Indicator is suitable"	Berlin
3–6 ½ years: 2002: 21,3 %		Berlin, Bremen
6 ½–12 ½ years: 2002: 3.4 %		Berlin
1992: 72.0 % 1997: 76.0 % 2001: 76.3 % 2002: 76.5 % **2004: 78.5 %** **By comparison: in the newly-formed German states: 91.8 %**	"Indicator is suitable"	
1996: 16.5 % total 2000: 15.8 % total, 18.9 % of the men, 12.4 % of the women 2002: 15.6 % total, 18.4 % of the men, 12.6 % of the women **2005: 14.2 % total**	"Indicator on the language abilities of children with an immigrant background" (see page 31)	Schleswig-Holstein, Bremen

Overview: Which lights are on red?

Traffic light status	Indicator	Target
20 Development cooperation		
green	Public **development cooperation**	Proportion of gross national income that goes toward development cooperation: **0.33** % in 2006 0.51 % in 2010 0.7 % in 2015
21 Opening markets		
green	EU **imports** from **developing countries**	**rise**

Achieved rates	Proposals and comments by the German Council for Sustainable Development	German states that positively deviate from the national average (self appraisal)
1995: 0.31 % 2000: 0.27 % 2002: 0.27 % 2003: 0.28 % **2005: 0.36 %**	"Indicator is suitable"	Berlin, North-Rhine Westphalia
1995: 172 bn euros 2000: 420 bn euros 2001: 412 bn euros 2002: 398 bn euros **2005: 478 bn euros**	"Differentiation between emerging market and developing countries" (see page 32)	

Assessments by the federal states

The sustainability strategy can only become effective if the German states and communities actively participate and put sustainability on the social agenda. The German Council for Sustainable Development recommends that the Federal Government places greater emphasis on the activities of the individual German states.

In addition to focusing on the average value for Germany as a whole, it is important to examine the **different developments in each German state.** This is an effective approach because it draws attention to the fact that significant developments can be primarily or solely driven by state policies. We intend to underscore when a state positively stands out from the national average for Germany.

While compiling the traffic light report, we gave the individual states an opportunity to provide their own assessment of the indicators in their particular region that deviate positively from the national average. State and regional governments have reacted differently to this offer. The German Council for Sustainable Development would like to thank the state governments for the attention that they gave to this matter.

The **positive trends** that were cited by the states reveal the extensive options available to state policy-makers and they show the diverse nature

of the overall picture in Germany. They are an invitation to enhance regional sustainable development approaches in an atmosphere of competition. Positive deviations from the national average concerning certain indicators were cited by the states of Berlin, Bremen, North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein. North-Rhine Westphalia also illustrated additional comprehensive practical approaches for sustainable development. These self-assessments are noted in the table below.

Other states did not take part. Bavaria indicated that the efforts of the German Council for Sustainable Development to include the states were, in principle, a positive move. However, the Bavarians referred to the outstanding contribution of the German states to the 2008 progress report, which will include the states for the first time, and thus they felt it would be acting prematurely to release data before the Federal Government's document is published. A number of states rejected the offer to participate **on grounds of political or data processing reasons**. Due to concerns of what they perceived as a comparison or "ranking" of the sustainability policies of different states, and after pointing out that statistical and methodological data from the Federal Government and the states could not be compared, the states of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, along with the Berlin Department for Health, Environment and Consumer Protection, declined to provide a response. Thuringia also referred to statistical difficulties, yet emphasised that in a comparison of different regions within the state it had made particularly good progress in the areas of climate protection (greenhouse gas emissions, CO_2 emissions, renewable sources of energy), food (nitrogen balance surpluses) and services for families and children.

The German Council for Sustainable Development sees the lack of data comparability as a serious **problem**. This situation prevents a coordinated and coherent approach at the various state levels and makes it impossible to attain a higher level of commitment to the sustainability strategy. This problem must be tackled. It has to be taken seriously but, at the same time, does not provide a valid reason for refusing to take ambitious measures on the topic of sustainable development.

