

CHAPTER 6

Links to other indicators and initiatives

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 There are many initiatives to develop sustainable development and related indicators at international, national, regional and local scales. It is important that these are co-ordinated, ensuring that wherever possible the same or consistent indicators are used to illustrate a particular issue in different contexts, to prevent confusion and avoid duplication of effort in collecting the necessary data.
- 6.2 In the international arena there is a considerable amount of co-ordination and co-operation between international organisations, such as United Nations (UN), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Environment Agency (EEA) and European Commission (EC), in their work on indicators. UK statisticians together with colleagues from other countries have been closely involved in the work of these international organisations – sharing expertise and learning from their experience and ideas.
- 6.3 Within the UK, as well as consulting non-governmental experts and the public (see chapter 7), efforts have been made to ensure congruence with the main related national initiatives on health, welfare, poverty, education etc. Work is also underway with local authorities and regions to explore how the more local scale indicators can be made convergent with the national ones as far as data constraints allow. Some of the main related initiatives are listed briefly below.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

- 6.4 The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) published in August 1996 a draft menu of indicators for all countries to use in reporting internationally on sustainable development¹. The menu includes some 134 economic, social, environmental and institutional indicators, and 22 countries, including the UK, have volunteered to pilot test their applicability. The UK selected 51 of the indicators to pilot in consultation with the expert advisory groups discussing the UK's own indicators; 41 of these were directly relevant to the emerging proposals for the UK's core set. The subsequent experience of developing the core set of indicators has been used to inform the pilot. The UK has also participated in three UN workshops of piloting countries over the last three years.

1 United Nations (August 1996). *Indicators of Sustainable Development Framework and Methodologies*. UN, New York (ISBN 92-1-104470-7)

- 6.5 To supplement the main menu of indicators, UNCSD is also developing further indicators to better reflect changing consumption and production patterns. The UK participated in an expert's workshop in March 1998. The UN, OECD and World Bank have also jointly developed a working set of core indicators designed to measure progress, particularly in developing countries².
- 6.6 Following the major UN conferences of the 1990s targets have been set internationally for the reduction of global poverty. These targets are known as the International Development Goals and progress towards them will be monitored by a small group of agreed indicators. These indicators are complemented by a wider set of indicators agreed by UN Funds and Agencies as a minimum requirement for assessing the development needs of individual countries and known as the Common Country Assessment (CCA) indicators. There are several other international indicator sets used for specific purposes including the International Monetary Fund's special data dissemination standard (SDDS), and its close parallel the general data dissemination system (GDDS), which set out the basic statistical indicators and processes required in disseminating economic and financial data and UNESCO's World Education Indicators.
- 6.7 In 1991 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a preliminary core set of indicators. These were revised in 1994 and again in 1998. This set is regularly used in country environmental performance reviews³. OECD has also been working on sectoral indicators, which supplement their core set. These include indicators on transport, energy and agri-environmental issues⁴. More recently, they published proposals for a set of indicators for sustainable household and consumption⁵.
- 6.8 The World Resources Institute (WRI) in conjunction with the Wuppertal Institute, Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Environment and National (Japanese) Institute for Environmental Studies has carried out a project to assess resource consumption and resource flows in four countries⁶.

INITIATIVES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

- 6.9 The European Commission has a major programme of work on environmental accounting and indicators, co-ordinated by Eurostat. In 1999, Eurostat published the first report on a set of Environmental Pressure Indices⁷. The project canvassed a panel of experts across

2 Record of joint OECD/United Nations/World Bank Seminar on the Indicators of Development Progress, held at the OECD, Paris on 20-21 May 1997. See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/indicators>

3 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
Environmental indicators – a preliminary set. OECD, Paris 1991
Environmental indicators – OECD Core Set. OECD, Paris 1994
Towards sustainable development – Environmental indicators OECD, Paris 1998

4 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Indicators for the integration of environmental concerns into transport policies. OECD, Paris 1993, 1999
Indicators for the integration of environmental concerns into energy policies. OECD, Paris 1993, 1999 (forthcoming)
Environmental indicators for agriculture. OECD, Paris 1997

5 *Towards more sustainable household consumption patterns – Indicators to measure progress*. OECD, Paris, 1999

6 World Resources Institute (April 1997). *Resource Flows; The Material Basis of Industrial Economies*.

7 European Commission (1999). *Towards environmental pressure indicators for the EU*. Luxembourg (ISBN 92-828-4978-3)

Europe, to develop consensus over the most useful set of 10 indicators to cover each of 10 environmental themes. The first report includes data for some 60 indicators, ie 6 within each theme. Eurostat has also developed the “SERIEE” system for defining and classifying environmental expenditure⁸.

- 6.10 In June 1998, the European Council of Ministers met in Cardiff and called for a set of indicators to be developed which would reflect the success in integrating environmental concerns into European Union (EU) sectoral policies, particularly for transport, energy and agriculture. Proposals for a set of indicators on transport and the environment (the Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism, TERM) were tabled at Cardiff, and a “zero-version” report including available data at EU level and for some countries is being produced by the European Environment Agency and Eurostat for the Helsinki Council in December 1999. A report by the European Commission on progress with developing energy, agriculture and industry indicators is also to be presented, together with proposals for a set of “headline” environmental indicators. Further indicators are to be developed for other sectors.
- 6.11 The European Environment Agency has published a number of ‘State of the Environment’ reports including environmental indicators. In its most recent report, ‘Environment in the European Union at the turn of the century’⁹, it includes a number of scenarios, illustrating likely trends to 2010. It is to publish an annual report on indicators, starting in Spring 2000. It has also developed the DPSIR framework and typology of indicators discussed in chapter 2.

