



Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

A Sustainable Development Action Plan for the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency 2008-09

Developed by VOSA's Sustainable Development Unit, Berkeley House.

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CEO Foreword

VOSA's Sustainable Development Action Plan for 2008/09, outlines how we intend to make sustainability a component of our day to day activities. Over the last year, VOSA made a solid start in embracing the principles of sustainable development. This plan ensures sustainable development continues momentum and growth throughout the organisation. It focuses on activities where we feel we can make the largest contribution. These include:

- raising the profile of sustainable development through strengthening communication links across the organisation through training packages and information packs;
- improving energy management and targeting and;
- embedding sustainable development across our range of procurement activities.

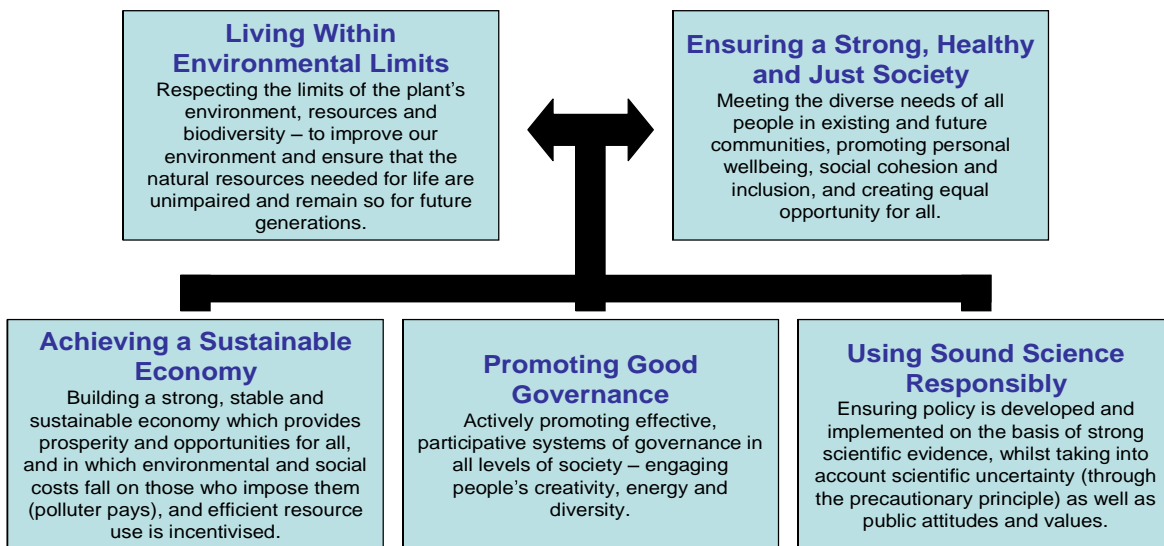
Sustainable development is important. I am confident that VOSA will continue to rise to the challenge and have it at the heart of our business.

Stephen Tetlow
Chief Executive

1 Introduction

“Securing the Future”¹ sets out the UK Government’s sustainable development (SD) strategy. The strategy was followed in 2006 by the publication of the Stern report on climate change which presented the global economic case for taking action on climate change – a key issue in the approach towards a more sustainable business.

The strategy aims to improve sustainable performance in the public sector so that Departments and Agencies become leading exponents of sustainable development. It identifies key principles of sustainable development which Departments and Agencies will use to guide all aspects of their business, plus it highlights priority areas for immediate action (see below). As a first step, the strategy commits all Government Departments and their Executive Agencies to produce Sustainable Development Action Plans (SDAPs) to set out their intentions for implementing and managing sustainable development across their business.



‘Securing the Future’: The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (Cm 6467), DEFRA March 2005

Figure 1 Sustainable Development guiding principles – agreed for use across the UK Government at the heart of policy.

