

Review of National strategies for sustainable development
in the Baltic Sea Region

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Stockholm, Sweden
2005

Contents

Preface

Introduction	9
Objectives of the study of NSSDs in the Baltic Sea Region	10
2. The main elements of the NSSDs in the Baltic Sea Region	13
2.1 Why an NSSD is needed?	13
2.2 The challenges of development and the environment	15
2.3 Key issues and the set of SF objectives	15
2.4 Responsible actors, implementation instruments, and SD	17
2.5 Monitoring for NSSD	18
2.6 Concluding remarks	18
3. National Strategies for Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region	19
3.1 Belarus	19
3.2 Denmark: a shared future – balanced development	23
3.3 Finland: The Government Programme on sustainable development 1998	27
3.4 Germany: 'Perspectives for Germany. Our strategy for sustainable development'	30
3.5 Latvia: Strategy for sustainable development of Latvia	33
3.6 Lithuania: National strategy for sustainable development	36
3.7 Norway	39
3.8 Poland 2025 – Long term strategy for sustainable development	43
3.9 Sweden	46
References	51

Preface

This study seeks to draw on the pool of international experience in respect of strategic approaches to sustainable development (SD) in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)¹. It will recognise that each country's approach to developing NSSD will be different, and designed to suit the individual set of national economic, institutional, socio-cultural and ecological conditions. The aim is to outline, in a comparable manner, the key elements of sustainable development in each country by describing the challenges posed by the environment and the need for development, as well as a set of national sustainable development objectives, the responsible actors and implementation instruments for SD and the arrangements put in place for monitoring and review of the NSSDs. The current paper has been prepared in close connection with Umbrella 2 of the MECIBS-project², which looks at the question of how small and medium sized cities in the Baltic Sea Region have worked with sustainable development. This working paper was compiled by Arto Ruotsalainen (Nordregio) and is based on an initial cooperation with Tomas Hanell (Nordregio). Liselott Happ-Tillberg was responsible for technical editing and Chris Smith for language editing. Patrik Tornberg prepared the cartographic illustrations.

Stockholm, December 2005

¹ Two countries, Estonia and Russia, had not published their NSSDs at the time of review compilation and were therefore excluded from this study.

² See www.mecibs.dk

1. Introduction

The 1992 United Nations ‘Earth Summit’ conference on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro announced a call for all countries to develop national strategies for sustainable development (NSSDs). It was intended that the ideas and commitments of the Earth Summit would be translated into concrete national policies and actions. At the national level, the achievement of sustainability requires a long-term and integrated strategic approach, linking various development processes in order to meet present and future complex challenges:

‘Being strategic is about developing an underlying vision through a consensual, effective and iterative process; and going on to set objectives, identify the means of achieving them, and then monitor that achievement as a guide to the next round of this learning process. Being strategic requires a comprehensive understanding of the concept of sustainable development and its implications, but not necessarily a comprehensive set of actions – at least at any one time. More important than trying unsuccessfully to do everything at once, is to ensure that incremental steps in policymaking and action are moving towards sustainability – rather than away from it, which is too frequently the case’ (OECD 2002).

A strategic approach to sustainable development at the national level calls for:

- Linking long-term vision to medium-term targets and short-term action.
- Horizontal linkages across sectors, so that there is a coordinated approach to development.
- Vertical spatial linkages, so that local, national and global policy, development efforts and governance are all mutually supportive.
- Genuine partnership between government, business, and community and voluntary organizations, since the problems are too complex to be resolved by any group acting alone. (OECD 2002).

It has become increasingly clear that strategic approaches to SD increase the potential for ‘win-win’ opportunities in national economic and social development, while at the same time helping efforts to preserve the diversity of the physical environment on which our economies and social systems depend. In countries where blueprint SD documents have been avoided and the principles of sustainable development have been widely adopted as a basis for central government policies, local government administration and commercial activity, ‘win-win’ situations, i.e. protecting the environment and enhancing competitiveness can occur simultaneously. In the graph presented below, the Baltic Sea Region countries (excluding Belarus due to missing data) are allocated index points according to their growth competitiveness (x-axis) and environmental sustainability index (y-axis). The comparison shows that environmental sustainability and competitiveness can be jointly supportive and that the integration of the environment into wider decision-making can be a source of competitive advantage.

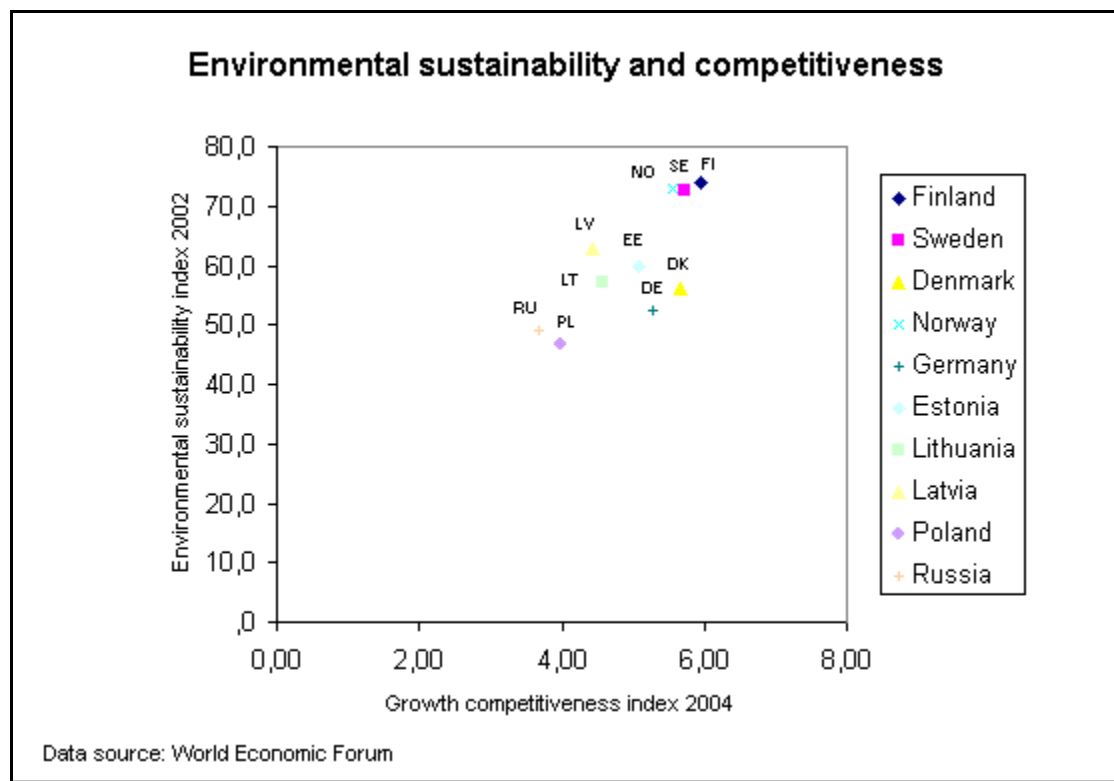


Figure 1: Comparison of environmental sustainability and growth competitiveness

Objectives of the study of NSSDs in the Baltic Sea Region

In short, the aim of this study is to identify a limited number of the key characteristics of the National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSSD's) in Baltic Sea Region (see map on the next page). The main focus of interest here is on the following issues:

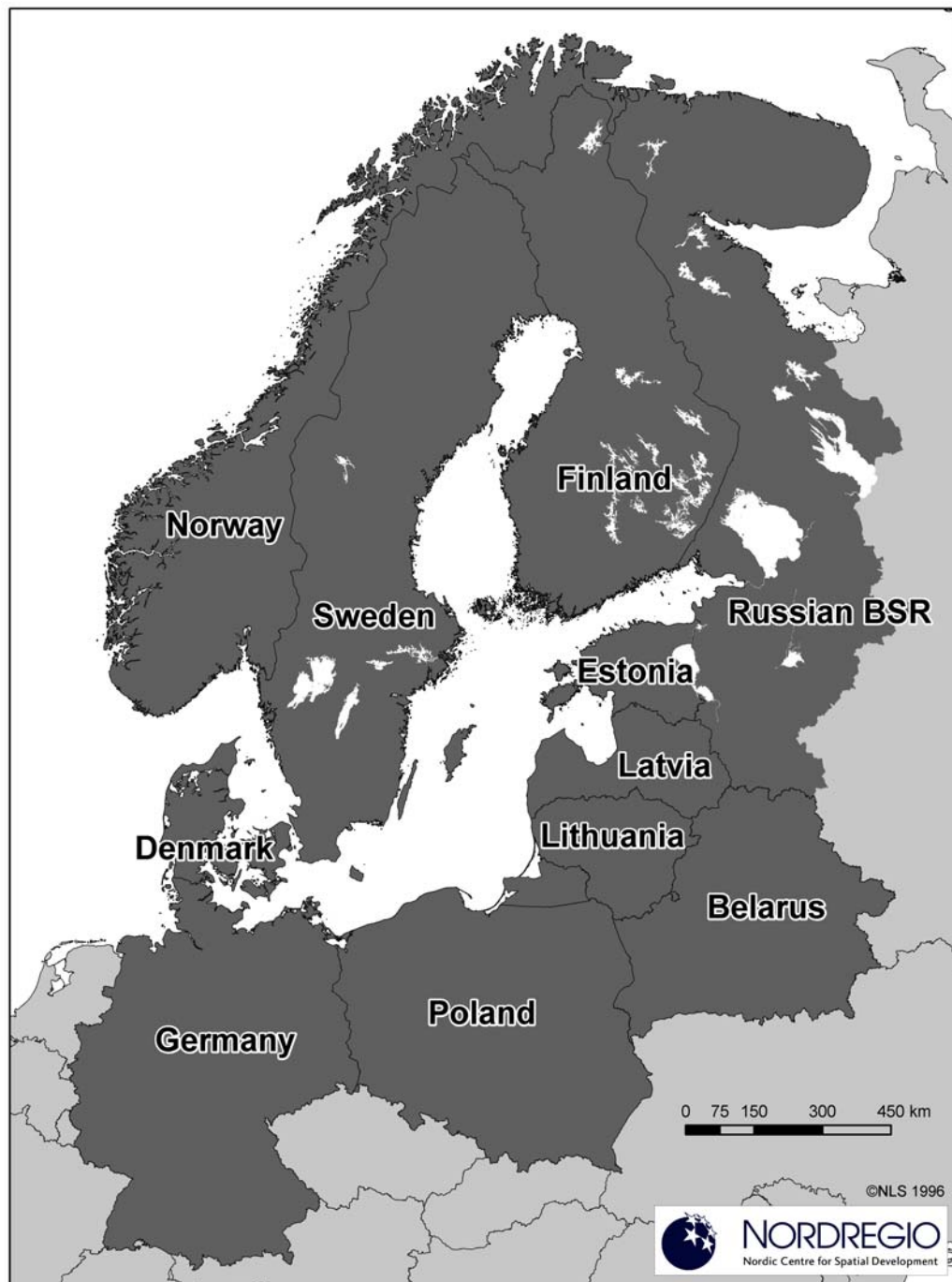
- What is the main focus and content of the NSSD?
- How is the need for a strategic approach to SD affirmed?
- What are the main challenges in terms of the environment and development in each country, as defined in the NSSD?
- What are the key themes, focus and scope of the NSSD? Are all three dimensions of sustainability, namely, the environment, the economy and society included? Do additional dimensions, such as for example, governance, culture, or sustainable regional development, exist?
- What are the main objectives with regard to sustainable development?
- Who are seen to be the responsible actors for SD?
- What are the main NSSD implementation mechanisms and what are the arrangements for monitoring and review?

