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## 2 National SCP Programmes and Action Plans: Guidelines and Indicators

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### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.1.1 Why do we need national SCP programmes and mechanisms to monitor progress?

Several international and regional Marrakech Process meetings, and in particular the international expert meeting in Costa Rica (September 2005), expressed the importance of supporting national SCP programmes or action plans and indicators and monitoring mechanisms to measure progress. It was agreed that to make SCP a reality, coordinated and integrated programmes were essential, considering in particular the cross-sectoral nature of consumption and production patterns.<sup>12</sup> These programmes are an instrumental part of the 10YFP. Realistic and achievable targets for the implementation of SCP programmes also need to be established.

*"SCP action plans could be a cornerstone for achieving progress. Such plans should, where relevant, be integrated into the national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) or poverty reduction strategy (PRS)." (Costa Rica, 2005)*

#### 2.1.2 International guidelines for national SCP programmes

UNEP, with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom, is following up a key request coming from the 2005 Costa Rica meeting that guidelines be prepared for the development, implementation and monitoring of national programmes. The guidelines will include a special focus on the application of SCP indicators to measure progress towards SCP (see Section 2.3.3).

#### 2.1.3 Integrated national SCP programmes

Many countries have instituted policies to promote sustainable consumption and cleaner production. However, these actions are often not sufficiently coherent or are driven by an isolated strategy or programme. Because of the global nature of production and consumption, individual national policies and activities – no matter how innovative – stand little chance of bringing about wholesale changes in consumption and production patterns.

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<sup>12</sup> UNEP (2005) *Second International Expert Meeting of the 10YFP for SCP, San Jose, Costa Rica, 5-8 September 2005, Summary by the Co-Chairs of the Meeting*, Paris.

There are an increasing number of integrated SCP programmes. The Czech, Finnish, Swedish and UK programmes were among the first and remain among the most comprehensive. But there are many more, including programmes in Ethiopia, France, Jamaica and Japan (see Section 1.3). However, some existing national SCP programmes lack the critical elements of an effective strategy: linking long-term vision to medium-term targets and short-term action.

## 2.2 What is a national SCP Programme?

### 2.2.1 Links to national sustainable development strategies

A national SCP programme or action plan is a tool for informed decision making that provides a framework for systemic thought across sectors. Working in concert with other socio-economic and sector strategies, a SCP programme can help to institutionalise processes for resource allocation, monitoring, consultation, negotiation, mediation and consensus building on priority societal issues where interests differ.<sup>13</sup> The SCP programme needs to adhere to the wider goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development.<sup>14</sup>

#### Selected Good Practices of National SCP Programmes

The **UK** *Government Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production* was among the first national SCP programmes. The framework document was a precursor to an integrated SCP action plan included as part of the UK Government's 2005 *Sustainable Development Strategy*. To help evaluate progress on SCP, a set of indicators has been developed to assess the progress of breaking the link between economic growth and environmental damage.

**Thailand** established an SCP advisory committee (SCPC) consisting of representatives from various government and non-government bodies to oversee the development process. A vision statement was revised and priority areas selected after a scoping exercise was carried out.

**Finland** appointed a multi-stakeholder advisory group (called the KULTU Committee) in November 2003 to develop the SCP programme. The programme was unanimously agreed by the KULTU Committee in June 2005 and entered into force in December 2006 as part of the country's sustainable development strategy.

**Ethiopia** undertook a number of studies including one that looked at creating synergy among national and international instruments and one that explored what was required to meet SCP goals. The African 10YFP on SCP served as an important starting point.

The **Czech Republic** *Framework of Programmes on SCP* was prepared by a working group chaired by the Minister of Environment and adopted by the Government Council for Sustainable Development (GSD) in 2005. The working group conducted research and analyses to arrive at the content of the framework.

<sup>13</sup> UN-DESA (2002) *Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium, Background Paper No. 13*, New York.

<sup>14</sup> The Johannesburg Summit (WSSD) Plan of Implementation (POI) called on countries to also consider the integration of SCP in sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies.