1.1 Sustainable Development Principles

Please refer to Figure 1. It has been agreed that these principles will underpin all UK policy. They are to be adopted at the very heart of the decision-making process and are to be considered collectively as far as possible. Thus, their use allows sustainable development to be taken up by every aspect of a Department or Agency’s business.

These principles are illustrated in Figure 1.

¹Securing the Future: The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (March 2005): www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm

1.2 Sustainable Development Shared Priority Areas

These priority areas are agreed for immediate action across the UK. VOSA's business touches on all of these areas and while we may not be able to tackle all of them in this plan, we aim to expand our efforts across the range in the coming years as our SDAPs evolve.

- *Climate change and energy;*
- *Sustainable consumption and production;*
- *Natural resource protection and enhancement; and*
- *Sustainable communities.*

The UK Government sustainable development strategy requires all central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies to produce sustainable development action plans (SDAPs). The DfT and its Agencies are now in their second year of producing individual action plans which set out our commitments and strategy for implementing sustainable development. These plans build upon VOSA's previous action plan published in July 2007. VOSA's SDAP is also available on VOSA's corporate website at:

www.vosa.gov.uk/vosacorp/repository/SDAP.pdf

All of the Department's Central and Agency action plans will be available online at:

www.dft.gov.uk/about/howthedftworks/sda/

A progress report on the VOSA's 2007 Sustainable Development Action Plan will be available on VOSA's corporate website and the Sustainable Development Commission's website at:

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/>

2 VOSA's Vision for Sustainable Development

2.1 Background

VOSA is an Executive Agency for the Department for Transport (DfT) and a member of DfT's Safety, Service Delivery and Logistics (SSDL) Group of agencies. This group works together delivering Government initiatives to provide modern and efficient services to meet the needs of customers, while always remaining focused on keeping drivers and vehicles safe and secure.

VOSA was formed following the merger of the Vehicle Inspectorate and the Traffic Area Network in 2003. We operate through a network of offices, vehicle testing stations and local sites across the UK, supported by a central Headquarters in Bristol.

VOSA's mission is:

- **Save more lives, safer roads**
- **Cut crime**
- **Protect the environment**
- **Value our people**
- **Deliver value for money**

Our business areas are as follows:

- MOT supervision
- Heavy goods vehicle licensing
- Bus registration
- Testing and Inspections
- Enforcement and Compliance
- Accident investigation and technical research
- Training and education

VOSA's strategy to achieve this mission focuses on contributing towards our main goals of improved road safety and customer satisfaction whilst addressing wider government goals including: a better environment; reduced vehicle crime; and, value for money. For more information on how we will be delivering our mission, please download our current Business Plan (www.vosa.gov.uk).

2.2 Sustainable Development in VOSA

For us, sustainable development means working in line with the principles and shared priority areas set out in the UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future', as described in Section 1 of this document. We are working within these in order to achieve our mission of saving lives, creating safer roads, cutting crime and protecting the environment using the best value for money in a way that mitigates the adverse impacts our activities have the potential to cause. At present, the business planning process is not thoroughly aligned with the SDAP process: this is an area where particular effort will be focused this year to ensure that SD is considered early in the business planning process.

2.2.1 The Benefits to VOSA

By implementing this sustainable development action plan throughout our business, VOSA will benefit by:

- satisfying the UK Government sustainable development strategy commitments;
- demonstrating to stakeholders, customers, staff and potential staff that VOSA is environmentally, socially and economically responsible;
- reducing the environmental impact of our activities and improving the environmental performance of our business;
- consuming efficiently (using less, buying less, wasting less), therefore reaping significant financial savings;
- becoming a role model to other organisations, in demonstrating business improvements from implementing sustainable development; and
- showing leadership on sustainable development to our customers, to support the Government's aim to lead by example (detailed in Securing the Future).

We are noticing the benefits of developing this plan already. It has highlighted where key relationships need to be formed within our Agency in order to bring together aspects covered by this plan. In doing so we can see how we can integrate SD across our Agency in a much more efficient manner that also raises awareness throughout our staff body.

