

August 2007

Report 1

2058

A National Sustainable Development Strategy

How New Zealand
measures up
against international
commitments

MCGUINNESS INSTITUTE


Project 2058: Report 1

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international commitments

This report forms part of *Project 2058*,
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1b:	<i>A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action</i>

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Wendy McGuinness
August 2007

Note: This report is one of a number published by the Sustainable Future Institute (now the McGuinness Institute) as part of *Project 2058*. Throughout 2013 these report are progressively being reissued, substantially unchanged, under the McGuinness Institute imprint.

Preface

If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.
Lewis Carroll, 1832–1898

There is no doubt we are undergoing a period of immediate and global transition. Within the space of two months last year, Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) changed public expectations for the future and the Stern Review on the *Economics of Climate Change: Conclusions and Recommendations* (HM Treasury, 2006) catapulted business into action — the rest is history.

In 1997, the New Zealand government, along with other United Nations member states agreed at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UN, 1997) to introduce a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) by 2002.

In 2001, Cabinet agreed to develop an NSDS. In 2003, it introduced a middle step, a Sustainable Development Programme of Action (SDPOA). In 2005, the Sustainable Future Institute published a report titled *A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand Measures up Against International Commitments* (2005) to remind New Zealanders about our international commitment to the United Nations member states. Two years later we find New Zealand has not progressed in developing an NSDS.

Project 2058 is a response to New Zealand's lack of progress towards this goal. We have designed *Project 2058* to assist interested individuals, organisations and government to increase their understanding of an NSDS, and to work with us to pursue a New Zealand NSDS. We hope *Project 2058* will act as a catalyst for government to begin this work. The strategic aim of our project is therefore 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. (SFI, 2007a: 5)

This paper is the first of a number of papers we plan to publish over the next few years. As the first, it provides the necessary background for the project team to produce additional papers in order to develop our view of an NSDS for New Zealand.

The authors would like to thank the peer reviewers who provided robust and challenging feedback: Dr Peter Davies, Dr Maggie Lawton, Stephen Knight-Lenihan, Dr John Peet and Dr Lin Roberts. Errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

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Wendy McGuinness

Executive Summary

The key finding of this report is that the New Zealand government is currently not pursuing a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).¹ This is contrary to international commitments,² but more importantly, it is contrary to the interests of New Zealanders.

Since 1997, New Zealand has committed to two international targets to develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). These targets are:

- the 'introduction' of an NSDS by 2002; this was set at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UN, 1997), and
- the 'implementation' of an NSDS by 2005; this was set under the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (UNCED, 2002). It was agreed that member states would take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development.

This paper reviews the history, outlines the current landscape, reports on progress and suggests a way forward.

Section 1: Outlines the Purpose of the Report

Sections 2–7 are briefly outlined below. In addition we have prepared two supplementary reports:³

- Report 1a: *International NSDS Milestones from 1970 to Today* (SFI, 2007b) and
- Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (SFI, 2007c).

Section 2: What is a National Sustainable Development Strategy?

This section explains that NSDSs are currently principle-based rather than rule-based. This means there are no internationally agreed criteria, but rather a list of guiding principles and tools for the creation, ongoing development and monitoring of NSDSs.

Section 3: New Zealand's International Commitments

This section first outlines the background contained in Report 1a: *International NSDS Milestones from 1970 to Today* (2007b), then goes on to consider the current international landscape in terms of the quantity and quality of NSDSs. It notes that although the quantity of NSDSs increased significantly between 2004 and 2006, the quality is mixed. As a result of our research, we make three suggestions to international standard-setters on reporting.

Recommendations to International Standard-Setters on Reporting

Recommendation 1: Provide a detailed, clear and internationally agreed definition to enable stakeholders to have clarity over what is and what is not an NSDS.

Recommendation 2: Create one accurate and complete internationally recognised NSDS register.

Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of international reporting and governance of NSDSs.

Section 4: New Zealand Government's Response

This section provides an overview of New Zealand's response to the previously outlined international agreements and obligations. It discusses the critical elements towards progress, the Sustainable Development Programme of Action (SDPOA) and relevant reviews, and makes the following recommendations.

1 See Appendices 1 to 4 for international guidance on creating an effective NSDS.

2 See Appendix 1 for excerpts from the international agreements.

3 Both reports are available on the McGuinness Institute website: www.mcguinnessinstitute.org

Recommendations to Government on International Relationships

Recommendation 4: Advise the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) that New Zealand currently has no NSDS.⁴

Recommendation 5: Apply for membership and consistent representation on the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development.

Recommendation 6: Develop international relationships to increase New Zealand's capacity and expertise to prepare and implement an NSDS.

The closest document that New Zealand has had to a National Sustainable Development Strategy was the Sustainable Development Programme of Action (SDPOA) which started in early 2003 and finished in July 2006.⁵ During the implementation of the SDPOA, New Zealand may have been able to argue internationally that it was pursuing an NSDS but since the SDPOA ended in July 2006, this is no longer the case. Section 4.3 briefly discusses the SDPOA, however a more thorough assessment is included in Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (2007c).

Since July 2006, no overall strategy or programme has been pursued and the government has reverted to isolated initiatives, such as the 'Six-Pack' initiative.⁶

Recommendations to Government on Future Programmes

Recommendation 7: Develop new initiatives and reinforce current initiatives to ensure the 'sustainable development principles' outlined in the 2003 SDPOA are better integrated into local and national government policies and strategies.

Recommendation 8: Review the SDPOA reporting programme (DPMC, 2003: 28) and update methods of 'measuring' and 'reporting' progress towards sustainability.

Recommendation 9: Establish an agreed process for creating and implementing an NSDS.

Recommendation 10: Ensure that there are mechanisms for national strategies and objectives to be reflected in territorial development long-term plans (LTPs).

Recommendation 11: Improve the quality of internal and external communication, transparency and consultation, with an emphasis on comprehensive plans, financial budgets, accountability structures and reviews by independent parties.

Section 5: The Role of Civil Society

In the international principle-based definitions of an NSDS there is considerable emphasis on an effective NSDS being '*country-led and nationally owned*' and '*defined through a participatory process involving civil society*' (see Appendix 2). Currently there is no formal process for civil society to develop dialogue and provide input to the government on an NSDS. Therefore, in order to meet international definitions and improve stakeholder commitment, we make the following recommendation.

Recommendation to Government on Partnerships

Recommendation 12: Develop open and clear communication pathways with all stakeholders to enable all parties to work together to develop an effective and innovative NSDS for New Zealand.

Section 6: Progressing an NSDS for New Zealand

To help improve efficiency and direct action towards the recommendations discussed above, we consider government should learn from recent experiences in New Zealand and overseas in order to implement an NSDS by 1 January 2010. This paper does not draw a conclusion as to the exact way forward or the precise governance structure, but we do discuss the alternative paths and list a range of institutional options, based on a continuum from a decision-making to an advisory model (see Table 3).

4 Upon the implementation of Recommendation 9 below, being to develop an agreed process for creating and implementing an NSDS, our United Nations status could be updated to 'NSDS under development'.

5 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.

6 See Appendix 9, page 72.

Recommendation to Government on Progressing an NSDS for New Zealand

Recommendation 13: Create an NSDS that meets the critical success factors outlined in Table 2 for implementation in the next five years.

Section 7: Observations and Recommendations

The completion of the SDPOA in July 2006 leaves in its wake a set of ‘2003 sustainable development principles’⁷ and a ‘2001 commitment to an NSDS’.⁸ While many industry and government initiatives are progressing towards sustainable development, the New Zealand government is not pursuing a National Sustainable Development Strategy. We do not even have a stepping stone, in the form of a plan (such as the SDPOA) or an institution (such as one of the options shown in Table 3, page 38), to progress sustainable development.

If New Zealand fails to produce an NSDS and the international community continues to move forward, the gap will be not only significant, but embarrassing. For a country like New Zealand that not only prides itself, but brands its products and services as ‘clean and green’ and ‘100% Pure’, we risk a great deal.

In this new ‘post-Gore and Stern’ marketplace, creating a competitive advantage by promoting sustainability is both inevitable and logical, but it has its challenges. This was best expressed in the recent international debate over food miles.⁹ New Zealand exporters and the tourism industry will have much to gain but even more to lose without a robust platform to support our ‘clean and green’ and ‘100% Pure’ national brand. New Zealand is not in a strong position to have our current practices (or lack of practices) towards sustainable development examined under the international microscope. The government must increase the pace of change and move from being a global follower to being a global leader in sustainable development.

Right now we have a choice between being on the right or the wrong side of history. As we sit back and watch our international peers being proactive in the face of challenge, time marches on. Often, the difference between an opportunity and a risk comes down to timing. This is very much the case with an NSDS. We consider government should find a way to implement an NSDS within the next five years. We believe this date allows time for the national conversation and research necessary to develop an NSDS that New Zealanders will be proud to own.

New Zealand must deliver within this timeframe before our inaction moves us from a position of opportunity to a position of risk. What we are putting at risk is our national integrity — our integrity with regard to our global brand, our integrity in delivering on our international commitments and our integrity in regard to the legacy we leave for future New Zealanders.

⁷ See Appendix 9, page 66.

⁸ See Appendix 9, page 64.

⁹ As highlighted in national media (such as the *New Zealand Herald*), international media, and the *Environmental Performance Review of New Zealand* (OECD, 2007a).

1. Purpose

The Sustainable Future Institute is an independent think-tank based in Wellington, New Zealand.¹⁰ We are currently undertaking a two-year research project called *Project 2058*. 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. (SFI, 2007a: 5)

In order to reach this objective, we have broken the research project into three parts, of which this is Report 1 of Part 1. For an explanation of our methodology (SFI, 2007a) and to monitor our progress, please refer to our website.

This report updates the 2005 Sustainable Future Institute paper, *A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand measures up against international commitments* (2005). The reason *Project 2058* has updated the 2005 paper is to ensure *Project 2058* is built on a comprehensive, timely and solid platform. In particular, as a team, it is crucial to ensure there is clarity over what an NSDS is, and to develop knowledge of the history, current institutions and available mechanisms to achieve our strategic aim. We are particularly keen to learn from the experiences of other countries so that we can develop the best NSDS at the end of the two-year research project, being early 2009.

Given that the government has not explicitly rejected an NSDS and has not explicitly informed the United Nations that it is not going to produce an NSDS, this report is based on the assumption that as at August 2007, the New Zealand government remains committed to, but is not actively pursuing, an NSDS. Based on this assumption the project team has developed a number of recommendations to progress an NSDS. The aim of the research was to:

1. Define what an NSDS is (Section 2);
2. Identify international milestones, the current international landscape and our commitments (Section 3);
3. Assess the government's response to our commitment (Section 4);
4. Discuss the role of civil society (Section 5);
5. Suggest a way to progress an NSDS (Section 6), and
6. Summarise and make recommendations to progress an NSDS for New Zealand (Section 7).

This paper does not:

1. Develop arguments for and against an NSDS;
2. Discuss in depth the meaning of sustainable development; or
3. Promote the optimal governance structure for sustainable development in New Zealand.

Given that New Zealand has made these international commitments to producing an NSDS, the authors assume the production of an NSDS is a given, therefore the recommendations focus on managing the risks to our international reputation and maximising the timely production of an NSDS in a cost-effective and transparent manner.

¹⁰ Since February 2012 the Institute has been known as the McGuinness Institute. See: www.mcguinnessinstitute.org

2. What is a National Sustainable Development Strategy?

The aim of an NSDS is to enable countries to develop an ongoing strategy toward reducing economic inequality, social instability and environmental degradation ‘to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations’ (OECD/DAC, 1999a). The OECD defines an NSDS as:

strategic and participatory processes encompassing analysis, democratic debate, capacity development, planning and action towards sustainable development. (OECD/DAC, 1999b: 2)

There are multiple definitions and guides available that are principles rather than rules based. One well-recognised guide is *Sustainable Development Strategies: A resource book* by Barry Dalal-Clayton and Stephen Bass (2002). This guide provides a set of ‘Key Principles for Sustainable Development Strategies’, which are listed in brief below.¹¹

1. People centred
2. Consensus on long-term view
3. Comprehensive and integrated
4. Targeted with clear budgetary priorities
5. Based on comprehensive and reliable analysis
6. Incorporate monitoring, learning and improvement
7. Country-led and nationally owned
8. High-level government commitment and influential lead institutions
9. Building on existing mechanisms and strategies
10. Effective participation
11. Link national and local levels
12. Develop and build on existing capacity. (Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2002: 33)

These principles are a collaboration of common features of good practice and have been endorsed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in its policy guidance on strategies for sustainable development (OECD, 2001a). In November 2001, a UN international forum on national strategies for sustainable development (held in preparation for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development) confirmed almost identical principles, which the forum termed ‘elements’; these were defined as being applicable to both developed and developing countries alike (UNDESA, 2002b).

Although the term ‘sustainable development’ continues to lack a detailed definition in its own right, there is sufficient information to provide clarity. However, as indicated by the OECD in Table 1, although the elements appear to be very similar, it could be argued that all stakeholders would benefit from an internationally agreed definition that sets specific criteria (see Recommendation 1, page 14).

¹¹ A more detailed description is contained in Appendix 4.

2. WHAT IS A NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY?

Table 1: Comparison of UN and OECD Recommendations for NSDSs

Source: OECD, 2006:13

Main Elements	OECD	United Nations
Policy integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate economic, social and environmental objectives Ensure comprehensive and integrated strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate economic, social and environmental objectives Link different sectors
Inter-generational timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop consensus on long-term vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop shared strategic and pragmatic vision Link short-term to medium/long-term
Analysis and assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base strategy on comprehensive and reliable analysis Build on existing processes and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchor strategy in sound technical and economic analysis Build on existing mechanisms and strategies
Co-ordination and institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed strategy in high-level government commitment and influential lead institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchor strategy in sound technical and economic analysis Build on existing mechanisms and strategies Ensure a strong institution or group of institutions spearheading the process
Local and regional governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link national and local levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link national, regional and global levels
Stakeholder participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective participation Develop a people-centred strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure access to information for all stakeholders, transparency and accountability Develop partnerships among government, civil society, private sector and external institutions

3. New Zealand's International Commitments

This section briefly outlines the early history of the term 'sustainable development' and the 'international milestones' that have helped shape the role of the present-day NSDS.¹² For more detailed information, please refer to Report 1a: *International NSDS Milestones from 1970 to Today* (2007b), available on our website.

The current international landscape is discussed in terms of quantity and quality of NSDSs. We note that although the quantity of NSDSs has increased significantly between 2004 and 2006, quality is mixed. To rectify concerns over quality, a number of international reviews have taken place.

From our research we make three recommendations aimed at improving the reporting of NSDSs internationally. We make these suggestions to the standard-setters, being international organisations that monitor and report on the quality of national strategies. These include the International Institute for Sustainable Development, International Institute for Environment and Development, the United Nations, the European Union and the OECD.

3.1 International Milestones — From 1970 to Today

For the purposes of this report, the milestones are grouped into three timeframes: 1970–79; 1980–91, and 1992 to today. These timeframes were selected to show the move from two separate concepts (environmental protection and economic development – see Section 3.1.1), to agreement on one concept (sustainable development – see Section 3.1.2), and finally turning the concept into practice (by producing an NSDS – see Section 3.1.3).

3.1.1 Environment protection and economic development: 1970 to 1979

In the early 1970s there was a growing awareness of global environmental issues, which resulted in the creation of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in 1972. Notably, a 1972 report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment delivered in Stockholm agreed on the urgent need to respond to the problem of environmental deterioration. Throughout the 1970s there was increasing recognition of the inter-dependence of environmental protection and economic development. It was generally agreed that neither could be managed in isolation from the other. This led to the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1983 and the birth of the approach we now refer to as 'sustainable development'.

3.1.2 Sustainable development: 1980 to 1991

In 1980, the UNEP commissioned the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) to produce a *World Conservation Strategy* (WCS). The resulting strategy was first and foremost an attempt to bring conservation and development together, as indicated by the following extract:

Human activities are progressively reducing the planet's life-supporting capacity at a time when rising human numbers and consumption are making increasingly heavy demands on it. The combined destructive impacts of a poor majority struggling to stay alive and an affluent minority consuming most of the world's resources are undermining the very means by which all people can survive and flourish. (IUCN, 1980: Section 1)

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was established in 1983, marking a significant point in the history of 'sustainable development'. In 1987, WCED released its report titled *Our Common Future*, which produced the most frequently used definition of the term sustainable development:

Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (WCED, 1987: 8)

¹² Please note, this report does not list the specific NGOs or individuals that have worked on identifying the problem, developing the solution and lobbying for the implementation of an NSDS framework.

3.1.3 Putting the concept into action: 1992 to 2007

Sustainable development was further defined by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*¹³ (27 Principles), *Agenda 21* and the *Statement of Principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests*. All three were adopted by more than 178 governments in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Notably, Chapter 8 of *Agenda 21* states, in a section headed 'Adopting a National Strategy for Sustainable Development':

Governments, in cooperation, where appropriate, with international organizations, should adopt a national strategy for sustainable development based on, inter alia, the implementation of decisions taken at the Conference, particularly in respect of Agenda 21. This strategy should build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country. The experience gained through existing planning exercises such as national reports for the Conference, national conservation strategies and environment action plans should be fully used and incorporated into a country-driven sustainable development strategy. Its goals should be to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations. It should be developed through the widest possible participation. It should be based on a thorough assessment of the current situation and initiatives. (UN, 1992: Chapter 9, Point 7)

Since 1997, New Zealand has committed to two international targets to develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).¹⁴ These targets are:

- the 'introduction' of an NSDS by 2002; this was set at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UN, 1997), and
- the 'implementation' of an NSDS by 2005; this was set under the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (UNCED, 2002). It was agreed that member states would take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development.

3.2 The International Landscape

This section reviews the international landscape in terms of the current quantity and quality of NSDS publications. We have provided more detailed background information in the Appendices for those interested in understanding the landscape in more detail. Appendix 5 provides background information on the five international standard-setters; Appendix 6 provides an overview of reviews completed by standard-setters; Appendix 7 provides information on five United Nations sites that contain country profile databases and Appendix 8 provides a list of all strategies, or their nearest equivalent, by country.

3.2.1 Quantity of NSDSs

As at June 2006, most countries had some form of NSDS in place or in progress. The United Nations (UNDESA) provides an annual map of the state of play to the UNCSD. We have included two maps,¹⁵ being Figure 1: 2004 (UNDESA, 2004a) and Figure 2: 2006 (UNDESA, 2006).¹⁶ The five categories in Figure 2 (being the text in the key to the left), are listed as:

- i. NSDS being implemented,
- ii. Countries with federal strategies,
- iii. NSDS under development,
- iv. No NSDS or
- v. No information available. (UNDESA, 2006)

13 United Nations: <http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html>

14 Additional background is provided in Appendix 1 and Report 1a: *International NSDS Milestones from 1970 to Today* (2007).

15 Please note, when making comparisons, that colour codes have changed.

16 The text on the bottom of Figure 2 (page 12) is as follows: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or any of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Cross-hatch with the colours used for Jammu and Kashmir (neutral colour) and China.

There are three particular points to note:

1. Both maps imply that New Zealand has an NSDS that is currently being implemented. The OECD (2006) report on *Good Practices in Sustainable Development Strategies of OECD Countries* similarly includes New Zealand among the 23 out of 30 OECD countries with an NSDS (2006: 10). However, the New Zealand government has acknowledged indirectly¹⁷ that an NSDS has not been prepared; hence this error in both the map and the UN¹⁸ and OECD registers must be rectified.
2. Although the United Nations reports progress via the annual map and a number of registers, this information is provided by countries on a voluntary basis (UNDESA, 2007) rather than as part of a compulsory reporting process (such as an annual reporting exercise). Therefore, as indicated by the New Zealand example in 1 above, accuracy and completeness cannot be relied upon. Another example is Australia, which is listed on the same UN website as having completed an NSDS, but in reality is still in the early stages of developing an integrated 'whole-systems' NSDS.
3. The increase in NSDSs over the past two years is significant, particularly in Asia and the Pacific. With the assistance of UNEP (for example, UNEP Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific) there has been a significant increase in NSDSs throughout developing nations (UNEP, 2005).