Overview: Indications by the federal states

Responses of the states to the following question:

With regard to which of these indicators does your state deviate positively from the national average for Germany?

States	Answer
Baden-Württemberg	Refuses to cite positive deviations
Bavaria	Refuses to cite positive deviations
Berlin	Administrative departments report positive deviations for the indicators: (6) Public debt (8) Private and public expenditure for research and development (9) Education (first-year student rate) (15) Crime (17) All-day care for children in the former West German states The Berlin Department for Health, Environment and Consumer Protection refuses to cite positive deviations.
Brandenburg	Refuses to cite positive deviations
Bremen	Reports positive deviations for the indicators: (8) Private and public expenditure for research and development (10) Economic prosperity (12) Nutrition (nitrogen balance surpluses and organic farming) (16) Employment (17) Services for families (3–6 ½ years) (19) Integration of immigrants (proportion of foreign school-leavers without a lower secondary education certificate)

States	Answer
Hamburg	Refuses to cite positive deviations
Hesse	Refuses to cite positive deviations
Lower Saxony	Refuses to cite positive deviations
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Refuses to cite positive deviations
North-Rhine Westphalia	Reports positive deviations for the indicators: (9) Education (first-year student rate) (11) Mobility (proportion of inland navigation) (12) Nutrition (nitrogen balance surpluses) (15) Crime
Rhineland-Palatinate	Reports positive deviations for the indicators: (7) Safeguarding our economic future (9) Education (first-year student rate) (12) Nutrition (nitrogen balance surpluses) (15) Crime
Saarland	Reports positive deviations for the indicators: (4) Land use (11) Mobility (proportion of total freight traffic that is domestically moved by rail and ship) (12) Nutrition (nitrogen balance surpluses and organic farming)
Saxony	No response
Saxony-Anhalt	Refuses to cite positive deviations
Schleswig-Holstein	Reports positive deviations for the indicators: (3) Renewable energy (proportion of total power consumption) (5) Biodiversity (16) Employment (19) Integration of immigrants (proportion of foreign school leavers without a lower secondary education certificate)

States	
Thuringia	Refuses to cite positive deviations However, in domestic comparison the state positively assesses: Climate protection (greenhouse gas emissions, Co_2 emission), renewable energies, nutrition (nitrogen balance surpluses) and perspectives for families (child care facilities)

Assessments by the state capitals

Furthermore, the German Council for Sustainable Development also surveyed 16 state capitals on their local sustainability strategies and energy efficiency. The German Council for Sustainable Development feels that cities play a key role in positive competition and the search for ways and concepts for sustainable development. This became clear during the "Local Agenda 21," which was formulated as a follow-up to the UN conference in Rio de Janeiro. Nowadays, important activities to promote sustainable development have become firmly anchored in city policies. The challenge remains, however, to establish a uniform and comprehensive strategy.

The quality of life in the cities of the future will depend on how we shape the dynamic forces of the economy, our social and cultural coexistence and the environmental conditions. A dedicated sustainability strategy in the cities can make a considerable contribution to the prosperity of an entire region. The state capitals have a very special appeal.

Their role as a model has been totally underestimated by politicians. In actual fact, cities and their initiatives within their respective states constitute an extremely important driving force, even at a national level.

When asked about their activities for community-based sustainability strategies and energy efficiency, mayors or, in some cases, the responsible administrative departments provided information on their plans and initiatives.

Based on Local Agenda 21 decisions, many cities are involved in development and searching processes designed to transform the sustainability model into political action. This approach has not always been easy, as Kajo Breuer, the mayor of the state capital of **Saarbrücken**, describes: "This process [of the Local Agenda] has not led to the desired result, in other words, a sustainability strategy that is pursued by as many people as possible. Instead, it has become bogged down in the pitfalls of community politics." Nevertheless, there are positive approaches. "Some of the results achieved in this process have nonetheless had an impact on everyday administrative activities. For example, sustainability criteria are evaluated for all administrative procedures, and environmental criteria also play a role in procurement," says Breuer.