The comparative section in chapter 2 discusses the question of whether the NSSD is intended to be a framework strategy that sets out general policy directions and guidance for sustainable development or an action programme that contains concrete objectives with strict timetables and detailed measures, or whether it is something of a mix between the two. In addition, information on how the various NSSD's were prepared will be provided in chapter 3, providing answers to the following questions: Which government ministry or agency took the

lead in the strategy making process, and which other stakeholders participated in this strategy making process?

Methodology and data sources

This study was performed as a desk study, with the national sustainable development strategy documents as our main data source. In some of the countries reviewed, the relevant progress took place after the implementation of the NSSD and therefore national SD progress reports have been examined in order to fill in the detected information gaps. The reader should also bear in mind the fact that this paper does not analyse sustainability as a concept nor does it analyse the quality of the NSSD's. The main objective was simply to present and compare the abovementioned contents of the various NSSD's in the Baltic Sea Region.



2. The main elements of the NSSDs in the Baltic Sea Region

The following table attempts to summarise the main elements of the reviewed national strategies for sustainable development, and includes issues that were explicitly addressed in the documents. Information regarding the key challenges posed by the environment and by the need for development can be found in the country specific descriptions in chapter 3.

2.1 Why an NSSD is needed?

Most of the Baltic Sea States have used the Brundtland Report's definition of sustainable development as a background for their own strategy processes: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' In addition, every BSR country has referred to the global challenges and international commitments, set for example by the United Nation's conferences on Environment and Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, 1992, and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002. Almost every NSSD mentioned the need to combat climate change as one of the country's main global responsibilities. Other global challenges are usually related to the fair management of international trade and the increasing pressure been placed on natural resources. In terms of all of the dimensions of sustainability, global responsibility is especially emphasised in the NSSDs of Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden. Latvia is also aiming at the goal of changing from a beneficiary of international aid to a country that is able to assist others in need.

Other international SD processes are also of relevance here, such as the EU's SD strategy, the Nordic SDS and Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region. All have as their objective the promotion of Sustainable Development, and were frequently mentioned as drivers in the compilation of national strategies for SD. It is also worth noting here that some of the BSR countries, such as Sweden and Finland, had already developed NSSDs before or shortly after the Rio conference in 1992. E.g. in Finland the Government Programme on SD (1998) is the country's third comprehensive document outlining national measures to promote SD.

Countries in transition (I.e. Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) have had specific motivations for their NSSD preparation. By implementing NSSDs, these countries aim to reverse the negative environmental, social and economic trends of the past, while setting the objective of raising the living standards of their citizens and eventually achieving the current average EU development level.

The majority of the NSSDs in the Baltic Sea Region can be seen as framework strategies with the objective of mainstreaming SD approaches so that action plans, programmes and concrete initiatives within the sectors and across spatial levels implement the NSSD. Sustainable development was highlighted as a cornerstone of political reform in Germany's NSSD, while in Norway, high expectations are held for the country's NSSD as it is described as a unifying national strategy to ensure that all individual plans, decisions and measures help to lead progress towards sustainable development. Norway has recently taken a further step forward by adopting and integrating a National Agenda 21 plan into the national budget.

	Belarus	Denmark	Finland	Germany	Latvia	Lithuania	Norway	Poland	Sweden
Year of the reviewed NSSD adoption	1997	2002	1998	2002	2002	2003	2002	1999	2002/2003
Responsible ministry / agency	National Economic research Institute of the Ministry of the Economy	Danish Environmental Protection Agency	Ministry of Environment	Green Cabinet serving the Federal Chancellery	National Sustainable Development Council	Ministry of Environment	Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Governmental Centre for Strategic Studies in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Environment
Scope of NSSD	Three dimensions but priority on ecological SD	Three dimensions	Three dimensions but priority on ecological SD	Three dimensions	Three dimensions	Three dimensions + regional SD	Three dimensions	Three dimensions + governance aspects	Three dimensions
Framework strategy or action plan	Framework strategy	Framework strategy	Framework strategy	Mixed	Framework strategy	Mixed	Framework strategy	Framework strategy	Mixed
Main issues	Traditional sectoral approach	Key policy areas: - Agriculture and fisheries - Forestry - Industry, trade and services - Transport - Energy - Urban and housing development	Key sectors: - International cooperation - Production and consumption - Energy economy - Regional development, urban structure and transport - Rural areas and use of renewable resources - Research and education	Key focus points: - Energy policy and climate change - Transport and mobility - Agriculture and rural development - Management of demographic change - Education - Innovative economy - International responsibility - Land use planning	Sixteen themes treated with equal importance, however social, economic and political security as the main issue.	Traditional sectoral approach + regional development issues	Priority areas: - International cooperation - Well-being and security - Environment - Energy - The oceans - Agriculture - Genetic resources	Traditional sectoral approach	- Environment - Climate change - Demographic challenges and public health - Social cohesion, welfare and security - Employment and learning in a knowledge society - Competitiveness and sustainable economic growth - Regional development - Sustainable community planning
Monitoring and review	The National Commission on Sustainable Development is expected to monitor the NSSD implementation.	A set of indicators will be updated annually and made accessible to the public via a homepage on the Internet.	Sustainable development indicators developed by the Finnish Environment Institute. An evaluation report of sustainable development in Finland published in 2003.	Sustainable development indicators will serve the monitoring process, which will be made on a biennial procedure.	Annual national sustainable development indicators report. The ministry of environmental protection and regional development is responsible for submitting a summary report of SD progress based on reports from responsible ministries.	A cross-ministerial task force, established by the Ministry of Environment, will submit biennial progress reports to the national sustainable development commission.	Statistics Norway is the central office in charge of compiling and issuing official statistics. NSSD revision will be carried out on a regular basis.	NSSD identifies the need for monitoring and evaluation albeit no specific plans were mentioned in the document.	The first set of Swedish SD indicators was adopted in 2001, covering 30 indicators. Sweden attempts to apply monitoring and review at the regional and municipal level.

2.2 The challenges of development and the environment

Although each country's approach to developing NSDS is different and is usually designed to fit its individual set of economic, institutional, socio-cultural and ecological conditions, the challenges posed by the environment and development are, in general, similar across the region, though some geographical variation can of course be identified.

Global and supra-national challenges, such as the threat of climate change and increasing levels of pressure on biodiversity and on natural resources were the most often mentioned environmental problems. Slowing down climate change calls for international cooperation and a reduction in the present volume of carbon emissions as well as more efficient energy usage and more sustainable production and consumption patterns. It was also argued that the rich nations should change their methods of production and ways of living, shape the development of globalisation in accordance with the basic principles of sustainability and increase public development aid.

In terms of internal environmental challenges, countries in transition face significant challenges due to the 'legacy' of old-fashioned large-scale industry, their obsolete municipal engineering infrastructure and inefficient energy production systems. In addition, their outdated water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure, their economically inefficient water sector and poor wastewater pollution monitoring system, are further problems relating to rural areas and small towns are particularly apposite here. Even if technological changes in the industrial structure have reduced the emissions of environmental pollutants, intensive economic development may increase land use pressure on the natural landscape and on protected and recreational territories. Moreover, increasing transportation, and road traffic in particular, contributes to global climate change and negatively impacts upon living quality, particularly in urban areas around the BSR. Another factor challenging both nature and human health is the continuing use of dangerous chemicals.

In respect of the social SD challenges, unfavourable demographic trends, falling birth rates and the ageing population were given special attention in Finland, Sweden and Germany. Worsening dependency ratios and the growing need for increased funding for social services, pensions and health care expenditure call for more child friendly social politics, something that was also addressed in the NSSDs. The threat of social exclusion was brought up for example in both the Lithuanian and the Swedish NSSDs. In Lithuania, sustainable social development is challenged by low employment rates, particularly in rural areas as the social security system is under-developed and local labour markets and the education system are not yet able to react quickly enough to the pressures set by economic restructuring. Furthermore, the differences in the health status of Lithuania's urban and rural population were considered significant. In Sweden, problems in respect of young people's integration into society, unemployment, mental illness and long-term dependency on social security benefits were all mentioned as future challenges.

A common social and institutional challenge across the BSR relates to public involvement and cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary cooperation in the achievement of SD. Such involvement is often accompanied by a lack of environmental awareness, and by the acknowledged fact that all actors do not emphasise adequately the implementation of SD principles. In addition, the inadequate level of resources and the lack of inter-sectoral cooperation in implementing proactive SD measures, such as improvements in environmental health, were seen as barriers to the promotion of SD.

In relation to sustainable economic development, the biggest challenge is to find solutions on how to decouple economic growth from its, often detrimental, impact on the environment and on human health. However, very few new solutions to this conundrum were noted. The development of more environmentally friendly production methods, renewable energy

resources and more efficient energy consumption approaches, and the sustainable use of forests and other natural resources are common measures to achieving a more sustainable economy. Investments in human and social capital and in R&D activities are needed to meet the rapid and continuing structural changes in society and in the economic realm, including the challenges set by economic globalisation.

Regional disparities and imbalances were also highlighted as challenges for SD particularly in Finland and Sweden but also in Lithuania. Heavy out-migration from some communities results in the under-utilisation of existing, fully operative infrastructures. At the same time, new housing, services and infrastructures are needed in areas of net in-migration. Mass-migration from rural areas has other possible negative impacts in the growth areas, as strong in-migration may lead to the deterioration of urban living environments. This calls for measures to tackle social segregation, the lack of housing and inadequate public transport in certain urban areas. On the other hand, more attention has to be paid to rural development issues and in particular to how to support the viability of rural areas and the diversify of the countryside's economic base without endangering bio-diversity, the quality of the physical environment and traditional cultural and rural landscapes.

2.3 Key issues and the set of SD objectives

The studied NSSDs tackle a wide range of environmental, social and economic issues. Most of the countries, with the exception of Latvia, had identified 4-8 key focus points or priority areas that the SD objectives should focus on. Referring to the European Commission's report (2004) it is possible to identify sectoral, cross-sectoral and territorial priorities. Sectoral priorities were usually related to:

- Government, e.g. the improvement of environmental legislation and management.
- Development of the service sector.
- Forestry: sustainable economic use of forests and increasing their recreational value.
- Agriculture: decreasing the use of fertilizers in the agricultural process.
- Energy: increasing the use of cost-effective, ecologically sound and efficient technology; reducing greenhouse gases.
- Transport: Promotion of public transport, creation of competitive alternatives to road traffic.

In terms of cross-sectoral objectives, the management of climate change was the most often mentioned issue, linking for example energy requirements and minimising their impact on the environment and on climate change. This was followed by overseas development aid and other international activities for the promotion of SD at the global level. Environmental health was also highlighted in the majority of reviewed material, and was usually linked to energy consumption and production, the growth in transport, the promotion of healthy food, the quality of urban planning and to the development of the social sector as a whole. Improvements in education and training, and attempts to develop human resources were priority areas in more than half of the reviewed material. Multidisciplinary research and innovation were foreseen as a future competitive advantage in the global economy but also as a means to support the development of tools and instruments for the promotion of SD.

It is rather difficult to identify notable differences between the countries in terms of key SD issues. Perhaps the clearest common character in the new EU member states and in Belarus was that the elimination of poverty and improvements in employment prospects were regarded as priority areas. The same countries also stressed the importance of cultural diversity and national traditions.