3.2.2 Quality of NSDSs

A significant body of work assessing the quality of NSDSs internationally is developing, and it generally appears the quality is improving. Five recent reviews and their findings are discussed in Appendix 6. Of note is the *French National Strategy for Sustainable Development: Report on a peer review and shared learning process* (IIED, 2005: 16–17), which states that:

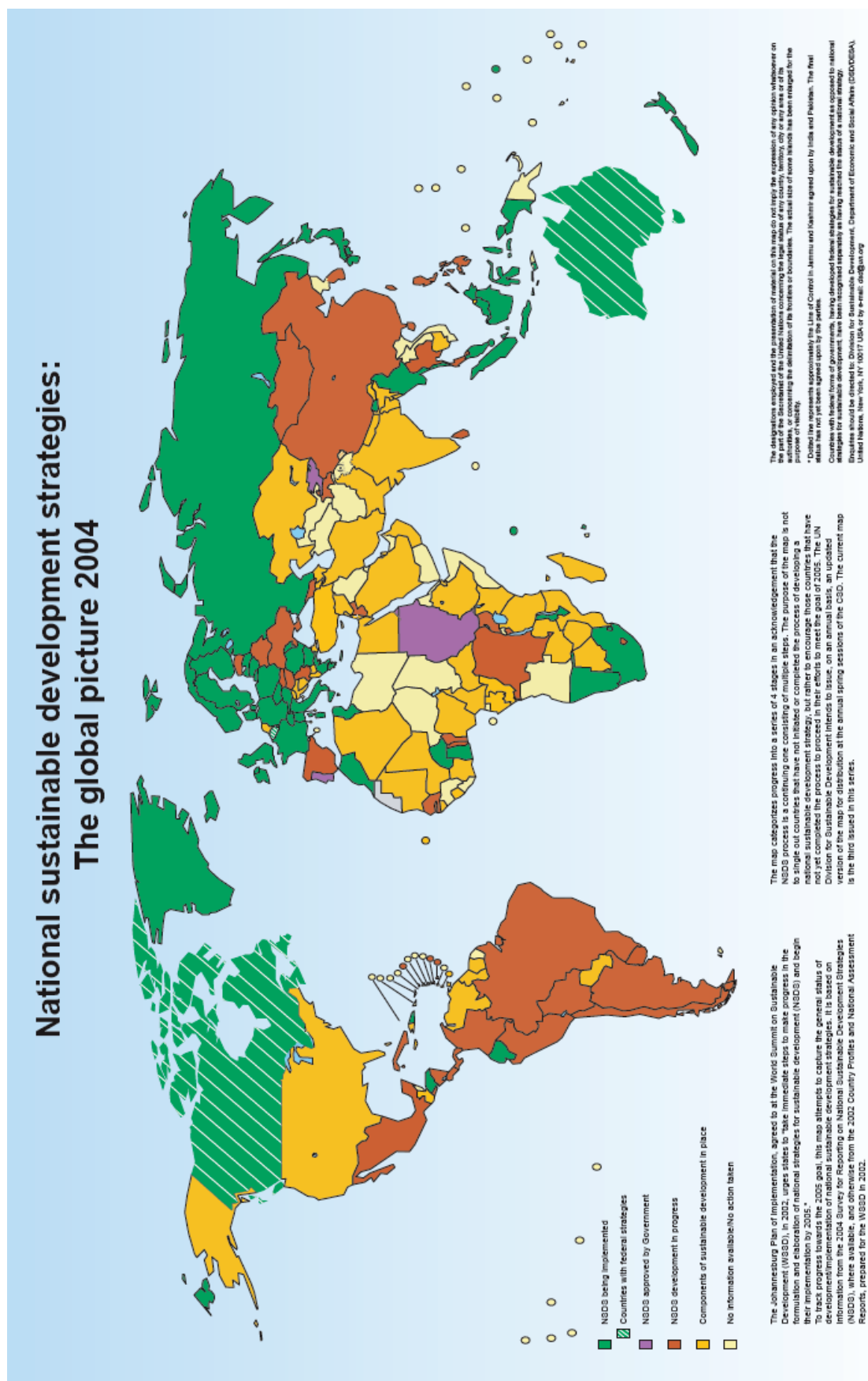
Experience in many countries indicates that there continue to be a number of common challenges to national strategies. But the transition to sustainable development clearly requires a coordinated, structured (i.e. strategic) response that deals with priorities, that can manage complexity and uncertainties, and that encourages innovation. (ibid.: 17)

Project 2058's research into the quality and relevance of the NSDSs internationally raises concerns over the accuracy of international reporting. For example, the OECD's (2006) report *Good Practices in Sustainable Development Strategies of OECD Countries* highlights New Zealand in several instances as demonstrating good practice, in particular in relation to the integration of social issues into the *Sustainable Development Programme of Action*, and our large, holistic collection of national indicators for sustainable development (OECD, 2006: 16, 27). The latter finding is of concern in light of the 2007 OECD *Environmental Performance Review* that detailed the lack of environmental indicators in New Zealand (OECD, 2007a: 2).

¹⁷ See Section 4.3.1, David Benson-Pope's correspondence.

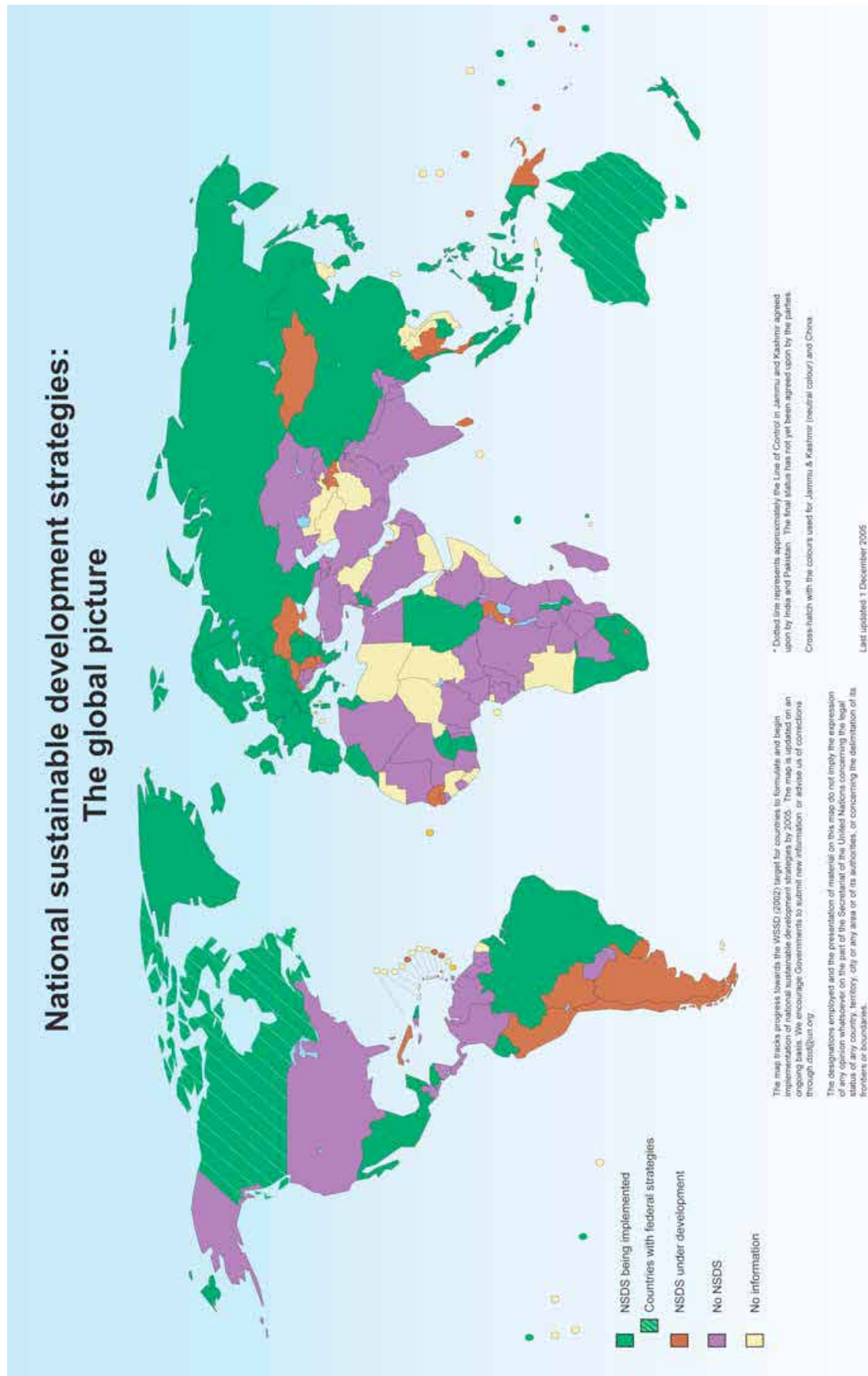
¹⁸ UN Country Register — New Zealand: <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/newzea/index.htm>

Figure 1: UNDESA: The Global Picture 2004
Source: UNDESA, 2004a



This text can be accessed at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds2004.pdf>

Figure 2: UNDESA: The Global Picture 2006
Source: UNDESA, 2006



Refer footnote 18. The text can also be accessed at: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/nsds_Map2006.pdf

3.2.3 Learning from international experience

The following international reviews shed light on some of the elements useful for building an effective and transparent NSDS framework. Important messages include:

1. International peer reviews can provide mutual learning based on shared experience, and can assist countries without NSDSs to develop their own;
2. Independent reviews of NSDSs are an excellent way of improving performance;
3. Coordinating and integrating government levels (e.g. central, regional and local government) assists implementation;
4. Linking and aligning NSDSs to regional agreements, such as in the EU or UK, is very effective;
5. Fostering ownership, transparency and engagement with stakeholders increases the chances that the NSDS will be implemented successfully, and
6. A variety of monitoring approaches are available to measure the success of an NSDS. There is consensus among the OECD, UN and IIED, who highlight that monitoring is an essential element of a successful process.

3.2.4 Recommendations to the international standard-setters

Although there have been improvements in reporting since our initial research in 2005, there is still some way to go before we can be comfortable that information contained on international registers is both accurate and complete. The current process can be further improved in order for stakeholders to be able to use and rely upon the information contained in the National Profiles and NSDSs of countries.

We found five different country profile databases funded by the United Nations (see Appendix 7) and no publicly accessible directory clarifying what information each provides or how they interlink. We considered it would be beneficial to have one place on a UN website to contain country profiles. This will significantly improve ease of access and benchmarking between countries and over time.

Although governments are currently encouraged to provide new information or to advise of corrections, we consider that more onus should be placed on countries to sign-off national information as accurate and complete. This includes information submitted biennially in national reports by member states to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

In addition, we consider there is value in correcting the 2002 Country Profiles and 2002 National Assessment Reports prepared for the Johannesburg World Summit, as well as the 1997 Country Profiles prepared for the Five-Year Review of the Earth Summit.

To have value, NSDSs must be rigorously implemented, periodically reviewed and easily accessible to the public. This being the case, we would like to have more clarity over the current structure and management of NSDSs. It is highly likely that we are not alone in this, and suggest standard-setters may like to clarify the following:

1. Are there any independent reports reviewing the UN's management of NSDSs?
2. For those countries that did not develop an NSDS, what was the reaction and/or what mechanisms were put in place to pursue an NSDS for these countries? For example, was a list of such countries produced and made public and/or was notification sent to the respective governments drawing attention to the lapse?
3. For those countries that did produce an NSDS, did any complete an assessment on the extent to which their NSDS was implemented?¹⁹

¹⁹ Specifically, we suggest the Commission on Sustainable Development may wish to assess the extent to which social issues were considered and integrated, the extent and range of stakeholder engagement, the age and therefore relevance of the last NSDS, and the frequency with which the strategy has been reviewed against progress.

On the basis of the above discussion, we make the following recommendations to standard-setters.

Recommendations to International Standard-Setters on Reporting

Recommendation 1: Provide a detailed, clear and internationally agreed definition to enable stakeholders to have clarity over what is and what is not an NSDS.

Recommendation 2: Create one accurate and complete internationally recognised NSDS register.

Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of international reporting and governance of NSDSs.

4. The New Zealand Government's Response

The remainder of this paper considers the extent to which New Zealand has met its commitments to the United Nations and made progress towards sustainable development.

This section reviews policy initiatives advocated by past governments and political parties. We then discuss the current government's response by summarising the critical elements to progress and reviewing recent initiatives such as the *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (DPMC, 2003), and the Ministry for the Environment's 'Six-Pack' initiative (refer Table 8). To assist in this discussion, we have provided a timeline of government initiatives in Appendix 9. From this analysis we identify the missing link (an NSDS) and make a number of key recommendations for decision-makers.

4.1 Past Governments' and Political Parties' Responses Since 1993

Past governments and political parties have developed a number of long-term strategies and policies to progress specific aspects of sustainable development. Examples include the *Environment 2010 Strategy* (MfE, 1994), the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement* (NZCPS) (DoC, 1994), the *Research Science and Technology 2010 Strategy* (MoRST, 1995), the *Green Party Environmental Policy* (Green Party, 2005)²⁰ and the National Party's *A Bluegreen Vision for New Zealand* (National Party, 2006) among others. Although both Labour²¹ and National²² state they are pursuing a 'whole-of-government' and 'stakeholder engagement' approach, the only party to consistently have an NSDS as part of its policy is the Green Party.

In 1993, the National government released a vision document, titled *Path to 2010* (National Party, 1993). This paper and its two subsequent updates (in 1994 and 1996) outlined a high-level, forward-thinking strategic direction for government that took environmental, economic, social and cultural goals into consideration. It is a strategic document and arguably fits within sustainable development (despite the lack of this terminology).

4.2 Critical Elements to Progress

This sub-section discusses legislation, the recent Code of Conduct, New Zealand's links to the Commission for Sustainable Development and the United Nations NSDS Register.

4.2.1 Sustainability legislation

Between 1983 and 2007, the term 'sustainability' is used 105 times²³ and 'sustainable development' 46 times in fourteen²⁴ statutes in New Zealand legislation.

One of the older and frequently debated pieces of legislation is the Resource Management Act 1991. Sir Geoffrey Palmer (1995) discusses the creation and purpose of the Act.²⁵ In terms of Section 5, Palmer maintains:

20 Green Party policy states: develop and implement a National Strategy on Sustainable Development that will link all policies, building on *Agenda 21* and compatible with international reporting frameworks. Retrieved 25 July 2007: <http://www.greens.org.nz/searchdocs/other8866.html>

21 Section on Partnerships (DPMC, 2003: 10).

22 For example, committing to new practices such as: empowering stakeholders, especially environmental groups and business, and providing them with strong incentives to reach agreement with each other on environmental goals and policies and fostering a sense of commitment to a shared national interest in sustainable development (National Party, 2006: 2).

23 Official New Zealand Legislation website: http://www.legislation.govt.nz/browse_vw.asp?content-set=pal_statutes

24 These are: Agricultural Reform (Repeals and Transitional Provisions) Act 2004, Biosecurity Act 1993, Building Act 2004, Civil Aviation Act 1990, Conservation Act 1987, Conservation Law Reform Act 1990, Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000, Environment Act 1986, Fisheries Act 1983 and 1996, Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996, Land Transport Act 1998, Land Transport Management Act 2003, Local Government Act 2002, Maritime Transport Act 1994, Resource Management Act 1991 and the Retirement Income Act 1993.

25 Resource Management Act 1991, Section 5(1). The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. In this Act, 'sustainable management' means managing the use, and development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while —

- a. Sustaining the potential of natural resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations;
- b. Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of future generations; and
- c. Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

It cannot be denied, there remain important issues to be dealt with in deciding how the various factors set out in section 5 mesh with one another and how a hierarchy of priorities is determined. (Palmer, 1995: 171)

There is an ongoing discussion about the relationship between 'resource management' (as set out in Section 5, Purpose of the Act) and 'sustainable development'. In an address at the 'Beyond the RMA' conference held in May 2007, the Hon. Peter Salmon QC reiterated Simon Upton's comment in his address to the Resource Management Association in 1994 (Salmon, 2007). He noted:

The Act was not designed as a social planning statute; it was not about balancing socio-economic aspirations and environmental outcomes ... it is first and foremost an environmental statute concerned with the sustainable management of resources. (ibid.: 1–2)

As recognised in the OECD's (2007) *Environmental Performance Review of New Zealand*, improvements in environmental management may happen, but very slowly, given the New Zealand government's preference for voluntary agreements and protocols, such as the *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord* agreed between local and central government and Fonterra (OECD, 2007a: 3).

The Local Government Act 2002²⁶ also requires a mandatory prescriptive ten-year approach for local authorities in their *Long-Term Council Community Plans* (LTCCPs) (NZ Govt, 2002c). The context for local authorities was outlined in an article by Frame et al. (2003) which stated:

The Act places a heavy emphasis on the need for local authorities to identify 'community outcomes' in order 'to provide opportunities to discuss their desired outcomes in terms of the present and future social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the community'. The latter point is important in that it places an additional emphasis on local authorities to report on the expected effects of future actions. (ibid.: 25–26)

Other relevant legislation does not use the term 'sustainable development' but does include the concept; for example, the Forests Amendment Act 1993, Ozone Layer Protection Act 1996 and numerous pieces of legislation focused on health, education and welfare.

4.2.2 State Services code of conduct

The code of conduct for the New Zealand State Services has recently been reviewed with the new *Standards of Integrity and Conduct* (SSC, 2007) coming into force on November 30, 2007. The *Standards* are issued under the State Sector Act 1988 (s57)²⁷ and refer to the activities of all public service departments, Crown entities and Crown entity subsidiaries. In the words of the State Services Commissioner, Mark Prebble, the code is designed to:

reinforce the spirit of service that currently exists in our State Services and will be a unifying document for all of the departments and Crown entities it applies to. (Prebble, 2007)

As an overarching document, the standards have considerable merit, however we consider this was a missed opportunity to ensure the government's ten sustainable development principles (DPMC, 2003:10), listed on page 67 in Appendix 9, were incorporated into the 'whole-of-government'.

4.2.3 UN Commission on Sustainable Development

New Zealand is currently not a member of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.²⁸ There are currently 54 member countries which meet on an annual basis to discuss advances in the area of sustainable development. We have been advised that New Zealand does informally attend meetings. However, in order to be a global leader in sustainable development and to be up to date with current practices, New Zealand should consider becoming a member of the Commission.

26 Part 6, Section 93, of the Local Government Act 2002.

27 State Sector Act 1988: http://www.legislation.govt.nz/browse_vw.asp?content-set=pal_statutes

28 The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development was established in December 1992 to ensure effective follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED): <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm>

4.2.4 UN register

As discussed in Section 3.2.1, UNDESA categorises a country's progress towards an NSDS according to stages (i) – (v). New Zealand is currently classified as having implemented an NSDS, being stage (i). However, this is incorrect. Using UNDESA's categories (as per section 3.2.1) of NSDS 'stages' (see earlier Figure 2: The Global Picture 2006) New Zealand cannot be categorised as having:

- i. An NSDS being implemented, or being a
- ii. A country with federal strategies, or
- iii. An NSDS under development;

but currently can only be classified as having:

- iv. no NSDS.²⁹

From 2003 to July 2006 during the implementation of the SDPOA, New Zealand may have been able to argue that we had an NSDS under development and therefore arguably had met stage (iii). But since the SDPOA ended in July 2006, our current status (stage (iv)) is contrary to our commitments. New Zealand has no NSDS, nor is one currently being pursued. See recommendations at the end of this section.

4.3 The Sustainable Development Programme of Action

In response to our international commitments, Cabinet agreed to develop an NSDS in 2001 and agreed to a set of sustainable development principles in 2003. However, the NSDS never eventuated.

4.3.1 The u-turn

Within 18 months of Cabinet's agreement in 2001 to develop an NSDS it reversed its decision, as indicated by the lack of progress. Since January 2003 there have been no public announcements on the reason why the SDPOA was developed instead of an NSDS or indeed any comment on New Zealand's commitment to produce an NSDS. In 2006, in a letter to the Sustainable Future Institute, David Benson-Pope, the then Minister for the Environment, provided a brief explanation of why the government had changed its course of action to an SDPOA. He stated:

[the SDPOA] 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)

Benson-Pope's letter went on to note that cost and practicality were issues for the New Zealand government in relation to an NSDS. The Sustainable Future Institute recognises the complexity of sustainable development issues, but would welcome the further stepping stone of an NSDS. However, to date there is no indication of moving beyond what was completed in July 2006. This report assumes that without a public statement to the contrary, an NSDS remains on the agenda but is not currently being pursued.

We note that in a recent review of the SDPOA, Frame and Marquardt (2006) did consider the SDPOA had met New Zealand's international NSDS commitments in the short term, stating under a section on international obligations:

This was satisfied, for the short term, by the 'action learning' approach inherent in the SDPOA, but will need to be carried forward with something that is equal or better, for the future. (Frame & Marquardt, 2006: 13)

But they do make the following point:

In terms of its international position, New Zealand is considered to have established a national strategy in the SDPOA. However this was created in 2003 as a programme of action and must be seen as such. A more complex and open question is the extent to which the whole sustainable development debate has progressed internationally and domestically and the extent to which New Zealand has stayed up with the play. (ibid: 28)

Although the SDPOA ceased in July 2006, the vision for sustainable development has remained. This can be seen in the Prime Minister's speeches of late 2006 and 2007 (Clark, 2007). However, the pursuit of an overarching strategy, partnership and support for guiding principles seem to have waned.

²⁹ There is a (v) category, which is used to show 'no information [is] available'.

To conclude, we consider the SDPOA did not meet the NSDS criteria as established in Appendices 1–4. The SDPOA was silo based, had no stakeholder engagement regarding the design of the programme or the selection of the workstreams, and did not contain a plan to bring the workstreams together into one overarching strategy, being an NSDS. Importantly, even if the SDPOA could be argued to have fulfilled the criteria of an NSDS from 2003–2006, the SDPOA has now ended. Therefore, as of August 2007, New Zealand still does not have a document that could legitimately be identified as an NSDS, nor a stepping stone towards creating one.

4.3.2 The new approach

The *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* was produced as a ‘stepping stone’ toward an NSDS. The government’s intention in 2003 was to produce an updated programme of action once the initial phase was completed and reviewed, as outlined below.

The programme of action is an evolving document and process. While it highlights a number of issues we need to tackle now, it also puts in place the building blocks that will help us deal with other issues at a later stage. We can’t tackle all the issues at once.

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. 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)

The government’s approach under the SDPOA was neither bottom-up nor top-down. The approach is perhaps best described as a ‘middle-down approach’, in that the government selected five workstreams, then provided the resources and framework for each of these issues to be managed in isolation. Consequently, we found the government did not take a whole-systems approach, but a silo approach. The five workstreams in the SDPOA have been passed onto other groups to continue and have since been split into smaller localised projects.

4.4 Reviews on Performance

In this section we discuss five reviews that demonstrate our concerns over performance regarding sustainable development and the challenges involved in managing ‘whole-of-government’ programmes (such as the SDPOA). These reviews are listed and then discussed below:

1. 2006: DPMC / Landcare Research written by Frame and Marquardt, titled *Implications of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action*,
2. 2007: New Zealand Office of the Auditor General, titled *Sustainable Development: Implementing the Programme of Action*, and
3. 2007: Sustainable Future Institute, titled Report 1b, *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action*.³⁰

Other reviews of interest include:

4. 2006: Central Government Review, *Review of Central Agencies’ Role in Promoting and Assuring State Sector Performance*, and
5. 2007: OECD report, titled *Environmental Performance Review*.

We note two additional reports due out later this year:

6. 2007: Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE), *Assessment Towards Progress* (a review of the SDPOA), and
7. 2007: Ministry for the Environment’s (MfE) updated *State of the Environment Report*.

