

European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC)

Input European SD councils (EEAC) for questionnaire UNCSD , misc. on
Preparation

Ingeborg Niestroy to: uncsd2012 05/11/2010 03:48 PM

Cc:

"B - FRDO-CFDD - JandeSmedt(SG)", "D - RNE -
GuentherBachmann(SG)"

1 attachment

EEAC-WG SD_survey-SD gov_concl_5-11-10_fin.pdf

Dear UNCSD secretariat,

1) Please find enclosed **our contribution to the questionnaire.**

These conclusions are based on a structured survey (10 questions with up to 3 sub-questions)
we have

run for some month, and replies by 11 national SD councils and two sub-national councils.

There are some questions on the questionnaire we can answer on the basis of this survey. Let
me know -

I can fill that in next week.

In the context of our work on governance for SD we are very interested in the replies on
Attachment E

(institutional framework), in particular 4 - 9, 10, 13, 15, 16.

For our aspirations to contribute to revitalising multi-stakeholder bodies such as SD councils, we
would

be very grateful if it was possible that we can receive answers delivered on **question 4** (the one
on SD

councils) a.s.a.p.

--> What are your plans how to analyse the questionnaires? (I am happy to help for this particular
question)

==> When do you see it realistic that there will be overviews published?

2) Our preparatory work:

- We are also working on the green economy issue.

- Our annual conference 2011 will take place on 16 September in Wroclaw, Poland, where we will
present

and discuss the input of the SD councils in Europe for the UNCSD.

- We have a project proposal for mutual learning with/support for countries who are about to
establish a

multi-stakeholder body/SD council. We would be happy if you could let us know if you know about
a

country with such intentions.

- We are in touch with SF and ANPED on a regular basis, informing about our
activities/aspirations, and
coordinating where appropriate.

**3) We would like to organise a side-event for the PrepCom2 in March: How does that
work?**

Many thanks for your help,
looking forward to hearing from you!

Best greets,

Inge

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Attachment

1

EEAC - European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils

Working Group Sustainable Development

Ingeborg Niestroy, EEAC Office

Survey on SD governance in European countries: Analysis and conclusions on the state of the art

Background

The EEAC Working Group for SD (WG SD) initiated this survey in order to provide input for the

topic "institutional framework for SD" of the Rio plus conference (UNCSD 2012).

The WG SD co-chairs together with the EEAC Office elaborated a questionnaire/checklist, which was sent to all councils organised in EEAC. Within two months (May and June 2010) there were altogether 13 replies from the national level (mostly from councils, a few from Ministries) and 2 from the regional level (councils). The WG SD is aiming at getting more replies and will further develop the analysis accordingly. Based on this analysis, and best practice examples to be compiled, the WG will develop recommendations to be discussed at the next meeting on 10 February 2011. This will include an evaluation of capacities and capabilities as well as an assessment of what we consider as needed in order to meet SD requirements.

The questions in the checklist on SD councils are rather informative and neutral. An assessment of SD councils themselves would require a wider series of inquiry with SDC members, government representatives and stakeholders.

Analysis and conclusions

1. SD strategies: comprehensiveness and monitoring

- All countries that participated in this survey have an SD strategy, and more (compared to 2004) are considered comprehensive, i.e. the different dimensions are covered.
- The links to economic strategies are still considered as rather weak (max. score was medium), as well as SDC's involvement there.
- The international implications are taken into account in all but one SDS.
- The long-term perspective is taken into account in the majority of the cases, i.e. this has improved since 2004.
- While legislative underpinning has not spread, there are a number of other mechanisms put in place to ensure/improve that the SD strategy/policies continue when a government changes.
- In most cases strategic objectives are only to a medium extent operationalised into actions, but in four countries higher scores are given.
- More countries have headline indicators established and have SIA introduced. At the same time, the use of quantified targets has not much increased.
- All SDSs are reviewed, in principle on a regular basis (though some with quite some delay), and the SDCs are involved to a high degree. These evaluations are in the very most cases based on criteria and indicators.
- In the case of SIA, it becomes apparent that this instrument is not yet fully applied; however, it is seen by many as desired for improving monitoring, communication and policy-decisions

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It is proposed that a broadened and more compulsory Sustainability Impact Assessment shall be introduced as an instrument to improve scrutiny and mainstreaming SD in sectoral policies, as well as for helping communication about conflicts, triple wins, and to demonstrate the concrete impacts and benefits of SD policies compared to business as usual.

2 . C o o r d i n a t i o n a n d r e s p o n s i b i l i t y

- While political coordination mechanisms are still lacking in around 50% of the countries, on the administration side they are now everywhere in place.
- All aspects of more comprehensive approaches have improved, both in the understanding of actors (those so far involved) as well as in policy-making (coordination), caused or supported by the SDS. However, it is still seen as a massive challenge to move this further to the "hardcore" policies.
- There seem to be no changes regarding top-level leadership, rather to the worse: DE had it (also CZ formally), PT was then on its way of doing it (and did), SE abolished its PM lead, as did FI (here, however, the (strong) coordination mechanisms remained the same).
- Vertical coordination has improved: in most cases the regional level is meanwhile included, and many cases also the provincial or local level. Also, the relation to the EU SDS has slightly improved. Almost all SDSs are related to international strategies (like MDGs).

3 . E c o n o m i e s , S C P , s o c i a l d i m e n s i o n

- Mainstreaming SD in "hardcore policies" concerns at the core the question of the economic model / growth imperative as well as consumption patterns.
- Green economy is seen as the pathway to the transition to more sustainable lifestyles. SDCs shall focus on this.
- Discourse on transition governance takes place in some countries, and in a few there are approaches developed and tested (incl. transition management).
- The social dimension needs more focus according to several voices. In some SIAs wellbeing, social inclusion and environmental justice are key issues.

4 . C o m m u n i c a t i o n , s t a k e h o l d e r i n v o l v e m e n t a n d S D c o u n c i l s

- In the area of communication there are some improvements, however: It is stressed very significantly that communication needs to be strengthened: in particular that SD needs to be communicated in more practical, daily life terms.
- SDCs shall play a strong role in this translation effort and they need to work on getting SD at the core of the media agenda; they should demonstrate what are the concrete impacts and benefits of sustainable policies vis-à-vis the business as usual.
- SIA is seen as a tool for communication.
- There needs to be ongoing capacity building on the civil society side, with special emphasis on the local level.
- Also on the side of business there are clear improvements, but also here it is stated significantly that the private sector needs to take up more responsibility, and more coalitions should be built.
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue and participation is widely seen as continuously important, and SDCs as a useful means and organisational form. SDCs serve as policy advisor, agent for stimulating informed debate and webbing into society. The SDCs in Europe are aiming at organising dialogue with councils for SD or similar multi-stakeholder bodies in other regions, in preparation of the UNCSD.