

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN**

This Action Plan is an evolving document and we welcome views from our staff and stakeholders at any time. If you have any comments please contact Karen Dell on 020 276 8481 or by e-mail at [karen.dell@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:karen.dell@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Foreword

The Food Standards Agency is committed to the principles of sustainable development and aims to put sustainability at the heart of its business. This is an ambitious aim, but I am confident that through the actions outlined in this plan we can take significant strides towards achieving this objective.

We face considerable challenges in delivering our position on sustainable development, not least being the need to more closely define what sustainability means for Agency policy making and bringing about the further change in organisational culture that is required to achieve our goal.

Our main priorities for action are embedding sustainability considerations into our options appraisal process and strengthening governance arrangements in relation to sustainability, thus making sustainable development an integral part of our policies and activities. We will contribute to the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy, particularly through safeguarding food safety and promoting healthy eating and through our work with local communities.

We welcome views on this action plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Harwood', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**John Harwood**  
**Chief Executive**

## Our Role

1. According to the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy "Securing the Future" the goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and to enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. It is about achieving economic, social and environmental objectives at the same time, and includes issues of particular relevance to the work of the Agency such as public health and consumer protection which fall under the social pillar. The principles of sustainable development, as set out in the Government's Strategy, are:
  - living within environmental limits;
  - ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
  - achieving a sustainable economy;
  - promoting good governance; and
  - using sound science responsibly.
2. The Food Standards Agency is committed to putting sustainable development at the heart of its business in order to contribute to the UK Government's and devolved administrations' strategic framework for sustainable development "One Future - Different Paths" and the various strategic plans that support it. As a UK Agency operating in a devolved area we are committed to working together in order to meet our shared goals. We aim both to run our business sustainably and also to take forward our remit in a sustainable manner. In practice this means taking sustainable development into account in all of the Food Standards Agency's activities, including in the full range of policy and decision making and advising consumers. It also affects how we run our business from accommodation to personnel policies.
3. It is in the areas of public health and consumer protection that the Agency makes its biggest contribution to the Government's Strategy. The Food Standards Agency's policies also contribute to the four priorities for immediate action identified in the Government Strategy. These are:
  - sustainable consumption and production;
  - climate change;
  - natural resource protection; and
  - sustainable communitiesMore information on how we contribute to the Government's Strategy through our policies is provided in the "Policies" section of this plan.
4. The Food Standards Agency's Strategic Plan 2005-2010 includes the following position statement on sustainable development:

**The Food Standards Agency's remit is to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food, both now and in the future. In doing so the Agency will take sustainable development into account in all of its activities and policy decisions.**

5. Although the Government's Strategy lays down useful principles on sustainable development and highlights priority areas for action it is not easy to interpret in detail what it means for the Agency and its work. We are therefore planning a fundamental examination of what sustainable development means for the Agency's policy making. A series of workshops, stakeholder meetings and a consultation exercise are planned in the course of 2007. The results of these will be brought together for consideration by the Board in spring 2008. This process designed to help the Agency reach a view on what sustainable development should mean for Agency policy making and could result in new sustainability goals. Any new goals will be reflected in our 2008/9 SDAP. More information on this process is provided under the "Defining our sustainability role" section.
6. This action plan covers the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 March 2008. It is owned, and its delivery monitored, by the Food Standards Agency's Management Committee (MC). The action plan has been signed of by the Chief Executive. Our executive agency, the Meat Hygiene Service has produced its own action plan.