SCP is a main pillar of sustainable development and also important to poverty alleviation. Therefore it is sensible to include wherever possible the SCP programme or action plan as a priority issue in the national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) and/or poverty reduction strategy (PRS). However, many countries are yet to develop a NSDS. This should not preclude a country from pursuing a SCP programme. Some countries without a NSDS have developed or are developing a national SCP programme, in many cases integrating the programme into existing strategies such as national environment plans and PRSs.

The preparation of a NSDS can be a major exercise for a developing country. Whereas a SCP programme focusing on specific sectors/issues such as waste and energy may require fewer resources. As noted by participants at the UNEP Guidelines project advisory group meeting of 12 April 2007, the process of developing an SCP programme may indeed act as the catalyst for a country to initiate its NSDS. On the other hand, countries with a NSDS but without a SCP programme may choose to include SCP as a priority area in future updates of the strategy. Nonetheless, the importance of the linkage between an SCP programme and an NSDS is self evident.

### 2.2.2 Key principles for national SCP programmes

There is no one type of approach and no single formula by which national SCP programmes or action plans can or should be instituted. Every country needs to determine, for itself, how best to approach the preparation and implementation of its SCP programme considering the prevailing political, cultural, economic and ecological conditions.

Nevertheless, there are certain key principles and elements of national programmes that should be considered. These include the programme being country-led with a high-level of political

*“To promote SCP it is necessary to identify national and regional priorities and to develop strategies tailored to national and regional conditions.” (Buenos Aires, 2003)*

commitment, based on comprehensive and reliable analysis, built on existing capacity, participatory, targeted with clear budgetary priorities, integrated within existing national frameworks and monitored and improved regularly.<sup>15</sup> Many of these principles represent good, common sense SCP practice and indeed many are already being adhered to at the activity level. But putting these principles into practice in strategic planning and policy processes presents a greater challenge.

#### Initiate a multi-stakeholder process

The importance of maximising the participatory nature of the programme development and implementation process needs to be emphasised. This includes reorienting SCP away from its traditional focus on the environment to consider also economic and social issues. A multi-stakeholder dialogue as instituted

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<sup>15</sup> See full list of principles in draft UNEP Guidelines for developing, implementing and monitoring national SCP programmes. See <http://www.unep.fr/pc/sustain/initiatives/action.htm>

in the case of Finland as an example can help to engage a wider array of government ministries and other stakeholders including civil society and business.

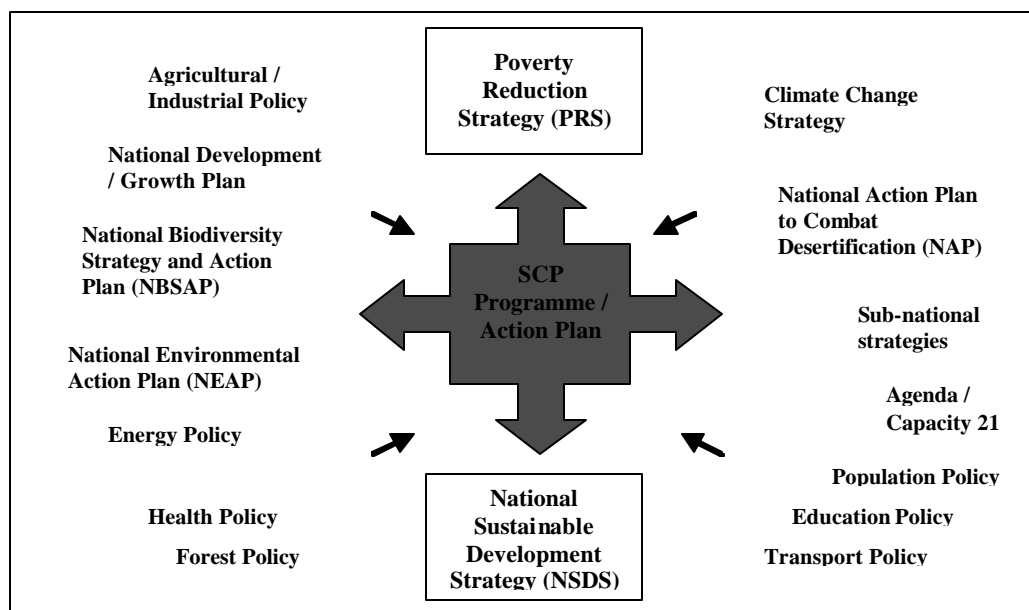
### Define objectives, targets and indicators

The setting of objectives and targets is crucial to the success of the programme. Monitoring and evaluating progress towards the programme's goals is another critical consideration. It provides accountability for those parties involved and demonstrates achievements and value of the programme. The UK and Japan are among the countries that have set targets and are monitoring progress towards these goals.