³⁰ The report is available from our website: www.mcguinnessinstitute.org

4.4.1 Landcare Research: 2006

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) commissioned Landcare Research to produce the report *Implications of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (2006). The report's purpose was to evaluate the SDPOA, as it had reached the end of its initial period, January 2003 to July 2006. Landcare Research reviewed the programme's interventions and other initiatives and assessed their contribution to increasing sustainability in New Zealand. The review included an assessment of the relationship between the ten principles of the SDPOA and their impact on four (of the five) workstreams:

The SDPOA has been a positive step towards greater sustainability and there is a demonstrated appetite for more. Barriers to implementation of such an approach have been lowered to more manageable levels as a result of the programme. (Frame & Marquardt, 2006: 11–12)

Frame and Marquardt highlighted the need to provide clarity over future steps and noted the following strategic options available to government:

1. Do nothing;
2. View Sustainable Development as “business as usual”;
3. Accentuate emerging [four] workstreams;
4. Establish a second phase of the SDPOA based upon existing workstreams;
5. Establish a second phase of the SDPOA by adding additional workstreams; or
6. Prepare an NSDS. (ibid.: 62)

The Sustainable Future Institute considers option six to be New Zealand's best way forward. We were pleased to see that Frame and Marquardt (2006) identified international obligations as important (as noted below), but we were concerned that the incorrect reporting of our current status to the United Nations was not raised as an urgent issue to be remedied.

In the broader New Zealand context, New Zealand needs to maintain national and international credibility through continuing to “raise the bar” in terms of government's initial performance on sustainability issues and the extent to which leadership is demonstrated to the wider constituency of business and community. (ibid.: 11–12)

We do support the following findings:

There is a concern that the pace and delivery of the SDPOA will be lost if government does not take stock of its policies in light of the principles [of sustainable development] and identify appropriate next steps. The benefits of these are not “low hanging fruit” that can provide short-term gains. (ibid.) [and]

SDPOA increased collaboration inside government but, in the three years available, was only able to make modest progress on significant long-term, integrated and sustainable development outcomes. (ibid.: 53)

The report concluded:

It appears the SDPOA has progressed sustainability in New Zealand.

[and]

The Principles and Policy and Decision-making have been given a thorough test in real-time. Their content has been found rigorous and valuable in deepening debate around complex-laden issues... The real test, however, of the SDPOA comes into two future areas.

First is the extent to which the SDPOA will be built on and taken forward to address severe constraints facing New Zealand on a raft of topics from water allocation through energy demand to social cohesion.

Second is the comparison of the speed and nature of New Zealand's response in relation to the OECD partners and competitors.

By privileging sustainability, New Zealand has an opportunity to increase its reputation as a clean, green place worthy of external investment and as a provider of exports. So much of New Zealand's image is currently dependent on this — yet future reliance on this aspect is highly dependant on an ability to have clear strategies that strive for a sustainable future and to put in place appropriate and practical mechanisms to achieve that vision. (ibid.: 14)

The Sustainable Future Institute agrees with the need for 'clear strategies'. This issue is further explored in the Institute's Report 2, *Central Government Strategies: Reviewing the Landscape 1990–2007* (2007d), which shows how an overarching strategy could play an important role in achieving sustainable development for New Zealand.

4.4.2 Office of the Auditor-General: 2007

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG), in a report titled *Sustainable Development: Implementing the Programme of Action* (2007), noted:

The Programme of Action sought a different way of working by requiring central government to work more collaboratively on complex issues, to better integrate existing initiatives and to learn from new processes. (OAG, 2007: 5)

Importantly, the report states that the OAG did not audit:

1. whether the SDPOA met the World Summit commitments;
2. whether all government policy used the sustainable development principles in decision-making; or
3. the programme for reporting progress towards sustainability. (ibid.: 13)

The review commented on the principles and four of the five workstreams. We briefly summarise three key aspects of the report.

(i) Ten sustainable development principles for government decision-making

The OAG found that departments needed to establish better methods for the implementation of the ten principles agreed by the government in 2003. The report stated:

2.68 While some legislation refers to sustainable development, this provides only high-level guidance for the practical application of principles in policy work and decision-making processes. In our view, it is important that those charged with implementing principles-based legislation agree on how the principles will be used in practice.

2.69 The principles need to be interpreted and accompanied by a range of methods for practical use if staff are to apply them in their work. We acknowledge that much of this can be done effectively through informal methods, and that some people we spoke to considered that making achievements in this way was a strength of the Programme of Action.

2.70 However, others said more attention needed to be given to agreeing on more formal methods for applying principles, such as how to:

- identify and analyse long-term scenarios;
- identify ways to improve environmental outcomes while continuing economic development; and
- address risks and uncertainties in the longer term.

2.71 Practical application of the sustainable development principles could have been more clearly supported. A "learning by doing" approach does not preclude thinking about how high-level principles would apply to a particular project or workstream. In our view, applying such principles would include evidence of some or all of the following mechanisms:

- providing support tools such as those listed in paragraph 2.56 to help departments apply the principles;
- making departments accountable for complying with the principles through formal accountability documents such as statements of intent; and/or
- referring specifically to the principles in statements of departmental policy, strategy, or planning documents such as projects' terms of reference. (ibid.: 28)

(ii) Four of the five workstreams (water, energy, sustainable cities and youth and child development)

The challenge of trying to adopt integrated thinking and action across government without an overarching strategy is noted in the OAG's review of the middle-down silo approach adopted by the SDPOA, namely:

Project planning for cross-agency work is complex, but we found a limited number of project plans for the workstreams and limited programme planning that addressed issues such as joint planning and consideration of the resources needed to implement the Programme of Action. While individual projects had project plans and budgets prepared, in our view, the longer-term aims of the Programme of Action would have been more fully supported by an increased focus on programme planning for the Programme of Action as a whole. (ibid.: Summary)

(iii) Next steps

The OAG report also provided a number of pointers on how new sustainable development programmes (including an NSDS) could be better developed and implemented in the future. This included better communication with the public, better planning and reporting mechanisms, improved governance and more integrated long-term thinking.

4.4.3 Sustainable Future Institute: 2007

This stakeholder evaluation, contained in Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (2007c), was designed to complement the previous two reviews of the SDPOA. We remain concerned that relevant and timely information was available, but not made public until June 2007. For example, we note that the Landcare Research report, discussed in 4.4.1, even though completed in September 2006, was not made public until June 2007. The information gap between what the public could access and what the government knew (or could obtain) was significant.

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.

We assessed the SDPOA in two ways:³¹ first, according to its 'ten elements', and second, as a 'programme as a whole'.

Method 1: The ten elements of the SDPOA

We assessed the ten elements contained in the SDPOA (see Table 1 in Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action*) 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 we have developed for project management (see Table 2 on page 32), that relate to strategy, structure and process. We also prepared a list of outstanding questions that we were unable to answer. We hope these questions will provide a valuable reference for government when designing the next step towards sustainable development in New Zealand.

Discussion

As discussed in Report 1b (2007c), the structure of the SDPOA did not fit the strategy. In particular, the 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 (running the machinery of government). In addition, a wide range of people were, on paper, responsible (ministers, chief executives, the DPMC and their respective committees), but no one person or agency was held accountable for performance or for reporting on progress. This finding was also supported by the review of the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG), which stated:

³¹ A more detailed explanation of the methodology is contained in Section 2 of Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action*.

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 work-streams (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. (OAG, 2007: 2.16)

The OAG review also recognised a 'suitable governance and leadership structure for cross-agency programmes as a critical factor in achieving successful outcomes' (ibid.: 2.19). The OAG identified that 'joint leadership required careful scrutiny', and that this and 'a lack of top-level leadership' were both barriers that needed to be addressed (ibid.). Frame and Marquardt (2006) also recognise the importance of governance when they state:

Governance is a pivotal change agent in most institutions. It is increasingly being recognised globally as the vehicle of change in relation to sustainability. Whole new paradigms are needed to supplement today's current practices. (Frame & Marquardt, 2006: 59)

The role of the SDPOA was not a public good advocacy role, an accountability role to the public, a centralised data collection role or a leadership role designed to drive change. It was instead an internal networking and reporting role, where key chief executives were brought together eight times over the three years of its existence to oversee progress and report back to Cabinet (OAG, 2007: 18). We understand the DPMC did have dialogue with a small number of NGOs who actively pursued contact with the department, but that this was not part of a comprehensive or wider dialogue driven by the DPMC.

The DPMC's role of informing Cabinet is clearly a critical one and did not mix well with the level of leadership and accountability needed or expected to manage a \$23 million programme of this importance and complexity. While one role required long-term thinking and project management skills, the other required expedient communication and crisis management. Matching the strategy (the nature of the role) to the structure (the institution) is therefore a key lesson to be learnt from the SDPOA.

Findings

1. Our analysis of the ten elements of the SDPOA 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 that could have been reasonably expected. Table 13 in Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* shows the results of our analysis.
2. The programme could have been better 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 reviewing progress. In particular, there was a lack of:
 - i. Specific milestones or outputs outlining how the programme would be implemented, measured, reviewed and fed back into a more strategic objective over time;³²
 - 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 and consultation in each workstream was below expectations, but communication regarding the whole programme was almost non-existent, and
 - 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 showed:
 - i. The purpose underlying the strategy was appropriate and over time has become increasingly so. However, the design was flawed because it was developed without stakeholder engagement and because it lacked linkages to a broader long-term strategic purpose;

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

4. THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

- ii. The structure did not fit the strategy. In particular, the DPMC (who arguably had the key leadership role) did not have the capacity to undertake leadership of a complex and 'whole-of-government' programme while maintaining its critical administrative role running the machinery of government; In addition, the wide range of people that were responsible on paper included ministers, chief executives, the DPMC and their respective committees, but no one person was held accountable for performance or for reporting on progress, and
 - iii. The processes linking strategy and structure were ineffective because of the lack of foresight in the planning at the initial stages of the project.
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, and
 - 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.

Conclusion

We argue that, had the SDPOA been explicitly developed from the outset as part of an ongoing process of creating an NSDS, New Zealand would have an NSDS today and we would be much further in our journey towards sustainable development. 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.

4.4.4 Review of central agencies: 2006

In April 2006, Cabinet commissioned the 'Central Agency Steering Committee' (CBC Min (06) 8/5)³³ to undertake a review of central government agencies.³⁴ The departments involved were the DPMC, Treasury and the State Services Commission. The objectives of the review were:

1. to create a shared understanding of the different dimensions of good performance and how it can be better motivated and supported by central agencies,
2. to understand how central agencies influence performance separately and together, and
3. to determine what practical steps the central agencies could take to improve performance of the system as a whole. (ibid.: 2)

This review highlights the need for cross-government solutions to 'wicked' problems (NZ Govt, 2006a: 46). In order to have the greatest impact, the review suggests that central government agencies should ensure more attention is focused on the 'vital few' rather than taking an across-the-board approach. To identify these 'vital few', there is a need to develop joint views on where priority issues lie and to identify where there is value in taking joint action on issues.

33 Retrieved September 3, 2007: <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/mallard/expenditure-review/expenditure-reviews-tranche-1-tor.pdf>

34 It was not stated explicitly in the review which central government agencies took part. Appendix 2 of the review notes that 84 interviews were undertaken and they wrote to 161 Departments, Crown entities and other public organisations, and received 21 submissions and written comments (NZ Govt, 2006b: 51).

The central agencies' work on performance is spread too thin, across too many agencies and programmes. There needs to be a shift to place more emphasis on cross-sector and system-wide work, although there would still be emphasis on some critical individual agencies and programmes. This means becoming more selective and focusing on the "vital few" issues and areas of performance that really count. More attention needs to be paid to the government's top strategic priorities and major investments and to emerging and longer-term issues that will impact on performance in the future. Strong relationships need to be built with Crown entities as a whole, and with sector leaders and monitoring agencies for Crown entities. (ibid.: 6)

Several significant findings align to those of this report:

1. Central agencies do not have an agreed definition of high performance in the State sector and what drives (or constrains) it, and are therefore less effective than they should be in monitoring and supporting good performance;
2. There is insufficient focus by the central agencies on performance at sectoral and government-wide levels relative to the attention paid to individual agencies and programmes, and
3. The performance-related work of central agencies is not well integrated, which adds to the compliance pressures on agencies and deprives the government of best quality information and advice on sector-wide performance issues. (ibid.: para 5)

As the following excerpt from the review indicates, central agencies have a key role in developing and aligning strategy across the whole of government. They provide the critical link between ministers' intentions and government actions. This review lists actions which should be taken by central agencies to ensure effective performance, namely:

1. Facilitating the strategic alignment of individual agency and sector effort with the priorities of the government as a whole [whole-of-systems approach], including identification and monitoring of the issues that are most important for public value at any given time, and advancing ways of interacting and sharing new insights of strategic importance;
2. Supporting Ministers in their decision-making by promoting and assuring processes in other agencies for good quality of analysis; appropriate consultation with stakeholders; clear presentation of options, trade-offs and opportunity costs; managing implementation; and performance monitoring, including impact on clients and the public;
3. Assisting strategic resource allocation by Ministers so that taxpayers' funds are applied in a manner that is consistent with the Government's economic, fiscal and other policy objectives, and are achieving the desired results;
4. Sustaining strategic leadership of the State sector by recruiting and appointing people of the highest quality to lead public service organisations, supporting their ongoing learning and development and that of the next generation of potential leaders;
5. Promoting and assuring strategic capability and systems so that the processes for delivering services have a results-focus and achieve excellence in terms of trust, integrity, accessibility and service quality. Similarly management information and incentive systems focused on performance are needed to enable the central agencies to fulfil their assurance responsibilities to Ministers. (ibid.: para 103)

The importance of a quality framework in the delivery of public-good outcomes is perhaps best explored in the context of the following statement:

The detrimental impact of all these expectations is compounded by the fact that responsibility for system-wide and agency performance falls heavily on a relatively small number of people — particularly senior Ministers, chief executives and senior leaders in a small number of other agencies. These people commonly carry a wide range of other responsibilities and expectations. A consequence can be that the urgent crowds out the important — in terms of the strategic, reflective, evaluative effort that is vital to a high performing and sustainable system. (ibid.: 19)

4.4.5 OECD: 2007

The 2007 OECD *Environmental Performance Review of New Zealand* (OECD, 2007a) mentioned the SDPOA briefly as a 'national approach to sustainable development'. It was noted since the previous review in 1997 New Zealand had made 'clear improvements, but more needs to be done' (Loretsen, 2007: 1). One area highlighted was the need to 'ensure that national sustainable development objectives are reflected in territorial development plans and resource consents' (OECD, 2007a: 7). This statement referring to the need for alignment between local and national strategies echoes an important principle of an NSDS.

The review made a number of recommendations throughout the following eight sectors of government:

1. Strengthening implementation of environmental policies,
2. Water,
3. Waste,
4. Nature and Biodiversity,
5. Integration of Environmental Concerns into Economic Decisions,
6. Agriculture, Forestry and the Environment,
7. Integration of Environmental and Social Decisions, and
8. International Co-operation. (ibid.)

It was also stated that 'consistent environmental indicators and trend data that can be aggregated at national level are scarce, and the sole national *State of the Environment Report* was published in 1997' (OECD, 2007a: 8). In addition, the OECD review makes the observation that there have been no major initiatives by government in the measuring and monitoring of performance (OECD, 2007a: 2). This lack of statistical information was echoed by the international speakers at the PCE20.³⁵ The OECD review included a number of specific recommendations to improve New Zealand's performance, including:

strengthen monitoring of air and water quality, and waste generation and treatment, assuring baseline consistency of methods used at local level to facilitate data aggregation and periodic reporting of key environmental indicators at national level; (ibid.: 3) [and]

expand availability of quantitative indicators and time series data related to environmental quality, assuring policy relevance and public access. (ibid.: 9)

4.5 The Missing Link—A National Strategy for New Zealand's Long-Term Future

There is a large amount of management literature on how to align visions and ideas with tools and practices. The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD), used by the international network The Natural Step (TNS), has five levels in a continuum which together identify the components necessary to achieve sustainable development. These hierarchical components are:

- Level One: Understanding of the environmental and social principles that govern these systems
 - Level Two: A vision of success governed by the conditions for sustainability
 - Level Three: Identifying strategic guidelines to achieve success
 - Level Four: Actions and
 - Level Five: Tools for measuring and carrying out the previous four levels
- (Robèrt et al., 2002: 10)

We will use the FSSD (above) to explore New Zealand's initiatives towards progressing sustainable development.

³⁵ PCE20 was the March 2007 conference held to mark the 20th anniversary of the existence of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.

4.5.1 New Zealand: Before 2007

Apart from the *Path to 2010* (National Party, 1993) mentioned at the beginning of this section, and the SDPOA, we were unable to find any other publication that could arguably be defined as an overarching high-level strategy for New Zealand's future.

1. *Path to 2010*

The *Path to 2010* (National Party, 1993), signed off by the Rt Hon. J. B. Bolger (then Prime Minister), documents a five-stage strategy from 1980 to 2010,³⁶ and states:

This is a plan for New Zealanders...The strategy is based on our assessment of where we are now, our strengths and weaknesses and what we can realistically achieve. (National Party, 1993:3)

This paper and its two subsequent updates (in 1994 and 1996) outlined a high-level, forward thinking strategic direction for government that took environmental, economic, social and cultural goals into consideration. It is a strategic document and arguably fits within a weak definition for 'sustainable development' (despite the lack of this terminology). It is unclear whether the goals set out in the document were translated into action; however, we were able to clarify that the vision document was instrumental in the development of the *Environment 2010 Strategy* (MfE, 1994).

Path 2010 is one of the few examples of how an overarching strategy document can lead to alignment of objectives across government over time (MfE, 1997). However, using the FSSD to assess its effectiveness as a strategic document, it scores poorly. The document provides some direction or vision for the country (FSSD level two component) such as 'the cleanest place on earth' and starts to articulate level three strategic guidelines such as 'cultural identity is the first foundation principle' (National Party, 1993: 28, 31) however these statements are not clearly defined or used as components to guide or measure against.

2. *Sustainable Development Programme of Action (SDPOA)*

The SDPOA (DPMC, 2003), signed off by the Hon. Marian Hobbs (then Minister for the Environment), develops a vision and ten principles.³⁷ It states:

[The SDPOA is] the government's view of the way forward.... the main purpose [is] - to set directions and outline the initial actions the government will be taking. (DPMC, 2003: 5)

[and]

the strategic intent is established through a high-level vision statement and principles to guide government policy and decision making. (ibid., 2003: 9)

We have undertaken a stakeholder evaluation of the SDPOA,³⁸ and consider that the SDPOA, as written, partially met all five FSSD levels however was far from recognising a clear definition for a sustainable future. The problem was not with the three-year design,³⁹ but in the development, implementation and completion stages, in that stakeholders were not involved in the development phase, the design was not managed and the results were not fed back into an overarching plan. Therefore, it was the standard of delivery of each level of the FSSD and the lack of rigour, not of the levels themselves, which were weak. This combined with concerns over governance and structure, as discussed in Section 4.4, resulted in the performance of the SDPOA being below what was expected. Interestingly, both documents above had very similar high-level principles and vision, leading the authors to believe that getting agreement across parties would be achievable through an NSDS.

36 These five stages of economic renewal are 1. Opening up the World (1980); 2. Setting the Fundamentals (1990 –); 3. Improving Existing Industries (1990 –); 4. Creating New Industries, Markets and Jobs (1993); and 5. Continuing to Innovate, Educate and Grow (2000 & Beyond) (National Party, 1993: 10).

37 The ten principles are also found in Appendix 9.

38 See Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* for a full evaluation.

39 We note the OAG stated 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' (OAG, 2007: 19).

4.5.2 From 2007

In 2007 the government stated that sustainability is at the centre of its strategic agenda by progressing sustainability through its work programme around the three policy themes: (i) economic transformation, (ii) families — young and old, and (iii) national identity (DPMC, 2007: 1, 8), thereby partially fulfilling the high-level aspects of the FSSD level one with regard to systems understanding. However, what was still lacking was further understanding with regard to how the state of our natural system influences these themes and how the themes affected each other.

The budget also reported on a number of actions and tools, thereby partially meeting the FSSD levels four and five (NZ Govt, 2007).⁴⁰ However, FSSD levels two (vision) and three (strategic guidelines) were not fulfilled, exposing the significant gap (and opportunity) that an NSDS would fulfil. We imagine that the government has developed an overarching strategy to guide its application of the three policy themes, the 'Six-Pack' initiative and (potentially) future actions. However, if any such strategy exists, it has not resulted from a national conversation or stakeholder dialogue, nor has it been documented, released or published. Stakeholders are therefore unable to assess, consult with or align their actions and activities with government.

An effective NSDS for New Zealand will be one that takes on a strong sustainability systems perspective and defines a clear vision of success using principles for sustainability (FSSD levels one and two). The strategy will ensure actions commence and tools for carrying out and measuring these actions are provided (FSSD levels four and five). Actions and their execution are guided by the 'vision' and 'strategic guidelines' needed to achieve success (FSSD levels two and three).

4.6 Recommendations to Government

Looking at the findings of Section 4, many strands towards sustainable development become apparent, but they do not form a strong and interwoven twine. There is no doubt that initiatives are being implemented, even progressing, but how effective and efficient are they? The ability to honestly and transparently review and learn from past actions is crucial and should be strengthened, as should wider communication with external stakeholders throughout this process. Effective engagement lends strength not just to the process, but also to the policy durability and its outcomes.

Recommendations to Government on International Relationships

Recommendation 4: Advise the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) that New Zealand currently has no NSDS.⁴³

Recommendation 5: Apply for membership and consistent representation on the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development.

Recommendation 6: Develop international relationships to increase New Zealand's capacity and expertise to prepare and implement an NSDS.

Recommendations to Government on Future Programmes

Recommendation 7: Develop new initiatives and reinforce current initiatives to ensure the 'sustainable development principles' outlined in the 2003 SDPOA are better integrated into local and national government policies and strategies.