Territorial issues were addressed in most of the countries, although approaches to such questions were generally targeted to different levels. Finland, Lithuania and Sweden emphasised the need for measures to balance social and economic disparities between depressed regions and growth areas. Sustainable rural development and finding ways to enhance the countryside's viability were highlighted in Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden. Sustainable urban development was particularly prioritised in Denmark, Germany and in Norway. Finland and Denmark also stressed the need to improve co-operation between local authorities and the general public in land use planning. Germany introduced a double strategy of both quantitative and qualitative control of land use.

2.4 Responsible actors, implementation instruments, and SD

Inter-ministerial working groups were typically the responsible organs for the preparation of NSSDs. In most of the BSR countries this work was coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment, though there were some exceptions to this rule. For example in Belarus, the NSSD preparation was coordinated by the National Economic Research Institute while in Norway the responsible ministry was the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Norwegian case can be explained by the fact that Norway's first national strategy for sustainable development was drawn up in connection with the World Summit in 2002 and that the Norwegian Government attaches specific importance to achieving international cooperation that will realize the goal of fair and just development at the global level. The majority of the countries have however given responsibility for the coordination of NSSD implementation to the national sustainable development councils, which are also expected to facilitate the participation of the social partners in the NSSD implementation process.

Regarding the role of different actors in the achievement of SD, national governments have the main political responsibility as the NSSD objectives are designed to be implemented through state institutions and thus decision-making at all levels should be integrated with the SD approach. All of the reviewed NSSDs also called for shared responsibility, where all societal actors, including region's, municipalities, individuals, schools, media, businesses, NGO's, churches and scientific communities should have the opportunity to participate in and to take responsibility for the wider process. This approach puts a significant amount of pressure on the authorities as they are expected to provide adequate conditions for public involvement and participation.

The roles and responsibilities of the regional and local authorities' were discussed in almost every reviewed NSSD document. They were generally considered to play an important role in NSSD implementation as they manage substantial parts of specific environmental and spatial planning activities. They are also close to the public and thus have a good opportunity to involve their citizens in active debate on local planning. Spatial planning procedures, regional and local development plans and Local Agenda 21s were the most often-mentioned tools in making sustainability work in practice at the local level. Through these measures, regional and local authorities are expected to provide a healthy and pleasant living environment to their inhabitants. All dimensions of SD should be taken into account while preparing general development plans and strategies and spatial plans. An SD approach in local policy making should also facilitate the inclusion of social partners and public participation in the decision-making processes, fulfilling the needs of local democracy. As it is stated in the Polish NSSD, local policies should lead to improvements in social, ecological and economic conditions. Although in many countries the local authorities have substantial powers to compile development and land use plans, the inclusion of SD aspects in them has proved to be challenging especially in the smaller municipalities. Therefore central government should

increase experience exchange, launch national campaigns and initiatives and provide concrete support for SD implementation at the local level.

The implementation instruments for national sustainable development strategies are quite similar across the BSR states. National government should create the legislative basis that supports SD. Economic instruments, market-orientated measures, such as environmental taxes, tradable quotas and subsidies, and budgetary support and regulation should assist legislative measures. Central governments across the region aim at implementing their NSSD through integrating SD objectives into different sectoral programmes and strategies. Some countries, such as for example Belarus, Germany, Lithuania and Sweden, have attempted to promote the creation of broad strategies and programmes to overcome traditional sectoral boundaries.

Impact assessment procedures at different levels were commonly referred to as administrative instruments for SD. National, regional and local level authorities should implement measures, such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environment Assessment, to protect both physical and social environments from the adverse impacts of industrial, commercial and other activities that have an impact on the environment. Sweden called for broader impact assessments at all levels in order to provide a better basis for decision-making processes.

In addition to the legislative and administrative instruments, the promotion of research and development, increasing education and disseminating information should facilitate the sustained involvement of both business community and the general public in the SD processes. Future education, teaching and publicity would increase public understanding of important issues and preferably have an impact on individuals' and enterprises' fundamental values.

2.5 Monitoring for NSSDs

All of the reviewed NSSD documents recognise the need for monitoring and for the evaluation of strategy implementation but the level of detail regarding this information varied to a great extent. Generally speaking, sustainable development indicators (SDIs) are, or have already been, prepared to illustrate a country's progress towards sustainable development goals and the success of the SD initiatives. Monitoring the NSSDs is usually coordinated by national commissions on sustainable development, or by cross-ministerial cooperation. Finland and Sweden have already reviewed their NSSDs and Denmark has displayed SDIs for public access via a homepage on the Internet.

2.6 Concluding remarks

Realisation of sustainable development necessitates profound structural changes and new ways of thinking and working in all areas of economic, social and political life, and a strategic framework can assist these demands (OECD 2002). The review of the NSSDs in the Baltic Sea Region has shown that the countries have established cross-sectoral, multi-level and participatory institutions as well as presented numerous integrated tools that attempt to engage actors from governments, NGO's, businesses and local communities. At their best, NSSDs serve as a shared vision between government, civil society and market players for further planning and decision-making. Moreover there is a common understanding that the state cannot be solely responsible for strategy process or for its implementation. It is also apparent that in order to genuinely promote SD the authorities have to overcome traditional sectoral and disciplinary boundaries and pool resources for integrated and participatory planning processes.

3. National Strategies for Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region

3.1. Belarus³

Affirming the need for a strategic approach to SD

Belarus' National Sustainable Development Strategy is based on the principles laid out in the United Nation's *Agenda-21* document, while also taking into account the country's local conditions and features. 'A national strategy of sustainable development is needed in order to enable the effective participation of Belarus in resolving issues of sustainable socio-economic and environmental development on the national and international levels. Development can be defined as sustainable if it leads to a balanced solution to socio-economic and environmental problems, a solution that would preserve a favourable natural environment and natural resources for the needs of the present and future generations.'

As a country in transition the need for sustainable development is particularly important for Belarus. Therefore, the strategic objectives of Belarus' sustainable development are to ensure stable economic progress, while ensuring that the natural resources needed for such development are used wisely, meeting the needs of both the present and future generations and taking into account the interests of other states. The national focus of the sustainable development in Belarus is determined by its orientation towards sovereignty and the need to find an effective solution to its economic transition, to raise the living standards of its citizens, and to gain inclusion and acceptance in the world community while maintaining constructive friendly international relations.



The challenges posed by the environment and development

The environmental situation in Belarus has been aggravated by the effects of the Chernobyl disaster and by large-scale industry, which use obsolete technologies. Large farms in rural areas moreover lack adequate facilities for waste management. Consequently, further development of the economy should be based on environmentally friendly technologies and effective means to ensure the synergy of the social, economic and environmental systems that would not undermine the capacity of the country's environmental system.

In the social sphere the predominant demographic trends have been mostly unfavourable. Belarus has experienced falling birth rates, rising mortality rates, including those for infant

³ Ms. Elena Kasyanenko provided the material on Belarus' NSSD in English.

mortality, falling life expectancy and a reduction in the size of its population. Sustainable development for Belarus will be impossible without securing adequate living standards, which have dropped significantly over the last few years.

The use of obsolete equipment in the transportation sector creates serious technological and environmental problems. Sustainable development requires the reconstruction and development of the transportation system and the modernisation of the transport infrastructure. The industrial sector faces similar challenges, as its infrastructure is often old-fashioned. Furthermore, Belarus' industrial sector should better meet the needs of the domestic consumer as well as increase the competitiveness of Belarusian goods in the foreign markets.

Set of objectives

In terms of sustainable economic and environmental development in general, changes in the structure of consumption and production are essential. The restructuring of the economy and consumption and production patterns should be based on the understanding that the resources available for the present and future generations are limited. Industrial development should be exercised in a way that provides a healthy living environment for both current and future generations. In contrast to existing environmental practices, emphasis should be addressed to proactive measures to the re-orientation of production technologies in respect of minimising environmental damage.

In the social dimension of sustainability the main objectives are the protection and improvement of public health, eradicating poverty and minimising crime. The key measures to improve public health include for example, minimising the health risks related to environmental pollution and unfavourable environmental effects, the creation of healthy living environments and the possibilities for active forms of recreation, health education and the improvement of the health care system. Efforts to minimise poverty are aimed at promoting employment and self-employment, pursuing an active social and incomes policy and providing social support for underprivileged groups.

The main priorities for cultural sustainable development include preservation of the historical and cultural heritage, maintaining the uniqueness of the national culture, the promotion of amateur and professional art, the revival and development of traditional crafts and the formation of healthy moral values, ideals and national Belarusian traditions. At the same time, the interests of other ethnic communities in Belarus should be supported.

The sustainable development of human settlements implies the development and improvement of the existing settlement system in large cities, medium- and small-sized urban, and their adjacent rural settlements as well as in rural areas. It is also necessary to identify the specific features of transition towards sustainable development in different areas and towns of the country, and to identify problem areas and regions subject to specific government regulation.

The following table attempts to capture the long-term objectives and interests of Belarus' sustainable development:

Table 2: Belarus' sustainable development objectives

Policy area	Examples of strategic objectives and measures
Environment	- Improve environmental legislation and the system of environmental requirements and regulations concerning the use of natural resources. - Provide economic incentives to increase resource and energy efficiency and minimise the amounts of household and industrial waste. - Conduct environmental assessments and evaluations of the environmental effects of all industrial projects, develop and introduce systems of environmental auditing and insurance. - Increase the efficiency of government control and tighten economic and administrative sanctions aimed at preventing environmental disasters and violations of environmental protection laws. - Always consider environmental threats in decision making in order to ensure sustainable development.
Economy	- Restructuring the economy, with a view to increasing its efficiency and export potential. - Maintaining high levels of investment and innovation activity as a basis for economic growth. - Achieving stability in the credit, monetary, budgetary and financial system. - Keeping inflation at a moderate level. - Promoting competition in the internal market. - Maintaining a high rate of employment and reducing unemployment.
Society	- Raising living standards and improving the quality of life. - Provision of high level of social support and minimisation of poverty.

Responsible actors and implementation instruments for NSSD

The NSSD recognises the need for public participation in the process of sustainable development, paying special attention to women and youth. Generally speaking, individuals and various socio-demographic groups should be informed about the decisions being made with regard to environmental protection and the future development of Belarus, and participate in the preparation of such decisions.

The representative and executive institutions of power in Belarus should provide adequate conditions to promote cohesion among various social groups around the common goal of sustainable development and enable the participation of non-governmental organisations, trade unions and the scientific community in the development of the appropriate legislation. The National commission on SD has been formed in order to act as an intergovernmental coordination council and to facilitate the participation of the scientific community, state and local level authorities, NGO's, the media, businesses, labour unions and the general public.

The NSSD emphasises the role of regional and local initiatives, operating within the framework of a common development strategy. The efforts of such initiatives should be focused on the following key areas:

- Implementing measures to protect the environment from the negative effects of industrial and commercial activity on the local eco-systems.
- Building a healthier living environment by eliminating the sources of excessive loads on the eco-system and by developing an environmentally sound infrastructure.
- Social and economic stabilisation.
- Public education.
- Development and implementation of measures to promote sound environmental practices in local communities.
- Reconstruction of urban and rural settlements with the view to creating a favourable living environment, in the context of the national urban development policy.

- Creating economic and other conditions eliminating the opportunities for the development of environmentally dangerous types of commercial activities in the local communities.