This illustrates two trends: Evaluating political decision-making for its sustainability effectiveness and using public procurement as a tool for sustainability management in cities. How can sustainability play a role in political decision-making? The answer is, with systematic evaluation mechanisms for administrative procedures that take into account environmental, social and economic consequences. This is happening in **Dresden**. "A checklist (sustainability test) is used to evaluate the sustainability of actions taken by the city council with regard to the criteria of economy, society, environment and participation," says the deputy mayor of the state capital, Herbert Fessenmayr.

How does sustainability manifest itself in the actions of the city's own administration? Public procurement is a key tool here. Dr. Lutz Trümper, mayor of **Magdeburg**, talked about a city council decision which states that, "in the future, when extending invitations for bids, only products and services will be taken into consideration that were not produced using exploitive child labor, as defined by ILO Convention 182. This was concretely applied in 2007 for the procurement of firefighter clothing and paving stones."

Sustainability must be measurable and manageable. This requires strategies that involve a number of different departments and include indicators and targets. A number of state capitals have already introduced sustainability strategy processes that aim to achieve these objectives. We received information on this topic from the **Berlin** Department for Health, Environment and Consumer Protection, the mayor of **Erfurt**, Andreas Bausewein, the mayor of **Munich**, Christian Ude and the Office for Urban Development, Statistics and Elections of the city of **Mainz**. Hamburg intends to formulate a strategy, as mayor Ole von Beust explains:

"For the past six years, at the annual Hamburg conference on sustainable development, we have addressed key sustainability issues that concern all political areas. [...] With regard to the effectiveness of our commitment, one of the most important realisations to emerge from these six conferences is that we need to integrate the various and impressive sustainability activities in the city as quickly as possible into an overall strategy. Our goal for the conference in autumn 2008 will therefore be to focus on developing a comprehensive sustainability strategy for **Hamburg**." The city of **Potsdam** talked about its plan to establish a comprehensive urban strategy that focuses on climate protection. Mayor Helmut Müller informed us that, although there is no sustainability strategy for **Wiesbaden** yet, there have been initial initiatives that work with indicators to monitor the success of sustainable urban development. The Economic and Environmental Department in **Hanover** indicated that the action programme for urban development and the "Hanover plus Ten" programme are seen as strategies.

We were informed of concrete projects and initiatives to implement sustainability by the mayor of **Düsseldorf**, Joachim Erwin and the mayor of **Stuttgart**, Wolfgang Schuster. In **Schwerin**, the Agenda 21 process has been revived and there is debate on a model for urban development, says Mayor Norbert Claussen.

Proposals by the German Council for Sustainable Development on each individual indicator

1 Conserving resources

Up until now, energy efficiency and effective use of raw materials have been assessed in relative terms. The absolute use of energy and resources is not measurable. GDP growth should be possible without necessarily using a corresponding amount of resources. In order to show the relationship between these two aspects using an indicator, in the future it will be necessary to show the extent to which productivity increases are greater than the consumption of energy and natural resources. The Council recommends a comparative analysis of growth rates retroactively from the basis years of 1990 and 1994.

In order to illustrate the necessity of using resources sparingly, the Council proposes evaluating whether current consumption figures and the available information on reserves indicate when a critical threshold will be reached for individual resources. A critical threshold would be attained, if a limited resource were depleted without the development of a replacement product, assuming that consumer patterns and production procedures were not altered to make it possible to dispense with this resource.

2 Climate protection

On a number of occasions in 2007, the German chancellor stressed the idea of “carbon justice.” Essentially, global justice for CO_2 emissions would exist if every person were granted the same emissions rights. The

German chancellor has come out in favour of reducing annual per capita emissions of CO_2 to two tons by the year 2050. The Council proposes integrating this long-term objective into the National Sustainability Strategy.

3 Renewable energy

If we are to achieve our climate objectives, it is imperative that we increase the proportion of renewable energy in the overall energy mix. At the same time, a careful assessment should be made to recognise or avoid conflicts that could arise from an ill-considered expansion of renewable energies that leads to other environmental, social and economic problems.

