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A Stakeholder
Evaluation of
the Sustainable
Development
Programme of
Action

Background Paper to
Report 1: A National
Sustainable
Development Strategy:
How New Zealand
measures up against
international commitments

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Background Paper to	<i>A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand measures up against international commitments</i>
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Preface

Agenda 21 addresses the pressing problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the next century. It reflects a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level on development and environment cooperation. Its successful implementation is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments. National strategies, plans, policies and processes are crucial in achieving this.

UN, 1992: para 1.3

The *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (SDPOA) is the only document that has come close to a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) for New Zealand.

In 2002, when the New Zealand government was considering a way to progress the development of a NSDS, it had a number of policy options. These ranged from the status quo (no steps) to a full and extensive programme. The SDPOA lay somewhere between these two extremes. It was not nearly as comprehensive as a full NSDS, but was a far superior option to no programme at all.

The SDPOA was like a stone being thrown into a pond; it was not just the size of the splash or the weight of the stone that mattered, but also the nature and frequency of the ripples. Our evaluation of the SDPOA and its 'ripple effect' is based on information that is publicly available; thus, our evaluation is developed from our perspective as an external stakeholder. This approach is designed to complement previous reviews of the SDPOA, which include a complete government review by Frame and Marquardt (2006) and an independent process-review undertaken by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) (2007).

This stakeholder evaluation is a key step in providing the necessary background for meeting the purpose of *Project 2058* and will, we hope, be useful for government when considering how the next steps in the programme could be improved. We hope our findings will stimulate further dialogue on how New Zealand can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of long-term sustainable development policy in New Zealand.

I would like to acknowledge the energy and motivation of the young team involved in *Project 2058*, in particular Ella Lawton, for her considerable perseverance and commitment to this background paper.

Wendy McGuinness
Chief Executive
Sustainable Future

Executive Summary

This background paper¹ is a stakeholder evaluation of the *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (SDPOA), which was published by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) in January 2003.

The SDPOA was a three-year \$23 million² ‘whole-of-government programme’³ to strengthen decision-making so that the concept of sustainability was infused into government policy (*ibid*: 6). The integrated approach underpinning the SDPOA was ‘new’ to central government and in retrospect, proved to be challenging.

The SDPOA was part of an on-going programme and was never intended to be a ‘one-off’ event (DPMC, 2003: 6), however in July 2006⁴ the initial programme was completed and nothing has been put in its place⁵.

This paper is a response to the lack of progress both throughout the programme and since its completion. In particular, it is a response to the government’s intention to ‘produce an updated programme of action’ (DPMC, 2003: 29), which to date has not been delivered. We note that the SDPOA document outlines the conditions upon which the ‘timing of the next programme of action is dependent’, namely:

1. the development of [sustainable development] indicators and reporting against these,
2. [to] build on consultation and on the government’s relationships with key stakeholders and other sectors, and most importantly,
3. draw[ing] on the lessons learnt from this first programme of action. (*ibid*)

¹ This background paper provides the basis for some of the recommendations contained in *Project 2058*’s main paper, Report 1: *A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand measures up against International Commitments* (Sustainable Future, 2007a).

² The OAG (2007) estimates that about \$23 million was allocated to the *Programme of Action* and the Sustainable Cities and Energy workstreams from July 2003 to July 2006 (inclusive).

³ We refer to this as a ‘whole-of-government’ approach, as the SDPOA states ‘to ensure that integrated policy development occurs across social, economic, environmental and cultural spheres. A single issue approach to decision making is unlikely to achieve the gains we are looking for’ (DPMC, 2003:10).

⁴ The funding for the programme stopped in mid 2006, although specific funding for the Water Programme of Action (WPOA) has continued. The WPOA is the only programme to resemble the original workstream.

⁵ A six-pack set of initiatives was launched on 13 February 2007 by the Prime Minister. This was not part of an overarching strategy but is a group of six separate low-level initiatives. They are listed below: 1. Household sustainability (MfE), 2. Waste minimisation and management (MfE), 3. Towards a carbon-neutral public sector (MfE), 4. Enhanced eco-verification (MED), 5. Enhanced sustainable procurement (MED) and 6. Business partnerships for sustainability (MED). (MED, 2007)

This stakeholder evaluation is designed to complement two previous reviews⁶ of the SDPOA. We remain concerned that relevant and timely information was clearly available, but not made public until June 2007. In our view, progress reports should have been prepared annually during the three years of the programme, and a comprehensive review should have been undertaken and made public shortly after the programme was completed in July 2006.

The information gap between what the public could access and what the government knew (or could obtain) was significant. We assessed the SDPOA in two ways: first, according to its 'ten elements', and second, as a 'whole programme'. A more detailed explanation of our methodology is contained in Section 2.

Method 1: The Ten Elements of the SDPOA

We assessed the ten elements contained in the SDPOA (see Table 1) in terms of the following:

1. The quality and staying power of the elements in terms of their continued 'relevance' today;
2. Whether the 'performance' was above, expected, or below the SDPOA's stated goals and desired outcomes, and
3. Whether the SDPOA performed well in terms of how it engaged with and was 'communicated' to stakeholders.

Method 2: The Programme as a Whole

We assessed the SDPOA as a whole in terms of nine critical success factors of project management (see Table 2), which were grouped in stages under strategy, structure and process. We also prepared a list of outstanding questions (in Section 4.4) that we were unable to answer. We hope this list will provide valuable feedback for government when designing the next step towards sustainable development in New Zealand.

Our Findings

1. Our analysis of the ten elements in Section 3 found that the relevance, i.e. the purpose underlying the strategy, is greater today than it was in 2003, but that the performance and communication of the ten elements was below the level we could have reasonably expected. Table 13 shows the results of our analysis.

⁶ Being one internal government review for the DPMC by Landcare Research (Frame and Marquardt, 2006) that was completed in October 2006 and published in June 2007, and an independent process-review by the New Zealand Office of the Auditor General (OAG, 2007).

2. The programme appeared not to have been well managed. Instead of the whole-of-government approach promised, the programme reverted to a silo approach. Progress therefore depended on the leadership of each silo. Two of the workstreams did pick up the baton (cities and water) and run with the initiative to a degree, but three did not (energy, 'child and youth' and the often forgotten fifth workstream, 'measuring progress').
3. The programme had a high-level vision statement and strategy (the SDPOA document), but did not have an action plan to measure progress. This meant that participants and reviewers struggled to find a way of both actioning and reviewing progress. In particular, there was a lack of:
 - (i) Specific milestones⁷ or outputs outlining how the programme would be implemented, measured, reviewed and fed back into a more strategic objective over time;
 - (ii) Clarity over the governance structure during the programme (everyone was responsible, but no one was accountable);
 - (iii) A detailed, published budget. The \$23 million figure mentioned above was only found by reading a review by the Office of the Auditor General published in June 2007;
 - (iv) Communication. Communication and consultation in each workstream was below expectations, but communication regarding the whole programme was almost non-existent;
 - (v) Regular reporting. Progress during the three-year period in each workstream, and for the programme as a whole, was minimal.
4. Our review of the programme as a whole in Section 4 showed:
 - (i) The purpose underlying the strategy was appropriate and over time has become increasingly so but the design was flawed due to the way it was initiated and because it was not woven into a broader long-term strategic purpose.
 - (ii) The structure did not fit the strategy. In particular, DPMC (who arguably had the key leadership role) did not have the capacity to undertake a leadership role of a complex and 'whole-of-government' programme while maintaining its critical administrative role, being the running the machinery of government.

⁷ An exception was workstream five, Measuring Progress and Updating the Programme of Action.

In addition, a wide range of people were on paper responsible, being ministers, chief executives, the DPMC and their respective committees, but no one person was held accountable for performance or for reporting on progress.

- (iii) The processes linking strategy and structure were ineffective because of the weaknesses in the first two.

5. Lessons to be learnt for future whole-of-government programmes include:

- (i) The strategy must have a well-formulated design appropriate for the purpose;
- (ii) The structure must 'fit the strategy'. This means that any future 'whole-of-government programme' must be capable of delivering the strategy;
- (iii) Whole-of-government programmes require significantly more resources and management capacity at the initial phases in order to deliver the optimal outcome at the end of the programme;
- (iv) Considerably more effort needs to be put into developing effective communication with all stakeholders in future programmes;
- (v) A more structured action plan with specified targets/milestones and dates would have allowed a more objective assessment by both internal and external stakeholders;
- (vi) Programmes of this nature must be initiated in a way that fits within a wider set of objectives so that lessons learnt and outcomes gained can be fed into a larger strategic objective. In our view, the SDPOA would have been a more effective stepping stone if it had fed back into a long-term integrated programme, such as a National Sustainable Development Strategy.

We conclude that the SDPOA was a well-intentioned first attempt at designing and implementing a cohesive approach to sustainable development policy in New Zealand. As such, it has helped instigate and guide some progress, although it appears not to have delivered the level of integration intended. This is indicated by the continuing relevance and quality of the SDPOA's goals and desired outcomes but the generally poor delivery on performance and communication.

Sustainable Future believes the results of the SDPOA have not been fully discussed in the public arena. We look forward to increased communication and clarity over what can be learnt from the SDPOA in order to develop and support the next steps in New Zealand's journey toward sustainability.

1. Purpose

Sustainable Future⁸ is an independent think-tank based in Wellington. We are currently undertaking a two-year research project called *Project 2058*⁹. The strategic aim of *Project 2058* is to:

promote integrated long-term thinking, leadership and capacity-building so that New Zealand can effectively explore and manage risks and opportunities over the next fifty years. (Sustainable Future, 2007b: 5)

In order to achieve this aim, we have broken the research project into three parts, of which this is Background Paper 1b of Part 1. For an explanation of the *Project 2058* methodology, please refer to our website.

The purpose of this background paper is to undertake an independent stakeholder evaluation of the *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (SDPOA), a three-year programme that finished in mid 2006. This paper is designed to provide the background analysis to Sustainable Future's *Report 1: A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand Measures up against International Commitments* (2007a), referred to in this document as the main paper.

Background to the SDPOA

The SDPOA brings together a number of key principles and ideas that the government intended to use to apply an integrated approach to policy and decision-making. At the release of the SDPOA, Hon. Marian Hobbs, who was the Minister for the Environment at the time, stated:

The Programme of Action represents a new approach. Earlier strategies had a relatively narrow focus, even though they were based on sustainable development principles. Achieving sustainable development involves a different way of thinking and working. It requires:

- looking after people,
- taking the long-term view,
- taking account of the social, economic, environmental and cultural effects of our decisions, and
- encouraging participation and partnerships. (DPMC, 2003: 6)

To date, Sustainable Future is aware of reviews of aspects of the SDPOA by two organisations:

- (i) 2006: DPMC/Landcare Research, written by Frame and Marquardt, titled *Implications of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action*, and
- (ii) 2007: New Zealand Office of the Auditor General, titled *Sustainable Development: Implementing the Programme of Action*.

⁸ Sustainable Future <http://www.sustainablefuture.info>.

⁹ *Project 2058* <http://www.2058.net.nz>.

A third review, prepared by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE), *Assessment towards Progress*, is at final prepublication stage. We also expect the Ministry for the Environment's (MfE) upcoming 2007 *State of the Environment Report* to comment on the SDPOA. These reviews are discussed in more detail in the main report.