The NSSD identifies mechanisms for the creation of socio-economic conditions for the transition towards sustainable development. These include for example, promotion of the technological development of manufacturing industries by maximising the use of internal scientific and technical resources and creation of an adequate system for social support. The development and implementation of national programmes, and of environmental programmes in particular (e.g. 'National Comprehensive Research and Development Programme for the Use of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection in 1996 – 2000 and Beyond' and 'The State Programme for the Protection and Efficient Use of Land') is considered to be vital for SD in Belarus. The NSSD also provides recommendations and guidelines for other national policy sectors. The strategy introduces modern environment-friendly technologies into the national economy, increasing the role of environmental taxation and highlights consistent development of legislative systems.

Progress towards SD is achieved primarily by implementing the NSSD objectives through the state institutions. Belarusian tools for sustainable development consist of framework conditions (legislation, international conventions and agreements), an adequate system of regulation and control guided by appropriate laws that include monitoring, financing, development and implementation of various programmes, and a mechanism to enable the development and introduction of environmentally friendly technologies and products.

Sustainable development should be guided and implemented primarily through the mechanism of budgetary support and regulation. The state's macroeconomic policies should stimulate resource efficiency, the development of environmentally friendly industries and research efficient sectors and job creation. It is foreseen that economic advancement will increase the share of environment-related duties and taxes in the share of budgetary incomes. This process should be accompanied by the provision of taxation benefits to environmentally friendly producers and by increasing the taxation of environmentally or socially dangerous goods and excessive environmental pollution. The proceeds from environmental taxes should be spent chiefly on environmental programmes. Furthermore, the government will attract investment in environmentally friendly technologies by providing investment loans and government guarantees to private investors. The technological restructuring of the economy will be assisted by the implementation of government, sectoral and territorial programmes supported by the state budget and from other sources.

The environmental assessment of investments and the development of an environmental auditing and consulting system should also be encouraged, along with the environmental certification of products. Environmental education, staff training and public information should also increase knowledge of the environment and form an adequate understanding of the social and economic situation and issues of development.

Monitoring and review of the NSSD implementation

The system of indicators for sustainable development should define the targets of socio-economic development and the limitations on the use of natural resources and environmental pollution. The targets and objectives of sustainability are reflected by indicators that characterise the living standards and quality of life, the level of economic development and changes in the state of the environment. The National Commission on Sustainable Development is expected to monitor the implementation of SD in Belarus.

In order to monitor the transition towards sustainable development a monitoring system is required. Its main functions are to collect, analyze and provide the information necessary for the analysis of the indicators defining the quality of life, the degree of environmental stress, the use of hazardous chemicals in the economy, the state of the environment, ecosystems and

conservation areas. The monitoring system is expected to affect the interests of different social groups and to steer decision making towards sustainable development.

3.2 Denmark: a shared future – balanced development

Denmark's approach to sustainable development is based on the Brundtland Commission's definition of SD. Furthermore, the global challenges set in Rio 1992 as well as the EU's commitments to the promotion of sustainable development have steered the country's work on NSSD.

The Danish vision of sustainable development describes the country as 'a society where economic progress can go hand in hand with an improved environment. Necessary incentives and opportunities must exist that enable individuals to contribute with their own initiatives. The population should enjoy a good framework for employment, living conditions, social conditions, and quality of life. Sustainable development implies that Denmark must face up to economic, environmental and social challenges simultaneously. Future generations should have at least as favourable opportunities for a good life as the current one. Sound economic development, which is socially balanced, must be ensured. This development must provide for greater individual freedom of action, display respect for the limits of nature and the environment, and have no negative impact on people's health.'

The NSSD covers a period of 20 years and it should be considered as a combined framework for Denmark's national initiatives for SD. Action plans, programmes and concrete initiatives within the sectors and areas concerned will implement the strategy.



The challenges posed by the environment and development

Denmark's NSSD lists the challenges, both at the global and the national level, which need to be solved if SD is to be realized. These global challenges relate to growing international trade and the level of increasing pressure now placed on the natural resource endowment. This demands more effective international co-operation, particularly on questions such as climate change; nature and biodiversity; environment, health and quality of life; sustainable exploitation and the management of natural resources and waste. Denmark also stresses the fact that environmental aspects are becoming a more competitive parameter in global economy.

The major internal challenges in Denmark concern all three dimensions of sustainable development. In terms of the environment, the large number of chemicals dispersed through various routes is an important challenge affecting human health and the quality of nature. Additional challenges relate to decoupling economic growth from the impact on the environment and human health, reducing the contribution of the transport system to climate change and to local air pollution and improving resource utilisation and reducing waste volumes. The development and introduction of more environmentally friendly production methods that prevent any deterioration in biodiversity is needed to protect biodiversity and

landscapes both in rural and urban areas. The Danish NSSD also discusses social challenges such as the threat from man-made climate change, the correlation between the environment and health and more efficient resource consumption. International initiatives, measures and the enhancement of the knowledge base and public participation in all sectors and areas are considered to be the necessary elements ensuring the success of the strategy.

Set of objectives

The Danish vision for sustainable development is based on eight objectives and principles that reflect the areas where there is a special need for Denmark to work at achieving sustainable development:

- Development of the welfare society and decoupling economic growth from environmental impacts.
- Achievement of a healthy and safe environment with a high level of protection, adoption of precautionary principle.
- Securing a high degree of biodiversity and the protection of ecosystems.
- Resources must be used more efficiently.
- Denmark should have an active role at the international level.
- Environmental considerations must be taken into account in all sectors.
- The market must support sustainable development.
- Sharing responsibility in the fields of SD action and measuring progress towards sustainability.

Denmark's NSSD describes the objectives and activities required enabling Denmark to contribute to sustainable development. Sustainable development affects all activities in society, and the NSSD focuses on the most important key sectors and policy areas where environmental considerations should be integrated:

Table 3: Denmark's sustainable development objectives

Policy area	Examples of objectives
Agriculture and fisheries	- Sustainable food production - Decreasing the loss of nitrates, phosphorous and ammonia from agricultural processes - Integration of SD considerations in the fisheries sector
Forestry	- Promotion of environmentally friendly forestry, increasing the forested area in Denmark, stressing the multiple role of forests for public welfare and involving public in decisions concerning forests
Industry, trade and services	- Promotion of environmentally friendly markets by using economic instruments such as 'eco labelling', environmental product declarations, environmental management and environmentally friendly public procurement. - Promotion of more sustainable production methods e.g. by adopting polluter-pays principle
Transport	- Safeguarding public access to safe and efficient transport - Decoupling economic growth from growth in transport related environmental and health problems
Energy	- Development of market orientated measures that will ensure stable, cost effective and sustainable energy supplies
Urban and housing development	- Promotion of a sustainable urban structure, housing and construction - Encouraging public participation and strengthening of local communities - Balanced urban renewal processes.

In addition, the NSSD defines the much-needed cross cutting activities in the fields of climate change, biodiversity, environment and health, resources and resource efficiency and international activities.

Responsible actors and implementation instruments for sustainable development

Participatory aspects are not explicitly addressed in the NSSD. It can be stated however, that an inter-ministerial working group has compiled the Danish NSSD, under the secretariat of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency. The Danish government, which has adopted the NSSD, is responsible for its implementation. Broad public participation was arranged during the strategy preparation process. (EC 2004:14)

As regards the roles of the various actors in the strategy implementation process, the Danish government has the main political responsibility. Throughout the strategy document it is stressed that decision making at all levels should be integrated with environmental thinking.

Regional and local authorities play an important role in the NSSD implementation as they manage substantial parts of specific environmental and spatial planning activities. They are also close to the public and thus have the opportunity to involve citizens in active debate on local planning issues. Local Agenda 21 has been implemented in most of Denmark's local municipalities. Central Government will in turn facilitate the municipalities' work on Local Agenda 21 issues by providing guidance and passing on experience.

In relation to the business sector, the NSSD highlights the fact that the market should support sustainable development. It is estimated that businesses engaged in significant environmental initiatives improve their competitiveness. Therefore the Danish government will pursue the promotion of market-based measures and support the building of a broader and deeper SD knowledge base. The Environmental Assessment Institute will contribute to determining how environmental goals can best be achieved and in the most cost-effective ways. The financial sector is also expected to focus on environmental considerations, for example, by increasing the use of green and ethical accounting.

Generally speaking, the NSSD stresses shared responsibility in Danish society as the state, the municipalities, the counties, the business sector, the schools, other associations, voluntary organisations, and citizens in general must all have the opportunity to participate in, and to take responsibility to ensure that development takes place. Individuals should consider their own behaviour and make conscious, pro-environment decisions regarding transport habits, energy consumption and selection of consumer goods.

In order to support the established environmental legislation the Danish government has attempted to increase the use of market oriented measures such as environmental taxes, tradable quotas and subsidies.

The NSSD emphasises the need for Government proposals, bills and large-scale engineering works to undergo strategic environment assessment in order to ensure that environmental consequences as well as economic analyses both inform the decision-making process. Similarly, local and regional authorities should also implement environmental impact assessments in their work, while the public sector in general should include SD considerations in its procurement policies.

Continuing research and development, technological breakthroughs and innovation will be supported through better information, the dissemination of green technology, guidance and the exchange of experience. Although many Danish enterprises have achieved better competitiveness by including environmental considerations into production, there remains a need to strengthen the interplay between public and private sectors. Eco-labelling and environmental product declarations are seen as a means to provide better opportunities for consumers to make new choices. Attention should also be paid to future education and teaching in order to shape the fundamental values of society. The public should have easy access to information, the capability to participate in decision-making and have access to justice in environmental matters in line with the Aarhus convention principles.

Monitoring and review of the implementation

The Danish government will monitor and report on the progress of implementing the strategy and achieving its goals. A set of indicators, based on international experience with SD indicators, illustrates the progress towards the SD goals and success of the initiatives. SD indicators have been developed in connection with the NSSD to follow progress in relation to key objectives and activities. According to the strategy they will be presented annually on a special website, accessible to the public via a homepage on the Internet for sustainable development (see http://www.mst.dk/indikator/ind1_1_2.html). The aim here is to adjust the NSSD on a regular basis, while the need for new targets will also be continually reassessed.

3.3 Finland: The Government Programme on Sustainable Development 1998⁴

The Government Programme on Sustainable Development outlines national measures to promote sustainable development. In Finland, the aim of sustainable development is 'for people to learn to live in harmony with nature and their fellow human beings'. This broad interpretation of SD is built on the principles of the work of Brundtland Commission. The programme aims at ecological sustainability and at creating the necessary economic, social and cultural preconditions for achieving this end. The NSSD reviews all three dimensions of sustainability while in addition both alternative courses of action and their respective objectives have been reconciled.



The challenges posed by the environment and of development

The Finnish NSSD discusses both external and internal challenges covering the different dimensions of development. In terms of the environment, slowing down climate change calls for international cooperation and a reduction in the present volume of emissions. Ecologically advanced land use planning, nature reserves, and the sustainable use and management of forests and other natural resources are needed to safeguard biological diversity in activities that affect natural environments.

In the economic sphere, far-sighted economic policies, investments in human and social capital, education, research and development, innovations and expertise, and the efficient economic utilisation of resources with the help of high-tech innovations are some of the named measures designed to alter production and consumption patterns.

One of the major challenges concerning Finnish society more generally relates to its ageing population and thus to the growing need of funding for social security, pensions and health care. Unemployment and the inequity and social exclusion that it entails can only be addressed through sound employment policies and efficient social services. Regional disparities are also highlighted as heavy out-migration from some communities resulting in the under use of existing, fully operative infrastructures. At the same time, new housing, services and infrastructure are needed in areas of net in-migration. Regional development policies aim to stabilize this imbalance.