Recommendation 8: Review the SDPOA reporting programme (DPMC, 2003: 28) and update methods of 'measuring' and 'reporting' progress towards sustainability.

Recommendation 9: Establish an agreed process for creating an NSDS.

Recommendation 10: Ensure that there are mechanisms for national strategies and objectives to be reflected in territorial development long-term plans (LTPs).

Recommendation 11: Improve the quality of internal and external communication, transparency and consultation, with an emphasis on comprehensive plans, financial budgets, accountability structures and reviews by independent parties.

⁴⁰ Please see Appendix 9 (page 91) for further information about these government initiatives.

⁴¹ Upon the implementation of Recommendation 9 below, being to develop an agreed process for creating and implementing an NSDS, our United Nations status could be updated to 'NSDS under development'.

5. The Role of Civil Society

The importance of partnership between government and stakeholders continues to be a critical thread in advancing sustainable development. In the international principle-based definitions of NSDS there is considerable emphasis on an effective NSDS being:

- Country-led and nationally owned [and]
- Defined through a participatory process involving civil society, the private sector and political stakeholders to open up debate, expose issues to be addressed, and build consensus and political support to action. (OECD, 2001b – see Appendix 2)

To our knowledge, no such inclusive discussion has taken place in New Zealand regarding a long-term vision and an NSDS.⁴² This is in contrast to what was expected when the SDPOA was proposed in 2003:

The partnership approach that government has taken means open relationships based on trust and understanding. While it is not always possible for the parties to reach agreement, there must always be a process for dialogue and co-operation. The government's relationships with other sectors provide the basis for joint work on the programme of action. This commitment to partnership also means that government agencies will need to be better co-ordinated in their dealings with others. (DPMC, 2003: 11)

There is a noticeable increase in the discussion, dialogue and action around sustainable development in the last twelve months by civil society and the private sector. We cannot accurately reflect the level of activity in this section of the paper, but we wish to acknowledge this wider contribution.

Civil society is working in a variety of ways to progress sustainable development in New Zealand. The range is diverse as indicated by such groups as Greenpeace, the Environmental Defence Society, and Fish and Game New Zealand.

The private sector have also been very active in advocating sustainable development through business organisations (such as the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Business Network); industry groups (such as the New Zealand wine industry),⁴³ and individual entities (such as Meridian Energy,⁴⁴ who now provide certified carbon-neutral energy). In addition there has been a significant growth in socially responsible investment practices.⁴⁵

In this section we discuss the contribution of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and NGOs toward progressing sustainable development in New Zealand. We limit our focus specifically to NGOs who have prepared research papers or significant think pieces on how to progress sustainability in New Zealand. From this we make a recommendation to government on the role of civil society in advancing sustainable development.

5.1 Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment continues to produce research reports that assess and promote aspects of sustainable development in New Zealand. Three recent examples include:

1. *Towards Sustainable Development*

Towards Sustainable Development: The role of the Resource Management Act 1991 (PCE, 1998) reviews the role of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and its contribution to New Zealand's sustainable development goals. The report raises strategic issues in the debate about achieving better environmental performance.

⁴² The Ministry for the Environment does meet with NGO representatives several times a year to discuss issues related to sustainable development, however there is no formal process to develop dialogue and have input into an NSDS.

⁴³ New Zealand Wine Industry: <http://www.nzwine.com/news>

⁴⁴ Meridian Energy: <http://www.meridianenergy.co.nz>

⁴⁵ See McGuinness Institute: www.mcguinnessinstitute.org

2. *Creating Our Future: Sustainable Development for New Zealand*

Creating Our Future: Sustainable Development for New Zealand (PCE, 2002) is a review of New Zealand's progress towards sustainable development with particular reference to environmental management and performance since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. At the time of publishing, the PCE clearly had no knowledge that the government was about to make a 'U-turn' in terms of sustainable development policy, as illustrated by the recommendations (a full excerpt is in Appendix 11), and the following excerpts:

The focus on developing a national strategy on sustainable development is to be applauded. It is encouraging to see the beginnings of a central government position on sustainable development. This is a significant component that has been conspicuously absent since the Earth Summit in 1992. (ibid.: 106)
[Bold added]

The Government has introduced, or has under consideration, a number of strategies and legislation that contribute in some way to aspects of sustainable development. The Government's intention is to draw all these together under an overarching sustainable development strategy. In some cases the links between the individual strategies and sustainable development are not clear because they were not developed with sustainability in mind. It would have been more logical to have in place a sustainable development strategy before all other related strategies were considered, so that the links and direction were clear. Nevertheless the production of a series of strategies in the last two years shows great promise for the implementation of sustainable development in New Zealand. (ibid.: 9)

[The report recommends] that the Prime Minister should establish an advisory body responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the Government's proposed New Zealand Strategy on Sustainable Development. (ibid.: 18)

3. *See Change: Learning and Education for Sustainability*

See Change: Learning and Education for Sustainability (PCE, 2004) is an in-depth review of education for sustainability in New Zealand and possible paths for the future.

Our dominant value systems are at the very heart of unsustainable practices. Making progress towards better ways of living therefore needs to be a deeply social, cultural, philosophical and political process — not simply a technical or economic one. Technical and economic mechanisms will certainly be key parts of the process. However, they will not come into play unless we, as a society, are prepared to openly and honestly debate the ways that our desired qualities of life can be met. That is why there must be a vastly expanded focus on education for sustainability. (ibid.: Preface)

PCE20

In 2007 the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) celebrated its first 20 years. When the PCE was set up in 1987, it was the first independent environmental watchdog of its kind in the world. A number of events coincided with the anniversary, including:

1. The PCE20 Forum: *Advancing Environmental Sustainability*⁴⁶ was held on March 1–2 to provide a summary of where New Zealand currently stands in relation to sustainable development, with 22 papers presented.
2. *Keeper of the Long View*, documenting key political figures, environmentalists and stakeholders speaking frankly about New Zealand's sustainability progress — and the PCE's role in it — was released as an independent history of the PCE (Young, 2007).
3. *Sustainability Review*: Between mid-2006 and mid-2007, the PCE has been reviewing New Zealand's progress towards sustainability. This review is the first since its 2002 report *Creating Our Future: Sustainable Development for New Zealand* (PCE, 2002). Twenty-three background papers⁴⁷ were written for the review to add to its breadth and depth.

46 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

47 Bosselman's paper *Why New Zealand Needs an NSDS* concluded that an NSDS for New Zealand should reflect the values of strong sustainability as expressed in the Earth Charter (Bosselman, 2007: 20; ECC, 2000).

The PCE20 conference reaffirmed the need for a body to steer sustainable development initiatives in New Zealand.⁴⁸ A summary of all proceedings from the conference can be accessed on the PCE20 website. An ongoing theme from the conference was that an independent body of experts is needed to progress sustainable development and while the New Zealand government fails to fund such a body, the level of government progress, partnership and accountability will be weak. Consequently, any potential benefits of independent review, such as those in the United Kingdom or the European Union, will not be realised.

Ingeborg Niestroy⁴⁹ was one of the international panellists.⁵⁰ She reflected on the work she had undertaken for the EU and her independent report *Sustaining Sustainability*, which is an insightful analysis of governance structures in respect to nine EU countries (Niestroy, 2005). Niestroy recommends:

Sustainable Development Councils are a specific mechanism for fostering dialogue among different stakeholders, which has the potential for innovative approaches and solutions, and for achieving agreements. They have a unique position of being established by governments, but being independent in their deliberations, they provide a potential for bridging the gap between government and non-government actors, and for transporting collective views and knowledge of civil society to the government. (ibid.: 12)

5.2 Significant Publications by Civil Society

The following New Zealand organisations have published research papers in order to progress sustainable development in New Zealand.

ANew New Zealand

ANew New Zealand⁵¹ aims to increase public awareness on sustainability by undertaking a number of projects including work on the development of progress indicators and publishing reports.

Ecologic Foundation

The Ecologic Foundation⁵² is a 'sustainability think tank' producing research based reports. One of its core projects focuses on two key themes that link into dialogue around New Zealand's direction in sustainable development; these are resolving tensions between democracy and sustainable development, and integrating the cost of resource use into the market economy.

The Natural Step

The Natural Step (TNS) is an international non-profit organisation that has been working since 1988 to accelerate global sustainability.

Using the internationally endorsed and tested Natural Step framework, which is based on sound science, systems thinking and practical business decision-making, we help companies, non-profit organisations, individuals and communities lead the transition to an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable future. (TNS, 2007)

Lin Roberts, then executive director of The Natural Step New Zealand, completed a *Sustainability Analysis of New Zealand* (Roberts, 2006) using the TNS Framework for the PCE20 Conference in March 2007.⁵³

New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development

NZBCSD is an incorporated society made up of about 40 member businesses. Their mission and aims are:

To provide business leadership as a catalyst for change toward sustainable development, and to promote eco-efficiency, innovation and responsible entrepreneurship. (NZBCSD, 2000)

48 *Sustainability Review: Background Papers*. Retrieved 17 May 2007 from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment website: http://www.pce.govt.nz/projects/COF2background_papers.shtml

49 Dr Ingeborg Niestroy has been the Secretary-General of the network of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Council since 1999.

50 The international representatives at the PCE20 came from a variety of backgrounds, including the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights and Environmental Commissioner, the German Council for Sustainable Development, the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability in Victoria, Australia and the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Council.

51 ANew New Zealand: <http://www.anewnz.org.nz>

52 Ecologic Foundation: <http://www.ecologic.org.nz>

53 Additional PCE20 conference papers can be found on the PCE website: http://www.pce.govt.nz/projects/COF2background_papers.shtml

In February 2000, a cross-sectoral meeting of minds to discuss and plan for the future of New Zealand was held. The meeting involved building a mutual understanding of sustainability, applying this vision to New Zealand, working out sector strategies for the future, and a discussion of the future direction of the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development.⁵⁴ The Council has continued to provide reports and run workshops on sustainability issues.

Pacific Rim Institute of Sustainable Management (PRISM)

Sustainable Development in New Zealand: Here Today, Where Tomorrow? (PRISM & Knight, 2002) was produced by the Pacific Rim Institute of Sustainable Management and Stephen Knight. The paper was a response to two international reviews of New Zealand's performance (the 1997 OECD and World Bank reports). Although PRISM no longer exists in its current form, the above mentioned paper is a frequent reference document for discussing sustainability in New Zealand.

The Royal Society of New Zealand (RSNZ)

The RSNZ works to raise critical awareness of the sciences in society. In this role it has ventured strongly into exploration and promotion of sustainable development. Of note is a discussion paper titled *Options for a Sustainable Development Advisory Body* (2004).

Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand (SANZ)

SANZ is a membership organisation that has produced a number of think pieces including a discussion paper titled *Making New Zealand Strong* (Peet, 2003). The paper makes five key recommendations. These are:

- i. Develop a National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSDS) using the 'strong sustainability' approach.⁵⁵
- ii. Consider and apply practical tools for measuring sustainability over time.
- iii. Establish a National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) responsible for developing leadership in sustainable development.
- iv. Re-write the Government's Draft Principles in line with 'strong sustainability principles'.
- v. Obtain additional information in order to determine the most appropriate strategy for sustainable development. (ibid.)

Sustainability Council of New Zealand

The Council produces a range of publications on energy, climate change and genetic modification.⁵⁶

Sustainable Future Institute

The Sustainable Future Institute⁵⁷ is an independent think-tank working on sustainability issues in New Zealand. It is a charitable trust that produces reports and manages a website to progress sustainable development in New Zealand.

5.3 Recommendation to Government

We make the following recommendation on the basis that we consider there is much to gain from greater partnership between government and civil society.

Recommendation to Government on Partnerships

Recommendation 12: Develop open and clear communication pathways with all stakeholders to enable all parties to work together to develop an effective and innovative NSDS for New Zealand.

54 New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development: <http://www.nzbcscd.org.nz/mission.asp>

55 Strong sustainability 'recognises that the economy is a subset of society (i.e. it only exists in the context of a society), and that many important aspects of society do not involve economic activity' (PCE, 2002b: 35).

56 Sustainability Council of New Zealand: <http://www.sustainabilitynz.org>

57 Since 2012 the McGuinness Institute: <http://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org>

6. Progressing an NSDS for New Zealand

Although New Zealand can no longer be a global leader in creating an NSDS, we still have an opportunity to take a leadership role by delivering an effective NSDS for a small resource-rich country located at the bottom of the world. Producing and implementing the optimal NSDS can make New Zealand a robust and resilient country for the future by providing alignment between policies at central, regional and local levels, and between the public and private sectors.

Alignment is not about central control, but about supporting decentralised control; and it is not about legislation and compliance costs, but about promoting a strategic direction and creating a national brand so that government, civil society and the private sector can work together for a better New Zealand.

In this section of the paper we discuss possible pathways to develop an NSDS and outline a range of institutional solutions based on a continuum from a central decision-making model to an advisory model.

The Way Forward

We discuss the pathways forward under the headings of strategy, structure and process. 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. In order to show what we mean by these terms, the headings are defined as follows:

- Strategy refers to the strategic design of the journey rather than to an NSDS itself.
- Structure refers to the governance and accountability framework that enables the strategy and the process to function effectively.
- Process refers to the activity that happens between strategy and the structure. Therefore, in this paper, we do not discuss the process required to progress an NSDS, as this would be more appropriate once decisions on strategy and structure are made.

The critical success factors for effective project management were developed to evaluate the SDPOA in our Report 1b, titled *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (2007c). They are reproduced in Table 2 below. A summary of key decisions for government is contained at the end of each sub-section.

Table 2: Nine Critical Success Factors for Effective Project Management

(Source: SFI, 2007c)

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 in to 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.

6.1 Strategy

Management theory emphasises the need to determine strategy first, followed by structure and lastly process. It is an ongoing iterative system where process feeds back into strategy and structure. Before determining structure we need to be very clear about the best strategy to achieve our desired output – in this case an NSDS.

Problem Definition

The problem an NSDS is trying to address is to provide excellent strategic alignment towards sustainable development. Importantly, all development needs to be sustainable, therefore the conversation, and hence the strategy, is about determining how best to position New Zealand in the future, and how best to design the journey to get us there.

This problem of alignment is not new, as recognised by Schick (1996):

Strategic alignment is a critical element of ownership, for if a department's objectives and policies are not congruent with those of the government, real damage may be done to the capacity for collective action... Misalignment occurs when the government fails to formulate and communicate its aspirations for the future in ways that can shape departmental actions. (Schick, 1996: 54)

Aligning government objectives with central government actions is difficult and will continue to challenge politicians and public servants alike. Appendix 10 explores recent government efforts to better integrate objectives and action, from 'output budgeting' in the late 1980s to *Statements of Intent* today.

We consider an NSDS is complementary to and would enhance the effectiveness of *Statements of Intent*. This is discussed in more detail in our Report 2: *New Zealand Central Government Strategies: Reviewing the Landscape 1990–2007*.

Purpose

Since 2003, we consider that the purpose of the debate has moved from 'what does sustainable development mean?' to 'how can we make sustainable development work for New Zealand?' In attempting to answer this question, we consider there are three strands that underlie New Zealanders' aspirations for the future:

1. Our legacy to future New Zealanders

The protection and maintenance of our natural resources based on an ethic that the 'world should be left in as good or better condition as when we found it'. This intergenerational equity also extends to the right of future generations to prosper and to have the freedom to choose how they want to live their lives.

2. Our social responsibility

An ethic about respecting, protecting and nurturing our heritage, our communities and people, celebrating diversity and looking after what makes New Zealanders unique.⁵⁸

3. Our clean and green brand

Our international integrity, in particular providing assurance to consumers of our products and services, and to the international community in regard to New Zealand's international commitments and expectations.⁵⁹

In a recent speech by the Prime Minister (Clark, 2007), the purpose of these aspirations is clearly spelt out. We interpret her vision to be a 'sustainable nation' and the strategic aim to be 'the first nation to be truly sustainable — across the four pillars of the economy, society, the environment, and nationhood' (ibid.).

Vision: *A Sustainable Nation*

Strategic Aim: *be the first nation to be truly sustainable — across the four pillars of the economy, society, the environment, and nationhood. (Clark, 2007)*

58 The Auckland Mana Whenua group's sustainability framework (expected to be published in September 2007) and the success of Māori Television both indicate the growing size and relevance of this strand in shaping New Zealand's future.

59 A recent example is the debate over food miles and the possibility New Zealand may need to provide assurance to UK customers about the carbon used in the production of our exports.

Strategic Options

Drawing on the Prime Minister's vision and strategic aim above, there are a number of strategic options that could be implemented to achieve the desired outcome. Frame and Marquardt (2006) highlighted six strategic options for the New Zealand government:

1. Do nothing;
2. View Sustainable Development as 'business as usual';
3. Accentuate emerging [four] workstreams;
4. Establish a second phase of the SDPOA based upon existing workstreams;
5. Establish a second phase of the SDPOA by adding additional workstreams; or
6. Prepare an NSDS. (Frame & Marquardt, 2006: 62)

Options two to six could arguably work towards achieving the above vision, but only option six:

1. Meets our international commitments;
2. Creates a mechanism to develop a legacy for future generations (the first strand above);
3. Nurtures and protects our social and cultural heritage (the second strand);
4. Adds value to the third strand, in that an NSDS provides a type of internationally recognised credential that can be used to demonstrate that a country is working towards being 'clean and green'. Therefore, an NSDS can be used to add value to New Zealand products and services by providing a level of assurance to consumers that we are not marketing an image, but a reality;
5. Allows for a whole-systems approach to sustainability. The development of an NSDS is the only option that has the capacity and scope to assess the four pillars of sustainability in a meaningful and thorough way; and
6. Most importantly, an NSDS can be used as a vehicle to align our long-term strategies and actions, across all our primary, secondary and service sectors in a comprehensive and cost effective manner. In our view, marketing, public education and voluntary initiatives are important, but ultimately more substantial government policies are also needed to ensure that sustainable businesses are not disadvantaged in relation to those utilising unsustainable practices. Therefore, an NSDS, among other things, could also:
 - a. establish mechanisms to estimate the full cost of goods and services, including their adverse effects on the environment, thus providing financial incentives to change production and consumption practices, so that adverse effects are reduced; and
 - b. provide decision-makers with more certainty over where New Zealand wants to be through the alignment of strategies and actions between all sectors, so that decisions like investing in infrastructure could be made at the right time, in the right place, for the right reasons.

Strategic Design

Once a strategic option is selected, the strategic design must be developed and documented. For example, when the Sustainable Future Institute decided it was going to produce our version of an NSDS for New Zealand, we spent a great deal of time developing our journey towards achieving this goal (Appendix 12). For a more detailed explanation of our methodology (2007a), please refer to our website.

Clearly, the Sustainable Future Institute does not have a mandate to produce such a strategy for New Zealand, but we hope that our work will fit into an 'overall government-led programme' that creates a 'country-led, nationally owned strategy' for New Zealand.

Time

Depending on the strategic design that is chosen, we consider a country-led, nationally owned NSDS for New Zealand will require approximately two years to produce, taking:

- i. six months to develop the design of the way forward with stakeholders,⁶⁰ including discussing the optimal structure,
- ii. at least twelve months to complete consultation and research, and
- iii. six months to write up the final strategy document.

We consider 1 January 2010 is a realistic, achievable and inspiring ‘implementation date’, but to be achieved, the New Zealand government needs to start now.

Funds

Once the strategic design and the timeframe are determined, the funds will need to be assessed and committed. It is difficult to assess the level of funding that might be required but we make the following observations:

1. The 2007 Budget invested over \$800 million in measures that are designed to contribute to environmental sustainability while transforming the economy and improving the lives of families.⁶¹ However, we note these investments are being made without the required investment into the overarching strategy.
2. To obtain an understanding of how to manage a national conversation, we reviewed past initiatives and considered the *Report of the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification* (DIA, 2001) might be a good starting point. We read the terms of reference and processes and noted that over the eighteen months of the Royal Commission, the Commissioners received more than 10,000 written submissions and held more than 13 weeks of formal hearings (ibid.: 6). In this time, the Royal Commission had cost in the vicinity of \$6.2 million in 2001 dollars (ibid.: Appendix A, 104).

Institutional Commitment

High-level political commitment is consistently found as a key factor for success, as indicated by the recent OECD report, titled *Institutionalising Sustainable Development* (2007), which states:

Achieving sustainable development depends a great deal on high-level political commitment, well-functioning government institutions and overcoming co-ordination failures in public policies. Involving and co-ordinating a wide range of government departments allows strategies to take a broad view of issues, give voice to a range of dispersed interests and develop trade-offs across policy areas. (OECD, 2007b: 21)

The New Zealand government has provided a great deal of high-level political commitment but has struggled with the implementation, for the reasons outlined in Section 4.5.1.

⁶⁰ As discussed in Report 1b, *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* (2007: 34), we consider that the strategy was flawed because the first four workstreams were not discussed in advance with key stakeholders and there was no overarching goal or objective to tie progress together.

⁶¹ See also Appendix 9 and NZ Govt (2007b) for further detail.

KEY DECISIONS ON STRATEGY TO PREPARE AN NSDS

1. Define what an NSDS would look like for New Zealand.
2. Decide how to create momentum and urgency.
3. Decide on the type of approach; e.g. 'whole-of-government', central or locally driven.
4. Decide how to be inclusive. For an NSDS to be accepted, it must be owned by New Zealanders, which means all New Zealanders need to be part of the process. This means designing a process that is inclusive, collaborative and ensures all interests are adequately represented.
5. Decide the place for a national conversation. This could be progressed using a number of initiatives such as a discussion document, a consultation process, workshops, public meetings and so forth. Expectations will need to be managed; in particular, stakeholders will need to be aware of trade-offs and compromise may be necessary.
6. Decide how to ensure it is country-led and nationally owned. This requires a local perspective. For example, the process could be undertaken through a local body initiative (like *Long-Term Council Community Plans*) linking to a national initiative.
7. Decide on the expertise needed to select the institutional structure.
8. Decide how to ensure that the project obtains high-level government support.
9. Decide how to communicate and reinforce it is an iterative process that (i) must be designed to be implemented and (ii) must feed into future NSDSs.