For more information on the programme we recommend reading the following:

- (i) 2006: DPMC / Landcare Research written by Frame and Marquardt, titled *Implications of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action*; in particular, Figures 4a–d (pages: 77–80) and Box 1, 'Performance of the SDPOA Workstreams against Principles' (*ibid*: 55). The figures provide an overview of the breadth of projects Frame and Marquardt consider fall under or are influenced by the first four workstreams. Box 1 assesses the performance in terms of a continuum from 'acknowledged' to 'international quality', and shows that 'water' and 'cities' were considered of a higher international quality than 'energy' and 'child and youth'.
- (ii) 2007: New Zealand Office of the Auditor General, titled *Sustainable Development: Implementing the Programme of Action*; in particular page 22 and Figure 2, 'Organisations, workstreams, committees, and groups involved in implementation of the Programme of Action' for an outline of the SDPOA.

The OAG (2007) estimates that about \$23 million was allocated to the 'SDPOA and the Sustainable Cities and Energy workstreams' from July 2003 to July 2006 (inclusive). We were unsure of the extent to which this included the total of the four (or five) workstreams and whether this figure included funding the programme as a whole under the DPMC.

The SDPOA was a significant investment in sustainable development and the remainder of this paper considers the results.

2. Methodology

The assessment method is broken up into two parts. The first part evaluates the ten elements contained in the SDPOA and the second, the programme as a whole.

2.1 Method 1: The Ten Elements

To undertake this stakeholder evaluation, we used the ten key elements contained in the SDPOA (see Table 1 below), and reviewed each element in order.

Table 1: Ten Elements of the SDPOA

(Source: DPMC, 2003)

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Vision for New Zealand2. Principles for Policy and Decision-making3. Relationship with Other Guiding Documents4. Partnerships5. Workstream 1: Quality and Allocation of Freshwater6. Workstream 2: Energy7. Workstream 3: Sustainable Cities8. Workstream 4: Investing in Child and Youth Development9. Workstream 5: Measuring Progress and Updating the Programme of Action¹⁰10. Next steps
--

We first defined each element by quoting sections of the SDPOA (see shaded boxes at the beginning of each sub-section of Section 3). Each element was then analysed and discussed, based on publicly available information. Finally, we provide an overall assessment. Our analysis of the ten elements is divided into three categories:

¹⁰ 'Measuring Progress and Updating the Programme of Action' has been treated as a fifth workstream. While it has not been commonly discussed as such, in the SDPOA it is highlighted as the fifth key component of the programme (in addition to the four commonly referred to — water, energy, cities, and child and youth).

- (i) The continued ‘relevance’ of the elements in terms of the 2007 landscape. Elements 1–4 and 10 were assessed in terms of continued quality and staying power, and the extent to which the elements remain relevant today. The level of relevance today as compared with 2003 was rated ‘above’ (as being above 2003 levels), ‘expected’ (no change) , or ‘below’ (being below 2003 levels).
- (ii) The level of ‘performance’ of each element compared the actual results at the end of the three years against the expectations outlined in the SDPOA. The level of performance was rated ‘above’, ‘expected’, or ‘below’ the SDPOA’s stated goals and desired outcomes.
- (iii) The effectiveness of ‘communication’. This was assessed in terms of (a) the existence, accessibility, accuracy and completeness of a website or websites; (b) the extent there was a transparent and meaningful consultation process, and (c) the quantity and quality of performance reports.

2.2 Method 2: The SDPOA as a Whole

We then assessed the ‘programme as a whole’ in terms of our nine critical success factors outlined in Table 2 below. We also prepared a list of questions which we were unable to answer. These outstanding questions are categorised under strategy, structure and process (see Section 4.4 of this report).

Table 2: Nine Critical Success Factors of Effective Project Management

(Source: Sustainable Future, 2007)

Strategy

1. Clear and well-formulated problem definition, purpose and overall design
2. Adequate resources (e.g. time and funding) are committed for the length of the programme and are aligned with the strategy purpose and design.
3. Institutional commitment occurs at all levels, particularly by people with influence

Structure

4. Structure is designed to deliver the strategy
5. Roles and responsibilities for the programme are clear and transparent

Process

6. Practical and realistic milestones are set (i.e. actions, funds and timeframes)
7. Frequent, comprehensive and transparent reviews are completed
8. Management maintains sight of the bigger picture and future steps and ensures results are fed back into the overall strategic direction in a timely and effective manner
9. Effective communication occurs with internal and external stakeholders both during and after the project, including regular monitoring and reporting of progress

In addition, we also discuss in Section 4, elements ‘1 to 4’ and ‘9 and 10’, as they also impact directly on the evaluation of the ‘whole’.

2.3 Key Points

1. Our research process involved accessing information from on-line documents produced primarily by central and local government and, when necessary, directly contacting relevant persons to obtain additional information or confirmation.
2. The 'relevance' of the goals and desired outcomes was assessed for elements 1–4 and 10 only. The five workstreams' goals or desired outcomes were not assessed for their continued 'relevance' as this would require a much larger review of each workstream to determine the relevance (and appropriateness) of its goals and desired outcomes against the current landscape. This is indicated by the dash in column (i) of Table 13.
3. The 'performance' and 'communication' of the elements are discussed in Section 3. Due to the size and complexity of the workstreams (elements 5–9), tables are used to clarify our findings.
4. In interpreting the results, it is important to note the relationship between 'performance' and 'communication'. Poor communication means external stakeholders are unable to evaluate performance, even if performance was good. What a stakeholder does not know, he or she cannot evaluate, hence 'poor communication' by its very nature leads a stakeholder to conclude 'poor performance'.
5. Due to the SDPOA's lack of clarity, cohesion and communication, it was difficult to assess the extent to which it has driven change. For example, Frame and Marquardt's (2006) review includes a comprehensive list of projects. We found it difficult to identify the links between the SDPOA and the projects listed, and the extent to which the SDPOA helped create, implement and monitor these projects.
6. We do not have access to internal government documents and processes; therefore our analysis is based on information readily available to the wider interested public.
7. Sustainable Future is the only stakeholder that has contributed to this assessment. As part of a broader dialogue, we have had discussions with other stakeholders as to what aspects of the SDPOA they consider to be successful or not, but this has not been completed in a formal or comprehensive manner.
8. Our evaluation has not been peer reviewed, as we consider the value of the review to be that of one interested stakeholder which has actively sought information on the performance of the SDPOA.
9. We agree with Frame and Marquardt, that 'there is in this case no alternative to a subjective, qualitative response to the evaluation of the SDPOA' (2006: 54). Under the circumstances noted above, our methodology is a response to the lack of specified targets and timeframes.

3. Review of the Ten Elements of the SDPOA

This section evaluates the ten key elements contained in the SDPOA and draws conclusions.

3.1 A Vision for New Zealand

[The central commitment of this programme of action is] to strengthen the way government operates by applying a set of guiding objectives and principles across the government sector. By doing this, the government is offering to lead other sectors and enterprises in New Zealand, and an invitation to share the path to our common future. The strategic intent is established through high-level vision statements and principles to guide government policy and decision-making. (DPMC, 2003: 9)

At the time of the implementation of the SDPOA, the New Zealand government recognised the magnitude of the project, and that the strategy required a high-level vision statement. This has been continuously reinforced by the Prime Minister (Clark, 2007). We consider the relevance of the vision and the continuous delivery of the vision as above expectations, and performance and communication were as expected.

3.2 Principles for Policy and Decision-making

The aim is:

to ensure the use of these operating principles in policy development. Infusing this way of thinking into the public sector will require a concerted effort from chief executives. It will also require government agencies to invest in capability building to ensure that integrated policy development occurs across social, economic, environmental and cultural spheres. (DPMC, 2003: 10)

The ten principles of the SDPOA were:

1. Considering the long-term implications of decisions.
2. Seeking innovative solutions that are mutually reinforcing, rather than accepting that gain in one area will necessarily be achieved at the expense of another.
3. Using the best information available to support decision-making.
4. Addressing risks and uncertainty when making choices and taking a precautionary approach when making decisions that may cause serious or irreversible damage.
5. Working in partnership with local government and other sectors and encouraging transparent and participatory processes.
6. Considering the implications of decisions from a global as well as New Zealand perspective.
7. Decoupling economic growth from pressures on the environment.

3. Review of the Ten Elements of the SDPOA

8. Respecting environmental limits, protecting ecosystems and promoting the integrated management of land, water and living resources.
9. Working in partnership with appropriate Māori authorities to empower Māori in development decisions that affect them.
10. Respecting human rights, the rule of law and cultural diversity. (*ibid*)

The New Zealand government formulated high-level principles to guide government process and decision-making (DPMC, 2003). These ten principles for sustainable development are considered to be a significant step in the evolution of a sustainable development approach. They have been well supported in the programme's content and referenced in civil society, but have largely failed to be used in central and local government. Therefore although the content of the principles is considered to remain relevant today, they have not been well integrated into government policy.

We consider the level of integration as increasingly relevant but performance and communication of the principles were below expectations, based on the lack of reference back to the principles and the SDPOA in relevant government documents.

3.3 Relationship with Other Guiding Documents

The government has identified its most important task as building the conditions for long-term and sustainable economic growth. The improved decision-making signalled here will assist that task. An important aspect of the sustainable development approach is to ensure that connections between the various pieces of work and feedback loops are encouraged and understood. (DPMC, 2003: 10)

The SDPOA was developed to sit alongside a wider body of government policies and documents, in particular the Growth and Innovation Framework and *Key Government Goals to Guide the Public Sector in Achieving Sustainable Development* (DPMC, 2002). As a whole the SDPOA's focus has not been integrated more widely than the first four workstreams. Integration of the principles into the workstreams themselves also appears minimal, as evidenced by their poor recognition in documents produced by key ministries. We consider the level of integration and connections to be increasingly relevant, but the performance and communication of these inter-connections between documents was below expectations and a significant concern.¹¹

¹¹ This finding has been further substantiated in analysis of the 130 central government strategies contained in *Sustainable Future's Report 2: Central Government Strategies* (2007).

3.4 Partnerships

The purpose of the partnership approach for sustainable development is to:

- combine efforts and resources towards common aims
- share information and expertise
- understand different points of view
- make better decisions
- create more “win-win” outcomes. (DPMC, 2003: 11)

Many of the projects and streams under the SDPOA appear to have worked relatively independently of each other. The Frame and Marquardt (2006) review tied a number of strategies and projects to the SDPOA. However, it appears that they were not initially developed under the SDPOA, as these projects’ reports do not acknowledge the SDPOA as a founding document. This raises a question about the degree to which the SDPOA created or supported these initiatives. We discuss the governance structure and its implications in Sections 4 and 5.

Until June 2007, we were not aware of any publicly available information on websites or in publications that mentioned either the mid-term report on the SDPOA or the final evaluation report. In July the OAG stated:

DPMC and workstream leaders successfully used a number of informal methods to share information and report to each other about the particular challenges of using the sustainable development principles in policy development. However, publicly available information and reports also support shared learning and public accountability. Neither the draft mid-term report nor the final evaluation report of the Programme of Action was publicly released, and the shared intranet site is no longer active. In our view, both the long-term effectiveness of shared learning for the wider public sector and public accountability would be strengthened by publicly available information and reports on the Programme of Action as a whole. (OAG, 2007: 9)

In addition, although the SDPOA highlights partnerships as a key component of the programme, it does not directly promote communication with stakeholders as integral to its success. This is supported by the following comment from the OAG.

For the Programme of Action as a whole, potential external partners had no avenues for formal and direct participation at a governance level, although there were informal opportunities for external stakeholders to have a voice at the central government decision-making and co-ordinating level. (*ibid*: 19)

We consider the emphasis on internal and external partnerships to be increasingly relevant, but performance and communication were below expectations.