Set of objectives

The Finnish NSSD defines six key sectors for SD as well as their strategic objectives and lines of action. Although the focus of the NSSD is on ecological sustainability it does also cover the social and economic fields. In respect of social and cultural sustainability the programme aims at improving knowledge and skills and thus at safeguarding the welfare of the citizens.

⁴ It is worth mentioning here that the first national document in respect of SD was presented to the Finnish parliament in 1990, while considerable efforts have been made in this area even after the adoption of the NSSD in 1998. For further information visit <http://www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?contentid=94236&lan=en>.

Economic sustainability is achieved through improved international competitiveness and high employment while production and consumption should be made to cause less stress on the environment. The key sectors and examples of strategic objectives are presented in the following table.

Table 4: Key sectors of sustainable development and examples of strategic objectives:

Policy area	Examples of strategic objectives
Finland's role in international cooperation	Implementation of international conventions and promotion of cooperation at different levels (global, EU, neighbouring areas), integration of cross-border investment, trade and environmental policies.
Products, production and consumption	Improvement of Finland's eco-efficiency and decreasing the environmental impact of production and consumption by using administrative and economic instruments and enhancing the use voluntary environmental instruments, e.g. environmental labelling and agreements between the business community and the authorities.
Energy economy	Increasing use of efficient, cost-effective, and ecologically sound technology in order to meet future energy requirements and minimise the impacts on climate, environment and human health arising from energy consumption and production.
Regional structure, urban structure and transport	National and EU-funded programmes will promote regionally balanced development and the implementation of Strategic Environment Assessment will lay stress on the aspects of sustainability. Intensifying the co-operation between local authorities and the public in the fields of land use planning. Local initiatives for SD will be supported.
Rural areas and use of renewable resources	Opportunities will be improved for the promotion of urban rural interaction and development of rural business, rural services and village centres. Rural development will be based on sustainable use and management of nature and natural resources Resources will be made available for the care and upkeep of traditional rural landscapes and habitat types of outstanding importance.
Research and education	Multidisciplinary research and education will support the development of choices, tools and instruments designed to promote SD. Environmental technology will be one of the nation's expertise

Responsible actors and implementation instruments for sustainable development

The Finnish Government's programme for sustainable development was launched in 1998 with the Ministry of the Environment coordinating the work. A cross-ministerial strategy group prepared the programme and, at the request of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, several other parties also drafted similar programmes of their own. These organisations have taken part in the NSSD evaluation (the evaluation report can be found on the Internet:

<http://www.ymparisto.fi/eng/orginfo/publica/electro/sy645/sy645.htm>).

The Finnish NSSD can be interpreted as a framework strategy as the described strategic objectives and lines of action are relatively abstract. The achievement of SD is based on shared responsibility because the basic aim of the NSSD is for all the key sectors of the administration as well as those in trade and industry to pursue the goal of sustainable development in all their activities. The NSSD is to be implemented by the Ministries, their subordinate organisations, other public bodies and local authorities, as well as the private sector, NGO's and private citizens, though the responsibilities of the various actors have not as yet been explicitly addressed. The NSSD stresses the need to promote dialogue between the Ministries and other social actors, to establish links between different programmes and to encourage commitment to measures promoting SD. The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development (FNCSO) was established in 1993 to promote and co-ordinate the implementation of sustainable development at different levels and to act as a forum where different stakeholders were able present their ideas, goals and programmes and to engage in a broad debate about sustainability.

Monitoring and review of the implementation process

Since Finland had already begun to work on NSSD at the beginning of the 1990's some experiences can already be drawn from the use of sustainable development indicators. The first Finnish set of sustainable development indicators was published in 2000, and four years later the indicators were reclassified with the purpose of broadening the meaning of sustainable development by changing the traditional three-dimensional division to better adapt to the SD objectives:

- Intergenerational equity
- Human health and well-being
- Distributional equity
- Adapting to the future
- Global responsibility
- Environmental pressure
- Preserving natural resources
- Eco-efficiency and community structure

The Finnish Environment Institute is actively developing sustainable development indicators and further information can be found (in English) on the Internet. (www.ymparisto.fi)

An extensive interactive process of assessment of the Government's programme for sustainable development took place in 2000-2002, while the evaluation report on sustainable development in Finland was published in the Spring of 2003. Each administrative sector submitted a report to the National Commission on Sustainable Development with the evaluation report describing the progress towards SD in Finland over the last twenty years. Here it is worth mentioning some of the institutional issues and roadblocks in implementing SD. First, sustainable development is a continuous and long-term progress with the progress made thus far being somewhat incremental in nature. Second, the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development is still unclear. Moreover, it has only limited financial resources and a limited capacity to make binding decisions. The evaluation report also highlights the identified problem areas and challenges posed by SD in Finland (see: <http://www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?contentid=66374&lan=en>).

3.4 Germany: 'Perspectives for Germany. Our strategy for sustainable development'

Following the international initiatives and declarations, such as the work of Brundtland Commission and the Rio declaration, the model of Sustainable Development is perceived as 'the leitmotif' of the Federal Governments politics of reform that will guide Germany into the 21st century. Special emphasis has been placed on Germany's global responsibility and the consequences of local activities. Germany's strategic approach to SD attempts to make the interaction between different dimensions of sustainability transparent and integrates different policy fields, which have been previously considered in isolation. Germany's NSSD serves as a long-term process and it will be repeatedly reviewed to check whether the decisions made and solutions found have been correct.

A vision for Germany's future builds on four guiding principles: fairness to different generations, quality of life, social cohesion and international responsibility following the commitments made in Rio 1992.



The challenges posed by the environment and development

The German NSSD calls for action in order to combat climate change and to reduce greenhouse gases, and consequently presents policy goals in terms of energy and climate protection. The development of renewable energy sources, and increasing energy efficiency and energy savings are some of highlighted tasks for the future. At the global level it is argued that the rich nations should change their methods of production and ways of living, shape the growth of globalisation in accordance with the basic principles of sustainability and increase public development aid.

EU enlargement is expected to exacerbate the enormous growth in road goods traffic and there is a need to decrease transport intensity and increase efficiency in terms of transport networks.

Regarding internal challenges, an ageing population and weakening dependency ratios requires support for a child-friendly society and that better opportunities are made available for the elderly to participate in economic and social life. Rapid and continuing structural changes in both society and in the economy highlight the need to develop innovative businesses and shape educational systems to meet future demands. In terms of physical planning, reducing land use and encouraging sustainable residential development are the key challenges, particularly in a densely populated country like Germany. The challenge here is addressed primarily to the Länder and to the municipalities, as they set the provisions concerning the reservation of land.

Set of objectives

The NSSD outlines, referring to Federal Government strategy ‘Perspectives for Germany’, key focus points for sustainable development:

Table 5: Germany’s key focus points for sustainable development

Policy area	Examples of strategic objectives
Energy policy and climate change	Increase energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gases Development of renewable energy sources and to double their share in the primary energy consumption between 2000 and 2010
Transport and mobility	Decoupling economic growth and transport growth Improvement of the performance of railway infrastructure
Agriculture and rural development	Encourage multifunctional agriculture and utilise the social capital of the regions Promote healthy food and better care of animals and environment
Management of demographic change	Encourage and strengthen families, provide financial resources for child friendly policies Increase the participation of older people in the labour force
Educational system	Increase the number of students with a university degree Ensure that all children have the basic qualifications to learn successfully, promote interaction between school and home
Innovative economy	Promote co-operation between companies and research institutes
International responsibility	Support SD worldwide by improving trade opportunities for developing countries and giving direction to globalisation
Land-use planning	Double strategy of quantitative and qualitative control of land use: - Decouple land use from economic growth, space saving construction, compact town development, more extensive mixed land use and traffic saving residential designs - Improvement of the living environment in inner cities - Ecologically compatible, economically efficient and socially accepted out of town development - Improvement of the landscape and recreational value of open space

For concrete benchmarks with measurable goals, see the section on the ‘Monitoring and review of the NSSD’ below.

Responsible actors and implementation instruments for sustainable development

The State, with its laws and programmes, and all other actors participating in Germany’s economy and society need to adapt to theme of SD. As such, public discussion and collaboration between the social partners was strongly recommended in the preparation of the NSSD, while a public internet forum for a ‘dialogue on sustainability’ was established. In addition, the National Council for sustainable development, consisting of representatives of different social groups and the scientific community was set up in order to enhance the consultation process for NSSD.

Germany’s NSSD addresses citizens, producers and consumers, economic actors and the trade unions, the scientific community, churches and other associations as important participants in the work towards realising SD. Specific emphasis is laid on businesses and

consumers, as businesses are responsible for their means of production and the goods they produce, while the consumer is responsible for choosing the product and for using it in ways that are socially and environmentally acceptable. Businesses are expected to inform consumers of the features of their products relevant to health and to the environment, and also in respect of sustainable means of production.

The State, the Länder and the municipalities should draw up balanced budgets and continually reduce the levels of their debts. The NSSD acts as a basis for further political reform, providing guidelines for a comprehensive SD policy, i.e. devising a form of development that is sustainable economically, ecologically and socially. Furthermore, the Länder and the municipalities are mainly responsible for the implementation of the objectives in relation to sustainable land use and residential development. Additionally, at the local level, Local Agenda 21 initiatives have been compiled in more than 2 300 German municipalities.

Monitoring and review of the NSSD

In order to review the progress made towards sustainability, the Federal Government has specified concrete benchmarks with 21 measurable goals and indicators. These indicators (see box below) are important for the monitoring process, which will be undertaken on a biennial basis.

German SD indicators for 21st century:

- Productivity of energy and raw materials
- Emissions of the 6 greenhouse gases specified in the Kyoto Agreement
- The proportion of renewable energy sources in overall energy consumption
- Increase in land use for housing and transport
- Development of the stocks of specified animal species
- Balance of public sector financing
- Capital-outlay ratio
- Private- and public-sector expenditure on research and development
- Educational outcomes for 25-year-olds and number of new students
- Gross domestic product
- Transport intensity and share of the railways in providing goods transport
- Proportion of ecological agriculture and general statement on nitrogen surplus
- Air pollution
- Satisfaction with health
- Number of burglaries
- Labour force participation rate
- Full-time care facilities
- Relationship between male and female gross annual earnings
- Number of foreign school-leavers who have not completed secondary school
- Expenditure on development collaboration
- EU imports from developing countries

The monitoring process aims at verifying how far the measures specified in the strategy have been successfully put into practice and on evaluating whether the objectives and goals set in the NSSD are being achieved.

3.5 Latvia: Strategy for Sustainable Development of Latvia

The National Long-term Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Latvia was prepared for the Johannesburg Conference in 2002. Ongoing regional processes and international commitments affirmed the need for a strategy compilation. The Latvian NSSD attempts to define the direction of the country's sustainable development approach. The strategy uses the Brundtland Commission's work as a basis for defining SD:

‘A sustainable development is focused on human beings and aimed at improving the living conditions of humans by preserving nature and the environment; therefore it is necessary to have respect for nature, which provides humans with resources and everything that is required for life. In light of the above, sustainable development means the qualitative improvement of living conditions of humans, which must be achieved without exceeding the supporting capacity of the ecosystem.’