6.2 Structure

Management theory considers structure should follow strategy; therefore the strategic design will be a key determinant of the optimal structure (Chandler, 2003: 48). If the strategy is going to be a 'cross-agency programme', it requires a structure that has the capacity to support, lead and report on progress. The OAG has commented on international experiences and notes that:

The international commentary on governing sustainable development initiatives identifies suitable governance and leadership structures for cross-agency programmes as critical factors in achieving successful outcomes. For example, a House of Commons report on the United Kingdom's implementation of the World Summit commitments pointed out that programmes needing joint leadership required careful scrutiny. The Canadian Auditor-General, in a report on various cross-agency programmes, found a lack of top-level leadership and suggested that central agencies had some barriers to address. (OAG, 2007: 19)

The New Zealand Experience

There has been considerable debate and discussion in New Zealand as to the optimal institutional structure to progress sustainable development. Recent discussions in New Zealand on the topic include:

1. Basil Sharp's 2002 Treasury working paper, *Institutions and Decision-making for Sustainable Development*. Sharp concluded that:

The challenge that sustainable development poses for policy is somewhat different to many other policy problems. Governance is important to achieving the outcomes of sustainable development because it provides both structure and incentives Virtually every discussion on sustainability concludes that existing institutions are part of the problem and reform is required. Meeting the challenge of sustainable development requires clear processes for identifying and integrating economic and environmental goals and efficiently implementing the goals at all levels of responsibility. (Sharp, 2002: 48–49)

2. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's report *Creating Our Future* (PCE, 2002) recommended an 'advisory body' be created and made responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the government's proposed New Zealand Strategy on Sustainable Development. Duties would include monitoring, reviewing and reporting on progress towards sustainable development. See discussion on page 28 and Appendix 11 for the full list of recommendations.

6. PROGRESSING AN NSDS FOR NEW ZEALAND

3. In February 2004, the Royal Society of New Zealand produced a discussion paper on the *Options for a Sustainable Development Advisory Board* (2004).⁶² This paper discusses the various options for establishing an advisory board on sustainability and recommends forming a working group to consider the next steps forward.
4. At the ‘Tuning into what’s next on sustainable development?’ workshop held in Wellington in June 2006, one key point to arise was the need for governance.

Governance is a pivotal change agent in most institutions. It is increasingly being recognised globally as the vehicle of change in relation to sustainability. Whole new paradigms are needed to supplement today’s current practices. (Frame & Marquardt, 2006: 59)
5. The participants at the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE)⁶³ conference (PCE20) in February 2007 discussed the need for a new body that looks at all the sustainable development pillars of New Zealand society. One such suggestion was that Treasury should become the responsible body.
6. Additional models have also been suggested by the Ecologic Foundation⁶⁴ which is currently completing a multi-year research project looking at alternative models for governance using the Nordic countries as a model. Ecologic recently held a conference in August 2007, titled ‘Northern Lights: Democracy, Markets and Sustainability – Resolving the Tensions’, and discussed collaborative governance models to progress sustainability. Ecologic comments on the highly inclusive decision-making processes used in Sweden and Finland that promote collaborative solutions, negotiation, informed decisions and policy ownership by all political parties and external stakeholders (Ecologic Foundation, 2006).

International Experience

Appendices 1 to 6 discuss the international landscape and provide guidance and critical success factors for developing and implementing an NSDS.

This paper does not draw a conclusion as to what form this institutional body (or combination of bodies) should take, but we do list a range of institutional options, based on a continuum from a ‘decision-making’ to an ‘advisory’ model. Our initial thoughts are outlined in Table 3.

62 This was a paper prepared for the Sustainable Development Forum (SDF) in Wellington 12 March 2004. The SDF is now Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand (SANZ).

63 The office is funded to assess and advise on changes needed rather than directly create change. The function of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment is established in Part 1, Section 16 of the Environment Act 1986.

64 Information on its research programme, *Institutions for Sustainable Development*, which was funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST), is being written up over the next year in a series of reports and papers that will be available at: www.ecologic.org.nz

Table 3: Institutional Options to Progress an NSDS

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2005)

<p>Option 1 – Create a decision-making body directly connected to Cabinet.</p> <p>For example, a National Commission on Sustainable Development, chaired by the Prime Minister.⁶⁷</p>
<p>Option 2 – Utilise an existing central government body or bodies.</p> <p>Specific options could include: (i) DPMC, (ii) Treasury, or (iii) a mix of government bodies such as the Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Social Development.</p>
<p>Option 3 – Create a new central government ministry or department.</p> <p>The National Party has suggested a Ministry for Sustainable Development.⁶⁸</p>
<p>Option 4 – Establish an independent advisory body within a ministry or department.</p> <p>This option could be a board, similar to the Growth and Innovation Advisory Board,⁶⁹ which is connected to the Ministry of Economic Development.</p>
<p>Option 5 – Establish a Crown entity for sustainable development.</p> <p>This could either be a new entity or a revamp of a current entity. For example, the creation of a ‘Sustainable Development’ authority (similar to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority) or a Crown Research Institute to develop a cohesive body of knowledge on sustainable development in New Zealand that feeds into the policy development process.</p>
<p>Option 6 – Establish a Royal Commission for Sustainable Development.</p> <p>This could be similar in structure to the New Zealand Royal Commission on Genetic Modification, but have a clear purpose and timeframe to develop the first NSDS for New Zealand. Another institutional model would be a commission similar in structure to the Commission for the Future (1976–1982).⁷⁰</p>
<p>Option 7 – Expand the role of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.⁷¹</p> <p>This could be similar to the UK’s independent advisory body, the Sustainable Development Commission.⁷²</p>
<p>Option 8 – Create a Sustainable Development Council.</p> <p>For example, adopting a model similar to Ireland.^{73, 74}</p>

65 See the Finland model: <http://www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?node=4412&lan=en>

66 *A Bluegreen Vision for New Zealand* (National Party, 2006: 30).

67 The Growth and Innovation Advisory Board is a private sector ministerial advisory group appointed by the government in May 2002 to provide an independent perspective on growth and innovation issues. The Board sits to one side of the day-to-day government machinery, providing the government with access to ideas, views and advice that might not otherwise be available to it: <http://gif.med.govt.nz>

68 The terms of reference of the Commission for the Future included: 1. ‘To consult with Departments of State, The National Development Council planning organisation (including its Councils and Committees) and such other instruments of State, professional and amateur associations and other organisations to the long term development of New Zealand of (a) present policies and decisions; (b) new world developments especially in technology and (c) the possibility of world catastrophic events’.

69 The functions of the Commissioner are set out in Part 1, Section 16, of the Environment Act 1986. Sub-section (1) (a) states: ‘With the objective of maintaining and improving the quality of the environment, to review from time to time the system of agencies and processes established by the Government to manage the allocation, use, and preservation of natural and physical resources, and to report the results of any such review to the House of Representatives and to such other bodies or persons as the Commissioner considers appropriate’.

70 See UK Sustainable Development Commission: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk>

71 See Ireland’s Sustainable Development Council (Comhar), which is a membership council with the terms, membership and funds provided by government to act in an advisory capacity and manage dialogue. For example, ‘A Strategy for Ireland (NSDS) was agreed by the Government in 1997. A review of their NSDS was undertaken in 2002 in the run up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in September of that year. The partnership agreement, between Government and the social partners, *Towards 2016*, commits the Government to a review of Ireland’s national sustainable development strategy in 2007. A key priority for Comhar during its third term is to make recommendations on the review of the NSDS and to facilitate stakeholder input to the process’: http://www.comharsdc.ie/about/terms_of_ref_mandate.aspx

72 As noted in Appendix 5, Niestroy’s (2005) EU research recommends ‘Sustainable Development Councils’ as a specific mechanism for fostering dialogue among different stakeholders.

KEY DECISIONS ON STRUCTURE TO PREPARE AN NSDS

1. Decide the optimal institutional structure to create the NSDS. Decide on who is responsible for implementing the NSDS. These could be the same entity or different (e.g. one of the options in Table 3).
2. Decide on the terms of reference for the new institution. Will they be a decision-making body or an advisory body? Clarify who is responsible and accountable for what, over what timeframe. For example: who is making the final decision on the NSDS? Appreciate that developing a country-wide NSDS requires trust between stakeholders. In governance terms this means decision-makers must not have (or be seen to have) a vested interest or personal agendas.
3. Decide the expertise and technology needed to co-ordinate and report on the conversation.

6.3 Process

The type and nature of processes is determined by decisions about the strategy and structure; hence we cannot discuss the optimal process until decisions are made about the first two. This being said, the nature of processes that are more likely to lead to the purpose being achieved are the critical success factors six to nine in Table 2 on page 32.

New Zealand and international experience consistently indicates that the nature of sustainable development requires a stakeholder engagement process, which means that processes must be clear, transparent and conclusive. Therefore, once the strategy and structure are decided, the processes must be developed and made clear in order to manage expectations and optimise information and ideas.

KEY DECISIONS ON PROCESS TO PREPARE AN NSDS

1. Decide on practical and realistic strategic targets, decisions and milestones.
2. Confirm a realistic timeframe (e.g. an NSDS is prepared for implementation by 1 January 2010).
3. Confirm the funds needed to deliver the NSDS in the timeframe and the methods for linking budgeting and objectives.
4. Decide on how decisions are made, based on what information from which stakeholders.
5. Decide on how to report on progress, to whom and how often.
6. Decide on mechanisms for frequent and comprehensive review and feedback.
7. Decide how challenges can be identified early and fed back so that the strategy can be altered and/or stakeholders' expectations managed and lessons can be learnt for future NSDSs.

6.4 Recommendation to Government

Recommendation to Government on Progressing an NSDS for New Zealand

Recommendation 13: Create an NSDS that meets the critical success factors outlined in Table 2 for implementation by 1 January 2010.

7. Observations and Recommendations

In the past, New Zealand has positioned itself in the global markets as ‘100% Pure’ and ‘Clean and Green’, and in the global public policy environment as a leader in sustainable development. However, our failure to meet our international commitments, in particular to produce an NSDS, negatively impacts on our credibility in both arenas. As at August 2007, New Zealand is not in a strong position to have our practices (or lack of practices) towards sustainable development go under the microscope.

The government has clearly articulated a vision for a sustainable future and is taking steps towards this; however, there remains no tangible strategy that connects all these initiatives together under one overarching strategy. Our underlying finding is that we need both a strategy and a structure, and we need them urgently.

We make the following recommendations to government:⁷³

Recommendations to Government on International Relationships

Recommendation 4: Advise the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) that New Zealand currently has no NSDS.⁷⁴

Recommendation 5: Apply for membership and consistent representation on the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development.

Recommendation 6: Develop international relationships to increase New Zealand’s capacity and expertise to prepare and implement an NSDS.

Recommendations to Government on Future Programmes

Recommendation 7: Develop new initiatives and reinforce current initiatives to ensure the ‘sustainable development principles’ outlined in the 2003 SDPOA are better integrated into local and national government policies and strategies.

Recommendation 8: Review the SDPOA reporting programme (DPMC, 2003: 28) and update methods of ‘measuring’ and ‘reporting’ progress towards sustainability.

Recommendation 9: Establish an agreed process for creating an NSDS.

Recommendation 10: Ensure that there are mechanisms for national strategies and objectives to be reflected in territorial development long-term plans (LTPs).

Recommendation 11: Improve the quality of internal and external communication, transparency and consultation, with an emphasis on comprehensive plans, financial budgets, accountability structures and reviews by independent parties.

Recommendation to Government on Partnerships

Recommendation 12: Develop open and clear communication pathways with all stakeholders to enable all parties to work together to develop an effective and innovative NSDS for New Zealand.

Recommendation to Government on International Relationships

Recommendation 13: Create an NSDS that meets the critical success factors outlined in Table 2 for implementation by 1 January 2010.

⁷³ We also make three recommendations to international standard-setters to improve reporting. See Section 3.2.4.

⁷⁴ Upon the implementation of Recommendation 9 above, being to develop an agreed process for creating and implementing an NSDS, our United Nations status could be updated to ‘NSDS under development’.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations	
CEG	Chief Executives Group
CESD	Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development — Canada
CSD	The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee — OECD
DFID	UK Government Department for International Development
DPMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
EC	European Community
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIF	Growth and Innovation Framework New Zealand
GNI	Gross National Income
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
G7/G8 Group	The G7 Group of major industrialised democracies comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the United States. The Group of Eight (G8) also includes Russia.
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
IEEA	Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LTCCPs	Long Term Council Community Plans
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDS or NSSD	National Sustainable Development Strategy or National Strategy for Sustainable Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
PLG	Project Leaders Group
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RMA	Resource Management Act (1991)
RSNZ	Royal Society of New Zealand
SANZ	Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand

SDC	United Kingdom's Sustainable Development Commission
SDPOA	Sustainable Development Programme of Action
SDSOG	Sustainable Development Senior Officials Group
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSIG	Sustainability Special Interest Group New Zealand
TNS	The Natural Step
UKSDC	United Kingdom Sustainable Development Commission
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations International Childrens Emergency Fund
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WCS	World Conservation Strategy
WGEA	Working Group on Environmental Auditing
WHO	World Health Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Appendix 1 International Commitments

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2005).

Below are excerpts from three significant United Nations agreements, two of which refer to specific time targets (see text in shade boxes). For a detailed understanding of world events that led to these international commitments, please refer to Report 1a: *International NSDS Milestones: 1970 to Today* (SFI, 2007b).

1.1 1992

In 1992, at the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, National Sustainable Development Strategies emerged as a mechanism for change. *Agenda 21* was the first international agreement to explicitly promote nations adopting National Strategies for Sustainable Development.

Governments, in cooperation, where appropriate, with international organizations, should adopt a **national strategy for sustainable development** based on, inter alia, the implementation of decisions taken at the Conference, particularly in respect of Agenda 21. This strategy should build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country. The experience gained through existing planning exercises such as national reports for the Conference, national conservation strategies and environment action plans should be fully used and incorporated into a country-driven sustainable development strategy. Its goals should be to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations. It should be developed through the widest possible participation. It should be based on a thorough assessment of the current situation and initiatives. [Bold added] (UN, 1992: Chapter 8, Point 7)

1.2 1997

2002 The 'introduction' of an NSDS by 2002. This was agreed at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly (Rio +5) in 1997.

Below is an excerpt from the Resolution on the *Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21*. This was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1997 at Rio +5.

Sustainable development strategies are important mechanisms for enhancing and linking national capacity so as to bring together priorities in social, economic and environmental policies. Hence, special attention must be given to the fulfilment of commitments in the areas set out below, in the framework of an integrated approach towards development, consisting of mutually reinforcing measures to sustain economic growth, as well as to promote social development and environmental protection. Achieving sustainable development cannot be carried out without greater integration at all policy-making levels and at operational levels, including the lowest administrative levels possible. Economic sectors, such as industry, agriculture, energy, transport and tourism, must take responsibility for the impact of their activities on human well-being and the physical environment. In the context of good governance, properly constructed strategies can enhance prospects for economic growth and employment and at the same time protect the environment. All sectors of society should be involved in their development and implementation, as follows:

(a) **By the year 2002, the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development that reflect the contributions and responsibilities of all interested parties should be completed in all countries**, with assistance provided, as appropriate, through international cooperation, taking into account the special needs of the least developed countries. The efforts of developing countries in effectively implementing national strategies should be supported. Countries that already have national strategies should continue their efforts to enhance and effectively implement them. Assessment of progress achieved and exchange of experience among Governments should be promoted. Local Agenda 21s and other local sustainable development programmes, including youth activities, should also be actively encouraged;

(b) In integrating economic, social and environmental objectives, it is important that a broad package of policy instruments, including regulation, economic instruments, internalization of environmental costs in market prices, environmental and social impact analysis, and information dissemination, be worked out in the light of country-specific conditions to ensure that integrated approaches are effective and cost-efficient. To this end, a transparent and participatory process should be promoted. This will require the involvement of national legislative assemblies, as well as all actors of civil society, including youth and indigenous people and their communities, to complement the efforts of Governments for sustainable development. In particular, the

empowerment and the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process, are central to all efforts to achieve such development;

(c) The implementation of policies aiming at sustainable development, including those contained in chapter 3 (Combating poverty) and in chapter 29 (Strengthening the role of workers and their trade unions) of Agenda 21, may enhance the opportunities for job creation, thus helping to achieve the fundamental goal of eradicating poverty. (UN, 1997: Para 24)

1.3 2002

2005 The 'implementation' of an NSDS by 2005. This was agreed under the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (UNCED, 2002).

Below is an excerpt from the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* of the World Summit on Sustainable Development:

Para 162: Guidelines — Strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable development at the national level.

(a) Continue to promote coherent and coordinated approaches to institutional frameworks for sustainable development at all national levels, including through, as appropriate, the establishment or strengthening of existing authorities and mechanisms necessary for policy-making, coordination and implementation and enforcement of laws.

(b) **Take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005.** To this end, as appropriate, strategies should be supported through international cooperation, taking into account the special needs of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. Such strategies, which, where applicable, could be formulated as poverty reduction strategies that integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, should be pursued in accordance with each country's national priorities.

Para 163. Each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development, and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized. All countries should promote sustainable development at the national level by, inter alia, enacting and enforcing clear and effective laws that support sustainable development. All countries should strengthen governmental institutions, including by providing necessary infrastructure and by promoting transparency, accountability and fair administrative and judicial institutions.

Para 164. All countries should also promote public participation, including through measures that provide access to information regarding legislation, regulations, activities, policies and programmes. They should also foster full public participation in sustainable development policy formulation and implementation. Women should be able to participate fully and equally in policy formulation and decision-making.

Para 165. Further promote the establishment or enhancement of sustainable development councils and/or coordination structures at the national level, including at the local level, in order to provide a high-level focus on sustainable development policies. In that context, multi-stakeholder participation should be promoted.

Para 166. Support efforts by all countries, particularly developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, to enhance national institutional arrangements for sustainable development, including at the local level. That could include promoting cross-sectoral approaches in the formulation of strategies and plans for sustainable development, such as, where applicable, poverty reduction strategies, aid coordination, encouraging participatory approaches and enhancing policy analysis, management capacity and implementation capacity, including mainstreaming a gender perspective in all those activities.

Para 167. Enhance the role and capacity of local authorities as well as stakeholders in implementing *Agenda 21* and the outcomes of the Summit and in strengthening the continuing support for local *Agenda 21* programmes and associated initiatives and partnerships and encourage, in particular, partnerships among and between local authorities and other levels of government and stakeholders to advance sustainable development as called for in, inter alia, the Habitat Agenda. [Bold added] (UNCED, 2002: Para 162–167)

Appendix 2 OECD: What is an NSDS? (2001)

Source: An excerpt from an OECD *Policy Brief* (2001b).

i. What is a Sustainable Development Strategy?

Integrating social, economic and environmental objectives, taking account of their implications for different socio-economic groups and for future generations, poses many technical and political difficulties. Such complex challenges cannot be tackled on an ad hoc or piecemeal basis.

First, countries need to have a vision of progress and where they want to go in the future. Such a vision must reflect the country's history and core values and be widely shared among the public as well as economic and other players across the political spectrum. They also need to involve multiple stakeholders (including representatives of government, business, labour and civil society) in order to examine realistic yet diverse policy options and translate a broad vision into specific short and long-term objectives at the national and local levels.

Mechanisms to examine the interaction between policy decisions taken at different levels and in different sectors and their implications for different socio-economic groups are essential to achieve cross-sectoral policy integration. These mechanisms must provide for the active participation of civil society and private sector stakeholders in policy formulation and planning at various levels.

Last but not least, a capacity to monitor current social, economic and environmental conditions and likely future trends is necessary to be able to assess options and constraints, define realistic objectives, monitor progress towards agreed goals and identify necessary changes of course. Taken together, these elements form the basis of a sustainable development strategy.

In other words, a strategy is not a 'grand plan' or set of plans, but rather a set of instruments and ways of working which enable sustainable development challenges to be tackled in a coherent and dynamic way. Based on a comprehensive review of experience in developing and developed countries, the Development Assistance Committee of the United Nations Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (DAC) has sought to clarify the principles underlying effective national and local strategies for sustainable development. These are summarised below.

ii. Key Principles of Sustainable Development Strategies

These principles represent a set of desirable features of sustainable development strategies.

Country-led and nationally owned. Countries must take the lead and initiative in developing their own strategies. Sustainable development strategies cannot emerge from outside pressures.

Rooted in a vision of long-term development. The vision should reflect a consensus among social, economic and political stakeholders across the political spectrum. High-level government commitment to the vision is also essential.

Defined through a participatory process, involving civil society, the private sector and political stakeholders to open up debate, expose issues to be addressed, and build consensus and political support on action.

Based on solid analytical basis, taking account also of relevant regional issues, including a comprehensive review of the present situation and forecasts of trends and risks, including those beyond the country's control. Such analysis depends upon credible and reliable information on changing environmental, social and economic conditions, pressures and responses, and their implications for strategy objectives and indicators.

Focused on ensuring sustained beneficial impacts on disadvantaged and marginalised groups, notably the poor.

In developing a sustainable development strategy it is essential to:

Build on existing strategies and processes, rather than adding additional ones, and focus on improving the convergence, complementarity and coherence between different planning frameworks and policies. This requires mechanisms to co-ordinate different processes, and to identify and resolve potential conflicts, as well as good communication and information dissemination with a premium on transparency and accountability.

Set realistic and monitorable targets linked to clear budgetary priorities. Targets need to be challenging – but realistic in relation to financial and other constraints. The strategy needs to be fully integrated into the budget process to ensure that financial resources are available to translate it into action. Conversely, the formulation of budgets must take account of the priorities highlighted in the strategy.

Identify priority capacity development needs. This includes taking stock of the institutional, human, scientific and financial capacity of state, market and civil society stakeholders and finding ways to fill gaps.

‘Build in’ continuous monitoring and improvement from the outset. This requires developing mechanisms and indicators to track progress, capture lessons from experience, and identify necessary changes of course. Local capacities for analysis and existing information should be fully utilised.