3.5 Quality and Allocation of Fresh Water

OVERARCHING GOAL:

Adequate, clean freshwater available for all.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The programme of action seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- freshwater is allocated and used in a sustainable, efficient and equitable way
- freshwater quality is maintained to meet all appropriate needs
- water bodies with nationally significant natural, social or cultural heritage values are protected. (DPMC, 2003: 13)

There are a number of water-resource-management issues that must be addressed for us to sustain our economic growth, natural environment and heritage, and the health and wellbeing of our people. (*ibid*)

The Water Programme of Action (WPOA) was the result of ongoing issues concerning demand for freshwater (especially for irrigation) often exceeding what was available and sustainable. Like the Resource Management Act 1991, the WPOA relies heavily on regional councils for freshwater management. The WPOA intended to 'build on the Government's strong relationships with local government' (MfE, 2006a: para 10) by outlining nine freshwater principles to guide its implementation (MfE, 2006b; see Appendix 1 for the complete list). The nine water principles emphasise that:

1. Water will still be managed as a public resource by regional councils under the Resource Management Act;
2. Clear environmental limits will be set around both water quality and the quantity available;
3. Mechanisms and incentives will be developed with the aim of enhancing both efficiency of use and the protection of nationally important bodies of water;
4. Sound information and community involvement are integral to the decision-making process.¹²

¹² How these principles are being integrated to build on central government's relationship with local government is outside the scope of this paper. This will be covered in another *Project 2058* paper, with the working title *Local Government Feedback Mechanisms*, due to be completed late 2007.

Allocation continues to be a major issue in many rural New Zealand areas. However, the technical report *Water Allocation and Use*, written collaboratively by central and regional governments and developed in consultation with Māori (MfE, 2004), did little to create the ‘clear environmental limits’ the WPOA states ‘will be set for water quality and the quantity available for allocation’ (MfE, 2006a: n.p.).

Work on the management of the WPOA has been a slow process. It has taken nearly four years since the release of the first in a series of documents in the programme of action (MfE, 2003b) to create a package for water care in New Zealand. The lack of progress in the development of National Environmental Standards is also disappointing.

On the other hand, there is still activity with the WPOA, and it is being updated regularly on the Sustainable Water Programme of Action website (MfE, 2007a). As part of a NGO Reference Group on the WPOA, Ecologic has drafted a proposal for a National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management (Ecologic Foundation, 2007).

The WPOA has not identified how it will weave together the number of corresponding strategies currently in use, develop a review for the programme, effectively communicate with local government (particularly regional councils) or deal with increasing problems of water allocation and management in New Zealand. Tables 3 and 4 explain our findings.

Table 3: Performance Evaluation for Freshwater

Performance Criteria	Sustainable Future’s Evaluation
Comparing delivery of outcomes against the workstream’s stated goals and desired outcomes	Below expectations: There have not been a lot of real outcomes towards improving water management and, considering that water issues have been on the agenda long before the WPOA, delivery of water outcomes in the WPOA is below what could have been reasonably expected.

3. Review of the Ten Elements of the SDPOA

Table 4: Communication Evaluation for Freshwater

Communication Criteria	Sustainable Future's Evaluation
Website for accessibility and accuracy	As expected: MfE has a comprehensive website of all documents relating to the implementation of the WPOA. ¹³
Consultation process	As expected: Several discussion documents have been released, and a NGO Reference Group has been involved in the planning and implementation of the WPOA.
Reporting on progress	As expected: The website provides progress reports such as Cabinet Minutes and ministerial speeches providing updates on government decisions.

Our observations are supported by the OECD's (2007) *Environmental Performance Review of New Zealand*. The review notes that change is happening, but that our use of soft persuasion methods, indicated by the use of non-binding agreements such as the *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord* (MfE, 2003a), is insufficient (OECD, 2007: 7).

3.6 Energy

OVERARCHING GOAL:

To ensure the delivery of energy services to all classes of consumer in an efficient, fair, reliable and sustainable manner.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The programme of action seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- energy use in New Zealand becomes progressively more efficient and less wasteful
- our renewable sources of energy are developed and maximised
- New Zealand consumers have a secure supply of electricity. (DPMC, 2003: 16)

The Programme of Action's major objective is to ensure continued delivery of energy services to New Zealanders. It acknowledges that renewable energy sources, such as wind, will become increasingly important in providing security of supply and in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁴ Desired outcomes for the programme include increased gain in energy efficiency, maximised development of renewable energy sources, and greater security of energy supply for consumers.

¹³ Ministry for the Environment. Retrieved 20 August 2007 from <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/prog-action/index.html>.

¹⁴ Ministry of Economic Development. Retrieved 20 August 2007 from http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentPage_12069.aspx.

In October 2004, MED (as part of the SDPOA), produced a discussion paper titled *Sustainable Energy: Creating a Sustainable Energy System for New Zealand*. This document was not a detailed plan or strategy, nor a new policy prescription (MED, 2004). The document discusses the key challenges associated with the transition of New Zealand's energy sector to a more sustainable model, and considers policy approaches for moving forward.

The July 2005 Cabinet Paper - *Sustainable Energy: Report Back* (2005a) and the related Cabinet Minute - *Sustainable Energy* reveal how the above document eventually led to development of the *Draft New Zealand Energy Strategy* (NZES) (MED, 2006a). The *Sustainable Energy: Report Back* also outlines a process of external engagement comprised of six 'stakeholder workshops' held in main centres and, seminar and conference presentations. A summary of feedback was published.

This background was not discussed in the *Draft New Zealand Energy Strategy* (MED, 2006a) or the *Draft New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy* (NZECS) (EECA, 2006) that were subsequently released in December 2006. Thus it is not apparent how the findings, approaches and outcomes from this discussion document have been drawn on when developing these strategies. The introduction to the *Draft NZES* outlines a significant role for a systems approach to sustainable development:

Energy policy underpins government policies on economic development, climate change, transport, resource management and research and development. It also supports wider government objectives for sustainable development and economic transformation. The development of the draft New Zealand Energy Strategy has been a whole-of-government process led by the Ministry of Economic Development. (*ibid*: 5)

The importance of sustainable development and its link to all policy areas was recognised in both the *Draft NZES* and the NZECS (EECA, 2006), however, in neither case was the SDPOA referred to as a guiding document. The *Government Policy Statement on Electricity Governance* only mentions the SDPOA as an 'other related document' (NZ Govt, 2006: 2).

There is a continued inconsistency within the body of energy documents emerging from government. Even though connections and linkages may happen behind the scenes; as an external stakeholder it is challenging to understand and appreciate these linkages, unless they are spelt out in the documents themselves.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment also notes in *Future Currents* (PCE, 2005) that the poor interconnections between these strategies and the greater body of government documents, strategies and policies reduces the ability of objectives and outcomes to be clear and cohesive. Consequently, the current progression of this workstream relative to the desired outcomes was considered below what could have reasonably been expected, as explained in Tables 5 and 6.

3. Review of the Ten Elements of the SDPOA

This lack of integration continued after the SDPOA finished. In April 2007, we noted five energy related strategies¹⁵ closed for consultation on the same day, without any clarity over the overall framework, the history or an explanation as to how the strategies linked together. *Project 2058's Report 2, Central Government Strategies: Reviewing the Landscape 1990-2007*, identifies and analyses the 130 strategies created since 1990.

Table 5: Performance Evaluation for Energy

Performance Criteria	Sustainable Future's Evaluation
Comparing delivery of outcomes against the workstream's stated goals and desired outcomes	Below expectations: Due to slow progress there are few measures or indicators that report on the level of progress against desired outcomes.

Table 6: Communication Evaluation for Energy

Communication Criteria	Sustainable Future's Evaluation
Website for accessibility and accuracy	Below expectations: No designated website. We note some relevant content is available on the MED site.
Consultation process	Below expectations: The <i>Sustainable Energy</i> document had only an <i>ad hoc</i> consultation process.
Reporting on progress	Below expectations: Cabinet report back and minutes are available on the MED site, but as no stakeholder report on progress against SDPOA outcomes was found, we concluded reporting was below what could have been reasonably expected.

We were concerned with the lack of progress in this important area, as energy management will have a significant impact on the way we live and work, now and in the future.

¹⁵ 1. *Measures to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in New Zealand Post-2012*; Ministry for the Environment (MfE, 2006d), 2. *Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change*; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF, 2006), 3. *Powering our Future: Draft New Zealand Energy Strategy*; Ministry of Economic Development (MED, 2006a), 4. *Transitional Measures — Options to Move Towards Low Emissions Electricity and Stationary Energy Supply and to Facilitate a Transition to Greenhouse Gas Pricing in the Future*; Ministry of Economic Development (MED, 2006b), and 5. *Draft New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy*; Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA, 2006).

3.7 Sustainable Cities

OVERARCHING GOAL:

Sustainable cities — our cities are healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The programme of action seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- cities as centres of innovation and economic growth
- liveable cities that support social wellbeing, quality of life and cultural identities.

While these outcomes are relevant to all urban areas in New Zealand, the government will give particular priority to addressing them in Auckland. With its rapid population growth, cultural diversity and economic dynamism, many of the challenges for sustainable development have their strongest expression here. The lessons learned in Auckland will also be useful for other centres.

Cities are increasingly the engines of economic growth. Many of the specialised services and facilities essential to a modern economy (such as information technology, financial markets) require the critical mass of economic activity, infrastructure and services present only in urban centres. Cities must also be good places to live: they should support and promote the social wellbeing of their inhabitants. Each city has its own cultural expressions. Each contributes to our national identity, historic heritage and cultural wellbeing. (DPMC, 2003: 19)

The desired outcomes for the Sustainable Cities Programme were the development of ‘cities as centres of innovation and economic growth’ and ‘liveable cities that support social wellbeing, quality of life and cultural identities’. Although innovative thinking did emerge from this workstream, it can be argued that cities other than Auckland did not benefit.

We note that the Quality of Life Project has released *The Quality of Life in New Zealand’s Eight Largest Cities* reports (Quality of Life Project, 2001, 2003) and a *Residents’ Survey* (undertaken in 2004 and 2006), but neither the reports nor the Project’s website refer to the SDPOA.

Two successful initiatives that do refer to the SDPOA are the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and the Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme.

(i) The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

The majority of the resources from the Sustainable Cities Programme of Action went into the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (MfE, 2005c). This is a voluntary protocol supported by a network of signatory organisations that have committed to implementing quality urban design in their work.

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol marks a significant milestone in our nation’s urban development. The changes we make now in the way we design our towns and cities will make a difference not just to us, but to our children and our children’s children in how they live their lives. The Urban Design Protocol forms part of the Government’s *Sustainable Development Programme of Action*, which aims to ensure our towns and cities are healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish. (*ibid*: 2)

3. Review of the Ten Elements of the SDPOA

As at July 2007, 138 stakeholders across both the public and private sectors had become signatories to the Protocol. Although commitment to the Protocol is voluntary, it has the potential to create a platform for central and local government, property developers and investors, design professionals, educational institutes and other groups to develop quality urban design.

(ii) The Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme

In 2006 the Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme published *Success in Sustainability* (ASCP, 2006) which attempted to integrate the New Zealand SDPOA into a coordinated action plan for the region. As such, it provides a good example of a framework from which to approach the process of sustainable development in our urban centres. Figure 1, taken from the report, provides a useful overview of the interconnections between local, regional and central government strategies and legislation, including the SDPOA.

Tables 7 and 8 explain our evaluation of this workstream.