## **The Benefits**

7. Operating more sustainably will provide benefits to the organisation, our staff and consumers.
  - Taking sustainable development into account in all our activities and policy decisions involves taking a wider and more long term view in decision making. By doing this we are likely to be more successful in identifying the implications and impacts of a proposal. In short, it leads to better, more robust decision and policy making.
  - By managing our buildings and using resources more sustainably, for example by reducing energy consumption and cutting down on the use of other consumables such as paper, the Agency will be reducing operational costs.
  - Leading by example in the sustainability field will enhance the Agency's reputation with its stakeholders and delivery partners, other Government departments and with the wider public.
  - Staff will benefit from the Food Standards Agency's Human Resources policies. These aim to promote a good work/life balance and ensure that everyone who works for the Food Standards Agency is treated fairly and with respect as well as providing the opportunity for development. The organisation also benefits from these HR policies which result in a better motivated and skilled workforce.
  - It is in consumers' long term interests that Food Standards Agency policies, decisions and advice take sustainability into account and do

not compromise their future interests. Consumers will benefit from more robust policies which further the Agency's remit in relation to food and health whilst minimising the risk of unforeseen affects in other areas such as the environment or economy.

## **How we will carry out our role**

### **Part I – Sustainable development in policy and decision making**

#### **Defining our sustainability role**

8. The embedding of sustainable development into our policy making has thrown-up a number of fundamental questions such as how pro-active should we be in promoting the principles of sustainable development in our policy making and how far can we trade-off food safety, health, quality, consumer information and other interests against other aspects of sustainability such as environmental protection and use of natural resources etc? This has highlighted the need for the Agency to further consider its role in relation to sustainability and prompted a programme of in-depth analysis, involving Agency staff, sustainability experts and our stakeholders, culminating in a paper to the Board for discussion in public in spring 2008.
9. This process is designed to help the Agency understand the barriers, challenges and opportunities the Agency faces when taking sustainable development into account in decision making and ultimately to reach a view on what sustainable development should mean for Agency policy making. This will be achieved in an open and inclusive way. The development and refining of the Agency's view of sustainable development will lead to a better understanding of how we can contribute to the Government's Strategy and result in a more focussed and effective approach. This approach will be detailed in future SDAPs.

**Outcome** - A clear and common understanding about what sustainable development means for the Agency's policy making,

#### **Targets and Milestones**

- ❖ Stakeholder workshop to be held by 30 November 2007.
- ❖ Informal consultation on the Agency's sustainability role to be held by January 2008.
- ❖ Board discussion of the Agency's vision by 31 May 2008.

***Division responsible for delivery: Labelling Standards and Allergy Division***

#### **Policy and decision making**

10. We assess the environmental, natural resource, social and economic impacts of our policies and actions routinely as part of our decision making

process. This is done through impact assessments and sustainability assessments which are required for all new and revised Agency policies or activities. We also ensure that our policies and advice are based on the best available scientific evidence and that we have interpreted the science correctly through scientific governance procedures. These include the appointment of a Chief Scientist and the use of a science checklist for presentations and papers setting out proposals for new or revised Agency policy or advice.

11. To help policy makers, those running projects, making decisions, running campaigns and formulating advice, take account of all aspects of sustainable development, the Food Standards Agency has developed "Guidance to Staff on Sustainability Assessment". We have developed guidance that is based on, and extends from, the Better Regulation Executive's Impact Assessment Guidance and Toolkit. Also examples of good sustainability assessments are made available on our intranet site. This is backed up by training, advice and ongoing support as outlined in the "People" section of this plan. Quality assurance arrangements are given in the "Monitoring, evaluation and accountability" section.
12. Assessing a policy, project or intended consumer advice involves all five principles of sustainable development and this is explained in the Guidance to staff. To assess the sustainability of individual policies and projects a set of questions has been devised. Our Guidance highlights the need to consider both immediate expected impacts and those that might occur over longer time scales. Although the focus of assessment is on the UK, our Guidance also reminds staff to consider any significant impacts on other countries. All impact assessments should include sustainability considerations. Our Guidance is an evolving document and is available on our website at:

[www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how\\_we\\_work/sustainability/](http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/sustainability/)

### **Outcome**

Sustainable development to be taken into account in all the Agency's policies and decisions.

### **Targets and milestones**

- ❖ Impact assessments will include sustainability considerations by 28 February 2008.

### **Policies**

13. The Food Standards Agency's core remit is to protect consumers by improving food safety and consumer information. The Agency in pursuing this remit will be contributing directly to ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. Some of the Agency's initiatives in this area include: -
  - Measures to reduce foodborne illness through the Agency's Foodborne Diseases Strategy.
  - Delivering proportionate BSE and TSE controls.
  - Reducing risks to consumers from contaminated food.