Define the roles, responsibilities and relationships of key participants in strategy processes early on. Governmental, civil society and private sector stakeholders should agree on the ‘rules of the game’ and be bound to clearly defined standards of behaviour.

Link national and local levels. Policy-making and planning should involve two-way iterative processes within and between national and decentralised levels of governments. The main strategic principles and directions should be set at the central level but detailed planning, implementation and monitoring would be undertaken at a decentralised level, with appropriate transfer of resources and authority.

Appendix 3 OECD: Good Practices (2006)

Source: An excerpt from *Good Practices in the National Sustainable Development Strategies of OECD Countries* (OECD, 2006: 7–8).

An OECD review has attempted to identify successful practices in the national sustainable development strategies implemented in the different circumstances of the OECD countries as indicated below:

1. **Policy integration** – national strategies should give consideration to environmental, economic and social concerns in integrated approaches contained in national plans and reports.
2. **Intergenerational timeframe** – national strategies should adopt long-term timeframes which enable inclusion of intergenerational principles and indicators.
3. **Analysis and assessments** – integrated assessment tools should be used in national reports to identify the environmental, economic and social costs and benefits of policy and strategy options.
4. **Co-ordination and institutions** – a wide range of government departments and agencies should be involved in the formulation and implementation of national strategies, with overall responsibility in the office of the Prime Minister or equivalent.
5. **Local and regional governance** – local and regional authorities should be fully involved in the development of national strategies, with certain delivery aspects devolved to sub-national levels.
6. **Stakeholder participation** – stakeholders (e.g. business, unions, non-governmental organisations) should participate with government representatives in commissions responsible for developing and implementing national strategies.
7. **Indicators and targets** – strategies should be based on structured indicator systems (enumerated in national plans and reports) to assist in monitoring progress and to serve as quantitative targets.
8. **Monitoring and evaluation** – independent bodies or processes should be established to act as watchdogs monitoring implementation of national strategies and providing recommendations for their improvement.

Appendix 4 IIED: Principles for NSDS (2002)

Source: An excerpt from *Sustainable Development Strategies: A Resource Book*, compiled by Barry Dalal-Clayton and Stephen Bass of the International Institute for Environment and Development (Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2002: 33).

These are principles towards which strategies should aspire. They are all important and no order of priority is implied. They do not represent a checklist of criteria to be set, but encompass a set of desirable processes and outcomes which allow for local differences.

People-centred – An effective strategy requires a people-centred approach, ensuring long-term beneficial impacts on disadvantaged and marginalised groups, such as the poor.

Consensus on long-term vision – Strategic planning frameworks are more likely to be successful when they have a long-term vision with a clear timeframe upon which stakeholders agree. At the same time, they need to include ways of dealing with short- and medium-term necessities and change. The vision needs to have the commitment of all political parties so that an incoming government will not view a particular strategy as representing only the views or policies of its predecessors.

Comprehensive and integrated – Strategies should seek to integrate, where possible, economic, social and environmental objectives. But where integration cannot be achieved, trade-offs need to be negotiated. The entitlements and possible needs of future generations must be factored into this process.

Targeted with clear budgetary priorities – The strategy needs to be fully integrated into the budget mechanism to ensure that plans have the financial resources to achieve their objectives, and do not only represent a ‘wish list’. Conversely, the formulation of budgets must be informed by a clear identification of priorities. Capacity constraints and time limitations will have an impact on the extent to which the intended outcomes are achieved. Targets need to be challenging – but realistic in relation to these constraints.

Based on comprehensive and reliable analysis – Priorities need to be based on a comprehensive analysis of the present situation and of forecasted trends and risks, examining links between local, national and global challenges. The external pressures on a country – those resulting from globalisation, for example, or the impacts of climate change – need to be included in this analysis. Such analysis depends on credible and reliable information on changing environmental, social and economic conditions, pressures and responses and their correlations with strategy objectives and indicators. Local capacities for analysis and existing information should be fully used, and different perceptions among stakeholders reflected.

Incorporate monitoring, learning and improvement – Monitoring and evaluation need to be based on clear indicators and built into strategies to steer processes, track progress, distil and capture lessons, and signal when a change of direction is necessary.

Country-led and nationally-owned – Past strategies have often resulted from external pressure and development agencies’ requirements. It is essential that countries take the lead and initiative in developing their own national or local strategies if they are to be enduring.

High-level government commitment and influential lead institutions – Such commitment – on a long-term basis, is essential if policy and institutional changes are to occur, financial resources are to be committed and for there to be clear responsibility for implementation.

Building on existing mechanisms and strategies – A strategy for sustainable development should not be thought of as a new planning mechanism, but instead build on what already exists in the country at national, regional or local levels, thus enabling convergence, complementarity and coherence between different planning frameworks and policies. This requires good management to ensure coordination of mechanisms and processes, and to identify and resolve potential conflicts. The roles and responsibilities and relationships between the different key participants in strategy process must be clarified early on.

Effective participation – Broad participation helps to open debate to new ideas and sources of information; expose issues that need to be addressed; enable problems, needs and preferences to be expressed; identify the capabilities required to address them; and develop a consensus on the need for action that leads to better implementation. Central government must be involved (providing leadership, shaping incentive structures and allocating financial resources) but multi-stakeholder processes are also required involving decentralized authorities, the private sector and civil society, as well as marginalized groups. This requires good communication and information mechanisms with a premium on transparency and accountability.

Link national and local levels – Strategies should be two way iterative processes within and between national and decentralized levels. The main strategic principles and directions must be set at the central level (here, economic, fiscal and trade policy, legislative changes, international affairs and external relations, etc. are key responsibilities). But detailed planning, implementation and monitoring would be undertaken at a decentralized level with appropriate transfer of resources and authority.

Develop and build on existing capacity – At the outset of a strategy process, it is important to assess the political, institutional, human, scientific and financial capacity of potential state, market and civil society participants. Where needed, provisions should be made to develop the necessary capacity as part of the strategy process. A strategy should optimize local skills and capacity both within and outside government.

Appendix 5 International Standard-Setters

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2005).

The international standard-setters who are monitoring and reporting on the quality of national strategies include IIED, the IISD, the UN, the EU and the OECD. This Appendix provides a brief background on each.

5.1 International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

IIED is an international policy research institute and non-governmental body working for more sustainable and equitable global development. Based in London, they work globally through a wide range of long-standing relationships with partners across the developing world. Some of these relationships go back to their beginning in 1971.⁷⁵

5.2 International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

The IISD has made a considerable contribution to NSDS guidance on process, and has produced a number of publications referring to both best practice and review.⁷⁶

5.3 United Nations

The United Nations' role has been to coordinate meetings and report results.

5.4 European Commission

The European Commission (EC) embodies and upholds the general interest of the European Union (EU) and is the driving force in the Union's institutional system. The EU has made significant progress in this area by ensuring all new members start working towards an NSDS. The EU calls on member states, citizens, businesses, social partners and all other stakeholders to join forces behind the strategy and bring about real change (EC, 2007). The EU strategy was renewed in 2006 (see Table 4), to reaffirm the EU's commitment to sustainable development (EC, 2006a).

The overall aim of the renewed EU SDS is to identify and develop actions to enable the EU to achieve continuous improvement of quality of life both for current and for future generations, through the creation of sustainable communities able to manage and use resources efficiently and to tap the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy, ensuring prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion. (ibid.: para 5)

Future reviews of members' NSDSs should be undertaken every two years starting in 2007 (EC, 2006a: para 38). Member states elaborating their first NSDSs are directed to complete these by June 2007 in the light of the revised EU NSDS, to ensure consistency, coherence and mutual support, bearing in mind specific circumstances in the member states (ibid.: para 40).

The most recent update of 25 European country profiles can be found in the *Summary Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies in the EU* (EC, 2004).

75 IIED: <http://www.iied.org>

76 IISD Publications Centre: <http://www.iisd.org/publications>

Table 4: Key Objectives of the Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy 2006

Source: EC 2006a: para 6

Environmental Protection	Safeguard the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity, respect the limits of the planet's natural resources and ensure a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. Prevent and reduce environmental pollution and promote sustainable consumption and production to break the link between economic growth and environmental degradation.
Social Equity and Cohesion	Promote a democratic, socially inclusive, cohesive, healthy, safe and just society with respect for fundamental rights and cultural diversity that creates equal opportunities and combats discrimination in all its forms.
Economic Prosperity	Promote a prosperous, innovative, knowledge-rich, competitive and eco-efficient economy which provides high living standards and full and high-quality employment throughout the European Union.
Meeting Our International Responsibilities	Encourage the establishment and defend the stability of democratic institutions across the world, based on peace, security and freedom. Actively promote sustainable development worldwide and ensure that the European Union's internal and external policies are consistent with global sustainable development and its international commitments.

A benchmark study of nine EU member states by Ingeborg Niestroy,⁷⁷ *Sustaining Sustainability*, reported that 'it was the underlying governance dimension that turns out to be of greatest relevance for SD policies' (Niestroy, 2005). Niestroy supported an organic model for developing NSDSs, stating:

The processes themselves need most attention: Moving towards sustainable development is a process, and most countries meanwhile characterise it as a "learning" process. Such an insight in a way is already a result of "learning" that SD strategies cannot be implemented like a "plan", but need flexible approaches on the government side with at the same time firm and accountable objectives, and ideally also quantitative targets. (ibid.: 11)

European Commission Guidebook

The 2006 report by the European Commission (EC), *A Guidebook for Peer Reviews of National Sustainable Development Strategies* (EC, 2006b), was published in February 2006 predominantly as a result of the French review of 2003 (IIED, 2005). The EC report states that:

Member States face a number of common challenges in preparing, implementing and reviewing their strategies. These relate to adopting appropriate institutional and procedural arrangements, creating a sense of ownership by the target groups, securing international collaboration, prioritising and concretising actions, formulating a coherent vision and agreeing on a path for long-term development. The Commission's analysis also found weak evidence of vertical policy coherence between the different policy levels, and in particular between the EU and the national level.

Given the wide diversity of approaches in the EU's member states, as well as weak vertical links and many common challenges, there is a clear potential to:

- Better identify, pool and exchange national experiences;
- Develop greater synergies and complementarities between NSDSs and between NSDSs and the EU SDS; and
- Generate information that can be used to inform assessments of progress across the EU and globally. (EC, 2006b: 1)

⁷⁷ Dr Ingeborg Niestroy has been the Secretary-General of the network of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Council since 1999.

With this in mind, the Commission's proposal for a revised EU SDS launched the idea to conduct a peer review process:

[The review] is intended to encourage Member States to work towards similar approaches to their individual NSDS reviews, with a view to facilitating Member State learning and the generation of EU-wide lessons. It also serves as a means of awareness raising, reaching consensus on values, building commitment, creating an environment with the right incentives, and working on shared tasks, all core to achieving sustainable development. (EC, 2006b: 2–3)

The *EU Strategy for Sustainable Development* (EC, 2001) was adopted by the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001. It focuses on five key priorities: limiting climate change and increasing the use of clean energy; addressing threats to public health; managing natural resources more responsibly; improving the transport system, and land use. Five years on, in June 2006, the European Council adopted the *Renewed NSDS for an Enlarged EU* (EC, 2006a). It builds on the 2001 *Gothenburg Strategy* and is the result of the extensive review process outlined above.

5.5 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

The OECD has a number of guidance references for the development and review of NSDSs. These include how states can support each other in the creation of NSDSs, outlined in *The DAC Guidelines: Strategies for Sustainable Development: Guidance for development co-operation* (OECD, 2001a).

This document provides policy guidance on good practice in developing and implementing strategies for sustainable development. The guidance focuses on the experience of developing countries, but many of the issues covered and lessons drawn are of equal relevance to developed countries. While the guidance looks at how development co-operation agencies can best assist developing countries, it should also be of value to policy-makers, planners and development practitioners in all countries, as well as of interest to academics, students and development analysts. (ibid.: 3)

In 2007 the OECD published *Institutionalising Sustainable Development* (OECD, 2007b) as a set of recommendations for the true 'institutionalisation' of sustainable development. The OECD view is that 'institutionalisation' will embed the concept in government operations for the long term, and reduce the vulnerability of sustainable development aims to shorter-term political objectives.

The OECD published the second round of its *Environmental Performance Review of New Zealand* on 5 April 2007 (OECD, 2007a). The emphasis of the review is on implementation of domestic and international environmental policy, as well as on the integration of economic, social and environmental decision-making.

Appendix 6 International Reviews of NSDSs

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2005).

The following international reviews shed light on some of the elements useful for building an effective and transparent NSDS framework. Important messages include:

1. International peer reviews can provide mutual learning based on shared experience, and can assist countries without NSDSs to develop their own;
2. Independent reviews of NSDSs are an excellent way of improving performance;
3. Coordinating and integrating government levels (e.g., central, regional and local government) assists implementation;
4. Linking and aligning NSDSs to regional agreements, such as in the EU or UK, is very effective;
5. Fostering ownership, transparency and engagement with stakeholders increases the chances that the NSDS will be implemented successfully; and
6. A variety of monitoring approaches are available to measure the success of an NSDS. There is consensus among the OECD, UN and IIED, who highlight that monitoring is an essential element of a successful process.

6.1 International Institute for Environment and Development 2006

The International Institute for Environment and Development's (IIED) *A Review of Monitoring Mechanisms for National Sustainable Development Strategies* (Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2006) considers how monitoring NSDSs contributes to their strategic purpose. Table 5 lists these various approaches and gives examples of where they are used. The advantages and challenges of each approach are not commented on here but can be found in Section 5.2 of the original report. However, whichever the approach taken, there is consensus between the OECD, UN and IIED that monitoring is an essential element of a successful process. This consensus highlights the need for monitoring to enable learning about whether a strategy is on the right path and what successes it is achieving.

Table 5: Examples of Recent Reviews of NSDSs

Source: Adapted from Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2006

Monitoring NSDSs: Approaches	Examples ⁸⁰
Peer Review	African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM, 2005) Peer review of French NSDS (IIED, 2005)
Internal Reviews	UK government reporting progress towards sustainable development (HM Government, 1999)
External Auditing	Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD, 2003) International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI): Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA, 2006)
Parliamentary Reviews	German Parliamentary Advisory Council on SD (Jänicke, 2001) Netherlands SD Action Programme Annual Reporting (Dutch Government, 2004)
Budgetary Reviews	Netherlands SD Action Programme (Dutch Government, 2004)
Indicator-based and Quantitative Monitoring	Norway's Core Set of SD Indicators (Alfsen & Moe, 2005) UK's Audit Commission (UK Commission, 2006)
Public-local Monitoring	Netherlands' Local Sustainability Metre (COS Netherlands, 2006)
International Monitoring	OECD Performance Review (OECD, 2007a)
Monitoring EU Strategy	Review and Indicators (EEAC, 2005)

6.2 International Institute for Sustainable Development 2004

In 2004 the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) released a paper titled *National Strategies for Sustainable Development: Challenges, approaches and innovations in strategic and co-ordinated action*, based on an analysis of the NSDSs of 19 countries (IISD, 2004). The review identified additional challenges in relation to strategic aspects of leadership, planning, implementation, monitoring and learning, and cross-cutting aspects of coordination and participation. The approaches and tools observed in relation to each aspect were presented, along with detailed innovative examples (IISD, 2004: xiii–xiv). The paper identified a number of key characteristics (ibid.: ix–x) that influence the effectiveness of NSDSs, including:

1. An integrated set of indicators to allow analysis of the inherent trade-offs and inter-linkages among the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
2. The overarching vision and specific objectives created through a national sustainable development strategy process still have little influence on national budget expenditures or revenue-generating processes. Most NSDSs simply remain at the periphery of government decision-making.
3. Co-ordination of sustainable development efforts at sub-national and local governance levels.
4. Implementation of a mix of policy initiatives, in particular effective use of economic instruments which are typically underutilised.

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The second column titled 'Examples' has been significantly reduced. Those interested in a full list should refer to the source.

6.3 United Kingdom Sustainable Development Commission 2004 and 2005

Although not an international review, the report by the UK Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) *Shows Promise ... But Must Try Harder* (UK Commission, 2004) provides some useful insights. It is an independent assessment of the UK government's reported progress on sustainable development from 1999 to 2004, and its NSDS *A Better Quality of Life* (HM Government, 1999). The first of 20 challenges provided in the report provides insight for the creation of a new strategy:

Challenge One — New Strategy

The Commission's first challenge to the Government is – to create a new Strategy that is unified and much more strongly driven by a fundamental over-arching commitment to sustainability at all levels and in all parts of Government; it should be a core part of the programme of all Departments, led from the centre.

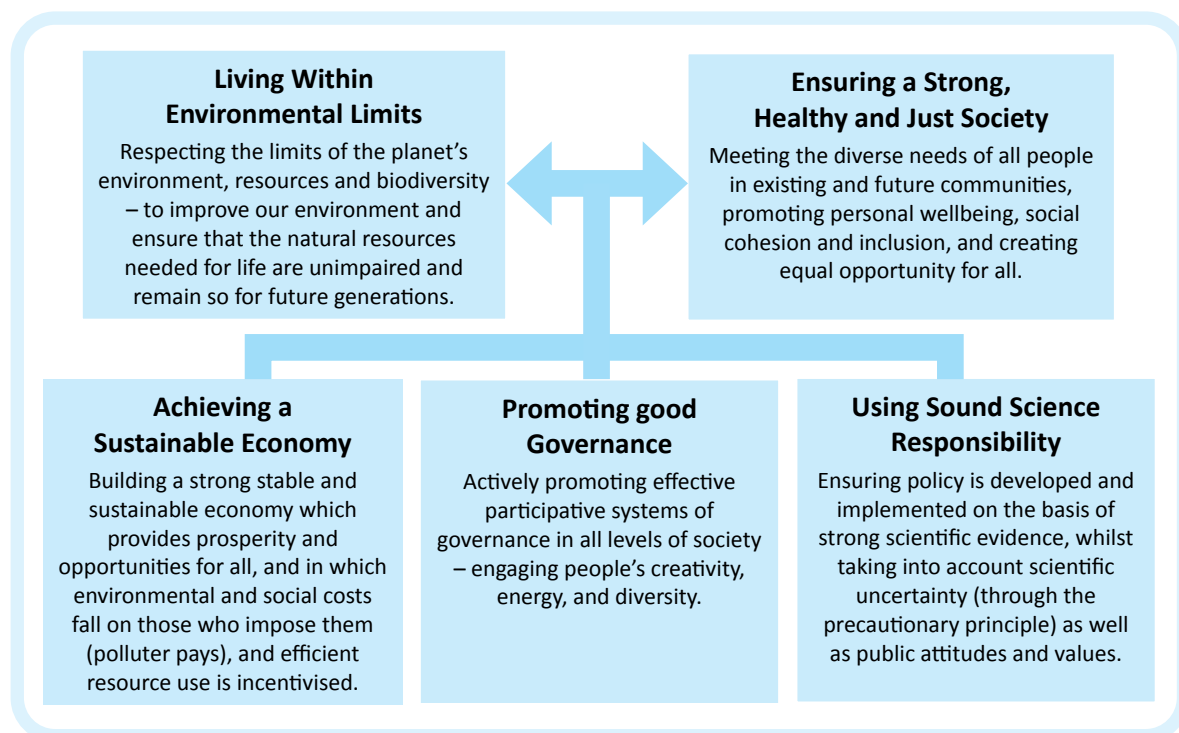
The new Strategy must:

- ensure that sustainable development principles and practices are mainstreamed into all Government programmes and policies and into the central determination of priorities and allocation of resources;
- galvanise all our institutions at national, regional and local level and inspire the whole of our society towards the changes that are needed;
- actively engage key stakeholders, including communities and the wider public, in the changes that are needed;
- be driven by a much more vigorous and well directed communications and engagement strategy built around key sustainability challenges; and
- be vigorously implemented and effectively monitored. (UK Commission, 2004: 4)

The challenge of developing a new strategy was taken up by the UK government with the publication *Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy* (HM Government, 2005a). The principles are outlined in the UK Framework for Sustainable Development, *One Future — Different Paths: The UK's shared framework for sustainable development strategy* (HM Government, 2005b) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: UK Framework for Sustainable Development

Source: HM Government, 2005b: 8



6.4 UN Expert Group Meetings — Reviewing NSDSs

Since 2001, the United Nations has convened four regional meetings to facilitate the understanding of NSDSs and related sustainable development indicators, providing a forum for peer reviewing NSDSs, and sharing experience among interested countries and organisations. The UN Expert Group Meeting on Reviewing National Sustainable Development Strategies, held in New York in 2005, highlighted:

1. International peer review processes can promote mutual learning and can serve as a catalyst for countries to use new methodologies and foster constructive dialogue.
2. Peer review can help guide a country that has no NSDS or is about to embark on an NSDS process, by ‘mapping’ the building blocks of a Strategy, such as identifying the range of existing strategic planning and decision-making processes that it can be built upon, their complementarities or lack thereof, and what coordination mechanisms exist or might be established.
3. An NSDS needs to contain proper consideration for the delivery of the strategy and its goals, including thorough and appropriate monitoring and establishment of an action plan with clear targets and timetables.
4. The UN, EU and OECD should seek a common flexible approach to peer reviews with minimum methodological requirements.

6.5 OECD Review

See Appendix 3 for an excerpt from *Good Practices in the National Sustainable Development Strategies of OECD countries* (OECD, 2006: 7–8).

6.6 Additional Reviews

Other reviews not discussed above include:

The 2005 review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy: Initial stock-taking and future orientations. (CEC, 2005)

Communication of the Commission to the Council European Parliament on the Review of the Sustainable Development Strategy: A platform for action. (EC, 2005)

Civil Society Monitoring the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development: From commenting to shared ownership. (SC, 2006)

Achieving a Better Quality of Living: Review of progress towards sustainable development. (HM Government, 2001)

UK Government Sustainable Procurement Action Plan (incorporating the Government response to the sustainable procurement task force). (HM Government, 2007)

Donor–Developing Country Dialogues on National Strategies for Sustainable Development. (OECD, 2000)

Reviewing National Sustainable Development Strategies. (UN, 2005)

Appendix 7 United Nations Country Databases

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2005).