Table 7: Performance Evaluation for Sustainable Cities

Performance Criteria	Sustainable Future's Evaluation
Comparing delivery of outcomes against the workstream's stated goals and desired outcomes	As expected: This workstream established two significant projects, the <i>New Zealand Urban Design Protocol</i> and the <i>Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme</i> . We were concerned the delivery appeared to only focus on Auckland city rather than 'cities'.

Table 8: Communication Evaluation for Sustainable Cities

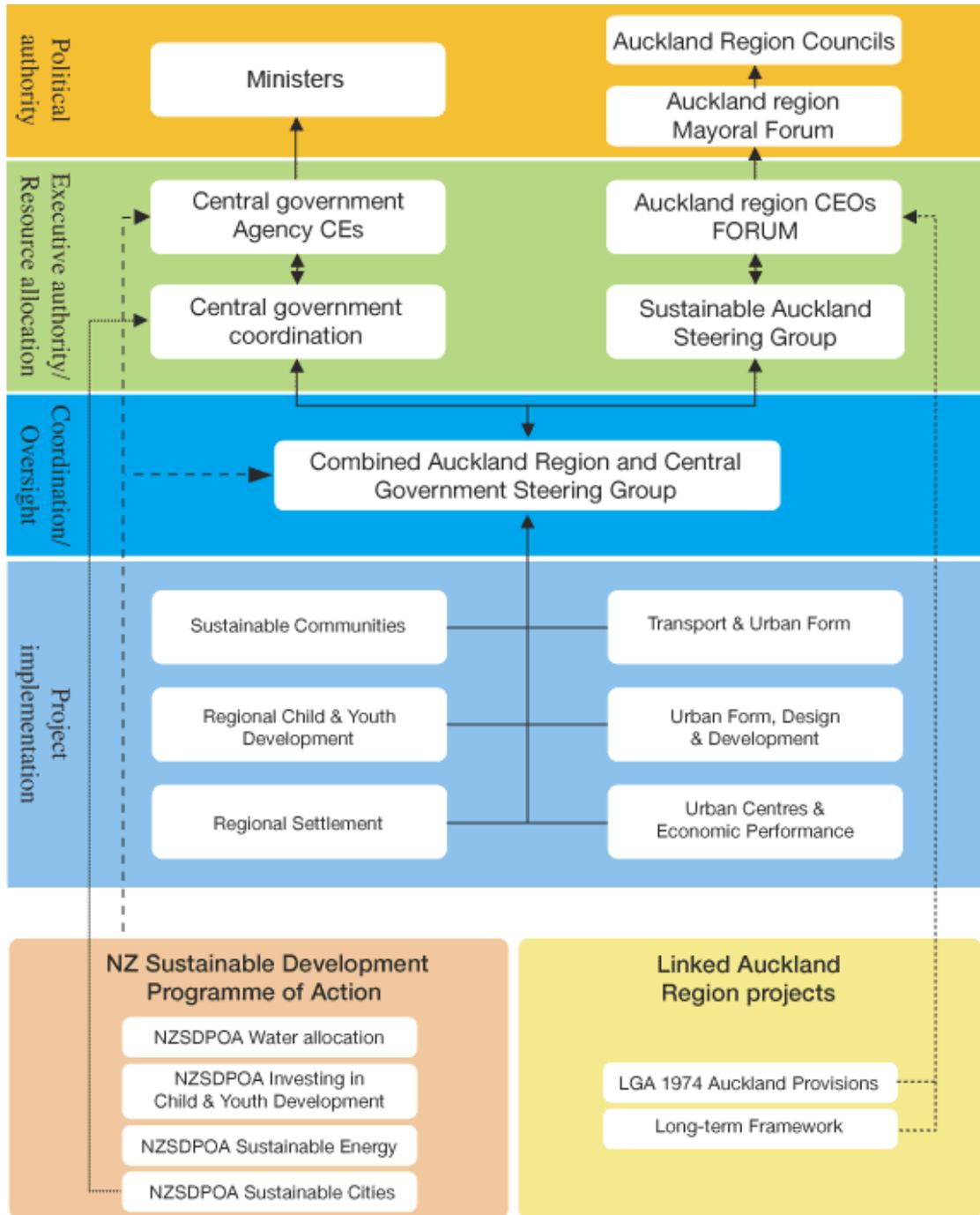
Communication Criteria	Sustainable Future's Evaluation
Website for accessibility and accuracy	As expected: Two websites were established under this workstream: 1) MfE's urban issues, including the <i>Urban Design Protocol</i> , ¹⁶ and 2) the <i>Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme</i> . ¹⁷
Consultation process	As expected: A draft <i>Urban Design Protocol</i> was developed in 2004 seeking feedback from stakeholders. ¹⁸
Reporting on progress	As expected: MfE published the <i>Urban Design Action Plan Review</i> (MfE, 2006c), and reported on the results of monitoring each of the signatories' action plans in the <i>Zealand Urban Design Protocol Action Plan Progress Report 2006</i> (MfE, 2007c).

¹⁶ Ministry for the Environment <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/urban/> and <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/urban/design-protocol/index.html>.

¹⁷ Sustainable Auckland <http://www.sustainableauckland.govt.nz/>.

¹⁸ Ministry for the Environment <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/urban/draft-protocol-aug04/html/index.html>.

Figure 1: Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme Relationships
 (Source: ASCP, 2007)



3.8 Investing in Child and Youth Development

OVERARCHING GOAL:

All children and young people have the opportunity to participate, to succeed and to make contributions that benefit themselves and others, now and in the future.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The programme of action seeks to achieve the following outcomes for the children and young people currently experiencing poor outcomes:

- supportive families
- adequate material living standards
- good health
- success at all stages of education and transition into employment
- lives free from violence and crime. (DPMC, 2003: 23)

At present, a significant proportion of the future workforce is under-prepared for the demands of the workplace and the knowledge economy. One of the steps to a sustainable future is raising the quality of the current and future workforce through knowledge and skill acquisition, and by addressing social and health barriers. We must take the opportunity to invest in children and young people because they are the parents, workers and adult citizens of the future. Skilled workers in sustainable employment are essential for funding the services associated with an ageing population. (*ibid*)

We were not able to access any information on the implementation of the Child and Youth programme. We searched a number of documents published by the Ministry for Social Development, but none mentioned the SDPOA Child and Youth Development programme. However, we were pleased to find that the programme has re-emerged in *Government Priorities 2006–2016*, which includes focusing on ‘Families — Young and Old’ (DPMC, 2006).

We note the following initiatives:

1. The report titled *Population and Sustainable Development 2003* (NZ Govt, 2003) discusses how changes in New Zealand’s population over the next 50 years are likely to impact on our future development and wellbeing. It was published as a collaborative project between a number of ministries, highlighting the link between children and youth and the development of cities. The Ministry for Social Development has undertaken a number of ‘cross-sectoral’ collaborative projects in this area.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ministry for Social Development ‘Cross-sectoral Work’. Retrieved 14th June 2007. <http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/cross-sectoral-work/>.

2. The report titled *Leading Social Development in New Zealand* continues to promote the importance of sustainable development in terms of ‘systems thinking’ (MSD, 2005):

To be sustainable, economic and social development must complement each other. If we match our progress on economic development with a strong focus on social development, we will have the best prospects for real, sustainable improvements in the wellbeing of all New Zealanders. (*ibid*: 9)

Based on the lack of accessibility and clarity noted above, we consider the fulfilment of the stated goals and outcomes is poor. This leads us to question the reporting processes around the SDPOA, even though this was an element that was highlighted in the SDPOA itself as crucial to developing ongoing value from the programme. Tables 9 and 10 explain our assessment.

Table 9: Performance Evaluation for Child and Youth Development

Performance Criteria	Sustainable Future’s Evaluation
Comparing delivery of outcomes against the workstream’s stated goals and desired outcomes	Below expectations: There was a lack of clarity about how the Child and Youth workstream had been managed over time.

Table 10: Communication Evaluation for Child and Youth Development

Communication Criteria	Sustainable Future’s Evaluation
Website for accessibility and accuracy	As expected: A website on population and sustainable development was established by the government to provide access to a comprehensive collection of population statistics provided by a wide range of government departments and agencies. ²⁰
Consultation process	Below expectations: We are not aware of any consultation processes.
Reporting on progress	Below expectations: We are not aware of any progress reports.

²⁰ Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved 14th June 2007 from <http://www.population.govt.nz/home/default.htm>.

3.9 Measuring Progress and Updating the Programme of Action

THE REPORTING PROGRAMME

Reporting will occur as follows:

1. Statistics New Zealand and the Ministries of Economic Development, Social Development and the Environment will lead work on core social, economic, and environmental indicators as building blocks for measuring progress towards sustainable development.
2. Statistics New Zealand will report information from national environmental accounts, including natural resource accounts.
3. Sustainable development indicators building on *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand* (and the review of this report) will be reported on by Statistics New Zealand in collaboration with the Ministries of Economic Development, Social Development and the Environment, and Local Government New Zealand.
4. The government will continue to explore the use of triple bottom line reporting in the public sector.
5. The government will work in partnership with local government to connect the quality of life reports on sustainable cities with the sustainable development work programme.
6. Officials will report to Ministers on emerging sustainability issues and progress against this Programme of Action. This will include advice on the capacity needed to review and audit the priorities for action arising from sustainable development indicators and other information, and hence to identify new issues for action.

As well as undertaking specific projects and joint work, the government expects that others will see partnerships on sustainable development reporting as the normal way of doing business. The government will promote monitoring and reporting partnerships through:

- collaborative work, involving Statistics New Zealand and the Ministries for Economic Development, the Environment and Social Development, on the collection, storage, analysis and reporting of core indicator data and statistics for measuring progress towards sustainable development
- collaboration between central and local government agencies and sector groups for sharing indicator data, information and expertise. (DPMC, 2003: 28)

The SDPOA highlighted the critical need to develop enhanced monitoring and review systems and sustainability indicators to assess and report progress towards sustainable development goals. The ability to monitor progress is an important criterion for ensuring sustainable development. Below, we report on the following work that has been undertaken to progress these goals, specifically the points referred to in the SDPOA reporting programme.

3.9.1 Environmental Indicators (Points 1 and 3)

Statistics New Zealand's *Statement of Intent* (2007) acknowledges that 'looking at aspects of sustainability in isolation overlooks their interdependence and it is these points where the greatest need for information lies' (StatsNZ, 2007: 24). The *Environmental Statistics Strategy* (StatsNZ, 2003a) also further developed Statistics New Zealand's role in providing national environment statistics. Yet only two significant national reports have been produced by Statistics New Zealand in this area. Both initiatives started before the SDPOA began. They are *The Social Report* (MSD, 2006), which has been published annually by MSD since 2001 using comprehensive indicators, and a one-off experimental report titled *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand* (StatsNZ, 2002a). This was the first national attempt at amalgamating indicators across the four pillars of sustainability into one document.