### Integrate with existing national strategies

A SCP programme should be an ongoing, flexible and iterative process and should not simply constitute a one-off initiative to produce a document. It should also pursue a process of sensitising all existing national strategies to SCP issues and integrating relevant components of these strategies where possible. In some cases this could equate to full integration of the SCP programme in a sustainable development, poverty reduction or other existing strategy. For example, the UK and France have included SCP as a priority area in their national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) and Ethiopia, Jamaica and Mauritius have done the same in their national environment strategy.

Figure 3: Integration with existing national strategies



### Develop sectoral SCP action plans

In most countries there are at least some SCP-related policies and actions that have been implemented, particularly those related to energy and water efficiency and waste recycling. Many of these activities are delivered through existing strategies and plans. These ongoing activities and the results of a strategic review will lead to the identification of priority areas for a country's SCP programme. A national SCP programme is usually concentrated on a few initial key priority areas, as attempting to address too broad

a scope of issues simultaneously is neither practical nor possible. Another way to approach an SCP programme is to develop one or two sector-based action plans that link to a framework document or existing strategy. This can be a more efficient means to tackle SCP for some countries, at least in the short-term.

## Current status

### 2.2.3 Tracking progress

#### National SCP Programmes

The 2002 UNEP *Tracking Progress* survey highlighted that the majority of SCP policies and activities were working in isolation of one another. The survey reviewed progress towards implementation of policies and activities related to the sustainable consumption clauses of the UN Guidelines for Consumption Protection. No country had implemented an integrated framework programme on SCP.<sup>16</sup>

Since that time there has been steady progress. More than twenty countries have developed or are developing national SCP programmes. These include Sweden, France, Czech Republic, Hungary, Finland, Belgium and UK in Europe; Ethiopia and Mauritius in Africa; Jamaica and Argentina in Latin America and the Caribbean; and Japan, Thailand and Indonesia in Asia and the Pacific. These national level initiatives are diverse in nature. They constitute national frameworks, programmes, action plans and multi-stakeholder dialogues. Often the programmes are integrated as a priority issue in the country's sustainable development, environment or poverty reduction strategy. This is the case in almost half of the programmes reviewed during the development of this paper. In addition, countries such as The Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Norway and Germany have dispersed SCP elements throughout their sustainable development strategies and have a range of national initiatives that deal with various aspects of SCP. Many other countries have national frameworks that deal primarily with sustainable production activities including national cleaner production strategies in Latin American countries such as Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama. There is great potential for these strategies to be redeveloped into integrated SCP programmes.

The majority of the existing programmes include a combination of new and existing SCP actions. Some SCP programmes focus on providing economic incentives and internalising external costs. This is the case with the UK and Finnish initiatives. The Finnish programme also includes a particular emphasis on technology. By contrast, the Swedish programme encourages the household sector to pursue change in the key areas of food, transport, and housing. Ethiopia's programme sets several targets in areas such as recycling, waste management and natural resource management. The targets are to be met through several initiatives including education and the use of environmentally sound technologies.

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<sup>16</sup> UNEP and Consumers International (2002, 2004) *Tracking Progress: Implementing Sustainable Consumption Policies*, UNEP DTIE, Paris.

Environmental issues are the key focus of many of the programmes and plans, especially with respect to eco-efficiency and resource use. The link to economic development is normally made through a focus on resource efficiency as a competitiveness issue. Social issues are addressed in some programmes and action plans, however, there is limited focus on the linkages between social and environmental issues. An important point is that some programmes are beginning to consider the internationalisation of SCP, in particular how government, business and consumer actions can affect sustainability at the global level as well as in other regions and countries. This is a crucial prerequisite for achieving SCP. Governments and businesses are increasingly entwined in the social, ecological and economic systems of other countries through, for example, international trade and investment.

