

Summary of the UK conservation agencies for Defra's consultation on the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (COM (2005)658).

1. The EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) needs to be reformulated into one strategic document that treats the economic, social and environmental dimensions equally, emphasising sustainable management, use and enjoyment of the natural environment as a necessary precondition for sustainable development.
2. The strategy should comprise an ambitious vision with supporting objectives, specific long-term targets and intermediate milestones, key actions, cross-cutting measures, indicators and a governance process (including implementation, reporting and review).
3. The strategy needs specific key actions which also focus on resource productivity, environmental taxation reforms, the phasing out of environmentally harmful subsidies, sustainable wider transport (including shipping and aviation) and the systematic mobilisation of EU funds for sustainable development.
4. The EU SDS must give greater priority to the core issue of natural resources and biodiversity and ensure that the EU is meeting its 2010 biodiversity target and the Malahide objectives.
5. The external dimension of the EU SDS needs strengthening and should also take account of the EU's global 'environmental footprint', i.e. addressing policies such as trade, investment, tourism, maritime, energy and transport.
6. The strategy needs a binding reporting process for Member States and EU institutions and a Commission progress report cycle where progress is measured against Sustainable Development (SD) targets and indicators, similar to the Lisbon reporting process and the Spring Council.
7. The EU SDS should provide guidelines and headline indicators or targets, which Member States must report on in order to benchmark progress, equalling the 'Integrated Guidelines' of the Lisbon strategy.
8. The EU SDS should focus on innovative ways for working across departments (DGs), within the EU institutions and between the institutions to embed SD into all EU decision making. Each institution needs a strong central focus (leadership) to ensure SD integration and these should work together as a means to verify that all institutions and decisions meet the objectives and obligations of the EU SDS.

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