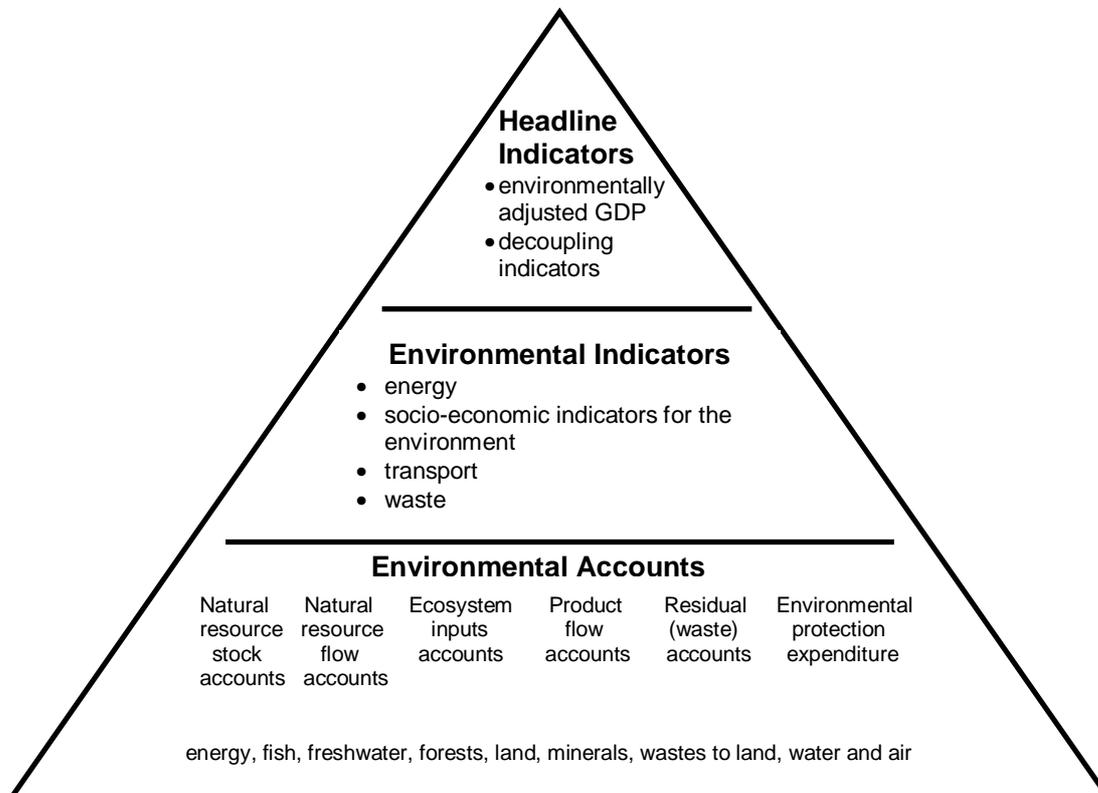
(i) *The Environmental Statistics Strategy*

Statistics New Zealand's environmental statistics priorities have been based on the government's Budget 2000 'green issues' funding package, and the SDPOA. The *Environmental Statistics Strategy* (StatsNZ, 2003a) was created to give Statistics New Zealand a vision for environmental statistics over the following five years, and identified the department's national role in the provision of such statistics.

Statistics New Zealand plans to continue the development and production of national environmental accounts that show what is happening to New Zealand's natural resource base, in physical and economic terms. Statistics New Zealand also plans to continue the development and production of national environmental protection expenditure accounts, residual (waste) accounts and a limited range of key indicators to be developed in partnership with the MfE. (*ibid*: Executive Summary)

Part of Statistics New Zealand's role is the provision of national environment statistics for central government. It also has a role in sub-national environment statistics where they relate to national statistics and are cost-effective to produce. Figure 2 below shows Statistics New Zealand's Environment Statistics Framework and the hierarchy of the indicators the agency intended to produce, but which have not been forthcoming.

Figure 2: Statistics New Zealand’s Environment Statistics Framework 2002
 (Source: StatsNZ, 2002a: 4)



(ii) *The Social Report*

Information gathered for *The Social Report* has been drawn together from across the social sector in order to chart New Zealanders’ progress in areas like employment, health, education and income. Producing *The Social Report* annually enables social changes and trends to be monitored, and gives the country a chance to respond to problems and opportunities as they emerge.

(iii) *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand*

We have found the integration of statistics from across the four pillars of sustainability in *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand* (StatsNZ, 2002a) useful for developing a ‘bigger picture’ understanding of New Zealand’s future. This is clearly a commendable framework for further developing sustainability indicators. We feel *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand*, which was reviewed in 2003 (StatsNZ, 2003b), was a thorough statistical overview of New Zealand’s progress that should be updated. Although there is no evidence on the department’s website to support this statement, a recent conversation suggests that the report may be updated in the near future.

Statistics New Zealand has developed international linkages by becoming an active member of the Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD), a joint working group of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), 'Eurostat' and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The WGSSD aims to progress statistics on sustainable development. The drivers of the WGSSD are international comparability and a common approach to sustainable development.

New Zealand attended both the first meeting of the WGSSD in Luxembourg in April 2006 and the second meeting in Oslo, Norway in November 2006. Two New Zealand papers were presented at the second meeting: *Social Capital: New Zealand's measurement framework* by Rachael Milicich (Milicich, 2006), and Martin Brown Santirso's *Sustainable Development and the Capital Approach: Conceptual and practical analysis* (Brown Santirso, 2006). Statistics New Zealand also participated in the World Forum — Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies in Turkey in June 2007. This forum brought together world experts and civil servants to look at ways to improve the measurement of sustainability and wellbeing (StatsNZ, 2007).

(iv) Population and Sustainable Development

The website and report (NZ Govt, 2003), also discussed earlier in Table 10, explores New Zealand's population over the next 50 years. The Ministry for Social Development has undertaken a number of 'cross-sectoral' collaborative projects in this area.²¹

In summary, the reporting and monitoring programme set out in the SDPOA (DPMC, 2003: 28) has not been reviewed in detail, and despite the solid foundation laid by *Monitoring Progress Towards a Sustainable New Zealand* (StatsNZ, 2002a) and the *Environmental Statistics Strategy* (StatsNZ, 2003a) these have not been either updated or referred to since their initial publication. We note the role of MSD's statistics in *The Social Report* but found very little collaboration by the MED, MfE and Local Government New Zealand with Statistics New Zealand.

²¹ Ministry of Social Development 'Cross-sectoral Work' <http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/cross-sectoral-work/> Retrieved 14th June 2007.

3.9.2 National Environmental Accounts and National Resource Accounts (Point 2)

Statistics New Zealand's website reveals that a decision to produce national environmental accounts was announced in the 2000 Budget. Yet New Zealand remains one of the few member nations of the OECD still to compile a set of environmental accounts (StatsNZ, 2002b). The recent OECD *Environmental Performance Review of New Zealand* noted an absence of data on environmental indicators. It recommended that the availability of quantitative indicators and time series data of environmental quality be expanded, and that this data be both policy relevant and publicly accessible (OECD, 2007). Statistics New Zealand's response to these recommendations is unclear.

3.9.3 Triple Bottom Line Reporting (Point 4)

There has been some partial progress in sustainability reporting by central and local government, and by businesses. A 'whole-of-government' trial of triple bottom line reporting has been undertaken (MfE, 2003c) which increased dialogue on the methodology, content and format of government reports in 2003–2004. However, the momentum behind this initiative has slowed and it is hard to identify the extent to which long-term improvements have been achieved.

3.9.4 Local Government Collaboration (Point 5)

Performance in this area is difficult to assess, and a review would need to be undertaken by the local authorities, individuals and organisations that worked on the Sustainable Cities workstream.

3.9.5 Reporting to Ministers (Point 6)

We could not assess the extent to which new issues for action have been identified to ministers, but to our knowledge there is no public reporting of 'overarching issues'. We had hoped to find confirmation that not only had issues been identified, but they had been ranked according to priorities, costs or timelines. We hope this may be picked up in the 2007 *State of the Environment* report now being worked on by the MfE. This report focuses on the 'whole of New Zealand' and will be released in conjunction with additional reports on specific issues. It is expected to use a core set of national environmental indicators and where possible to benchmark against the 1997 *State of the Environment* report (MfE, 2007b).

In 2007, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) estimated that about \$23 million was allocated to the SDPOA from July 2003 to July 2006 inclusive (OAG, 2007: Appendix 2). We would have expected a programme that invested this amount of public funds over three years to produce an annual report for stakeholders outlining performance and comparing actual costs against budgeted costs.

3.9.6 Our Evaluation of ‘Measuring Progress and Updating the Programme of Action’

For the reasons discussed above, and in particular the fact that significant publications were produced before the SDPOA started (and few have been published since it began), and the unclear participation of the MED, MfE and local government, we rated the performance on this workstream as below the level stated in the desired outcomes. It is interesting that the momentum appears to have slowed (as in relevant reports produced) rather than speeded up under the SDPOA. Tables 11 and 12 reflect our findings.

Table 11: Performance Evaluation for Monitoring Progress and Updating the SDPOA

Performance Criteria	Sustainable Future’s Evaluation
Comparing delivery of outcomes against the workstream’s stated goals and desired outcomes	Below expectations: Progress was slow, and the level of MED, MfE and local government involvement and collaboration was unclear.

Table 12: Communication Evaluation for Monitoring Progress and Updating the SDPOA

Communication Criteria	Sustainable Future’s Evaluation
Website for accessibility and accuracy	Below expectations: Statistics New Zealand has a website on environmental accounts; ²² however, it does not make explicit reference to the SDPOA and is not user-friendly. It also has a small site called Population and Sustainable Development. ²³ This site is user-friendly, states it is part of the SDPOA, and is still being updated. In summary, considering the significant role of indicators to report progress, we consider significant improvements could be made.
Consultation process	Below expectations: We are not aware of any consultation processes. For example, we would have expected stakeholders to have been consulted over the formation of the national environmental accounts, see Figure 2.
Reporting on progress	Below expectations: Statistics New Zealand’s report <i>Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand</i> (StatsNZ, 2002a) is a useful document but it could have been better utilised to drive and benchmark sustainable development practice.

²² Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved 20 August 2007 from <http://www.stats.govt.nz/environment/environmental-accounts/default.htm>.

²³ Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved 20 August 2007 from <http://www.population.govt.nz>.

3.10 Next Steps

The *Programme of Action* is an evolving document and process. While it highlights a number of issues that need to be tackled now, it also puts in place the building blocks that will help us deal with other issues at a later stage.

The government intends to produce an updated programme of action. The timing of the next programme of action is dependent on the development of indicators and reporting against these, as outlined in Section 3.5. The updated programme of action will also build on consultation and on the government's relationships with key stakeholders and other sectors. And, most importantly, it will draw on the lessons learned from this first programme of action. (DPMC, 2003: 29)

Background

In 2003, the New Zealand government implied that the SDPOA was the first step in the process of developing a NSDS. In early March 2006, Sustainable Future requested information regarding the government's decision to move away from the creation of a NSDS. The reply from David Benson-Pope, then Minister for the Environment and the Minister responsible for Sustainable Development, concluded:

The current Programme of Action was never seen as an end in itself — it was simply a practical way of giving meaning to sustainable development in New Zealand. It is a stepping stone along the path of achieving sustainable development. Further down that path we may look to prepare a National Sustainable Development Strategy. (Benson-Pope, 2006)

In addition, the minister indicated the reason for the downscaling of the programme and why a 'whole-systems' strategy was not carried out:

A comprehensive document covering the issues facing New Zealand under every pillar of sustainable development — economic, social, environmental and cultural — and including their interrelationships, would be a vast and extremely resource intensive exercise. (*ibid*)

David Benson-Pope's letter (2006) thus implies that the reasons New Zealand does not have a NSDS include:

1. Cost,
2. Practicality, and
3. [The SDPOA] is a stepping stone along the path of achieving sustainable development.

Central government funding of the SDPOA initiative ended in July 2006, with some of the funding for projects (such as the WPOA) spilling over into the 2007 financial year. Although the government intended to 'produce an updated programme of action' the conditions to do so have not yet been fulfilled.