- Helping to ensure safety and choice for food allergic and food intolerant consumers.
- Measures to help reduce diet related illness e.g. Salt Campaign
- Improving food in schools and institutions

Further information and targets relating to these can be found in our Strategic Plan 2005-2010 and also our Corporate Plan 2007-2010

[www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications/busreps/strategicplan](http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications/busreps/strategicplan)

14. The Food Standards Agency's policies also contribute to the four priorities for immediate action identified in the Government Strategy. With regard to sustainable consumption, the Agency accepts that when giving advice to the public and others on food, and where evidence is available, we will include sustainability information. In carrying out sustainability assessments we consider the impacts on climate change and on natural resource protection. We directly contribute to the creation of sustainable communities through support for local, regional and national bodies to help them deliver effective locally based food initiatives. These initiatives include:

- Collaborating with the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services and the Local Government Association on "Food Vision", an initiative to develop and deliver food projects that promote community health and well being.
- Working with "Community Food and Health in Scotland" and funding 300 local food initiatives there.
- FSA Wales Awards for Food Action Locally which recognises contributions to local nutrition initiatives that have made a positive impact on communities.
- We also have a regional presence in England to act as a local point of access for those running food initiatives and to improve our ability to reach and support projects.
- Listening to Consumers - We are establishing a programme of consumer listening mechanisms "Citizens Forums on Food" across the UK. These forums will encourage the Agency to have a richer and more meaningful dialogue with the public. Through these mechanisms we will deepen our understanding of the public mood, finding out about the kinds of questions / comments that the public want to ask and make. We will also continue listening and engaging with consumers through a range of other activities i.e. School Council Network, bespoke focus groups & consumer surveys.
- Food Deserts - The Agency has for the last three years provided support to Community Food Initiatives through the Dame Sheila McKechnie Food Award. Two Awards are made annually to projects that are improving food access or the provision of healthier affordable foods in socially deprived communities, where the access to fresh fruit & vegetables has been severely limited.

Further information and targets relating to these can be found in our Strategic Plan 2005-2010 and also our Corporate Plan 2007-2010  
[www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications/busreps/strategicplan](http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications/busreps/strategicplan)

## **Part II - Running our business sustainably**

### **Procurement**

15. Our policy on sustainable procurement will help us meet our needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the Agency, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment. In pursuing this policy the Agency is directly contributing to the principle of living within environmental limits and to the priority areas of sustainable production and consumption, climate change and natural resource protection. The Procurement Flexible Framework effectively forms the cornerstone of the Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan and is designed with a range of public sector audiences in mind. It is a framework of key behavioural and operational change programmes against which progress can be measured. It has been tested by a range of public sector stakeholders to confirm its usefulness and endorsed by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). We aimed to reach level 1 of the Framework by 31 March 2007 and this has been achieved. We plan to achieve level 2 by 31 March 2008. More detail can be found in the procurement plan at Annex IV.

### **Targets and milestones**

- ❖ To reach level 1 of the Flexible Framework by 31 March 2007. (Target met).
- ❖ To reach level 2 of the Framework by 31 March 2008.

***Division responsible for delivery: Finance Division***

### **Facilities Management and Communications**

16. The Food Standards Agency in running its estate more sustainably directly contributes to the principle of living within environmental limits. It also contributes to the four priority areas highlighted in the Government's Strategy. The 2007/8 targets for facilities management are set at a milestone level to meet or exceed the Government's 2010 targets laid down in Sustainable Operations in the Government Estate.

### **Energy**

17. At our London headquarters, Aviation House, we have an Environmental Management System (EMS) based on the ISO14001 standard. We are also signed up to the Green Tariff, in which London Energy pledges to match the electricity we use with the equivalent amount of electricity from renewable sources; wind, landfill gas and small scale hydro.