The challenges posed by the environment and development

The NSSD does not explicitly outline the challenges posed by the environment or development in Latvia. However, internal and external stability, social confidence in development perspectives, social coherence and cooperation in the achievement of that development can be mentioned here as important elements of the Latvian sustainable development approach. In terms of environmental sustainability, Latvia's starting points are rather good. The restructuring of manufacturing and production has resulted in a decline in the number of industries with high-energy consumption and raw material use. Therefore the next challenge for Latvia is to continue to develop its economy, while at the same time preserving its natural heritage and maintaining the regenerative capacity of natural ecosystems, while at the same time striving for greater social equality and trying to avoid passing on a higher level of risk to future generations. The achievement of SD in Latvia requires changes in social behaviour and values as well as greater equality of opportunity between inhabitants and inhabitant groups, and between the various territories and regions of Latvia. (Latvian Rio + 10)

Set of objectives

Latvia's situation as a country in transition is clearly visible in its priorities for sustainable development with economic, political and social security being the main issue. Integration within the EU and NATO is seen as guaranteeing this priority. Latvia should also become an active member in the business, finance, science, high-tech and communications networks in the Baltic Region. The development of a civil society and law-governed state should be furthered and political and economic decisions should be made in line with the country's long-term objectives. The economic and social cohesion of the society should be ensured, providing for equal opportunities for all members of the society and enabling the participation of every

individual in the country's economic, political and social processes as well as ensuring the amalgamation and integration of the entire society. Higher educational standards are seen as a prerequisite for economic and social development.

The Latvian NSSD defines ten general objectives for future development, with a consensus forming around environmental, social and economic objectives. They are based on global principles, defined in the Rio de Janeiro declaration, as well as on Latvia's geopolitical position, its natural particularities, and its experience of social and economic development.

In the social sphere Latvia should construct a welfare society while promoting democracy, equality, integrity and its cultural heritage. Public participation should be ensured in sustainable development processes. Regarding the economic dimension, Latvia should ensure that market economy mechanisms serve sustainable development needs. In relation to environmental issues Latvia should take adequate measures aimed at preserving biodiversity and protecting vulnerable ecosystems while developing a responsible societal attitude towards natural resources while constantly increasing the efficiency of the utilisation of such resources.

Some of the objectives have a multidimensional character. Latvia should ensure a safe and healthy environment for both the present and future generations while constructing a stable economy capable of ensuring the country's social needs are met. The rate of the economic growth should not however exceed the rate of environmental pollution or the consumption of resources. Environmental matters should be integrated into all sectoral policies.

In terms of international cooperation and global responsibility Latvia is aiming at a gradual change from being a beneficiary of international aid to a country that is able to ensure its needs and necessities by its own means, and even provide assistance to other countries where needed.

The NSSD lists, in addition, the following 16 key themes and policy objectives, indicators and measures for the realisation of these objectives. The NSSD mainly contains policy initiatives that have already been mentioned in other Latvian sector policy documents. As there are no priority issues, only the key themes are presented below:

1. Water protection
2. Climate change and the protection of ozone layer
3. Use of natural resources
4. Conservation of biodiversity
5. Reduction and management of waste
6. Elimination of poverty
7. Employment
8. Education and science
9. Environment and health
10. Housing policy
11. Industry
12. Energy
13. Transport
14. Agriculture
15. Regional development
16. Tourism

NSSD implementation instruments and responsible actors

The NSSD does not explicitly refer to a communication strategy or to stakeholders in the strategy compilation process. However, the Latvian Rio + 10 document stresses the importance of the following major target groups in the review process of the NSSD: NGO's, employees and trade unions, employers, municipalities, farmers and youth. The Sustainable Development Council will coordinate the implementation of the NSSD.

The environmental, social and economic goals of the NSSD require additional investment from both the national and municipal budgets. The achievement of economic goals will mainly be based on private investment. The NSSD does not explicitly refer to implementation

instruments and responsible actors though they are mentioned in the Latvian Rio + 10 document. Economic instruments are based on the 'polluter pays' principle and on the attempts to create 'win-win' situations. Revenue from environmental taxation will be targeted to national and environmental protection budgets, environmentally friendly investments and recycling programmes.

Spatial planning acts as an important implementation instrument, as important reforms on planning, programmes and legislation have been elaborated to gradually alter attitudes to SD planning. International knowledge and the exchange of experience, e.g. VASAB and Baltic 21, are also significant factors contributing to a more sustainable form of planning. The, as yet, insufficient level of institutional capacity however is currently affecting the quality of planning. In addition, Latvia also lacks institutional mechanisms for participation in decision-making. Land use planning processes, EIA procedures and the possibilities provided by ICT are considered as likely to enhance public participation and the flow of information between the state, the municipalities, businesses and the social partners. The Latvian NGO centre has an active role in information dissemination.

Territorial development planning significantly influences the sustainable development processes at a local level as the municipalities elaborate territorial development plans and act at the closest level to the citizens. There are, however, many municipalities, who have not yet begun to elaborate their territorial planning. Moreover, municipalities actively working with sustainable development have experienced considerable problems. There is a lack both of local capacity and resources, and SD issues are often simply not in line with local priorities to ensure the essential needs of the populace. Nevertheless, Latvian municipalities should, within their limits of responsibility and capacity, ensure that sustainable territorial development, social and health care and the economic, educational and cultural needs of society are addressed. (Latvian Rio + 10)

Monitoring and the review of the implementation process

The Latvian Environment Agency will prepare, on a yearly basis, a national report on the sustainable development indicators. Responsible Ministries shall also deliver reports concerning the progress towards the objectives set in the NSSD. The Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development is responsible for submitting a summary report to the Sustainable Development Council and to the Latvian Cabinet.

3.6 Lithuania: National Strategy for Sustainable Development

The compilation of the Lithuanian NSSD closely reflects national interests and previously prepared strategic documents as well as international initiatives and the EU's sustainable development strategic provisions. The NSSD serves as a strategic analysis, taking into account the peculiarities of Lithuania as a country, and in particular with its economy currently in transition, to identify the internal and external factors and processes that influence the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Lithuania's development from a sustainable development point of view. Most attention has been paid to the major internal factors of the transition period.

The main objective of sustainable development in Lithuania is:

‘to achieve the present average developmental level of the EU countries by 2020, according to indicators on economic and social development as well as efficiency in the consumption of resources, and not to exceed allowable EU standards, according to indicators on environmental pollution, while meeting the requirements of international conventions in the field of the minimization of environmental pollution and inputs into global climate change.’



The challenges posed by the environment and development

In terms of environmental quality and natural resources, the main challenges result from the inefficient energy production system and outdated technology in the energy sector, the outdated water supply and waste water treatment infrastructure, and the economically inefficient water sector and poor waste water pollution monitoring system, particularly in the countryside and in the small towns. Furthermore, intensive economic development will increase land use pressure on the natural landscape and on protected and recreational territories. Consequently, new conflicts in landscape management are likely to occur. In respect of natural resources, effectiveness as regards the use of natural resources and alternative energy resources is still low, while the establishment of a well functioning waste management system remains ongoing.

In the sphere of economic development, it is foreseen that the intensive development of the transport sector and a growth in the number of cars will increase air pollution, particularly in urban areas. In respect of industry, the consumption of energy, raw materials and water per production unit is still comparatively high due to the underdeveloped nature of the nation's technological endowment, the lack of environmental awareness and also a dearth in economic mechanisms promoting environmental protection measures. The challenge in the energy sector is to modernize the old-fashioned and now worn out infrastructure.

Sustainable social development is challenged by low employment rates particularly in the agricultural sector, by unbalanced regional development, inadequate labour market flexibility in the process of economic restructuring, and an under-developed social security system as well

as by the threat of the social exclusion of marginalized groups. Moreover, little exists in terms of inter-sectoral cooperation in the field of public health and the differences in the health status of urban and rural population are often significant. Schools, local communities and society more generally are inadequately prepared for economic transition while different levels of society lack an understanding of modern science and knowledge-based skills, which is usually an important factor in helping to ensure progress, and particularly in terms of realising the sustainable development of society more generally.

Since the early 1990s a major part of the country's investment capital has been directed towards the most urbanized regions. This trend has accelerated the already unbalanced economic and social development balance between Lithuanian regions. Another challenge here is that although regional master and strategic plans have been prepared in some regions, the implementation of sustainable development principles is not adequately emphasized.

Set of objectives

The NSSD provides a comprehensive list of Lithuanian's SD objectives up to 2020. They are built on the following sustainable development priorities:

- Moderate economic growth balanced between economic branches and regions.
- Minimization of social and economic differences between regions and within regions by preserving their identity.
- Minimization of the impact from the main sectors (transport, industry, energy, agriculture, housing, tourism) on the environment.
- More efficient use of natural resources and waste management.
- Minimization of impact on human health.
- Mitigation of global climate change and its consequences.
- More effective protection of biodiversity.
- More effective protection of the landscape and rational landscape management.
- Reduction of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.
- Enhancement of education and science roles.
- Preservation of Lithuanian cultural identity.

The SD objectives cover all traditional dimensions of sustainability and, in addition, regional development issues are also discussed. The NSSD presents short-term, mid-term and long-term objectives and specifies tasks and implementation measures within each of the four spheres of SD. The NSSD 'identifies sustainable development as a compromise between the environmental, economic and social objectives of society, providing opportunities to improve the welfare of present and future generations without exceeding the allowable limits in respect of the impact on the environment.' The following table attempts to give a general overview of the priority issues of sustainable development in Lithuania.

Table 6: Priority issues of SD in Lithuania

Policy area	Examples of strategic objectives
Environmental quality and natural resources	Growth of air pollution emissions will be only half of the growth of production and services Establish integrated water resources management systems Increase forest coverage, promote restoration of damaged areas, expand and integrate protected areas Implementation of a modern waste management system and reduce total quantities of waste
Economic Development	Reach the average <i>per-capita</i> GDP of EU15 by 2020, growth should be balanced between sectors and regions Decouple transport growth from transport emissions Restructure and modernise Lithuanian industry Increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources Redirect agriculture towards ecological farming Integrate environmental concerns in policies affecting households Establish a network of recreational networks and develop regional parks
Social Development	Increase the employment rate to 70% and keep unemployment under 7% Widen the coverage of social security system, reform the pension system and provide access to housing for marginalized groups Improve the health of the population Enhance the role of science and education Preserve Lithuania's cultural identity
Regional Development	Balance social and economic disparities between different regions of Lithuania Support the preparation and implementation of LA21 initiatives

Responsible actors and implementation instruments

The Ministry of the Environment is authorised to co-ordinate the implantation of the NSSD and to establish a taskforce from representatives of the various Ministries for the preparation of biennial reports on the implementation of the NSSD. All of the ministries are entitled to revise their sectoral programmes with the SD objectives defined in the NSSD. In order to ensure the coordination of sustainable development process at the highest level a National Commission for Sustainable Development, chaired by the Prime Minister and composed of representatives from the various Ministries, the President's Office, and other interested institutions and public organizations, has been formed.

The NSSD serves the purpose of integrating and improving existing strategic processes and sector policies, since seeking to successfully implement NSSD, national programmes have to be specified and amended with measures included in the Strategy. The NSSD highlights the importance of extensive public participation in the implementation of sustainable development principles, both in everyday decision-making and in addressing the tasks mentioned in the strategy. Regional and municipal development plans will be one of the major conditions for the successful implementation of the Strategy. Therefore, the central government is to delegate competences to the regions and municipalities and to support Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

Monitoring and review of the NSSDs implementation

The aforementioned cross-ministerial task force, established by the Ministry of the Environment, will submit biennial progress reports to the national sustainable development commission. By considering ongoing external and internal changes, the Strategy will be regularly revised and amended. Based on the monitoring results, supplementary measures to better ensure the implementation of the strategic objectives have to be planned and implemented.