The Way Forward

The SDPOA document outlines the conditions upon which the ‘timing of the next programme of action is dependent’, namely:

- (i) the development of [sustainable development] indicators and reporting against these,
- (ii) [to] build on consultation and on the government’s relationships with key stakeholders and other sectors, and most importantly,
- (iii) draw[ing] on the lessons learnt from this first programme of action. (DPMC, 2003: 29).

Key points that emerge from the evaluation include:

1. New Zealand has no ‘National Sustainable Development Strategy’.
2. It remains unclear whether anything is in the pipeline regarding actions or funding to contribute to, produce and implement a NSDS. This is contrary to *Agenda 21* and the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation*, to which New Zealand is a signatory.²⁴
3. The SDPOA was a new approach requiring government organisations to work together for one purpose. This was obviously challenging, and required new structures, strategies and processes to be designed and implemented.
4. Although a number of groups reviewed the SDPOA, New Zealand has no official independent body²⁵ reviewing overall progress towards sustainable development. This was discussed at the PCE20 conference in February 2007²⁶.
5. Frequent reviews of all sustainable development initiatives and indicators²⁷ are necessary, in order to report on our progress towards sustainability and meeting our international commitments. Consequently, New Zealand currently cannot benchmark progress over time and between countries. Insufficient monitoring and reporting means that independent reviewers²⁸ will be unable to assess and make conclusive statements about our environmental management and performance.

²⁴ See *Report 1: A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand measures up against international commitments*, Section 3, for further discussion of these commitments.

²⁵ See *Report 1: A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand measures up against international commitments*, Section 6, for further discussion on institutional options.

²⁶ PCE 20th Anniversary, *Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment*. Retrieved 4 April 2007 from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Website: http://www.pce.govt.nz/anniversary/pce_anniversary.shtml.

²⁷ We note that the OAG (2007) excluded both monitoring progress and international commitments from its review, and that international experts often comment on New Zealand’s substandard performance data.

²⁸ Including the OECD’s *Environmental Performance Review* (OECD, 2007).

3. Review of the Ten Elements of the SDPOA

6. Despite these current lag between July 2006 and today, there is still a significant opportunity to advance these 'next steps'.

For the reasons discussed above, in particular the fact that New Zealand has internationally committed to produce a NSDS, we rated the relevance as increasingly important (i.e. above) and the performance and communication on determining and communicating the next steps as below the level indicated in the SDPOA.

3.11 Summary of the Ten Elements of the SDPOA

Based on our use of Method 1 (outlined in Section two), we have produced an overview of our assessment of the ten elements of the *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* in Table 13 below. We conclude that performance and communication could have been significantly improved, both within each element and in the programme as a whole (as indicated by our evaluation of elements 1 to 4 and 9 to 10).

Table 13: Analysis of the Ten Elements of the *Sustainable Development Programme of Action*

Elements of the SDPOA	(i) Relevance			(ii) Performance			(iii) Communication		
	Above	Expected	Below	Above	Expected	Below	Above	Expected	Below
3.1 ²⁹ Vision	✓ ³⁰				✓			✓	
3.2 Principles	✓					✓			✓
3.3 Relationships with other documents	✓					✓			✓
3.4 Partnerships	✓					✓			✓
3.5 Workstream 1: Freshwater	- ³¹	-	-			✓		✓	
3.6 Workstream 2: Energy	-	-	-			✓			✓
3.7 Workstream 3: Cities	-	-	-		✓			✓	
3.8 Workstream 4: Child and Youth	-	-	-			✓			✓
3.9 Workstream 5: Measuring progress	-	-	-			✓			✓
3.10 Next Steps	✓					✓			✓

²⁹ The number refers to a sub-section in this paper.

³⁰ A tick indicates an evaluation has been completed.

³¹ A dash indicates an evaluation has not been completed. See Section 2, key point 2.

4. Review of the SDPOA as a Whole

As outlined in Section 2, we assessed the 'programme as a whole' using the nine critical success factors (see Table 2) as guiding principles. Our consideration of the nine critical success factors has led our assessment to be discussed under strategy, structure and process. We think of 'process' as the activity that happens between the strategy (being the strategic design of the SDPOA), and the structure. An analogy would be a car trip. The strategy is the choice of destination; the structure is the car; and the process is the map, the petrol, the rest stops and everything else needed to reach the destination. We review each of the three below.

4.1 Strategy

The term strategy, as used in this section, refers to the problem definition, purpose and overall design of the programme, being the creation of the ten elements in Table 1 (this is not to be confused with the NSDS). For example, designing any project or programme requires asking questions such as, what is going to be achieved, how will it be implemented and importantly, what are the boundaries (what will we not do)?

We consider that the design underlying the SDPOA document was well intentioned but flawed for the following reasons:

- **The first four workstreams were not discussed in advance with key stakeholders.**
Of particular concern was that neither the choice of workstreams nor the best way forward to optimise progress with each workstream was discussed widely, thus reducing a further opportunity to fine-tune the strategy and obtain commitment early on (which often saves time later). This was particularly important as the project was dependent on an effective partnership with stakeholders.
- **There was no overarching goal or objective to tie progress together.**
We believe the publication of a NSDS at the end of three years would have provided this, but there could have been other milestones that may have integrated and brought together the actions under the SDPOA. For example, the lessons learnt were fed into a process to develop the terms of reference for a second stage of the SDPOA (e.g. beginning 2007).

We found, as indicated in Table 13, that the purpose underlying the strategy was appropriate in 2003 and is even more relevant today (considering the post Al Gore/Stern Review world and the recent debate over food miles) but the overall design was flawed.

4.2 Structure

A large number of participants were involved in the programme.³² Although this was the only realistic way forward, in our view there was a failure to provide clarity over who was accountable for what and when. In our research, we found that a lot of participants were held responsible, but no one organisation or individual could ultimately be held accountable under the SDPOA governance structure. The internal participants we found were ‘responsible’ for the SDPOA are listed in Table 14.

Table 14: Governance Structure of the SDPOA

(Source: Sustainable Future, 2007)

(i) Cabinet Ministers

According to Hon Marian Hobbs (2003), the Cabinet was driving the sustainable development initiatives and had given ministers specific responsibilities for the SDPOA. In her speech, she specified the following responsibilities under the SDPOA — Water: Marian Hobbs; Energy: Pete Hodgson; Sustainable Cities: Marian Hobbs and Jim Anderton; and Child and Youth Development: Steve Maharey. See Appendix 2 for her full speech.

(ii) Departments and Ministries

Frame and Marquardt (2006) stated that the following departments and ministries were responsible for coordinating the four workstreams: 1) Water: MfE and MAF; 2) Energy: MED; 3) Sustainable Cities: MfE, in association with MED and DPMC; and 4) Child and Youth Development: MSD.

(iii) DPMC

The DPMC published the SDPOA, and we understand had overall responsibility for coordinating the programme as a whole. OAG (2007) discussed several additional related bodies, such as the Sustainable Development Senior Officials Group (SDSOG), the Chief Executives Group (CEG), and the Project Leaders Group (PLG).

The OAG found and reported on the history as follows:

3.5 In approving the Programme of Action and associated projects, Cabinet agreed that departmental chief executives would be responsible for the work programme and that DPMC would oversee the Programme of Action as a whole, lead the process for publication of the Programme of Action document, and convene the Chief Executives Group. (OAG, 2007: 31)

³² The OAG (2007: 2.18) noted that ‘When we looked at other international initiatives that sought either to implement the commitments made at the World Summit or to make progress on other sustainable development objectives, we found that they most often did this by establishing complex, cross-agency programmes’.

4. Review of the SDPOA as a Whole

Since 2003, we have reviewed DPMC's *Statements of Intent* and found three of the four have included some discussion on sustainability or sustainable development (see Appendix 3). However, only one explicitly mentions the SDPOA, being the DPMC's *Statement of Intent* for the year ending 30 June 2006,³³ which stated:

DPMC continues to have a leadership role in co-ordinating the Sustainable Development Programme of Action, in partnership with local government, industry, iwi, non-governmental organisations, and central government agencies. (DPMC, 2005: 10)

We consider the dual reporting process, indicated below, may have been part of the problem.

3.6 The Chief Executives Group [which met eight times during the three years of the SDPOA. (OAG, 2007: 2.6)], set up:

- a Senior Officials Co-ordinating Group led by DPMC; and
- four co-ordinating groups and structures to carry out the four workstreams

4.8 Departments involved in the various workstreams reported on their activities to the Senior Officials Co-ordinating Group, which in turn reported to the Chief Executives Group. Each chief executive also had direct reporting responsibility to their Minister. (OAG, 2007: 44)

We are also unsure why the size was reduced in late 2004, but it seems unusual to reduce the size when at the time, concerns over performance must have been apparent.

3.7 In late 2004, DPMC reduced the size of the Senior Officials Co-ordination Group. It became the Project Leaders Group and continued under DPMC's leadership. (OAG, 2007: 31-32)

We also had concerns over the lack of formal reports on progress. For example, if the DPMC had been required to report on progress to Cabinet on the programme as a whole (e.g. every six months), we consider such an approach would have made DPMC's leadership role more clear and there would have been more clarity over who was accountable (being DPMC or the Chief Executives) and how performance could be improved. OAG (2007) reported on what happened:

3.8 DPMC led a cross-agency approach. It kept oversight of the Programme of Action through the Senior Officials Co-ordinating Group/Project Leaders Group and by participating in the co-ordinating groups for each workstream in a manner consistent with its usual way of working. However, given the complexity of the Programme of Action, we expected the overview to include formal programme planning. (OAG, 2007: 31-32)

4.7 We were told that reporting to the co-ordinating Minister was mostly informal, and we found few written reports. (OAG, 2007: 44)

³³ Retrieved 20th August, 2007 from DPMC website
http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/dPMC/publications/soi_2005/index.html.

- Our concerns over the lack of clear accountability and responsibility are supported by the OAG (2007), who state:

2.16 However, we consider that the lack of Ministerial meetings and the number of agencies with responsibility for leadership, co-ordination, and governance of the Programme of Action and its workstreams (including the Minister for the Environment, Chief Executives Group, DPMC, and the Senior Officials Coordinating Group) meant that oversight for the whole Programme of Action was less clear.

2.17 In our view, the Programme of Action as a whole did not receive the same attention as the individual workstreams. Whole-of-programme matters not fully addressed were:

- identifying and reporting emerging Programme of Action (as distinct from workstream) issues to chief executives and Ministers;
- supporting links between the workstreams and with other government initiatives and
- reporting on progress of the Programme of Action as a whole. (OAG, 2007: 19)

We found the structure inappropriate for the nature and complexity of the strategy. DPMC, in our view, was not suited to lead the SDPOA. It already has a significant administrative role, which is necessary to keep the machinery of government operating efficiently (as outlined in Table 15 of our Appendix 3). We therefore consider one of the important lessons to be learnt from the SDPOA is that a separate structure should be created to manage 'whole-of-government' programmes. Report 1: *A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand measures up against international commitments*, Section 6, discusses the institutional options.

4.3 Process

Evaluating process is about assessing the delivery and practices of the strategy. Although we were not aware of it at the time, Frame and Marquardt (2006) report that a workshop titled: *'Tuning into what's next on sustainable development?'* was held in Wellington in June 2006. Over 80 participants³⁴ attended with an emphasis toward central and local officials. The purpose was to review the processes, take stock and share the lessons from the three-year SDPOA. We understand no report/s or papers were published or accessible on-line after the event, but that the discussion was primarily organised as input into the Frame and Marquardt (2006) review.³⁵

³⁴ We understand it was by invitation only.

³⁵ See Frame and Marquardt (2006: 58-59).

