

CHAPTER 8

Future work

INITIATIVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Indicator development

- 8.1 A core set of about 150 indicators of sustainable development have been described or illustrated in this publication. These indicators provide a baseline assessment against which future progress towards sustainable development can be monitored in this country.
- 8.2 However, in some cases the indicators illustrated may need to be changed or further refined – for example indicators covering public understanding and awareness and indicators measuring the progress with biodiversity action plans. Work will continue to improve these indicators in consultation with experts and interested groups.
- 8.3 In about 20 other cases the report describes the issue and objectives but the indicator still needs to be developed – for example indicators for overall resource use, the quality of the countryside and people’s satisfaction with their quality of life. Future work will focus on research to develop or refine ideas and collate information for these indicators.
- 8.4 The UK Round Table is convening a national seminar in January 2000 to give an independent review of the core set of indicators presented in this report. The new Sustainable Development Commission will have a remit to comment on progress against the indicators, and may also recommend changes and developments.

Publications

- 8.5 It is a long established principle, in accordance with the government statistical service’s code of practice, that each individual set of official statistics should be released as soon as it has been collected and validated. This means that new official data lying behind each individual indicator will be released by the source organisation or department as they become available during future years.
- 8.6 In addition to the release of individual data series the government proposes to bring together and publish once a year the latest information about the progress against each of the headline indicators. This review will also account for the action that the government has taken, and proposes to take, in priority areas. It will publish this review annually, starting in 2000.
- 8.7 The government also envisages a full review of the strategy after 5 years. This review will include a report on the progress over the period of all the indicators in the core set in this report.

Devolved administrations

- 8.8 The new devolved administrations in the UK for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have the opportunity to deliver policies for sustainable development, and their own indicators, which reflect individual country's circumstances and needs.

Local and regional indicators

- 8.9 The piloting of a draft set of local indicators in England and Wales will be completed in early 2000. Final recommendations and guidance on the core menu of 20-30 local indicators will be launched in Spring 2000. Work will also continue on the further development and co-ordination of regional indicators.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

United Nations

- 8.10 Following the piloting of the UN set of indicators of sustainable development in 22 countries and a workshop in December 1999 to assess the results, a revised framework and indicators will be produced. The framework will also identify a number of areas where work is needed to develop further indicators. By 2001, the aim is to have a standardised set of indicators available as a tool to measure progress towards sustainable development. This tool will be available to all countries for their own use.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

- 8.11 The OECD will continue its work to develop a revised Core Set of indicators to be used in the second cycle of Country Environmental Performance Reviews, and also to develop further indicators of sustainable development following workshops in late 1999 on the social dimension and other indicators to measure progress.

European Union

- 8.12 The European Environment Agency (EEA) will publish its first annual report on environmental indicators in Spring 2000. Within the EU work will continue to develop and agree a headline set of environmental indicators, and also other indicators covering the integration of the environment into EU sectoral policies.