## National SCP Indicators

Many of the reviewed initiatives do not include targets and mechanisms to monitor policy and programme implementation or measure progress towards SCP.<sup>17</sup> This is indeed problematic in that it greatly weakens the effectiveness of the programme. There are a number of ways to monitor and evaluate a national SCP programme including national peer reviews, external auditing and quantitative indicators. Only a limited number of countries such as the

UK<sup>18</sup> and Sweden include sets of SCP indicators as part of their national programmes. The international guidelines for SCP programmes being developed by UNEP will include a discussion on SCP indicator sets. For example, UN-DESA's core set of SCP indicators<sup>19</sup> – a component of the UN sustainable development indicator framework – includes indicators on material consumption, energy use, waste management and transportation.

*"Indicators were recognised as a key element of any national strategy on SCP. It would be useful to establish a small set of key, globally accepted indicators that would reflect the ecological, social and economic dimensions of SCP from which countries could select, as appropriate, in creating their own indicator sets." (Costa Rica, 2005)*

## Maintaining a link to the regional processes

What should not be underestimated is the importance of maintaining a link between the national initiatives and the international and regional framework programmes on SCP. These mechanisms working in unison will increase political momentum on SCP and provide other benefits including opportunities for cross-learning and cooperation. The regional programmes and institutions can provide valuable resources and foresight for the national process. They often list key priority areas and a shared vision and contextual basis for SCP. All regions except North America, West Asia and Asia-Pacific have developed or are developing formal regional SCP framework programmes (see Section 1 on Regional Processes). These mechanisms should be continuously linked to and drawn upon in the national context. There are

<sup>17</sup> The UNEP-CI *Tracking Progress* survey found that just over half (54%) of the governments surveyed had not specifically measured progress towards SCP.

<sup>18</sup> See [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/national/consumption-production.htm](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/national/consumption-production.htm)

<sup>19</sup> See [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/consumption/cpp1224.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/consumption/cpp1224.htm) and [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/isd.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/isd.htm)

also other national level processes that countries can utilise to assist themselves when developing their national programme.

## 2.2.4 National roundtables supporting development of SCP programmes

UNEP and the European Commission (EC) are organising national roundtables on SCP in major emerging economies. The roundtables help to raise awareness on SCP and to identify country-specific priority areas in a multi-stakeholder setting. Participants are encouraged to learn from and input to the ongoing Marrakech Process.<sup>20</sup> Roundtables in China (May 2006) and India (September 2006) are to be followed by similar exercises in Brazil and South Africa in 2007.

While not a formal objective of each of the meetings, the need to develop or strengthen national programmes on SCP was one of the underlying themes. Future roundtables should take on the more ambitious task of discussing the institutional framework and content of a national programme. The multi-stakeholder roundtables offer the perfect opportunity to initiate the national programme development process. This will of course require the full support of the partner government. There should also be a greater effort at these roundtables to define SCP in simple terms and explain its benefits to ensure take-up by the national government. The roundtables should also spur action on other strategic levels including the inception of action plans for specific sectors. Energy, water, agriculture and waste management were among the key SCP priority areas identified at the Indian roundtable. It was concluded that more in-depth, expert-level discussions were now warranted as precursors for sector-based action plans. UNEP and the EC will follow up both the Indian and Chinese roundtables with a specialised expert meeting on one of the recognised priority areas. The objective will be to arrive at an action-oriented outcome.

## 2.2.5 Guidelines and indicators for national SCP programmes

It has been made clear at several Marrakech Process meetings that many countries lack the capacity to develop and implement on their own national SCP programme. To help overcome this hurdle UNEP, with the support of the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), is developing a set of non-prescriptive guidelines and carrying out a number of demonstration projects. The Guidelines will provide practical steps for the development, implementation and monitoring of national SCP programmes and indicators to monitor progress towards SCP. The Guidelines will also support regional mechanisms (e.g. Latin America and Africa) and the Marrakech Task Force on Co-operation with Africa to pursue goals of SCP programme development and implementation.