2.2.2 SDAP Layout

In this action plan, VOSA's sustainable development actions are divided into two categories:

1. Business delivery – external work, delivering our strategic objectives. This encompasses management of policy and business strategy.
2. Operational delivery – internal work, managing our estate, facilities, processes and staff. This encompasses all aspects of site maintenance and operation, sustainable procurement, and human resources.

2.3 Achievements so far

Valuable progress has been made in all of the key actions as documented in the 2007/08 SDAP. Not all specific targets have been met in full but progress has been achieved towards the expected target, as each area has been actively worked on over the year. Key areas of achievement include:

- Increase in communication across the estate, culminating in case studies/posters being displayed at VOSA's Corporate Conference;
- Improved data utility data collection and bill validation (enabling to understand site consumption) and;
- Reduction in water consumption through better monitoring and leak detection services.
- Purchasing fleet administrative vehicles in line with Government Targets

Where specific expected actions are incomplete they have been brought forward onto the 2008/09 SDAP. VOSA now has a better understanding of each activity, which has allowed us

to develop more focused objectives for the coming year. Further information on progress can be found in the full SDAP Progress Report 2007/08 (see www.vosa.gov.uk).

2.4 Looking Forward

The actions we are committing to in this Sustainable Development Action Plan are set out in Annexes A and B.

Annex A describes our vision for VOSA's business, summarising the key measures which VOSA is aiming to achieve by March 2009 and the contact for ownership of each. It also highlights the main SD principles supported by each measure.

Annex B describes our vision for VOSA's operational activities – encompassing internal policy, education and communications amongst others. The timescale for completion of each task is clearly laid out, as is the ownership, plus the main SD principle supported by each.

2.4.1 Sustainable Procurement

Over the last year the importance placed on sustainable procurement has gathered pace, and VOSA has recognised this shift in gear and begun forging strong links between the Sustainable Development and Procurement Units. Both units are fully aware of the important influence each has over the promotion of sustainability and its standing within VOSA and by working together, the sustainability message will be amplified and will have a much better chance of being heard and absorbed across the agency. During 2008-2009, VOSA is planning to bring a specific sustainable procurement action plan within the overarching sustainable development action plan to ensure progress is achieved and documented.

Key areas of work for the year are included in Annex B.

3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

The SDAP process involves establishing targets and publishing the SDAP, implementing targets, monitoring and assessing progress against these targets, and then reporting progress at the end of the SDAP period. This will occur on an annual basis. In order to do this, process and accountability for each stage must be clearly defined. This is described below, together with a commentary of how cross-team communication has benefited the process. Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the SDAP is held by the Finance Director.

Since VOSA published its first SDAP, we have sought to improve the communications links between the two teams responsible for taking forward business and operational work areas: the Business Strategy Team and the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU). Managing the interface between sustainable development in our business and operational delivery areas has been a novel process for VOSA and it is something we feel has improved over the last year. This has resulted in a better understanding of the processes each team implements, better communications between these teams, and a smoother process for integrating sustainable development objectives into the business planning process. However, more still needs to be done – this is something we will continue to work on throughout the duration of this SDAP. We have also sought to improve communication channels with VOSA's Procurement Unit and Human Resources (HR). To take forward sustainable procurement in VOSA, the SDU and the Procurement Unit have jointly formed a Sustainable Procurement Working Group: meetings are held bimonthly to discuss and plan actions to push VOSA forward in achieving the targets set by the UK Government's Sustainable Development Task Force Sustainable Procurement Flexible Framework (see UK Government Sustainable Procurement Action Plan²)

The Sustainable Development Unit (SDU), within VOSA's Estates Division, is responsible for managing the SDAP process within VOSA. The SDU implements and reports against our environmental performance, having responsibility for feeding back data to satisfy the requirements of the Framework for Sustainable Operations in the Government Estate (SOGE)³. The Business Strategy Team have responsibility for business strategy, planning, improvement services and work measurement – producing VOSA's business plans and annual reports.