4 Land use

In an effort to limit the land use in Germany, the German Council for Sustainable Development works to maintain and implement targets at all relevant political levels. These efforts include a wide range of events to foster dialogue, recommendations to the German Federal Government (More value for the "30 ha target" for sustainability in the city and the countryside. RNE text no. 11, 2004—only available in German), a study to evaluate this recommendation (Success factors for reducing the land use in Germany, RNE text no. 19, 2007—only available in German) as well as the support from the REFINA research program of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (www.refinainfo.de).

5 Biodiversity

The Council welcomes the decision by the German Federal Government to include the "biodiversity indicator" in its biodiversity strategy. The Council recommends expanding the indicator for bird populations to include maintaining plant species and linking this to the presence of semi-natural habitats for the diversity of landscape structures.

6 National debt

The Council would like to note that maintaining the Maastricht criterion is not a sustainability criterion in and of itself. In order to better characterise the connection between public financing, reducing national debt, and sustainability, the Council thinks that a close examination should be

conducted to determine whether the quality of debts and debt reduction are aspects which should be considered in this context.

7 Safeguarding our economic future

The German Council for Sustainable Development agrees with the selected indicators.

8 Innovation

The Council suggests complementing the indicator for “expenditure for research and development,” which covers measures to promote innovation, with another indicator for effectiveness.

9 Education

The “first-year student rate” sub-indicator provides no information on the success of the university-level education if it is accompanied by an increase in the number of college dropouts. As a result, the Council suggests complementing this sub-indicator with a “student dropout rate” with the aim of achieving a 10% reduction. There is a need to improve the educational system so that new students complete their studies successfully.

10 Economic prosperity

The indicator “gross domestic product” does not take into account the wealth distribution. The Council thus recommends adding an indicator like the Gini index that considers the distribution of income and assets.

11 Mobility

The German Council for Sustainable Development agrees with the selected indicators.

12 Nutrition

The indicator “nitrogen balance surpluses from agriculture” and the target “developing the cultivated area for organic farming” are important and provide information on key sustainability issues. However, they provide only limited information on the topic of nutrition. The Council

suggests complementing them with the “number of obese children” sub-indicator.

13 Air quality

The Council suggests adding particulate matter, as an element of carcinogenic air pollution, to the calculation basis for this indicator.

14 Health

Instead of the “satisfaction with your health” indicator, the Council recommends selecting indicators that are more closely related to preventing illness.

15 Crime

The indicator “home burglary” covers only one of the less significant aspects of crime in relation to sustainability development. The Council therefore recommends replacing it with the indicator “offences involving bodily injury.”

16 Employment

The German Council for Sustainable Development agrees with the selected indicators.

17 Perspectives for families

The German Council for Sustainable Development agrees with the selected indicators.

18 Equality

The German Council for Sustainable Development agrees with the selected indicators.

19 Integration of immigrants

The indicator “foreign school leavers without a lower secondary education certificate” is too narrow. Educational careers often depend on curricular and extracurricular support measures, and today there is a

broad consensus that pre-school educational offers, particularly with regard to learning the German language, are the most important criteria. Therefore, this indicator should be enhanced by an extra indicator that relates to children with an immigrant background and measures their abilities in the German language at the time of their school enrolment.

20 Development cooperation

The German Council for Sustainable Development agrees with the selected indicators.

21 Opening markets

With regard to the "EU imports from developing countries" indicator, it is necessary to differentiate between emerging market and developing countries, because today's market is widely characterised by imports from China, according to the 2006 indicator report from the Federal Statistical Office.

The following policy papers and publications are available in English as part of the publication series of the German Council for Sustainable Development. They can also be downloaded at *www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de.* Printed versions can be ordered at *info@nachhaltigkeitsrat.de*

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German Council for Sustainable Development

The German Council for Sustainable Development has the task to provide recommendations on Germany's sustainability policy, to suggest exemplary projects and to strengthen the topic in the public sphere. On European level, the Council regularly exchanges experiences with other European SD bodies on their respective national strategies through the Network of European Environmental and SD Advisory Councils (EEAC). Informations about members and activities of the council are available under: *www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de*

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