4. Review of the SDPOA as a Whole

Both reviews of the SDPOA to date³⁶ imply this type of programme was difficult to manage. Frame and Marquardt (2006) also imply that a wide range of interconnections occurred as a result of the SDPOA (see their Figures 4a–d), however we found these connections difficult to identify and quantify.

Because of the shortcomings mentioned above, we consider that the practices ‘tying the strategy and structure together’ were ineffective. Our analysis of strategy, structure and process has highlighted a number of outstanding questions, which we list below.

4.4 Outstanding Questions

We have made a number of observations about the programme, but as external stakeholders we were left with a number of questions that we were unable to answer. We have grouped the outstanding questions by:

1. Strategy - Overarching (being the SDPOA)
2. Strategy - Individual (the five workstreams)
3. Structure necessary to deliver the overarching strategy
4. Process and performance in monitoring, review and public communications

Overarching strategy (the SDPOA)

1. Who was accountable for the performance of the SDPOA?
2. How did DPMC work in partnership with local government, industry, iwi, non-governmental organisations, and central government agencies, as indicated in their *Statement of Intent* for the year ending 30 June 2006, quoted above?
3. Is the SDPOA still considered a ‘stepping stone’ on the path to a National Sustainable Development Strategy, as was initially suggested? Are there any plans for the programme now; if not, will the SDPOA workstreams continue in their current identities as distinct programmes that are no longer part of a collective SDPOA?³⁷

³⁶ Frame and Marquardt (2006) and the Office of the Auditor General (2007).

³⁷ A six-pack set of initiatives was launched on 13 February 2007 by the Prime Minister. This was not part of an overarching strategy but is a group of six separate low-level initiatives. They are listed below: 1. Household sustainability (MfE), 2. Waste minimisation and management (MfE), 3. Towards a carbon-neutral public sector (MfE), 4. Enhanced eco-verification (MED), 5. Enhanced sustainable procurement (MED) and 6. Business partnerships for sustainability (MED). (MED, 2007)

4. Will the sustainable development principles contained in the SDPOA continue to be integrated into government policy in New Zealand?
5. What mechanisms might be utilised to better integrate future programmes, in particular their strategy, structure and processes?
6. How can opportunities to foster partnerships with government agencies and NGOs be optimised?
7. What was the cost of the SDPOA, broken down by the five workstreams and the other five elements, which we assume was funded by DPMC?³⁸

Individual strategies (the five workstreams)

1. What contributed to the different levels of success or failure of the individual workstreams?
2. What was the role of the SDPOA in facilitating these outcomes for each workstream?
3. To what degree have the SDPOA workstreams created or supported current initiatives at local and regional levels?
4. How can we better share the experiences, lessons and initiatives with wider communities? How can New Zealand foster similar initiatives for sustainable development in the future, so our successes do not become isolated events?

Structure necessary to deliver the overarching strategy (the role of DPMC)

1. Was the structure, in terms of governance, accountability and resources, appropriate for the size and complexity of the programme (i.e. was it 'fit for the purpose')?
2. Was the DPMC the most suitable body to oversee a \$23 million project of this size, complexity and importance, considering the DPMC's current role,³⁹ capacity and resources?
3. Were there sufficient feedback loops from the workstreams to a central body that coordinated opportunities, managing risks and assessing lessons learnt?

³⁸ We were unsure whether the \$23 million included the total of the four (or five) workstreams and whether this figure included the programme as a whole under DPMC control. We note the OAG (2007) in Appendix 2 estimated that about \$23 million was allocated to the Programme of Action and the Sustainable Cities and Energy workstreams from July 2003 to July 2006 (inclusive).

³⁹ DPMC is one of the three core central agencies and has a key role in linking central government with ministers – see Appendix 3, Table 15.

4. Review of the SDPOA as a Whole

Process and performance in monitoring, review and communication with stakeholders

1. How can the process for monitoring and reviewing the SDPOA and other future initiatives be improved?
2. What are current plans for developing a cohesive set of sustainable development indicators in order to assess as a whole (rather than in a compartmentalised way) the sustainability of our development as a nation — socially, culturally, environmentally and economically? As such, what consideration has been given to the development of the next *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand* (StatsNZ, 2002a)?
3. How can reporting on integrated programmes of this size and importance be best developed, and by whom? Would an annual financial report be appropriate?
4. What is the process for making the findings of monitoring and review public? Why was the Frame and Marquardt (2006) report not made public until June 2007 when the report was completed in October 2006?
5. How, when and by whom will the public be advised of the continued direction for each workstream and sustainable development policy in New Zealand?

4.5 Summary of the SDPOA as a Whole

In our view, the SDPOA had a clear strategic purpose, committed resources and commitment from the top (being stages 1 to 3 in Table 2), but issues over structure, governance and management in stages 4 and 5 meant stages 6 to 9 were not delivered. We are concerned that without sufficient review, 'next steps' towards a NSDS or indeed any future 'whole of government' programmes may repeat the same mistakes.

5. Conclusion

As it stands, the outcomes of the SDPOA were not of the scale required, in breadth or depth, to achieve sustainable development in the longer term. However, to move forward based on the lessons learnt would significantly strengthen the value that can be drawn from this experience.

We argue that, had the SDPOA been explicitly developed from the outset as part of an ongoing process of creating a NSDS, New Zealand would have a NSDS today and we would be much further in our journey towards sustainable development. However, this is not the case. New Zealand has instead developed and implemented a three-year stepping stone which came to an end in July 2006. The real question is: what lessons can be learnt from the SDPOA for future sustainable development programmes, and where to from here? The lessons we have identified are listed below.

5.1 What we found

1. Our analysis of the ten elements in Section 3 found that the relevance, i.e. the purpose underlying the strategy, is even more relevant today than it was in 2003, but that the performance and communication of the ten elements was below the level we could have reasonably expected. Table 13 shows the results of our analysis.
2. The programme appeared not to have been well managed. Instead of the whole-of-government approach promised, the programme reverted to a silo approach. Progress therefore depended on the leadership of each silo. Two of the workstreams did pick up the baton (cities and water) and run with the initiative to a degree, but three did not (energy, 'child and youth' and the often forgotten fifth workstream, 'measuring progress').
3. The programme had a high-level vision statement and strategy (the SDPOA document), but did not have an action plan to measure progress. This meant that participants and reviewers struggled to find a way of both actioning and reviewing progress. In particular, there was a lack of:
 - (i) Specific milestones⁴⁰ or outputs outlining how the programme would be implemented, measured, reviewed and fed back into a more strategic objective over time;
 - (ii) Clarity over the governance structure during the programme (everyone was responsible, but no one was accountable);

⁴⁰ An exception was workstream five, Measuring Progress and Updating the Programme of Action.

5. Conclusion

- (iii) A detailed, published budget. The \$23 million figure mentioned above was only found by reading a review by the Office of the Auditor General published in June 2007;
- (iv) Communication. Communication and consultation in each workstream was below expectations, but communication regarding the whole programme was almost non-existent;
- (v) Regular reporting. Progress during the three-year period in each workstream, and for the programme as a whole, was minimal.

4. Our review of the programme as a whole in Section 4 showed:

- (i) The purpose underlying the strategy was appropriate and over time has become increasingly so but the design was flawed due to the way it was initiated and because it was not woven into a broader long-term strategic purpose.
- (ii) The structure did not fit the strategy. In particular, DPMC (who arguably had the key leadership role) did not have the capacity to undertake a leadership role of a complex and 'whole-of-government' programme while maintaining its critical administrative role, being the running the machinery of government.

In addition, a wide range of people were on paper responsible, being ministers, chief executives, the DPMC and their respective committees, but no one person was held accountable for performance or for reporting on progress.
- (iii) The processes linking strategy and structure were ineffective because of the weaknesses in the first two.

5. Lessons to be learnt for future whole-of-government programmes include:

- (i) The strategy must have a well-formulated design appropriate for the purpose;
- (ii) The structure must 'fit the strategy'. This means that any future 'whole-of-government programme' must be capable of delivering the strategy;
- (iii) Whole-of-government programmes require significantly more resources and management capacity at the initial phases in order to deliver the optimal outcome at the end of the programme;
- (iv) Considerably more effort needs to be put into developing effective communication with all stakeholders in future programmes;

- (v) A more structured action plan with specified targets/milestones and dates would have allowed a more objective assessment by both internal and external stakeholders;
- (vi) Programmes of this nature must be initiated in a way that fits within a wider set of objectives so that lessons learnt and outcomes gained can be fed into a larger strategic objective. In our view, the SDPOA would have been a more effective stepping stone if it had fed back into a long-term integrated programme, such as a National Sustainable Development Strategy.

5.2 Where to from here?

We conclude that the SDPOA was a well-intentioned first attempt at designing and implementing a cohesive approach to sustainable development policy in New Zealand. As such, it has helped instigate and guide some progress, but has not delivered the desired level of integration and its outcomes were not of the scale required to achieve long-term sustainability.

In our view, the SDPOA would have been a more effective stepping stone if it had fed back into a long-term integrated programme, such as a National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Sustainable Future believes the results of the SDPOA have not been fully discussed in the public arena. We look forward to increased communication and clarity over what can be learnt from the SDPOA in order to develop and support the next steps in New Zealand's journey toward sustainability.

Abbreviations

ASCP	Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme
CEG	Chief Executives Group
DPMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
EECA	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MfE	Ministry for the Environment
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
PLG	Project Leaders Group
SDPOA	Sustainable Development Programme of Action
SDSOG	Sustainable Development Senior Officials Group
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
WGSSD	Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development
WPOA	Water Programme of Action

Appendix 1 Nine Freshwater Principles

Source: *Freshwater for the Future: A supporting document* (MfE, 2006b)

1. Water will continue to be managed as a public resource,
2. Freshwater management will be improved under the Resource Management Act,
3. Regional councils will continue to have primary responsibility for managing freshwater,
4. Clear environmental limits will be set for water quality and the quantity available for allocation,
5. Enhancements to existing mechanisms and the provision of incentives will improve efficiency of water use,
6. Resource users will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and will be given the flexibility to develop appropriate solutions,
7. Nationally outstanding natural water bodies will be identified and better protected,
8. The best available information will be used for decision-making processes, and
9. Community involvement and confidence in decision-making processes will be maximised, building on the opportunities for participation in the regional planning process.

Appendix 2 Hon. Marian Hobbs Press Release 31 January 2003

Source: Hon Marian Hobbs: Sustainable Development Programme of Action. Retrieved 20 August 2007 from <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=15944>.

Note: Text shaded for emphasis.

The government today released its programme of action for sustainable development in New Zealand.

Environment Minister Marian Hobbs said the programme provides a set of guiding objectives and principles to policy and decision-making across the government sector.

“We have agreed that growing our economy is vital for the social growth of New Zealand,” Marian Hobbs said. “The more money we earn, the better education and health services we can afford. ”

“But the growth we have must be sustained over a number of generations. Therefore, we need to plan for that growth so that we don’t add to our problems.”

“Partnership is at the heart of the government’s approach, because we recognise we cannot achieve sustainable development on our own. We are inviting other sectors and enterprises to share the path to our common future.”

The initial focus is on water quality and allocation, energy, sustainable cities, and child and youth development.

“These issues must be addressed otherwise they will impede New Zealand’s long-term sustainable development,” Marian Hobbs said. “Clean abundant water has long been a key element of economic prosperity. We must ensure the delivery of energy services to all consumers efficiently, fairly, reliably and sustainably. Cities are the engines of economic growth where 85 per cent of our people live and work. They must support social wellbeing, quality of life and cultural identities. Ensuring the wellbeing of children and young people benefits New Zealand as whole, including a skilled workforce, healthy population and capable parents of the next generation.