### Waste

18. We operate an active recycling policy through our waste disposal contractors and also provide paper and recycling facilities in our offices. Our consumable items such as IT equipment and display systems are either recycled or reused in line with the new Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations.

### FSA Scotland

19. In Scotland we are reducing energy consumption through active management of the office environment at times of reduced office occupancy such as evenings and weekends. We also have arrangements in place for recycling all paper waste. Consumable items are recycled and re-used. The Food Standards Agency Scotland (FSAS) has also invested in dual fuel capacity for two of its pool cars. This will be increased when the remaining cars are due to be replaced. FSAS is developing targets on estates management including the reduction of electricity consumption and the increased use of video conference facilities.

### FSA Wales

20. FSA Wales shares leased premises with several other organisations which limits the opportunity to set targets in relation to facilities management. However, it has been successful in establishing a tenants' committee through which it is actively pursuing its sustainability agenda.

### FSA Northern Ireland

21. A stationery policy has been developed at our Northern Ireland office which aims to reduce use of stationery consumables and cut down on waste. Consideration is being given to the provision of water coolers that use filtered tap water rather than bottled mineral water. The recent installation of timer switches for the heating system is expected to reduce heating bills by about 26%. Savings on the travel budget are planned through tighter controls on travel expenditure and the increased use of video conference facilities.

### ***Targets and Milestones***

- ❖ To reduce gas consumption in Aviation House for 2007/8 by 2% relative to 2006/7 levels.
- ❖ To reduce electric consumption in Aviation House for 2007/8 by 3% relative to 2006/7 levels.

- ❖ Reduce water use per capita in Aviation House for 2007/8 by 1% relative to 2006/7 levels.
- ❖ To reduce waste volume by 2% relative to 2006/7 levels.

**Lead division:** *Information Services and Facilities Division*

- ❖ To increase the number of dual fuel cars on the FSAS fleet to 5 by 31 December 2007 (currently have 2 out of the 5 in the FSAS fleet)
- ❖ To reduce electricity consumption at the Aberdeen office by 7% by April 2008 (from April 2007 figure).
- ❖ To increase the use of video conference facilities by 10% by April 2008 (from April 2007 figure).

**Lead division:** *FSAS*

## **Human Resources**

22. Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society, and promoting good governance have long been at the heart of what the Agency aims to do for its workforce. We encourage a healthy lifestyle by offering subsidised gym membership, annual flu vaccinations, and a lifestyle screening programme. We operate supportive sickness absence procedures and arrange occupational health, and employee assistance advice. In addition, staff can get interest-free loans for the purchase of season tickets or for bicycles for travel to work. Although a number of our procedures are necessarily paper-based, we do what we can to minimise this e.g. our job application process can be completed on-line.

23. We are committed to treating fairly and with respect everyone who works for us. We conduct annual staff attitude surveys and take clear actions based on these. We run a diversity forum which models, monitors and spreads good inclusion practice to help the Agency get the best from its workforce, and have a network of trained harassment advisers. The requirement for impact assessments under the various statutory Equality Schemes e.g. race, disability has been incorporated into the sustainability process. We provide a range of reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and staff and have recently joined the Employers Forum on Disability. We operate a number of different working patterns which suit both the needs of staff and the needs of the Agency, in some cases reducing the requirement for work accommodation and travel.

24. The Investors in People Standard significantly contributes to the social and economic strands of social development. The Food Standards Agency successfully obtained Investors in People (IiP) accreditation in 2004 and we are committed to maintaining this external validation of our business practices. The Food Standards Agency is due to undertake re-assessment against the new, more challenging IiP standard by the end of November 2007. The Agency undertook a mid-term IiP review in November 2006 to see how it is progressing against the new IiP Standard. This confirmed that the Agency has moved on since the assessment in

2004 and the review in 2005 and continues to meet the old standard against which it was assessed. It also highlighted some areas the Agency needs to develop further in the spirit of continuous improvement and we have planned action to address these. These include for example, leadership and management development for our most senior staff and our middle managers and the introduction of an FSA Manager Guide during 2007 to support delivery of our Strategic Plan.