Progress against targets laid out in this SDAP will be reported overall by the SDU: at the end of each SDAP period, a progress report will be submitted to the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC), published on their website alongside progress reports for DfT Central and the other Executive Agencies (www.sd-commission.org.uk). The report will also be published on VOSA's website. In addition, the two distinct areas covered by the SDAP, business and operational delivery, will be reported separately: progress against business targets (see Annex A) will be reported by VOSA's Business Strategy Team in VOSA's annual report; progress against operational targets (see Annex B) will be reported by VOSA's SDU back to central Government via the Framework for Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOGE).

² <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/SustainableProcurementActionPlan.pdf>

³ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/government/estates/targets.htm>

ANNEX A

VISION FOR VOSA'S BUSINESS:

The table below summarises the key measures which VOSA is aiming to achieve in the 12 months from April 2008 to March 2009. This reflects VOSA's commitments in our business plan for 2008-2009.

Please refer to VOSA's website:

<http://www.vosa.gov.uk/vosacorp/publications/corporatereports/corporatereports.htm>)

SD Priority Area	DfT Strategic Objective	SSDL Strategic Outcomes	Secretary of State Target	VOSA Business Targets plus descriptions	Owner	Main SD Principles Supported
Sustainable communities; Sustainable consumption and production	Sustain economic growth and improved productivity through reliable and efficient transport networks.	Better transport networks.	Reduce the administrative burden of commercial operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Implement simplified fees structure for licensing and annual roadworthiness testing in readiness for implementation in April 2009. ♦ Implement DfT plan for Graduated Fixed Penalties & Deposits. <p>→ Simplified fees structures contribute to improving the economy as they reduce the number of transactions necessary by the operators. The Graduated Fixed Penalties & Deposits scheme contributes to national and international drivers working on a level playing field as non-compliant operators can be fined at the roadside, therefore reducing the necessity to appear in court.</p>	Chief Operating Officer Customer Director	Achieving a sustainable economy. Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society.
Sustainable communities	Strengthen the safety and security of transport in the UK.	Improving road safety.	Improve road safety through better targeting of non-compliant operators, vehicles and drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Deliver a programme of increased enforcement activities at hotspots in the strategic road network, contributing to a 15% increase in the number of dangerous vehicles and drivers being taken off the road compared with 2007/08 <p>→ By targeting our enforcement activities at incident hotspots across the UK, we will help reduce the risk to the public and other operators, thereby promoting a strong, healthy and just society and good governance. Removing non-compliant, polluting vehicles from the</p>	Chief Operating Officer	Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. Promoting good governance. Living within environmental limits. Using sound science responsibly.

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				road also helps to protect the environment. We are using state of the art technology in order to enforce road safety.		
Sustainable communities; Sustainable consumption and production	Enhance access to jobs, services and social networks, including for the most disadvantaged.	Transforming customer services	Increase the range of electronic services available to businesses and citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 4 new electronic services available by 31 March 2009 enabling customers to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - book and pay for bulk annual test on-line - receive updates on changes to legislation and standards - start the application process for technical tests with forms available on-line - where requested, be reminded of private vehicle MOT date by e-channels <p>→ Making more services electronic simplifies the processes that customers engage with: reducing visits to test sites and phone calls necessary. This increases business efficiency and therefore helps to improve the economy. Electronic services also help us to live within environmental limits by reducing the use of paper for official correspondence.</p>	Services Director	Achieving a sustainable economy. Living within environmental limits. Using sound science responsibly.
Sustainable communities; Sustainable consumption and production	The Department strives to carry out its work effectively and efficiently, achieving value for money from its expenditure, as well as to be a good employer and to innovate in public service, management and delivery.	Improved efficiency and capability		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 32% overall take-up for electronic services <p>→ As above.</p>	Services Director	Achieving a sustainable economy. Living within environmental limits. Using sound science responsibly.
Climate change and energy; Sustainable consumption and production; Natural resource protection	Improve the environmental performance of transport.	Reduced impact on climate change and the environment.		<p>There is no Secretary of State target for this strategic outcome. However, there is an overarching commitment throughout Central Government to achieve the targets for Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOGE), which covers the internal workings of our Agency. The current targets were set by the Prime Minister in 2006 (see Annex B).</p> <p>→ The SOGE targets commit each Department to achieving challenging targets for reducing emissions, waste and protecting natural resources.</p>	Finance, Estates & Facilities Director People & Change Director	Living within environmental limits. Achieving a sustainable economy. Using sound science responsibly. Promoting good governance.