“The focus on sustainable cities, for example, illustrates the importance of all levels of local and central government being much better co-ordinated in their actions, and thereby avoiding costly planning mistakes.

“The sustainable development approach will be embedded in the public sector and we will be looking for concrete action in each programme area.

“The programme highlights the importance of thinking differently and taking into account the economic, environmental, social and cultural dimensions of issues when we are making decisions.

“We must learn to create opportunities for ‘win-win’ results. That is, that we improve economic performance as well as enhancing the environment and the way we live.

“We also expect central government agencies to develop new ways of working with local government, business, Māori, the community and voluntary sector on sustainable development.”

The Cabinet is driving the sustainable development initiatives and has given ministers specific responsibilities for the Programme of Action:

Marian Hobbs, Water

Pete Hodgson, Energy

Marian Hobbs and Jim Anderton, Sustainable Cities

Steve Maharey, Child and Youth Development.

Sustainable Development for New Zealand —Programme of Action builds on work for last August’s World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and recent strategies for biodiversity, energy, waste and other issues and the new local government legislation. This gives local authorities a mandate to take the lead in achieving sustainable development locally. It also takes into account the report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment on sustainable development.

The Programme of Action is the third document issued by this government to focus and reorient government policy and decision-making and processes. The others were *Growing an Innovative New Zealand* (the Growth and Innovation Framework) and *Key Government Goals to Guide the Public Sector in Achieving Sustainable Development*.

Sustainable Development Programme of Action Questions and Answers

What will this programme of action achieve?

There will be greater integration across the government sector when policy is being developed. Too often key perspectives are an ‘add-on’ to policy rather than being fully integrated from the beginning.

What will it mean in practical terms?

We've got a big work programme ahead of us. For example working on better ways to conserve and allocate available freshwater, addressing the quality of drinking-water through legislation and standards, involving all 'stakeholders' in overcoming the threat to Lake Taupo and similar 'iconic' water bodies. We want to develop an Urban Design Charter, develop environmental standards (e.g. air and water quality, noise and waste). Child and youth development means improving living standards, health, access to quality early childhood education.

How will you ensure the programme is implemented?

Four ministers have been appointed to drive the initiatives. There will also need to be significant leadership from chief executives to ensure sustainable development is at the core of all government policy.

How did the government come up with the four priorities?

We needed to give a practical expression to sustainable development. The four priorities all need long-term planning, they are cross cutting and they each have significant impacts in their own right. Water quality and allocation is urgent. Our cities increasingly are driving economic growth but facing problems. We want them to support and promote residents' wellbeing. Renewable energy is a perfect example of sustainability with gas supplies running out. We have an ageing population and must ensure the younger generation have the skills to prosper as they grow older. The entrepreneur of 2015 (or school dropout) is right now in their formative years of development.

How will the government make cities more sustainable?

We will work collaboratively with local government. One of the first actions will be to meet with the metropolitan mayors in the first part of this year to form new partnerships.

We will develop a New Zealand Urban Design Charter, working with local government, design professionals and organisations with cultural, heritage and environmental interests.

We will work on developing environmental standards on air and water quality and noise and waste.

We will also tackle the social aspects of sustainable cities such as improving housing and improving participation of young people in education, training and employment.

If these are the government's priorities, what about other issues?

The focus on water, energy, sustainable cities and child and youth development does not limit the application of the sustainable development approach. The principles set out in the Programme of Action apply to all policy and Decision-making.

What's the connection between the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg and this Programme?

The Programme of Action picks up issues significant for New Zealand's sustainable development. Initially these will be water, energy, sustainable cities and child and youth development. The World Summit focused on poverty, water, energy and trade. The Programme of Action highlights child and youth development because our young people need the qualifications and skills to give them a share in our future. Access to water is already an issue in some parts of the country. This will become a barrier to sustainable development unless we find ways of addressing the economic, environmental, social and cultural issues that this raises. There are pressures on our energy resources. New Zealand played a significant role at the World Summit in promoting the use of renewable energy sources. Our Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy is giving effect to commitments we made at the World Summit.

Does the Programme of Action pick up the recommendations in the report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment?

The Programme of Action takes into account the PCE's report. For example he strongly supported the development of such a plan. He also commented that economic growth should not dominate such programmes. We recognise that growing our economy is vital for the social growth of New Zealand. The more money we earn, the better education and health services we can afford. But the growth we have must be sustained over a number of generations. Therefore, we need to plan for that growth so that we don't add to our problems.

Isn't there a clash between the government's priority for Growth and Innovation and sustainable development?

No. Economic growth through the Growth and Innovation Framework is the government's goal and sustainable development is the way in which we will reach that goal. The Sustainable Development Programme of Action and the Growth and Innovation Framework support each other. We are talking about the quality of growth.

What is the connection between sustainable development and the new Local Government Act?

The Local Government Act 2002 involves the community in setting patterns for growth, working with central government.

How do other sustainable development initiatives from government, like waste management and biodiversity, oceans policy and climate change relate to this new Programme of Action?

The Programme of Action represents a new approach. Earlier strategies had a relatively narrow focus, even though they were based on sustainable development principles. The Programme of Action signals that the government now intends applying the sustainable development approach across the government sector and to all policy and decision-making. It is the first step in this process and focuses on four areas. Over time, the sustainable development approach will be infused across the public sector to become the normal way of working.

How does sustainable management under the Resource Management Act relate to sustainable development?

The RMA focuses on avoiding adverse environmental effects, in other words, sustainable management. The sustainable development approach has much wider objectives in that it aims to deliver the best decisions and outcomes for the economy and the environment, as well as for the social and cultural interests of New Zealanders. Because it takes this broad approach, and also involves consideration of the long-term effects of decisions, decision makers, communities and others must consult more broadly and find more comprehensive solutions to problems. The issues highlighted in the Programme of Action, such as water quality in Lake Taupo, show their complexity, but also the potential benefits of finding better solutions.

How does this Programme of Action reflect Māori aspirations?

Sustainable development is about the economic, environmental, social and cultural consequences of decisions and means the government will also work in partnership with appropriate Māori authorities in development decisions that affect them.

What progress is there on sustainable development indicators?

The Government Statistician published *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand* in August 2002. This was an experimental report and will form the basis for further work on a set of sustainable development indicators. These indicators will provide us with a more broadly-based measure than GDP, and will inform the development of future programmes of action.

When will the report on population be released?

About mid-February. It is currently being printed.

Appendix 3 Statements of Intent of the DPMC

Below are excerpts that contain the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’:

Statement of Intent 2003 – 2006

Another factor influencing the policy environment is New Zealand’s orientation towards a pathway of sustainable development, which will require both leadership and the development of partnerships with local government, industry, iwi, and non-governmental organisations. DPMC, along with other central agencies, will play a key role in co-ordinating the public service’s activities in this area (page 6).

the complexities posed by sustainable development in the areas of water, energy, sustainable cities, and child and youth development – particularly as these issues will demand solutions that incorporate economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions (page 13).

Statement of Intent 2005 for the year ending 30 June 2006

DPMC continues to have a leadership role in co-ordinating the Sustainable Development Programme of Action, in partnership with local government, industry, iwi, non-governmental organisations, and central government agencies (Section 1:10).

Relationship to the government’s goals for the public sector

The present government established six goals to guide the public sector in achieving sustainable development:

- strengthen national identity and uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
- grow an inclusive, innovative economy for the benefit of all
- maintain trust in government and provide strong social services
- improve New Zealanders’ skills
- reduce inequalities in health, education, employment and housing
- protect and enhance the environment (Section 2:16).

What we are trying to achieve

System-level outcome: The government’s six goals for guiding the public service in achieving sustainable development.

DPMC’s overall outcome: “good government, with effective public service support”. This high-level outcome – through the DPMC’s advisory, information and co-ordination roles – supports all six of the government’s sustainable development goals (Section 2:20).

Key ongoing co-ordination activities for the Policy Advisory Group in 2005/06 includes:

...providing co-ordination in policy development to ensure that strategic connections are made – sustainable development activities remain an important focus for this activity (Section 2:22).

Working with others

As has been discussed, DPMC works closely with the other two central agencies (the Treasury and the SSC) to promote the capability and the performance of the public service in servicing this contributing outcome. On specific issues, DPMC works with a range of government departments that may be the lead agencies in terms of policy development. An example of this is in the area of sustainable development, where DPMC has a support and co-ordinating role that backs up the more specific activities and interventions of other government departments and agencies (Section 2:24).

Statement of Intent 2006 for the year ending 30 June 2007

Note: There is no mention of sustainable development or sustainability in the 2006 Statement of Intent.

Statement of Intent 2007 for the year ending 30 June 2008

The government has put sustainability at the centre of its strategic agenda, underpinning its three priority themes (economic transformation, families – young and old, and national identity). DPMC's Policy Advisory Group (PAG) will continue to play a key role in ensuring that sustainability and the three themes are reflected in the priorities of departments and their associated entities. A chief executives' sustainability group has been established, chaired by DPMC, and is charged with taking forward the overall sustainability programme. Local government, business, research organisations, and local communities will all have a part to play as New Zealand moves along this path (Part A:1).

Issues across the range of government business

As the political head of the government, the Prime Minister must have an overview of government activity and access to information on any and all issues that arise. DPMC works with the rest of the public service to achieve this, co-ordinating activity where necessary – for example, working with the other central agencies and with key departments to ensure that sustainability and the government's three priority themes (economic transformation; families – young and old; and national identity) are supported (Part A:3).

Contributing Outcome 1: Decision making by the Prime Minister and Cabinet is well informed and supported

...PAG advises the Prime Minister on a very broad range of policy matters; and DESG provides policy advice to her on security matters in the widest sense, from natural disasters to counter-terrorism. Both groups help departments make links with other agencies working on related issues, and they attempt to ensure that officials do not lose sight of broader government priorities – in particular, sustainability and the three priority themes. They also help remove bottlenecks in the flow of departmental policy making, and they work to ensure state sector support for effective Cabinet decision making. To do this, they provide comment on draft papers and provide briefings to the Prime Minister across all government business (and other areas when relevant). Further, the two groups participate in a wide range of officials’ committees, attend Cabinet committee meetings in an advisory and support capacity, co-ordinate follow-up work, and, where appropriate, inform officials of the wider context in which decisions have been made (Part A:4).

Table 15: DPMC’s output and outcome summary

Summary of DPMC’s outcome and output framework (DPMC, 2007:Part A, Page 8)		
<p>The government’s key strategic priority for the next decade is achieving true sustainability in New Zealand through its work programme of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic transformation • families — young and old • national identity. <p>DPMC will support the Prime Minister in carrying forward this strategic agenda by working with Treasury, State Services Commission, and other key departments, so that the government’s priorities are delivered.</p>		<p>DPMC’s Contributing Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decision making by the Prime Minister and Cabinet is well informed and supported. 2. Executive government is well conducted and continues in accordance with accepted convention and practices. 3. The Governor-General is well supported. 4. The management of domestic and external security is well planned, informed and co-ordinated. 5. A high-performing, trusted and accessible state sector, delivering the right things, in the right way, at the right prices.
Departmental Output Class 1	Departmental Output Class 2	Departmental Output Class 3
<p>Policy advice and secretariat and coordination services (includes Contributing Outcomes 1, 2, 4, and 5)</p>	<p>Support services to the Governor-General and maintenance of the residences (includes Contributing Outcome 3)</p>	<p>Intelligence assessments on developments overseas (includes Contributing Outcomes 1 and 4)</p>

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