Below are five UN websites that provide country profile databases.

7.1 Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) Country Profiles Project

Country Profiles Project: United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. Retrieved April 1, 2007 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/wssd>

Agenda 21 recommended that member states consider preparing national reports and communicating the information therein to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Each profile covers all 40 chapters of *Agenda 21*, as well as those issues that have been separately addressed by the CSD since 1997. The 2002 Country Profiles series provides the most comprehensive overview to date of the status of implementation of *Agenda 21* at the national level including trade, energy, transport, sustainable tourism and industry. Each Country Profile is based on information updated from that contained in the national reports submitted annually by governments. Importantly, the register provides an opportunity for countries to publish their NSDSs.

7.2 UNEP Net Country Profiles

Country Profiles. New York: United Nations Environmental Protection Agency. Retrieved April 1, 2007 from: <http://www.unep.net/profile/index.cfm>

Country Profiles provide a brief overview of the national state of the environment and of a country's international environmental activities. The information is provided by national representatives and is updated by each country on a regular basis. Currently 79 profiles are complete, but some basic information is available for all countries.

7.3 Food and Agriculture Organization Country Profiles

FAO Country Profiles and Mapping Information System. Retrieved June 1, 2007 from: <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/default.asp?lang=en>

FAO Country Profiles and Mapping Information System: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the United Nations and its 190 members highlight information as one of the priority areas in fighting hunger and achieving food security. The FAO Country Profiles and Mapping Information System is a pioneering information retrieval tool which groups the organization's vast archive of information on its global activities in agriculture and development in a single area and catalogues it exclusively by country.

7.4 Population Division Country Profiles

National Trends in Population, Resources, Environmental and Development: Country Profiles. United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division. Retrieved July 12, 2007 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/countryprofile/index.htm>

The 2005 compilation of the data shown in these Country Profiles was made possible by the substantive support of various United Nations agencies and departments at the United Nations Secretariat. In addition to population estimates and projections produced by the Population Division, the data series shown in here include statistics provided by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and by FAO, ILO, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO, the World Bank, the World Resources Institute, the International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC) and the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Centre.

7.5 National Information (including NSDS) Profiles

United Nations National Information. Retrieved April 1, 2007 from:
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natinfo/natinfo.htm>

National information includes information submitted biennially in national reports by member states to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Also included are 2002 Country Profiles and 2002 National Assessment Reports prepared for the Johannesburg World Summit, as well as 1997 Country Profiles prepared for the Five-Year Review of the Earth Summit.

Appendix 8 International NSDs by Country

Table 6: Individual Country NSDs or the Next Best Publication Available

Source: Adapted from UNDESA <http://www.undeva.it>

Country/Continent	Titles and URLs		Date
Africa	The New Partnership for Africa's Development and Programme of Action www.nepad.org/2005/files/documents/inbrief.pdf		(2001)
Australia	National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development www.deh.gov.au/esd		(1992)
Austria	A Sustainable Future for Austria: The Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development www.nachhaltigkeit.at/strategie/pdf/strategie020709_en.pdf www.nachhaltigkeit.at/strategie.php3?strat_strategie.php3 www.lebensministerium.at/index		(2002)
Belgium	Federal Plan for Sustainable Development www.cidd.fgov.be/pub/PL200401/PL200401en.pdf www.cidd.fgov.be/pub/detail_pub.stm?pub=PL200401&TPub=Plan www.cidd.fgov.be		(2004–2008)
Bhutan	National Environmental Action Plan www.searo.who.int/EN/Section23/Section1318/Section1790.htm www.regserver.unfccc.int/seors/file_storage/phdwpq3nd5xoslk.pdf		(1998)
Cameroon	Cameroon Poverty Reduction Paper www.imf.org/external/country/cmr/index.htm		(2003)
Canada	A Guide to Green Government www.sdnfo.gc.ca/reports/en/ggg/Default.cfm		(1995)
Costa Rica	Capacity 21 Evaluation: Costa Rica www.undp.org/capacity21/docs/evaluations/CostaRica.doc		(2004)
Cuba	Preventing Poverty through Sustainable Development at the Community Level www.undp.org/cu/pdhl/Documentacion/cuba-pdhl-ingles.pdf		(2002)

Individual Country NSDS or the Next Best Publication Available

Source: Adapted from UNDESA <http://www.undesa.it>

Country	Titles and URLs	Date
Italy	Strategia d'azione ambientale per lo sviluppo sostenibile in Italia www.unece.org/stats/documents/2006/04/sust-dev/wp.10.e.pdf www.agenda21.it/ita/A21verde/svilupposost/strategia_azione_ambientale.pdf	(2002)
Japan	Basic Environment Plan and Indicators www.japanfs.org/index.html www.soumu.go.jp/joho_tsusin/policyreports/english/misc/Basic-Plan.html	(2000)
Jordan	Approaches to Sustainability: Jordan's National Agenda 21 "Small Country, Big Ideas" www.capacity.undp.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=519 www.capacity.undp.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=573	(2001)
Kazakhstan	www.rrcap.unep.org/projects/nsds/pub/ATT00032.pdf	
Korea	The Korean National Strategy for Sustainable Development www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/tmKorea/backgroundReport.pdf www.rrcap.unep.org/projects/nsds/pub/NSDSKorea.pdf www.pcsd.go.kr/eng/index.html	(2006)
Lithuania	National Strategy for Sustainable Development www.am.lt/VI/en/VI/files/0.901665001073997792.pdf	(2003)
Luxembourg	Plan National pour un Développement Durable www.environnement.public.lu/developpement_durable/publications/PNDD_1999_brochure/PNDD_brochure_00_07_PDF.pdf www.environnement.public.lu/developpement_durable/publications/PNDD_1999_brochure/index.html www.environnement.public.lu/developpement_durable/index.html?SID=84e07e9506a7cace52ed8c98f0af3d80	(1997)
Malta	A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands 2006–2016 third draft http://home.um.edu.mt/islands/hcsd/draftstrategydocument_2006.pdf	(2006)
Mexico	Programa para Promover el Desarrollo Sostenible en el Gobierno Federal (in Spanish) www.sener.gob.mx/work/sites/SenerNva/recursos/LocalContent/3709/1/programaenergiamedioambiente2.pdf	(2002)
Mongolia	Mongolia's Journey Towards Sustainability www.rrcap.unep.org/projects/nsds/pub/hcsd_mongolia.pdf	

Individual Country NSDS or the Next Best Publication AvailableSource: Adapted from UNDESA <http://www.undeva.it>

Country	Titles and URLs	Date
Netherlands	A National Strategy for Sustainable Development — What Choices Must the Government Make www.international.vrom.nl/Docs/Internationaal/2695%20NSDO%20Samenvatting%20ENG.pdf Netherlands Sustainable Development Action Programme www.un.org/esa/sustdev/hatinfo/nsds/progress_report.pdf	(2001)
New Zealand	Sustainable Development in New Zealand Programme of Action www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/sus-dev/sus-dev-programme-of-action-ian03.html	(2003)
Norway	Norway's National Strategy for Sustainable Development www.regjeringen.no/upload/kilde/ud/bro/2003/0013/ddd/pdfv/171847-nsbu.pdf	(2002)
Philippines	The Philippine Council for Sustainable Development: Like Cooking Rice Cakes www.pdf.wri.org/ncsd_philippines.pdf	(1998)
Poland	Poland 2025 Long-term Strategy for Sustainable Development www.rec.hu/sdconference/doc/PL_strategia.doc www.ceu.cz/edu/ma21/strategy_poland.htm	(2000)
Portugal	National Strategy for Sustainable Development www.desenvolvimentosustentavel.pt/ (in Portuguese)	(2002)
Republic Slovak	National Strategy for Sustainable Development for the Slovak Republic www.tur.sk/doc_en/Slovakia_NSDS_Final.pdf www.tur.sk/index.stm?apc=0-5ed5460afc52a69ce1aa16a204115b39-1-1&x=86783	(2002)
Republic of Uzbekistan	National Environmental Action Plan www.enrin.grida.no/ara/nea/eneapuzb.pdf	(1997)
Romania	National Sustainable Development Strategy www.sdnr.ro/ncdpublications/NSDS.pdf	(1999)
Slovenia	Environmental Performance www.unecce.org/env/epr/studies/slovenia/welcome.htm	
Spain	www.mma.es/imagenes/ceneam/blanco/pocas.pdf	

Individual Country NSDS or the Next Best Publication Available

Source: Adapted from UNDESA <http://www.undesa.it>

Country	Titles and URLs	Date
Sweden	A Swedish Strategy for Sustainable Development — Economic, Social and Environmental www.sweden.se/upload/Sweden_se/english/publications/RK/PDF/RK%20Sustainable%20development.pdf www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2066	(2003)
Switzerland	Sustainable Development Strategy www.are.admin.ch/themen/nachhaltig/00262/00528/index.html?lang=en	(2002)
Syria	The Syrian National Strategy Report for Sustainable Development www.rrcap.unep.org/projects/nsds/pub/syria_natl_asses.pdf	(2001)
Tajikistan	National Sustainable Development Strategy — 2nd edition www.untj.org/library/?mode=details&id=281	(2006)
The Netherlands	Sustainable Action — the National Strategy international.vrom.nl/docs/international/summary%20actionprogramma%20SD%20text.pdf	(2002)
Turkmenistan	Country Programme Action Plan www.undptkm.org/files/co/cpap.pdf www.undptkm.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=32	(2005)
United Kingdom	Securing the Future — UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/SD%20Framework.pdf www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/strategy/SecFut_complete.pdf Scotland: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/12/1493902/39032 Northern Ireland: www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/sustain-develop.pdf Wales: new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/403826/action-plan-e.pdf?lang=en	(2005)
United States	Sustainable Development Partnerships www.sdp.gov/sdp/usgweb	
Vietnam	Vietnam Poverty Reduction Strategy www.rrcap.unep.org/projects/nsds/pub/Vietnam_Poverty2006.pdf	(2006)

Appendix 9 New Zealand Government Initiatives

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2005).

The following is a list of central government initiatives that aim to promote sustainable development. The events below are listed in chronological order to illustrate the opportunity that exists to pull the numerous uncoordinated strands together to create an overarching strategy that works efficiently and effectively towards the common goal of a sustainable future.

Prior to 2000

Prior to 2000, the efforts of successive New Zealand governments to meet *Agenda 21* commitments and promote sustainable development were weak (PCE, 2002: 102).⁷⁹

2000: Cabinet Adopts the Brundtland Definition

Cabinet agreed to the definition and concept of sustainable development outlined in the Brundtland Report (NZ Govt, 2000). The government acknowledged that sustainable development involves:

thinking broadly about objectives, considering long-term as well as short-term effects, assessing indirect as well as direct effects, and taking extra care when changes brought about by development may be irreversible... [and] having an approach to government policy that integrates social, environmental and economic issues. (ibid.: para 2 and 3)

2001: Cabinet Directs Officials to Investigate an NSDS

In April 2001, Cabinet directed officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (lead), Economic Development, Treasury, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Environment and Social Policy to report back to the Cabinet Policy Committee by 30 June 2001 on the scope, process and timetable for the development of an integrated New Zealand NSDS.⁸⁰

2001: Cabinet Agrees to Develop an NSDS

In July 2001, a paper titled *Proposal — New Zealand Sustainable Development Strategy* (NZ Govt, 2001) was prepared for the Cabinet Policy Committee by the Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Minister of Social Policy and Employment, and Minister for the Environment. This paper included comment on background, options for government action to develop the strategy and key recommendations.

On 9 July 2001, after referral from the Cabinet Policy Committee, Cabinet:

(3) Agreed that the Government adopt an approach to sustainable development which includes both:

(3.1) A number of practical steps which will improve current practice and provide national leadership, and which will also contribute to:

(3.2) The development of a New Zealand Sustainable Development Strategy. (ibid.: para 3)

2001: DPMC Establishes the Sustainable Development Senior Officials Group

In July 2001, the government established the Sustainable Development Senior Officials Group (SDSOG). Chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the group was responsible for leading and coordinating processes, and appointed to provide support for the lead chief executives, the coordinating ministers, and leadership for the Sustainable Development Programme of Action (SDPOA).

⁷⁹ See distinction between weak and strong in Appendix 1 of *Project 2058's Report 2: New Zealand Central Government Strategies*.

⁸⁰ NZ Govt (POL Min (01) 6/2).

2000–2003: MED Defines Sustainable Development

A statement released by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) titled *Sustainable Development* (MED, 2000) defined sustainable development in relation to New Zealand's economy as:

Policies that support an effective and competitive economic and business environment that is flexible and responsive to changes both in the world and in New Zealand. (ibid.: para 3)

This was expanded with the creation of the Growth and Innovation Framework (GIF).⁸¹ Important publications it produced were *Growing an Innovative New Zealand* (MED, 2002) and *Growth and Innovation* (MED, 2003). The GIF was designed to deliver 'long-term sustainable growth and comprehensive indicators' for measurement of progress, necessary to improve the quality of life of all New Zealanders. The New Zealand government has since changed its focus to 'economic transformation' — see '2006: Government Priorities'.

2001: Environmental Education

Environmental education, as a commitment in the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (UN, 2000) and *Agenda 21*, is also high on the international agenda. A vast number of countries agreed under the *UN Millennium Declaration* to focus on heightening environmental education at both primary and tertiary levels during the *Decade for Environmental Education 2002–2012* (UNESCO, 2002).

Marian Hobbs, as Minister for the Environment, launched the Rio + 10 Community Programme (MfE, 2001) on 3 May 2001. Over the next two and a half months the ministry distributed 13,000 starter packs, entertained a total audience of about 1000 people at eight community debates on the topic 'Our environment — trash can or treasure', and took part in events, meetings and hui.

However, since this time, central government has introduced few environmental education initiatives at any level. We are currently halfway through the decade and few advances have been made in New Zealand in terms of environmental education.

2002: MfE Proposes Draft Principles and NSDS Process

In May 2002, the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) submitted a paper to the Cabinet Policy Committee (NZ Govt, 2002a) outlining the proposals for developing New Zealand's NSDS. This included developing a set of draft principles to articulate the government's approach to sustainable development (ibid.: para 14). Later, these were to be adopted in *The Government's Approach to Sustainable Development* (2002), and to form the basis for the subsequent principles of sustainable development in the SDPOA (DPMC, 2003).

2002: Statistics NZ Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand

In 2002, Statistics New Zealand compiled *Monitoring Progress towards a Sustainable New Zealand: An experimental report and analysis* (Stats NZ, 2002). This document provides a comprehensive review of cross-sectoral information related to sustainable development in New Zealand. The report was the New Zealand government's first attempt since the 1997 state of the environment report (MfE, 1997) to bring together vital information that could eventually be used as substantive data needed for an integrated system with the use of indicators to monitor change in the New Zealand environment.

81 Growth and Innovation Framework: www.gif.med.govt.nz

2002: Government's Approach to Sustainable Development

The Government's Approach to Sustainable Development (NZ Govt, 2002b) was released in August 2002. It outlined the government's current approach to sustainable development, illustrated by describing a wide range of activities across the government sector. At this time the government clearly acknowledges that no NSDS has been prepared to date, but the need for one has been acknowledged and a potential process outlined:

The next step in the process is the World Summit in Johannesburg. After the Summit, we will review the Programme of Action and decide whether there are new issues that New Zealand needs to address. The Government will also need to form a view about priorities. Some of the priorities are already evident in this report — such as economic growth, the implications of international population change for New Zealand, decoupling of economic growth from environmental harm, governance for sustainable development, and implementation of the Local Government Bill. Others may emerge from the World Summit and the process of engagement that follows. Once a draft strategy has been written there will be a process of consultation and an opportunity for everyone to comment and contribute their ideas. (ibid.: 5)

2002: Key Government Goals to Guide the Public Sector in Achieving Sustainable Development

Six sustainable development goals were developed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in *Key Government Goals to Guide the Public Sector in Achieving Sustainable Development* (DPMC, 2002). These have since been superseded by the three 2007 'Government Priorities' (DPMC, 2007). The six 2002 goals were:

1. **Strengthen National Identity and Uphold the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi:** Celebrate our identity in the world as people who support and defend freedom and fairness, who enjoy arts, music, movement and sport, and who value our diverse cultural heritage. Resolve at all times to endeavour to uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
5. **Grow an Inclusive, Innovative Economy for the Benefit of All:** Develop an economy that adapts to change, provides opportunities and increases employment, and while reducing inequalities, increases incomes for all New Zealanders. Focus on the Growth and Innovation Framework to improve productivity and sustainable economic growth.
6. **Maintain Trust in Government and Provide Strong Social Services:** Maintain trust in Government by working in partnerships with communities, providing strong social services for all, building safe communities and promoting community development, keeping faith with the electorate, working constructively in Parliament and promoting a strong and effective public service.
7. **Improve New Zealanders' Skills:** Foster education and training to enhance and improve the nation's skills so that all New Zealanders have the best possible future in a changing world. Build on the strengthened industry training and tertiary sectors to ensure that New Zealanders are among the best educated and most skilled people in the world.
8. **Reduce Inequalities in Health, Education, Employment and Housing:** Reduce the inequalities that currently divide our society and offer a good future for all by better co-ordination of strategies across sectors and by supporting and strengthening the capacity of Māori and Pacific Island communities. Ensure that all groups in society are able to participate fully and to enjoy the benefits of improved production.
9. **Protect and Enhance the Environment:** Treasure and nurture our environment with protection for eco-systems so that New Zealand maintains a clean, green environment and builds on our reputation as a world leader in environmental issues. Focus on biodiversity and biosecurity strategies. (ibid.)

2002: New Zealand Government Ratifies the Kyoto Protocol

In December 2002 New Zealand ratified the Kyoto Protocol. This international agreement commits New Zealand to reducing its average net emissions of greenhouse gases over 2008–2012 (the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, or CP1) to 1990 levels (UNFCCC, 1997).

2003–2006: Sustainable Development Programme of Action

Please see Report 1b: *A Stakeholder Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Programme of Action* for a detailed background to the SDPOA. For the purpose of this report, we provide the ten sustainable development principles adopted in the SDPOA that were intended to align 'whole-of-government' policy and decision-making.

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.
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. (DPMC, 2003: 10)

2004: Government's Response to the United Nations

The paper *New Zealand's Response to the Reformed Commission on Sustainable Development* (UNDESA, 2004b) refers to a number of specific strategies, such as the *National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy* (ibid.: 13), but does not refer to a national strategy:

Following the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), New Zealand carefully considered how it might seek to implement the sustainable development ideas contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The result of this was two strands of action which focus on the areas where New Zealand could best apply these ideas. These are:

- The development and publication of a national programme of action, Sustainable Development for New Zealand, in January 2003.
- The incorporation of key sustainable development ideas into the development assistance programmes already being implemented by the New Zealand Agency for International Development. (ibid.: 1)

2005: Briefing to the Incoming Minister for the Environment

The 2005 briefing to the incoming Minister for the Environment, *Protecting People and the Environment* (MfE, 2005a), commented:

Sustainable development challenges countries to think broadly across economic, environmental, social and cultural objectives and to take a long-term view. It requires an integrated approach to policy and decision-making. It encourages governments to act as a coherent whole rather than a number of parallel, sometimes conflicting, parts. (ibid.: 5)

2005–2006: Landcare Research Manaaki Whenua

Landcare Research Manaaki Whenua has released a number of sustainability-oriented products and services. These include Enviro-MarkNZ, E-Manage, Waste Management, Greening the Screen (MfE, 2005b) and the CarboNZero Programme (Landcare Research, 2007).

2005: DPMC

The *SOI for the Year Ending June 2006* (DPMC, 2005) mentioned the SDPOA in the context that the programme was still making progress:

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)

2006: Statistics New Zealand

Statistics New Zealand is 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,⁸² '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.

2006: Buy Kiwi Made Campaign

Buy Kiwi Made is a government campaign aimed at promoting consumer awareness of New Zealand-made products and encouraging domestic producers to label their goods as such.⁸³ Buy Kiwi Made is an element of the co-operation agreement negotiated between the Labour Party and the Green Party following the last election. The campaign is administered by the Ministry of Economic Development and \$11.5 million has been allocated to the programme over two years.

2006: Climate Change Policy

A 2006 Cabinet paper recommended a number of areas for climate change policy development but particularly highlighted the need for long-term strategic direction (NZ Govt, 2006b):

To provide the necessary direction for policy development, I recommend that the Government's climate change focus be:

1. Long-term and strategic;
2. On balancing durable efforts to reduce emissions with preparations for the impacts of a more variable climate;
3. On engaging with and inspiring the wider public and business to energise their willing, effective and long-term involvement;
4. On international engagement that advances our national interests. (ibid.: para 25)

2006: Govt³ Initiative

Under the motto 'walking the talk', the Ministry for the Environment runs the Govt³ programme, which helps government agencies become more sustainable, particularly in the area of procurement and purchasing policies. The '3' in Govt³ stands for the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic (MfE, 2006a). The Ministry for the Environment offers assistance to agencies to undertake sustainable initiatives, including providing information, practical tools and links to other agencies that have undertaken similar initiatives.⁸⁴ As of 2 June 2006, 47 agencies had formally signed up to Govt³ membership. The Govt³ programme also engages in less formal partnerships with sustainability leaders in the wider public and private sectors.

2006: Environmental Education

In 2006 the government increased its spending on education, which included \$13 million of extra funding for environmental education (Maharey, 2006b). The predominant educational initiative to date is 'Enviroschools', established in the Waikato region in the early 1990s and led by a few key local authorities in the area (Enviroschools, 2007).