OTHER NATIONAL INDICATORS

- 6.12 In developing the strategy *A better quality of life*¹⁰ strong links were made to many other related strategies across government. In a similar way the development of the core set of indicators, which underpin the Strategy, has been linked to indicators in these other initiatives and where appropriate common or consistent indicators have been used. For example the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) have been developing in parallel a set of agri-environmental indicators, which will be published shortly. These indicators include seven indicators, which use the same data sources and are either identical or very similar to corresponding indicators in the core sustainable development set. Similarly, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will be publishing shortly a set of UK competitiveness indicators, of which five are also in the core sustainable development.
- 6.13 These related initiatives contain, of course, many other indicators which are relevant to sustainable development issues but have not been included in this core set. Readers may also find some of these other indicators useful. Most of the related initiatives are mentioned in the strategy. References to appropriate sections of the strategy or to the initiatives themselves are included in the introductory section to each of the 18 families of indicators in chapter 4. Some of the main initiatives or sources are listed below for ease of reference:

8 European Commission (1994). *SERIEE, 1994 Version*. Luxembourg (ISBN 92-826-8564-0)

9 European Environment Agency (1999). *Environment in the European Union at the turn of the century*. Environmental assessment report No. 2. EEA, Luxembourg (ISBN 92-9157-202-0)

10 Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, (May 1999). *A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development in the United Kingdom*. TSO, London (Command number 4345)

- Economic Trends (Office for National Statistics, annual and monthly) for key economic indicators
- The Government's Measures of Success – Output and Performance Analyses (Her Majesty's Treasury, March 1999)
- Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Driven Economy (Department of Trade and Industry, December 1998)
- UK competitiveness indicators 1999 (Department of Trade and Industry, to be published shortly)
- Opportunity for all: Tackling poverty and social exclusion (Cabinet Office and Department of Social Security, September 1999)
- Saving Lives Our Healthier Nation: A contract for health (Department of Health, 1999)
- New ambitions for our country: a new contract for welfare (Department of Social Security, March 1998)
- The learning age: A renaissance for new Britain (Department of Education and Employment, 1998)
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Home Office)
- Towards sustainable agriculture – a pilot set of indicators (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, to be published shortly)
- A Way with Waste (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions June 1999)
- A new deal for transport: Better for everyone. The Government's white paper on the future of transport (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, July 1998)
- Forthcoming UK Climate Change Programme (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions)
- The United Kingdom National Air Quality Strategy (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, February 1997) and its review (forthcoming)
- Tomorrow's tourism. A growth industry for the new millennium – Tourism strategy for England. (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, February 1999)
- Eliminating World Poverty; A challenge for the 21st century (Department for International Development, 1997)
- Forthcoming Rural white paper for England (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions)

- Forthcoming Urban white paper for England (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions)

6.14 As discussed in chapter 2 above, the national set of indicators of sustainable development is very broad in scope, and only a few high level indicators are included in each area. More detailed sets of indicators are included in “daughter” sustainable development strategies on forestry, tourism and waste and forthcoming strategies on chemicals and soil.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL INDICATORS

Local

6.15 Local authorities are developing Local Agenda 21 strategies, and many have developed or are developing indicators for use in reporting at local scale. In 1996 the Local Government Management Board (LGMB) developed a preliminary menu of around 100 indicators^{11,12}. The LGMB carried out a survey of progress in developing indicators, which showed that progress was mixed. Some authorities would welcome guidance and many see value in having a common core set of indicators, which could be supplemented by indicators selected to reflect local circumstances.

6.16 Following consultation and discussion in England and Wales, the government with the Local Government Association and Improvement and Development Agency (formerly LGMB) has now set up a joint project to develop a small menu of indicators of sustainable development which all local authorities could use on a voluntary basis. These will be closely linked to the headline indicators and other core national indicators, and will also build on some of the experience of local groups in developing their own local indicators. Draft guidance, including common definitions and methods for collecting data and compiling the indicators, is being developed through a contract managed by a Task Force of the Central and Local Government Information Partnership. The indicators are currently being piloted in around 30 local authorities, with a view to finalising and publishing the guidance in the form of a handbook in Spring 2000. Where appropriate the local sustainable development indicators will be consistent with those selected under the Best Value and other initiatives.

6.17 There are also a wide variety of local initiatives. Many focus particularly on communities deciding what indicators would be most meaningful to them. Some councils publish illustrated leaflets showing changes in the indicator values; these can stimulate a lot of local interest and are good for raising awareness.

Regional

6.18 Some regions are developing regional sustainable development frameworks, with associated indicators. There are also a number of other related initiatives, which include the development of indicators relating to sustainable development. Where appropriate these indicators have been or will be made consistent with each other.

11 LGMB (1995). *Sustainable Indicators Research Project: Indicators for Local Agenda 21 – a Summary*. ISBN 0 7488 9744 5

12 LGMB (1995). *Sustainability Indicators Research Project – Consultants Report of Pilot Phase*. ISBN 0 7488 9702X

- 6.19 Regional Development Agencies have been established in each English region and a set of core indicators has been developed as part of the evaluation and monitoring framework. These core indicators include three of the headline sustainable development indicators for which regional data were available. Work is in hand to improve the range of information available both for further core and non-core RDA indicators. An area of particular focus will be the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development.
- 6.20 Following a scoping study in 1999, the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions will be developing good practice guidance on how to set key targets in each topic area in regional planning guidance (RPG), measured by a limited number of appropriate indicators. These are essential elements of the proposals to improve RPG set out in draft PPG11 "Regional Planning".
- 6.21 The Department of Trade and Industry have also developed and publish a set of regional competitiveness indicators¹³.

¹³ Department of Trade and Industry (July 1999). *Regional competitiveness indicators, July 1999*. DTI, London. See also internet site at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/sd/rci>.