The NSSD defines quantitative sustainable development indicators, based on EU recommendations and national characteristics, in order to monitor the implementation of the strategy. These development indicators are grouped in accordance with the four main sustainable development sectors: environmental quality (18 indicators), economic development (29), social development (22) and regional development (8).

3.7 Norway

The Norwegian NSSD is based on the work of the Brundtland commission, the UN's conventions such as Rio 1992 and the World Summit's millennium development goals, the Nordic SDS and also is a result of previous government decisions. The NSSD's aim is to place sectoral policies in a larger and more holistic perspective. The Norwegian strategy is the beginning of 'a long-term process of cooperation, the process of creating and realizing the country's common vision of a sustainable society'.

'To achieve sustainable development, we must apply a long-term perspective and be cautious in taking choices that will have a lasting impact on our descendants' freedom of choice, their ability to meet their needs, and even their prospects of survival. Thus one of our guiding principles must be to respect nature's tolerance limits and base our policy on the precautionary principle.'



Norway's NSSD document is the first attempt to formulate a coherent, unifying national strategy. Its primary objective is to ensure that all individual plans, decisions and measures help to lead society towards sustainable development. The strategy has its focus on factors that are of crucial importance in ensuring that future generations have a real freedom of choice, and a broad scope of options particularly in the economic and social fields. Norway's NSSD can be defined as a framework strategy, and as is a process as much as a document, for all actors in Norwegian society.

The challenges posed by the environment and development

Norway's NSSD contains a comprehensive debate of the development trends and problems in several policy areas.

- Challenges related to global development: climate change is the greatest environmental problem.
- Challenges related to national economic development: the 'greying' of the population as a growing proportion of public expenditure will be targeted towards social security and health care.
- Challenges related to societal development: how to gain more resources for proactive measures such as improvements in environmental health, growing demands on the school system.
- Challenges related to urban development: how to create a healthy urban environment, control urban sprawl and foster viable cultural communities? How to increase cooperation between the private, public and voluntary sectors in order to maintain cultural diversity?
- Challenges related to culture: it is important to ensure cooperation between the private sector, the public sector and voluntary organizations in order to maintain the diversity of the physical and cultural heritage.
- Challenges related to the environment: how to deal with greenhouse gas emissions, the loss of biological diversity and how to reduce the use of dangerous chemicals?
- Challenges related to the management of natural resources: Norwegian energy policy must promote value creation and be based on the principles of SD. How to ensure a clean and healthy marine environment? How to produce safe and healthy food and enhance viable rural districts?

Set of objectives

Norway's overriding objective is an expression of sustainable development, covering all three dimensions, based on solidarity in time, i.e. with future generations, and in space, i.e. within and across national borders. The basis for the continued utilization of nature and natural resources must be maintained. Within these constraints Norway promotes stable, healthy economic development and a society with a high quality of life. Norway also attempts to play a significant role in worldwide sustainable development initiatives.

Table 7: Norway's NSSD calls for action at the following priority areas

Policy area	Examples of objectives
International co-operation	- Deepening the political and economic cooperation
Economic development	- Sustainable use of petroleum revenues e.g. to meet future pension commitments - Sustainable consumption and production will be emphasized in the design of taxation system
Well-being and security	- Giving priority to preventive health measures - High quality urban planning in order to promote physical and social well-being as well as good environmental standards including the cultural environment - Improvement of overall social security for future pensioners and generations
Environment	- Continuing efforts towards further greenhouse gas emission reductions - Improving knowledge, monitoring and conservation of biological diversity - Decreasing the emission of environmentally hazardous substances - Improvements in public transport are to be given priority especially in the largest cities

	- Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) should be used to ensure that environmental aspects will be integrated into decision-making
Energy	- All sectors should achieve progress in energy saving and energy conservation and increase the use of renewable resources
The oceans	- Environmental considerations should be integrated more fully into the management of the fishing industry and fish farming, without jeopardizing the viability of local communities - Decreasing marine pollution e.g. by establishing mandatory sea lanes and making use of regional and international co-operation
Agriculture	- The agricultural sector should produce, in a sustainable manner, safe and healthy food and maintain viable rural districts as well as a wide range of environmental and cultural goods
Genetic resources	- National legislation is to be established relating to access to genetic resources in Norway, benefit sharing, and rules for the handling of genetic diversity from other countries.

Responsible actors and implementation instruments for SD

The government undertook the majority of the work on Norway's first national SD strategy, while initiating a consultation process with the municipalities, the *Samediggi*, the social partners and a wide selection of other organizations. Further dialogue is expected to take place when the strategy leads to action.

The NSSD can be seen as an umbrella for strategic planning in general, as sustainable development requires a coherent approach to planning and management, and a change from sectoral to integrated thinking. At the national level, sustainable development requires action in all sectors of society. All the sectoral authorities share in the responsibility for this in their respective spheres of authority, and must provide a framework that encourages efforts to incorporate sustainability considerations into all their activities. However, efforts and results must also be coordinated and monitored centrally.

The achievement of sustainable development in Norway will be the result of a long series of decisions at various levels. The NSSD is being put into practice through political decisions and through the other choices and decisions that are made in society as a whole, both in business and in industry, in central and local government, and by organizations and individuals. The government and the *Storting* (parliament) have the ultimate responsibility for starting the action towards SD and for coordinating national policy.

At the national level, the public authorities will have to integrate sustainability considerations into all sectors. The national authorities exercise overall responsibility for providing information that enables people to make the right decisions in matters relating to the environment. The national authorities have also to ensure that the goal of sustainability is a basic premise of international relations and agreements in general.

County and municipal authorities should continue to adopt the methods of Local Agenda 21, or the Fredrikstad Declaration, which is the Norwegian expression of its content, as a tool for promoting democracy and sustainable development, both locally and in partnership with local communities in the rest of the world. In 2002, over 60 % of the municipalities in Norway had already signed the Fredrikstad declaration. The SD approach should also be linked to regional planning processes. The preparation of municipal and county plans is seen as a potential way to ensure the participation of the general public, business and industry. Municipalities have particular tasks that directly affect their inhabitants, such as schools, waste collection and disposal, and spatial planning. The government intends to transfer more functions and responsibilities to the municipal authorities in various areas including that of environmental protection. Therefore they should consider environmental factors in their activities and planning, and set special environmental targets. Municipal master plans and local development plans should not only consider economic and social factors, but also focus on

environmental implications, such as the use of energy and transport, the effect of noise, loss or enhancement of biological diversity and cultural heritage.

Although business, industry and voluntary organizations can set stringent targets for their own activities, quality control can be assured through certification systems such as ISO and EMAS and be documented through eco-labelling and social and ethical labelling. Furthermore, to ensure open result monitoring and provide investors with information, companies should integrate financial reporting with sustainability reporting in their annual reports.

The Government will implement the strategy through the ordinary planning and budgetary processes. Implementation tools consist for instance of economic instruments (taxes, market-based emissions trading systems, the removal of subsidies that are environmentally harmful, incentives for technological innovation) and administrative instruments ('green public administration', strategic environmental impact assessment, eco-labelling, conditions for and agreements with the industrial sector, legislation, information and research).

Norway's national strategy will be executed cooperatively between the public sector, the business sector, the research community, the voluntary sector and individuals. Cooperation with various NGO's will help to address all dimensions of SD. In addition, NGO's are viewed as being able to mobilise individuals, who have a central role in achieving sustainable development through consumption habits.

The compilation of the NSSD highlights the fact that the commercial sector needs dialogue with the authorities over the framework conditions, more sustainable production and more information about the roles of enterprises as socially, economically and environmentally responsible stakeholders in society, at both national and international levels. In addition, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities has stressed the need for further discussion forums in respect of implementing the sustainable development strategy and proposes, for example, through greener procurement as a tool.

Norway's national action plan for SD, national Agenda 21, has been published in the 2004 national budget. A 'green committee' of state secretaries from the Ministries most closely involved and the Office of the Prime Minister have led this process, with the Ministry of Finance coordinating the work. The national Agenda 21 focuses more clearly than the NSSD on the following seven priority areas:

- International cooperation to promote SD and combat poverty
- Climate change, the ozone layer and long-range air pollution
- Biological diversity and cultural heritage
- Natural resources
- Hazardous substances
- Sustainable economic development
- Sami perspectives on environmental and natural resource management

Monitoring and the review of the implementation process

Statistics Norway is the central office in charge of compiling and issuing official statistics. One of the aims of Norway's efforts to develop indicators must be to ensure that they are closely comparable with indicators in other countries. The information SD indicators provided should benefit Norwegian society as a whole. A provisional national set of indicators has already been drawn up. The NSSD document estimates that the sustainable development strategy will require some modifications in a few years' time, and that revisions will be carried out on a regular basis. The strategy will be revised by central and local government, the business sector and also by the voluntary sector in close cooperation.

3.8 Poland 2025 – Long term strategy for sustainable development⁵

Poland's NSDS is based in the main on an analysis of changes in Poland since the transition to a market economy, while the main aim of the strategy is to reverse negative trends from the past in all dimensions of sustainable development. The overall objective of the strategy is to ensure the growth in welfare terms of Polish families and to reduce development gaps in relation to highly developed countries as well to attain living standards comparable with those in the EU.

Economic growth should be achieved while taking due consideration of both social and environmental aspects. Economic development should be based on the creation of a modern and well-educated knowledge society, while at the same time the rehabilitation and protection of the environment should be promoted. The strategy calls for action towards the reduction of environmental hazards, changes in production and consumption models and the preservation of Poland's cultural and natural heritage. The NSSD serves as a framework programme, stating a general vision of future Poland and presenting guidelines for the development of sectoral and regional plans, programmes and policies. It can best be viewed as an 'open' process, illustrating the desired direction of Poland's development, rather than an action plan strategy *per se*.



The Polish NSSD was prepared by the Governmental Centre for Strategic Studies in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment, while all other Ministries concerned were also consulted. The NSSD document however provides no further information on the compilation process in terms of negotiation.

The NSSD has several linkages to international conventions, declarations and agreements, emphasising Agenda 21, and the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development. Poland's NSSD defines the preconditions for the adoption of sustainable development, such as:

- Development in science and technology, constant environmental education in the society.
- Improvement of access to information, both for public and decision-makers.
- The creation of effective and environmental friendly financial and economic instruments and the adoption of a 'win-win' strategy.
- Significant reduction of environmental pollution.

The challenges posed by the environment and development

The NSSD document does not explicitly name environmental or other sustainable development challenges. As a country in transition, the general development challenges cover issues such as the improvement of:

⁵ Ms. Joanna Kocyba provided assistance to the translation of Poland's NSSD.

- Living standards
- Employment prospects
- Environmental quality
- Dynamics for stable economic growth

Regarding the issue of environmental quality, there remains a need to implement environmental management systems to meet international standards and to implement a new sustainable doctrine for future development.

Set of objectives

Poland's NSSD is a multidimensional long-term strategy, defining SD as holistic development that involves different dimensions of society and highlights changes in governance and public participation. Poland's NSSD should be implemented through sectoral and regional policies, in the fields of economic development, spatial planning, transport, energy and fiscal policy. In addition, the environmental components should be considered in privatisation programmes as well as in educational programmes. The strategy calls for policy coherence as well as for horizontal and vertical policy integration, e.g. with the EU's SDS strategy, VASAB 2010, and local and regional strategies.