Enviroschools is working towards this vision through a whole school approach to environmental education. Students develop skills, understanding, knowledge and confidence through planning, designing and creating a sustainable school. Action projects undertaken by enviroschools have both environmental and educational outcomes that benefit the school and the wider community. (Enviroschools, 2007)

2006: Long-Term Fiscal Report (LTFR)

New Zealand's first *Long-Term Fiscal Report* was published in 2006. The purpose of this statement is to report on the government's long-term fiscal position over a period of at least 40 years. The statement is intended to lead to comprehensive reporting of the issues that could adversely affect a prudent level of net worth. The report does not consider significant environmental issues, such as climate change, water quality and energy constraints.

82 Statistics New Zealand, *Environment Statistics News*, December 2006.

83 Buy Kiwi Made: <http://www.buykiwimade.govt.nz>

84 Govt³: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/sustainable-industry/govt3>

2006: DPMC SOI for the Year Ending June 2007

In the *SOI for the Year Ending June 2007* (DPMC, 2006), the DPMC highlighted that the government's priorities had changed from those stated in the 2002 *Key Government Goals to Guide the Public Sector in Achieving Sustainable Development* (DPMC, 2002) to three new key policy themes (see below).

2006–2007: Prime Minister Helen Clark's Speeches

In two speeches, in October 2006 and again in February 2007, the Prime Minister Helen Clark promoted the government's commitment to moving New Zealand in a direction towards carbon neutrality and sustainable development.

The Prime Minister's speech to the Labour Party Annual Conference in October 2006 was a leap forward in terms of the government's position on sustainability. The speech came on the heels of the Stern Review, released by the Treasury Department of the UK government (HM Government, 2006). The Prime Minister stated:

I believe it's time to be bold in this area. Why shouldn't New Zealand aim to be the first country which is truly sustainable — not by sacrificing our living standards, but by being smart and determined? We could aim to be carbon neutral. I believe that sustainability will be a core value in 21st century social democracy. (Clark, 2006)

In a statement to Parliament, the Prime Minister re-emphasised the government's commitment to sustainability, using the term 40 times.

New Zealand's future is dependent on long-term sustainable strategies for our economy, society, environment, culture and way of life. Those strategies have to be driven by strong leadership and sound policies... Building a sustainable nation requires smart, active government working with key stakeholders across the economy and society... I believe New Zealand can aim to be the first nation to be truly sustainable — across the four pillars of the economy, society, the environment, and nationhood. I believe we can aspire to be carbon neutral in our economy and way of life. (Clark, 2007)

2006–2007: Energy Strategies

In April 2007 submissions closed for five energy-related strategies, listed below:

1. *Measures to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in New Zealand Post-2012*; Ministry for the Environment (MfE, 2006b),
2. *Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change*; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF, 2006),
3. *Draft New Zealand Energy Strategy*; Ministry of Economic Development (MED, 2006c),
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, 2006d),
5. *Draft New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy*; Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA, 2006).

Project 2058's second paper, Report 2: *Central Government Strategies: Reviewing the Landscape 1990–2007*,⁸⁵ explores the process and level of integration of eighty major strategies, and finds there are significant areas for improvement, in regard to both horizontal and vertical strategic integration. The five strategies listed above are an example of how the process and the level of integration could be improved within one specific area.

2006–2007: Statements of Intent (SOI)

All government agencies are required to submit a *Statement of Intent* (SOI) in June of each year (see Appendix 10). This 'provides a way for departments to explain to a wider audience what they intend to do and why' (SSC, 2004). The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) sets out these guidelines for the other government departments:

The central agencies all have a key role to play in aligning the activities of the public service with the government's goals and making sure that ministers receive the best possible advice before making decisions. (DPMC, 2005: 10)

85 See *Project 2058's* Report 2: *Central Government Strategies*: http://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org/Site/Publications/Project_Reports.aspx

2007: Government's Three Policy Themes

1. Economic Transformation

In March 2006, Cabinet agreed that economic transformation would be one of the government's three priorities for the next decade (MED, 2006a).⁸⁶ Since 2004 the government's economic development thinking had been focused on the Growth and Innovation Framework. The Economic Transformation Agenda outlines the government's long-term commitment to lift incomes and improve quality of life through increasing productivity.

The Economic Transformation Agenda seeks to progress New Zealand to a high income, knowledge-based market economy, which is both innovative and creative, and provides a unique quality of life to all New Zealanders. (ibid.)

MED's paper *Giving Effect to the Five Themes* (MED, 2006b) outlines a cross-government approach that would see the public sector undertaking work around five economic transformation themes:

1. Growing globally competitive firms,
2. Developing world-class infrastructure,
3. Developing innovative and productive workplaces,
4. Making Auckland an internationally competitive city and
5. Enhancing environmental sustainability. (ibid.)

2. Families Young and Old

The government's priority 'Families – Young and Old' has similarities with the priorities laid out under the Youth and Child Development workstream of the SDPOA (see Table 7 below). In addition, the Families – Young and Old theme aims to make four contributions to ensuring the success of New Zealand:

1. it enhances the wellbeing of New Zealanders and supports them to fulfil their potential,
 2. it ensures that all New Zealanders have opportunities to contribute to and benefit from the success of New Zealand,
 3. it contributes to ensuring a cohesive society into the future and that New Zealand is able to secure the economic, social and cultural benefits of diversity, and
 4. it helps equip New Zealand to achieve economic transformation.
- (Maharey, 2006a)

Table 7: Comparison of SDPOA Youth and Child Development Outcomes with Government Priorities 2006–2016

Source: DPMC, 2003: 23; NZ Govt, 2006

SDPOA: Youth and Child Development Outcomes	2006–2016 Priorities: Families — Young and Old Outcomes
Supportive families	Strong families
Lives free from violence and crime	Safe communities
Good health	Better health for all; positive ageing
Success at all stages of education and transition into employment	Healthy confident kids
Adequate material living standards	

86 Economic Transformation: http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/StandardSummary_22996.aspx

3. National Identity

There is limited material available that explains what is meant by ‘national identity’ in a New Zealand context. The original *Government Priorities 2006–2016* (DPMC, 2006) noted:

All New Zealanders [need] to be able to take pride in who and what we are, through our arts, culture, film, sports and music, our appreciation of our natural environment, our understanding of our history and our stance on international issues;

The National Identity theme can usefully be approached using the following sub-themes:

1. who we are,
2. what we do,
3. where we live, and
4. how we are seen by the world. (ibid.)

2007: DPMC SOI for the Year Ending 30 June 2008⁸⁷

The DPMC’s *SOI for the Year Ending 30 June 2008* (DPMC, 2007) included reference to ‘sustainability’. It noted:

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. (ibid.: 1)

The government’s key strategic priority for the next decade is achieving true sustainability in New Zealand through its work programme of: economic transformation, families – young and old and national identity. (ibid.: 8)

2007: Budget – KiwiSaver

The 2007 Budget, launched on 17 May, laid out a number of initiatives, including KiwiSaver. It was stressed that:

Increasing saving and investing will underpin the Government’s three core themes of economic transformation, families young and old, and national identity. It will help build a sustainable future for New Zealand over the long-term. (Cullen, 2007)

[and]

Sustainable growth is the hallmark of Budget 2007. It takes significant further steps to transform our economy and provide higher living standards for all families. (NZ Govt, 2007)

In her Budget speech of 18 May 2007, Jeanette Fitzsimons, co-leader of the Green Party, summed up the Greens’ position on what this Budget means for sustainability in New Zealand:

Ever since the Prime Minister declared an aspiration for New Zealand to become carbon neutral and truly sustainable, the nation has been waiting for the means to this end to be revealed and to be funded. Instead, we have a budget designed to make us a teensy-weensy bit less unsustainable in a few years, with carbon emissions growing just a little bit more slowly than they are now; provided we don’t upset anyone and we continue to move slower than all our trading partners. It is not that there is nothing, it is that sustainability is a footnote in this budget. (Fitzsimons, 2007)

⁸⁷ We noted that the SOIs for all central government departments for the ‘year ending June 2008’ have adopted the government’s ‘key priorities’. They have all emphasised the need for ‘departmental integration’ and overall sustainability. For example, MfE’s *SOI for the Years June 2007–2010* re-emphasises these priorities and how sustainability fits into them (MfE, 2007b).

2007: Budget – Sustainability Initiatives

The government made the following financial commitments to progress sustainability in New Zealand.

Transportation

\$600 million for the electrification of Auckland's urban passenger network and upgrade of Wellington's passenger network (over six years)

\$50 million to upgrade the national track system

Energy efficiency

\$23 million for an interest-free loans scheme to help homeowners pay for energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades

\$14.2 million for the EnergyWise Home Grants Scheme

\$15 million for a Home Energy Rating Scheme and \$6.8 million for research and development of energy efficient technologies

\$3.1 million for a homeowner energy efficiency information and advice campaign and \$6 million for installation of clean forms of heating for low-income families in poor air quality areas

Research

\$28 million to improve sustainability and primary sector productivity

\$4 million for international collaboration on agricultural and forestry research to fight climate change

\$11.1 million to research Antarctica's role in climate change and global environmental systems

Households and business

\$23.8 million for the Healthy Housing programme

\$3 million to develop business partnerships for sustainability and \$7.4 million for sustainable procurement and improved eco-verification*

\$6 million for a household sustainability awareness campaign*

\$4.6 million for public recycling facilities* (NZ Govt, 2007)

The initiatives marked with a * comprise what has retrospectively been called the 'Six-Pack' (see below).

2007: Budget – The 'Six-Pack' Initiative

During her Statement to the House on 13 February 2007 the Prime Minister announced a new package of six key sustainability initiatives, 'as the government's next steps ... to address the need for long-term sustainability strategies to meet the challenges of the 21st century'. The initiatives are to serve as a rallying point for a national drive on sustainability, and to create an environment that encourages a change to more sustainable practices in New Zealand households, communities, businesses, local authorities and central government (MED, 2007). See Table 8 below.

Table 8: The 'Six-Pack' Initiative

Source: Adapted from NZ Govt, 2007

Household sustainability (MfE)	Waste minimisation and management (MfE)	Towards a carbon-neutral public sector (MfE)	Enhanced eco-verification (MED) ⁹⁰	Enhanced sustainable procurement (MED) ⁹¹	Business partnerships for sustainability (MED) ⁹²
\$6 million — awareness campaign — length unknown	\$4.6 million — public recycling — length unknown	Unknown	\$7.4 million between them over four years		\$3 million over three years

The Ministry for the Environment has the overall responsibility for heading the project while working closely with the Ministry for Economic Development on a number of the projects, such as procurement. The six sustainability initiatives deliver across four common themes:

1. Government leadership through a call to action and changes to government's own practices,
2. Encouraging the uptake of sustainable practices across New Zealand by promoting the practicalities and benefits of being more sustainable,
3. Recognising and giving impetus to the good work already done in communities, local government and business, and
4. The use of partnerships to promote change. (MED, 2007)

The six initiatives sit alongside a much broader public sector work programme contributing to sustainability. Current work includes the New Zealand Energy Strategy, the New Zealand Transport Strategy, and development of an Emissions Trading Scheme for New Zealand (Dalziel, 2007).

2007: Towards a Carbon-Neutral Public Sector

In March 2007 Treasury released *Towards a Carbon Neutral Public Sector*, which highlighted that there are three aspects to achieving carbon neutrality: (i) Measure emissions; (ii) Reduce emissions and (iii) Offset remaining emissions. The publication stated that early 2008 was the target date for core agencies to reduce and offset emissions, and 2012 was the target date for all 34 core agencies to be 'on the path' to carbon neutrality (Treasury, 2007).

88 The funding for eco-verification will help to make eco-labels and standards work better for New Zealand businesses, help businesses to identify reliable eco-standards to work towards, encourage investment in cleaner technologies, and grow the market for environmental goods and services (Benson-Pope, 2007). This work will also help businesses comply with international and domestic requirements for environmental sustainability (Dalziel, 2007).

89 The Ministry of Economic Development will work closely with the Ministry for the Environment, the State Services Commission, and the Treasury to develop sustainable procurement key performance indicators and targets for inclusion in agency performance agreements (Dalziel, 2007).

90 See Benson-Pope (2007).

Appendix 10 New Zealand State Sector Reforms

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2005)

The state sector has seen a number of reforms over the last twenty years, many of which have been driven by a desire to increase strategic capacity, alignment and accountability. Outlined here is a brief timeline of changes in the way public service agencies have delivered and aligned budget and policy.

Output budgeting: 1989 to 1991

The process of the state sector reforms cemented ‘output budgeting’ as the public service policy delivery mechanism of choice. This mechanism was established in legislation in the Public Finance Act 1989. It was soon determined that this focus on outputs was problematic, especially where the link between outputs and outcomes was unclear, poorly defined or absent, and it was not an effective tool for use in strategic planning (Schick, 1996; SSC, 1991).⁹¹ - As Schick would later comment:

the lack of attention to the question of strategic capacity was a serious flaw in the original design of the New Zealand reforms. (Schick, 1996: 53)

SRAs and KRAs: 1991 to late 1990s

The so-called Logan report (SSC, 1991) became the catalyst for the first real attempt to create goals for public service agencies following the reform process. The result was the development, alignment and use of ‘Strategic Result Areas’ (SRAs) and ‘Key Result Areas’ (KRAs). SRAs became the means for defining outcomes while the KRAs served as the output measures (Schick, 1996). SRAs and KRAs were used throughout most of the 1990s as the means for public sector budgeting and the implementation of national strategic policy such as the *Path to 2010* (National Party, 1993). By the end of the decade, however, the effectiveness of SRAs and KRAs was unclear.

Despite being dumped by the late 1990s, it was argued that the use of KRAs was helpful in highlighting for public service agencies the link between policy design and intended policy impacts (Webber, 2005). However, the effectiveness of use of both KRAs and SRAs for achieving policy outcomes was seen to be weak (Schick, 1996). A review by the State Services Commission in 1998 was prompted by concerns that these tools could not adequately respond to government strategic goals (SSC, 1998). At the same time, output budgeting was becoming less popular both in New Zealand and internationally (Webber, 2005).

Outcomes focus: Late 1990s to 2002

The movement away from *output budgeting* towards an *outcomes focus* began at the end of the 1990s. This was partly precipitated by the change in government in 1999, with the newly elected Labour-led coalition aiming to reverse some of the policy reforms of the previous fifteen years (Webber, 2005). The State Services Commission’s *Review of the Centre* in 2001 concluded that the established output approach had led to fragmentation of, and therefore a lack of integration and alignment in, public service activity (SSC, 2002). While this review advocated more of a ‘softening’ of the output approach than it did the disposal of output budgeting altogether, it did lead to a subsequent series of workshops for public service agencies and the release of guidance materials known as the *Managing for Outcomes* (MfO) initiative (Webber, 2005).

Statements of Intent: 2002 to today

The *Managing for Outcomes* (MfO) initiative was undertaken by Treasury, the SSC, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The initiative supported the adoption of outcome focusing. Importantly for strategic planning, the MfO initiative saw the introduction of the requirement of the production of *Statements of Intent* (SOIs) by public service departments (Webber, 2005).⁹² The requirement to produce an SOI was introduced into legislation in 2004 with amendments to the Public Finance Act (s38).

91 Outcomes can be described as the intended effects of a programme and outputs as the means by which to achieve the outcomes (see Webber, (2005) for an interesting discussion on outcome planning in New Zealand).

92 An SOI is a document that identifies, for the medium term, the main features of intentions regarding strategy, capability and performance: <http://www.ssc.govt.nz>

Even before becoming legislation, the use of SOIs was increasingly popular, as is reflected in the Treasury's use of SOIs from 2002 onwards, and the comment in 2002 that the Treasury has:

prepared an SOI rather than the traditional departmental forecast report to demonstrate leadership for this more results-focused approach to planning. (Bollard, 2002: 6)

The use of *Statements of Intent* for outcome delivery has been further supported by work undertaken by the State Services Commission. The role of SOIs has also become more important in government outside of public service agencies, with, for instance, the requirement for Crown Entities to use SOIs in their strategic planning under the Crown Entities Act 2004 (s139).

Appendix 11 New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

Source: An excerpt from *Creating Our Future: Sustainable Development for New Zealand* (PCE, 2002: 18–19).

Recommendations:

Responsibilities for sustainable development policies and actions come under a range of Ministerial portfolios and local government functions in the environmental, social and economic areas. For this reason, where a recommendation refers to the need to coordinate policy in all three areas, it has been directed to the Prime Minister. In other cases, recommendations have been directed to the relevant Minister or Ministers, or to local government.

Vision and Framework for Sustainable Development

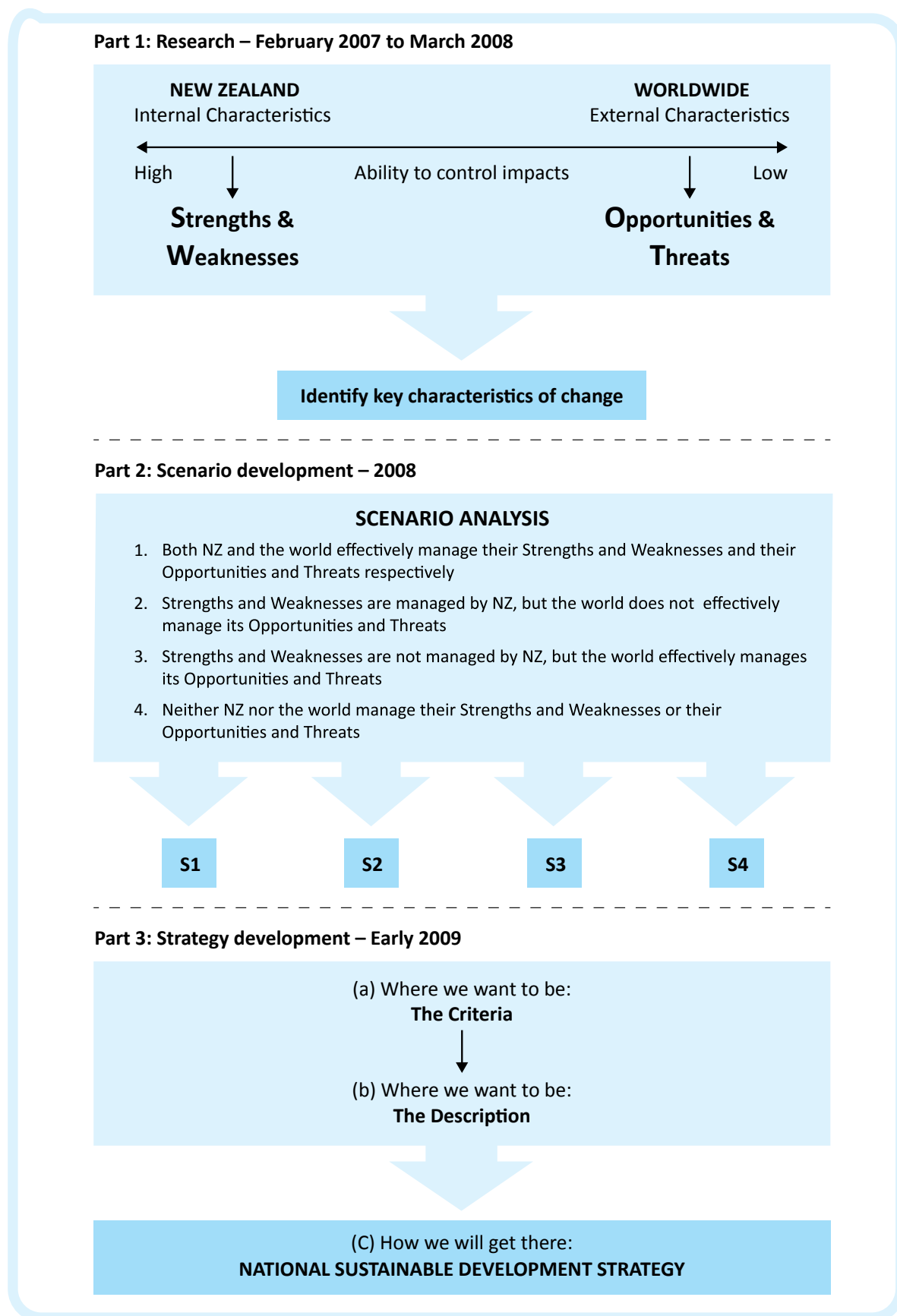
1. That, as part of the development of the proposed New Zealand Sustainable Development Strategy, the Prime Minister develops a range of policy, legislative, economic and voluntary measures designed to progress the implementation of sustainable development. These measures should include:
 - a. a position (or vision) statement outlining the goals and objectives of the Government's policy on sustainable development
 - b. a timeline for meeting objectives and measurable targets
 - c. a timeline and processes for reviewing the position (or vision) statement and associated goals and objectives
 - d. adoption of Agenda 21 principles into current and future environmental, economic and social legislation reviews.
2. That the Minister of Local Government, in consultation with Local Government New Zealand, develops guidelines for local authorities on preparing long-term community plans dealing with environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability, as proposed under the Local Government Bill. Such guidelines should be consistent with the principles of Agenda 21.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Sustainable Development

3. That the Prime Minister should establish an advisory body responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the Government's proposed New Zealand Strategy on Sustainable Development, including:
 - actively promoting activities and education programmes that will increase public awareness of sustainable development
 - reviewing government departments' performance in working individually and collaboratively to meet sustainable development goals and objectives
 - providing support and guidance to local government and nongovernmental organisations to ensure effective implementation of sustainable development at the local community level
 - encouraging sustainable development initiatives and partnerships among central and local government, private sector and non-government organisations
 - reviewing sustainability research priorities, capacities to undertake research and mechanisms for the application and adoption of the research
 - monitoring, reviewing and reporting on progress towards sustainable development goals and objectives
 - encouraging local authorities to regularly review and report on the effectiveness of resource management policies and plans, as well as the proposed long-term community plans under the Local Government Bill, in achieving the goals and objectives of the proposed New Zealand Strategy on Sustainable Development.
4. That the Minister of State Services, in consultation with the Minister of Local Government and Local Government New Zealand, identifies the capacity and capability issues associated with implementing sustainable development, and introduces methods to improve skills in integrating environmental, social and economic policy analysis and implementation.

Appendix 12 Project 2058's Methodology

Source: Sustainable Future Institute (2007a: 6).



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