25. Along with colleagues in England, staff in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are fully committed to the drive to maintain the Food Standards Agency's liP status. Additionally, FSA Scotland is planning to develop a new three year training and development strategy to complement the People Development programme. This will address both the future business needs of the organisation and the personal development needs of staff in Scotland. Work on this Training and Development Strategy will begin in parallel with the 2006/07 Annual Training and Development Plan. The Strategy will operate as a "work in progress" undergoing regular review and update on a rolling basis. FSA NI are also assessing how they may deliver a learning and development programme to staff in a more sustainable way, particularly in relation to business travel.
26. The Food Standards Agency's policy on sustainable development is being brought to the attention of staff through a range of awareness raising measures including talks and seminars, articles in our weekly in-house news bulletin and a dedicated section on our intranet site. Staff are being provided with the necessary skills for implementing this policy and the principles of sustainable development through the Guidance to Staff on Sustainability Assessments and through in-house sustainable development seminars and impact assessment training.

### ***Targets and Milestones***

- ❖ To maintain liP accreditation following reassessment against the revised Standard by late 2007.
- ❖ To develop the management capability and practice of middle managers through skills development by April 2008
- ❖ To run the next phase of the lifestyle screening programme in March 2007 (target met).

***Division responsible for facilitating and monitoring delivery: Human Resources Division. All divisions will contribute to delivery.***

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability**

27. The Management Committee will monitor delivery of the Sustainable Development Action Plan and will report to the Executive Management Board. Our reporting requirements in relation to sustainable development, both internally and externally, are shown at Annex II. The Agency

acknowledges that governance arrangements in relation to SD, including monitoring, evaluation and accountability, need strengthening. It is important that the Agency develops a simple but more co-ordinated approach to implementing and reporting on sustainability as well as for improving performance in this area. We therefore plan to set up a Sustainable Development Steering Group to oversee the Agency's approach to sustainable development.

28. This group will have the authority to take decisions and determine priorities. It will also provide internal challenge and encourage commitment. Other aspects of its remit will include overseeing strategy and developing policy for embedding sustainability, ensuring that actions are delivered and evaluating the outcome and agreeing the annual sustainable development action plan. Membership of the group will at a more senior level (Grade 7 and above), including the sustainable development champion at director level. All parts of the Agency will be represented.
29. The diagram at Annex I shows management responsibility and accountability in relation to sustainable development in the Agency, including the position of the planned Sustainable Development Steering Group
30. Further action is planned or underway to improve governance and reporting on the policy side. These include:
  - a sustainability and equality assurance checklist;
  - quality assurance checks on sustainability assessments;
  - establishing an ad hoc panel of sustainability experts; and
  - a further review of sustainability assessments and their impact is planned for spring 2008. The results of this will be reported to the Board.
31. We have systems in place to monitor the energy efficiency of our London Headquarters building, Aviation House, through the Building Management System software. We also have systems in place to monitor the waste management at Aviation House and identify areas where improvements can be made. Provisions for meeting our waste recycling targets have been incorporated into the new waste contract.

### **Targets and milestones**

- ❖ SDSG to be set up by July 2007 (target met)
- ❖ SDSG to hold its first meeting by the end of August 2007 (target met)
- ❖ The rollout of the Sustainability and Equality checklist by August 2007 (target met)
- ❖ The introduction of quality assurance checks by October 2007
- ❖ Ad hoc panel of sustainability experts to be set up by September 2007

- ❖ Review of sustainability assessments and their impact by May 2008

***Division responsible for facilitating and monitoring delivery: Labelling Standards and Allergy Division. All divisions will contribute to delivery.***