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VISION FOR VOSA'S OPERATIONS:

The table below summarises the key actions which VOSA is engaged with/ aiming to achieve in the 12 months from April 2008 to March 2009. These reflect VOSA's commitments within the Framework for Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOGE).

Please see <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/government/estates/targets.htm>

SD Priority Area	VOSA Operational Targets plus descriptions	Owner	Time scale	Main SD Principles Supported
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 'SD-proof' the business planning process – build on new links with the Business Planning team, to align the SDAP with VOSA's high level strategic objectives, ensuring SD is considered early in the target-setting process. 	Finance, Estates & Facilities Director	March 09	All.
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Publish a policy framework, to cover energy, transport, waste, procurement and natural resource protection. → Policies commit the Agency at a high level to sustainable ways of working and are to be targeted across the whole estate, for compliance with by all staff. 	Finance, Estates & Facilities Director	December 08	Living within environmental limits; Promoting good governance; Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; Achieving a sustainable economy
Potentially all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Publish a Sustainable Procurement Action Plan (SPAP) and implement progress against the flexible framework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying major spend contractors/suppliers and scrutinising their SD credentials - Engage with suppliers through sustainable procurement prioritisation workshops and awareness training - taking sustainability into account in specifications and tender evaluations; - continuing to ensure fleet vehicles purchased adhere to SOGE targets on CO2/km and; - promotion of product standards detailed on the OGCbs 'Quick Wins' sustainable procurement list. 	Finance, Estates & Facilities Director	March 09	Promoting good governance; Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; Achieving a sustainable economy

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	(where applicable).			
Climate change and energy; Sustainable consumption and production; Natural resource protection and enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Development and publication of a Travel Plan. Key areas to consider are targeting high mileage staff, frequency of travel, and whether this mileage can be transferred to audio/video conferencing technology. → VOSA to look at CO₂ from operational travel, administrative travel and visitor activities ♦ Through its SLA with the Government Car and Dispatch Agency (GCDA) for its fleet management, VOSA to ensure fleet selection policy is in line with government emissions targets. → VOSA will look at operational vehicles to be purchased and hire car contract to specify reductions in vehicle CO₂ emissions ♦ Evaluate the findings from VOSA's Green Fleet Review (undertaken by Energy Saving Trust) → Report focused on Administrative fleet; hire vehicles; operational fleet and grey fleet. 	Finance, Estates & Facilities Director	Mar 09	Living within environmental limits; Promoting good governance; Using sound science responsibly
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Review driver training scheme for operational drivers → To be reviewed following further examination of Green Fleet Review. ♦ To explore offsetting mechanisms and invest in measures that compensates for unavoidable emissions. Operational travel and air travel will be priority areas → Awaiting further guidance from DfT on available schemes. 	Finance, Estates & Facilities Director / People and Change Director	Mar 09	Living within environmental limits; Promoting good governance; Achieving a sustainable economy
Climate change and energy; Sustainable consumption and production; Natural resource protection and enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Introduction of a national waste management contract across the VOSA estate. ♦ Contract to be available for use by other Government Departments <p>→ Targeted at improving VOSA's waste management levels, aiming for an overall reduction in waste produced and to establish recycling as the primary method of waste disposal.</p>	Finance, Estates & Facilities Director	Mar 09	Living within environmental limits; Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; Achieving a sustainable economy