The general goal of the NSSD is to maintain the current (1999) 5% rate of economic growth, and in terms of sustainability to increase efficiency, with reference to GDP, of raw material, fuel and natural resource usage. The NSSD should also consider national needs such as the state's territorial and environmental protection strategy, the maintenance of national sovereignty, the health and social protection of each citizen, the respect for national law and the Republic of Poland's Constitution, and the fulfilment of international agreements, declarations and commitments ratified by the Polish government.

The following table summarises the priority issues regarding sustainable development in Poland:

Table 8: Priority issues regarding sustainable development in Poland

Policy area	Examples of objectives
Economy	- Modernisation of the economy to maintain long-term growth and to enhance competitiveness. - Political, administrative and financial support for clean production, recycling and sustainable consumption trends. - Restructuring of traditional industry sectors: efficiency increase and elimination of state subventions. - Implementation of environmental technology and integration of environmental approaches in economic activities. - Creation of public-private consultation platforms. - Improving innovation capacity and the linkages between research and businesses. - Modernisation of agriculture and improving the preconditions for rural development. - Development of SMEs, creation of new jobs - Modernisation of technological infrastructure, particularly in energy sector and transport
Society	- Development of human resources: investments in the educational system, science and research - Improvement of social security provision: prevention of crime, development of housing standards, promotion of public health and environmental safety, combating poverty - Conservation of Polish cultural identity
Environment	- Implementing environmental impact assessments in government's sectoral policies and programmes and in public and private investments - Integrating the aspects of cultural and ecological sustainability

	into spatial planning programmes - Provision of state support in pro-ecological activities (re-cultivation of degraded territories, contaminated natural resources, environmental and biodiversity protection) - To apply 'polluter pays principle', fees for natural resources use, financial sanctions for non-responsible ecological activities. These resources will be applied to pro-environmental activities - Proper financial and fiscal policy should guarantee the competitiveness of proactive environmental measures (of the use of renewable resources and recycling) - Development of environmental friendly technology and research and development - Guarantee public access to information regarding environmental issues and decision-making
Governance aspects	- In terms of the EU's regional and cohesion policy, the central government is responsible for co-ordination and general guidance, while the regions ('vojvodships') are in charge of implementation - Integration of the environmental dimension and EU regulations into the operation of other sectors in state, regional and local administration

Responsible actors and implementation tools for SD

Both central government and the local authorities are responsible for the implementation of NSSD. In addition, the strategy document has devoted one chapter to define the role of the various actors who are considered responsible for sustainable development in general, referring to Agenda 21's chapters 23-32. The NSSD emphasises the role of the family as the main social unit and also names the following stakeholders as important actors in strategy implementation: the school system and primary schools in particular, universities, trade and labour unions, the media and the Catholic Church.

Parliament and the President of the Republic share the main responsibility for implementation of the NSSD, as they are expected to guarantee the availability of resources for implementation and strategy monitoring. The state administration should create policies and a stable legislative basis that support SD, provide financial, technical and educational support for environmental friendly activities, protect the natural and cultural heritage, promote living conditions and public health and provide equal access to the environment and in terms of service provision to Poland's citizens. The roles of the main actors in SD process have been explicitly stated in the constitution and in the appropriate legal acts relating to the issue. Therefore one of the main objectives of the NSSD is the construction, permanent improvement and the implementation of sufficient mechanisms based on sustainable development policies, programmes and plans. The effectiveness of actions derived from such policies, programmes and plans needs to be successively monitored via objective qualitative indicators.

In 1998, a process of administrative decentralisation was put in place, which reduced the state's administration responsibilities, delegating more powers to the regional and municipal levels. Consequently, the local authorities gained additional tools in respect of SD implementation, with the result that they are now able to create their own local development policies, strategies and spatial plans and have the power to control the local use of natural resources in cooperation with central government. Municipalities also have the right to create ecological funds by collecting environmental taxes. Generally speaking, local policies and plans should lead to an improvement in social and environmental conditions.

The strategy document includes a comprehensive listing of instruments for the implementation of NSSD, covering institutional changes, economic mechanisms: the creation of a legislative basis for SD, the development of the educational system, the transfer of technology and information, improvements in environmental management systems,

international cooperation and the realisation of a monitoring system. The NSSD foresees that SD will require institutional changes, new approaches to management and the integration of social, economic and ecological policies. Ideally, SD can be realized through the coordination and equalization of the three dimensions of sustainability and reasonable natural resource use. Since the NSSD has a 'guiding' character, the presentation of those instruments in detail in this study is not appropriate.

Monitoring and the review of the implementation process

The NSSD identifies the need for monitoring and evaluation, albeit no specific plans were mentioned in the document. It refers to international indicators, e.g. developed by the UN's Commission on Sustainable Development as well as to the EU's work on sustainable development indicators and to the Environment Policy Committee (EPOC) of the OECD.

3.9 Sweden

The Swedish NSSD was compiled in order to serve two purposes: first, to fulfil Sweden's international commitments in the field of SD (such as those relating to the World Summit, and the EU's SDS and Lisbon strategies) and second, in an attempt to describe the current situation and provide a vision of the future as regards sustainable development in Sweden. The NSSD is defined as 'a living document that will need continuous monitoring and evaluation, besides clearly defined objectives the important thing is the process of change'.

The Swedish vision of SD, which is based on seven principles, has been built on three premises. First, SD in Sweden can be achieved only within the context of regional and global co-operation. Second, SD policies should be mainstreamed, i.e. integrated into all existing policy areas. Third, further action at the national level is needed to guarantee the availability of essential resources that constitute the basis for SD.



The challenges posed by the environment and development

The Swedish NSSD has its focus on four strategic issues: environmentally driven growth and welfare, good health, sustainable community planning and child and youth policies for an ageing society. Although the strategy document does not explicitly outline the challenges posed by the environment and development, the following topics are mentioned under the strategic focus areas:

- Combating global climate change: efficient energy use and production and consumption patterns are the key areas.
- Regional imbalance is a growing concern; mass-migration from rural areas has a possible negative impact also in the growth areas, as drastic in-migration may lead to a deterioration of the urban living environments. This calls for measures to tackle social segregation, the lack of housing and inadequate transport in urban areas and, on the other hand, attention has to be paid to rural development issues.

- A relative decline in the economic and social circumstances of young people has taken place in recent years. Poor societal integration, unemployment, mental illness and long-term dependency on social security benefits are the major problems.

Furthermore, the 'greying' of society and the declining size of the working age population are seen as future development challenges in Sweden.

Set of objectives

The Swedish NSSD is a holistic and cross-sectoral approach to sustainable development as it is recognised that all development resources (natural resources, infrastructure and buildings and human resources) are becoming increasingly interdependent. The NSSD specifies policy areas and objectives and presents eight core areas as well as measures already adopted and further action within each priority area.

Table 9: Eight core areas in Sweden's sustainable development

Policy area	Examples of objectives
Environment	- Fulfilment of 15 national environmental quality objectives for solving and avoiding major environmental problems - Promoting nature conservation and the preservation of biological diversity - Balancing marine environment and achieve a living coastline and archipelago
Climate change	- Ratification of international conventions and the reduction of green house gas emissions
Population and public health	- Meeting the challenge posed by the declining size of the working age population e.g. by having sickness absenteeism, keeping older people at work and supporting families with children - Promoting a coherent public health policy, promote of good working conditions - Promoting safe food
Social cohesion, welfare and security	- Reduction in the number of socially and economically vulnerable people - Countering ethnic discrimination - Gender equality - Development and participation of children and youngsters - Reduction in crime and improving security - Encouraging greater access to, and participation in, cultural life
Employment and learning in a knowledge society	- Making Sweden a leading knowledge society and research nation - Promoting education in respect of SD in all levels of education system
Sustainable economic growth and competitiveness	- Encouraging more sustainable consumption and production patterns - Enhancing a more stable and efficient economy, e.g. by boosting employment and social development - Integration of SD concerns into company operations, transferring know-how and expertise into SD and new jobs
Regional development and regional conditions	- Establishing efficient and sustainable local labour market regions throughout the country - Promotion of sound agriculture, forestry, fisheries and reindeer husbandry

Development of sustainable community planning	- Further development of urban and regional development planning and integrating them with SD policy goals - Improvement of the indoor environment and the promotion of higher quality building design, construction and maintenance standards - In the energy sector adverse effects on health, climate and the environment must be minimised - Development of economic policy levers to promote sound transport systems and infrastructure - Utilisation of IT for achieving environmental quality goals and facilitating the transition to an ecologically sustainable society
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Responsible actors and the implementation instruments for NSSD

In Sweden, the government offices, i.e. the Ministries are responsible for the implementation of the NSSD. To facilitate this process, the government has set up a special body – a coordination unit for SD – in the Prime Minister's Office to coordinate efforts in the field of SD. In general, relevant authorities at national level are required to take the principles of sustainable development into account in the course of their work.

At the regional and local level county administrative boards, regional government authorities and local government associations play a vital role in implementing national sustainable development strategies. At the regional level, regional development programmes must reflect the government's vision of SD. Local efforts to promote sustainability, such as Local Agenda 21, have been widely prepared in Sweden.

The NSSD also lists important societal actors in relation to SD, such as voluntary associations including advocacy groups, religious societies, sports clubs and other organizations. The business community is expected to contribute to sustainable development by being competitive and developing new technologies, generating employment, introducing long-term measures aimed at supporting employees and assuming global responsibility for its operations. Finally, the NSSD stresses the need for information and education, since the choices made by individual citizens affect production and consumption patterns.

The NSSD lists the following implementation and policy instruments that aim at the production of decisions designed to balance SDs social, economic and environmental objectives:

- Legislation as one of the most important implementation tools.
- Spatial planning should play a more important role, adopting a holistic approach and not focussing solely on the physical environment.
- Sectoral integration and a holistic approach generate synergies: the aim here is to integrate the overall objectives of one sector into other areas and sectors.
- Broad strategies are needed to break down sectoral boundaries.
- Economic instruments and policy levers (taxes, charges, grants, emissions trading, subsidies, green certificates etc) are effective in increasing the pace of the adjustment process.
- Broader impact assessments (environmental, strategic and health impact assessments) at all levels should provide better basis for decision-making.
- Indicators and monitoring systems should be capable of evaluating the progress and pace towards SD.
- R&D and lifelong learning are essential elements of a sustainable society.
- Education, information and dialogue help to identify important issues and increase public understanding.

- Strengthening institutional capacity (leadership, adaptability, cost-effectiveness, responsibility and training) so that SD issues can be integrated into all policy areas and decision-making.

Special attention has been paid to sectoral integration; dialogue and voluntary agreements between government and private enterprise; public-private partnerships; sustainability reports and local investment programmes and climate investment programmes.

Monitoring and the review of the NSSD process

An initial review of the NSSD was performed at the end of 2003 when Sweden's municipal and county councils, government authorities and individual citizens were invited to contribute with their own views. Special attention was given to problems such as climate change and people's lack of involvement in the issues as well as to the need for a greater emphasis on public health and working life. The next review will take place in 2006, where the government will invite interested parties to submit their views early on in the process.

The first set of Swedish SD indicators was adopted in 2001, covering 30 indicators. The latest NSSD states that Sweden attempts to apply monitoring and review at the regional and municipal level as in so doing the potential to generate public involvement and interest are increased. Sweden continues to develop SD indicators, which aim to reflect core SD issues.

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