## **Next Steps**

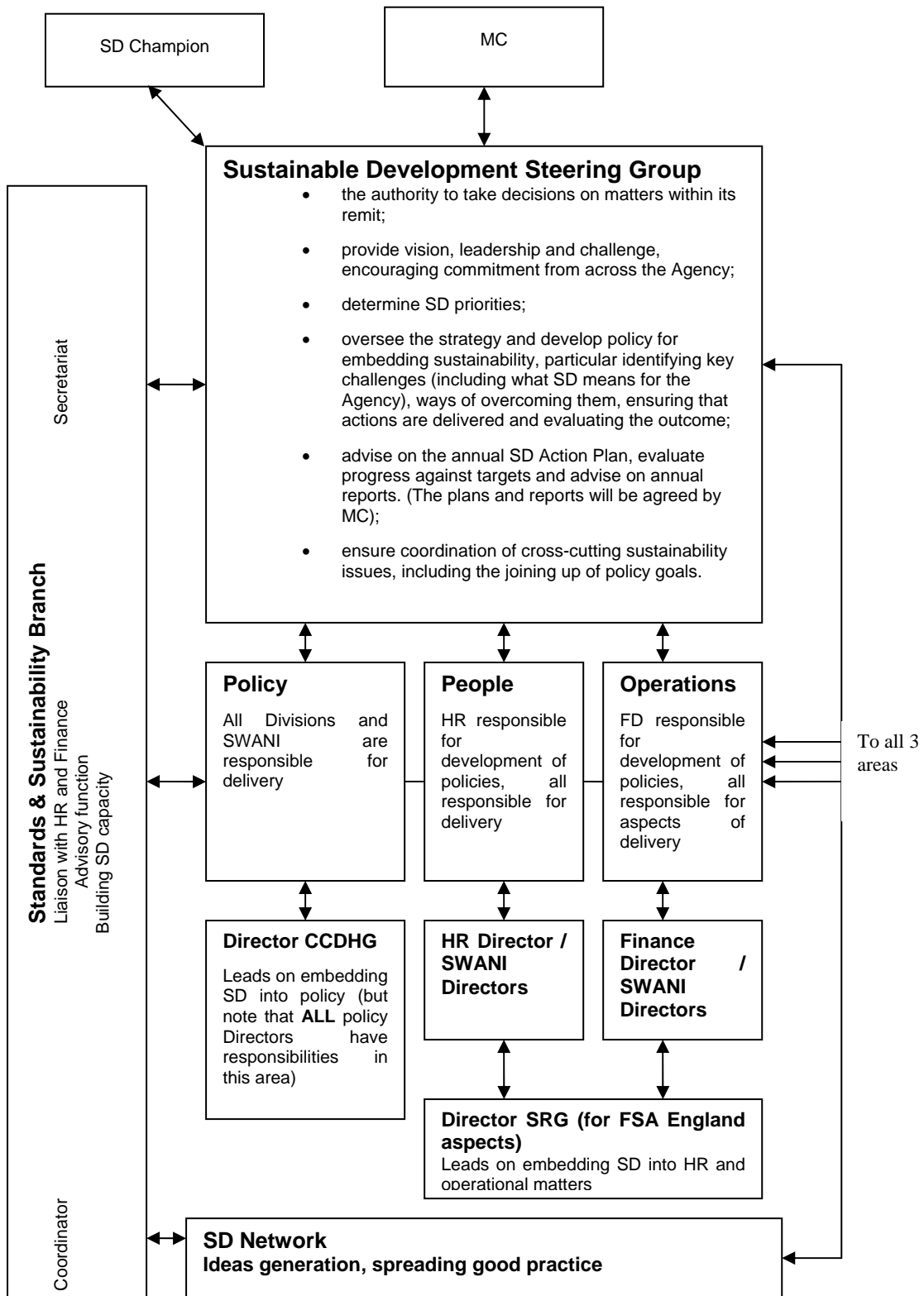
32. We will be reporting our progress against the Action Plan on the Food Standards Agency's website by May 2008 and annually thereafter. Reference will also be made to progress against the action plan in our departmental annual report to be published in autumn 2007.

### ***Targets and milestones***

- ❖ Report progress against this Plan on the Food Standards Agency's website by May 2008

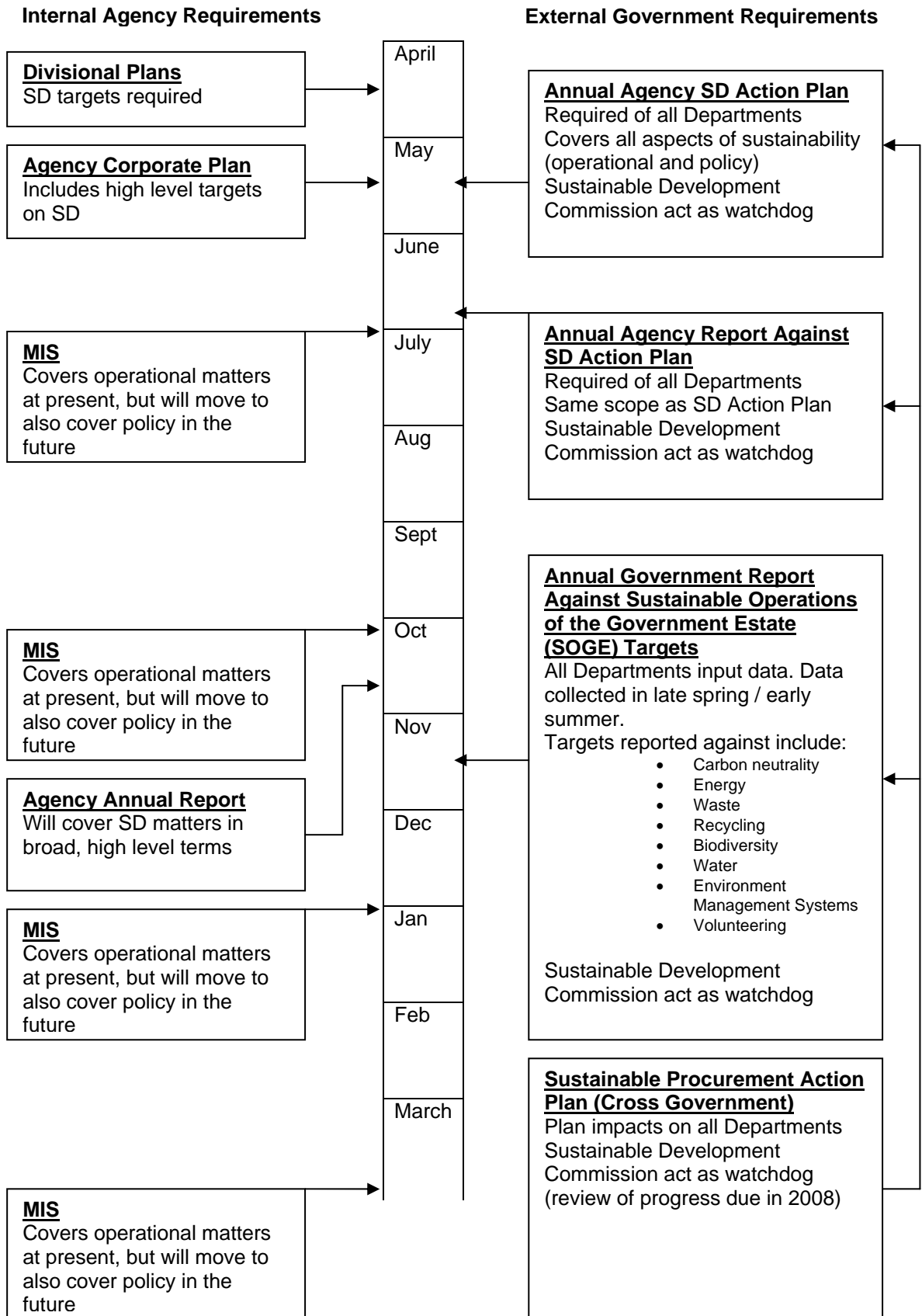
***Division responsible for co-ordinating delivery – LSA Division***

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**



## Reporting Requirements

## Annex II



**Summary of milestones and targets**  
**Policies – Developing our sustainability role**

1. Stakeholder workshop to be held by 30 November 2007.
2. Informal consultation on the Agency's sustainability role to be held by January 2008.
3. Board discussion of the Agency's role by 31 May 2008.

**Decision making**

4. Impact assessments will include sustainability considerations by 28 February 2008

**Procurement**

5. To reach level 1 of the Flexible Procurement Framework by 31 March 2007 (Target achieved).
6. To reach level 2 of the Framework by 31 March 2008.

**Facilities Management**

Aviation House

7. To reduce gas consumption in Aviation House for 2007/8 by 2% relative to 2006/7 levels.
8. To reduce electric consumption in Aviation House for 2007/8 by 3% relative to 2006/7 levels.
9. Reduce water use per capita in Aviation House for 2007/8 by 1% relative to 2006/7 levels.
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FSAS

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13. To increase the use of video conference facilities by 10% by April 2008 (from April 2007 figure).

**Human Resources**

14. To maintain liP accreditation following reassessment against the revised Standard by late 2007.

15. To develop the management capability and practice of middle managers through skills development by April 2008.
16. To run the next phase of the lifestyle screening programme in March 2007 (Target met).

**Monitoring, evaluation and accountability**

17. SDSG to be set up by July 2007 (target met).
18. SDSG to hold its first meeting by the end of August 2007 (target met).
19. The rollout of the Sustainability and Equality checklist by August 2007 (target met).
20. The introduction of quality assurance checks by October 2007.
21. Ad hoc panel of sustainability experts to be set up by September 2007.
22. Review of sustainability assessments and their impact by May 2008.

**Next Steps**

23. Report progress against this Plan on the Food Standards Agency's website by May 2008.

## Procurement

*DAP Progress Report – Procurement Flexible Framework*

	<b>TARGET for 07-08</b>	<b>TARGET for 07-08</b>	<b>PLANNED ACTIVITY</b>
	Embed Level 2	<b>Practice Level 3</b>	
<b>People</b>		Targeted refresher training on latest sustainable procurement principles. Performance objectives and appraisal include sustainable procurement factors. Simple incentive programme in place.	<p>Continuous Professional update by Procurement staff on sustainability issues including attendance at SD UK Annual conference and other updates/ Conferences.</p> <p>Objectives for all procurement staff in PAU for 07/ 08 include targets for sustainable procurement initiatives.</p> <p>Measurable targets set against quick wins product listing for all staff who own contracts.</p>
<b>Policy, Strategy &amp; Communications</b>		Augment the sustainable procurement policy into a strategy covering risk, process integration, marketing, supplier engagement, measurement and a review process.	<p>Strategy in place to cover key Sustainability issues within procurement process. Changes to key procurement documentation e.g. EOI, ITT, capture sustainable requirements at start of process.</p> <p>Procurement processes currently under strategic review and any new arrangements/ changes endorsed by CEO, will be implemented by April 08.</p>

		Strategy endorsed by CEO.	
<b>Procurement Process</b>	Detailed expenditure analysis undertaken, key sustainability risks assessed and used for prioritisation. Sustainability is considered at an early stage in the procurement process of most contracts. Whole-life-cost analysis adopted.		Detailed expenditure analysis on all areas with high sustainability impact being undertaken within the first 6 months of the year 07/08. These to include Travel, Car Hire, Taxis , Hotels, Stationery, IT Consumables etc.
<b>Engaging Suppliers</b>	Detailed supplier spend analysis undertaken. General programme of supplier engagement initiated, with senior manager involvement.		Detailed spend analysis to be completed by July 07. Targeted Supplier programme already started and will be complete by March 08.  Supply chain strategy for key spend areas being developed as a result of spend analysis.
<b>Measurements &amp;</b>	Detailed appraisal of		Sustainability targets have been set for each Division based on the

<b>Results</b>	the sustainability impacts of the procurement activity has been undertaken. Measures implemented to manage the identified high risk impact areas.		Sustainability issues applicable to their own contracts and those identified in the Quick Wins document.  Progress against the Quick Wins items set as high priority.
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