UNEP is proposing a basic 3phase programme development model<sup>21</sup> that draws on earlier work on national action plans in Asia<sup>22</sup> and on the experiences of several international SCP experts. It is a highly

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<sup>20</sup> UNEP (2006) *SCP Roundtables in China and India: An overview of sustainable consumption and production challenges and opportunities*, Paris.

<sup>21</sup> The draft 3 phase/10 step programme development model will be distributed at the Stockholm meeting.

<sup>22</sup> UNEP (2005) *Advancing Sustainable Consumption in Asia: A Guidance Manual*, UNEP DTIE, Paris.



flexible approach reflecting regional and local differences. However, it does stress the need to apply the underlying principles and elements of comprehensive SCP programmes.<sup>23</sup> The Guidelines will give special attention to the need to develop monitoring mechanisms including SCP indicators and to link the programme to existing national strategies wherever practicable.

Demonstration activities in Argentina, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Mozambique and Mauritius among others are underway. The pilot projects are providing support to the individual countries to develop and implement an SCP programme. They will also offer an opportunity to learn from local experiences and to further test the guidelines. The implementation of the project is being guided by an International Advisory Group comprised of national SCP experts.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.3 Challenges and opportunities

Making the principles mentioned above operational will be a challenging task. To help accomplish this, it may be necessary to harness and bolster a number of critical processes. The main contributing mechanisms to the development of an ongoing national SCP programme constitute the political, technical, participatory and resource mobilisation processes. They are all important, but the political dimension for all countries and the technical and resource mobilisation dimensions for developing countries need special attention. Some challenges and opportunities are outlined below:

- ***Leveraging off existing mechanisms:*** High-level political support for a strategic response on SCP is often difficult to acquire, and in most cases a prerequisite for an effective programme. Making clear the benefits of SCP to both developed and developing countries (and to all stakeholders including business) will help encourage them to take the lead at the national level. The national multi-stakeholder roundtables are a vehicle that can be strengthened to demonstrate the benefits of SCP while initiating the programme development process. Links to the regional and international processes must also be continuously promoted to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. Governments and those supporting and working with them should look to linkages with new or existing national strategies and other policy frameworks. SCP can be incorporated in sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies or existing cleaner production strategies can be strengthened with demand-side elements. But policy and programme integration can pose a real challenge for developing countries without the appropriate support.
- ***Strengthen implementation of national strategies:*** A national SCP programme needs to consider competing political and operational forces and balance ecological, social and economic objectives. This is not always easy. It will often require a country to take a long-term approach, where initiating achievable short-term actions linked to priority areas is the main goal. Weak technical capabilities and other resource constraints in developing countries are clearly a major

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<sup>23</sup> Draft UNEP Guidelines for developing, implementing and monitoring national SCP programmes

<sup>24</sup> The first meeting of the advisory group was held on 12 April 2007 in Paris.



inhibitor to progress.<sup>25</sup> This includes the need for national-level support to develop indicators and improve data availability for progress monitoring efforts. The UNEP project to develop guidelines and indicators under the Marrakech Process intends at least in part to respond to these calls for assistance. Guidance, training and direct support projects to develop capacity are the project's main pillars. However, further support will also be necessary.

- ***Enhance progress monitoring efforts:*** A critical support mechanism under the Marrakech Process is reliable and accessible monitoring tools at both the national and international level. This includes setting clear targets for SCP programme development and implementation as well as using indicators to measure progress towards SCP. Monitoring and peer review promote the SCP concepts. Progress reports can be used to leverage action at the national level. Experience with developing and implementing SCP programmes and action plans is still very limited. Most of the existing programmes have only been developed in the last couple of years. In 2002, UNEP's *Tracking Progress* study found that of the 52 countries surveyed not one employed an integrated approach to SCP. No major assessments of the effectiveness of SCP programmes or indeed the implementation efforts have been undertaken in the past five years.

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<sup>25</sup> The Johannesburg Summit (WSSD) POI stated that "all countries should take action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development needs and capabilities of developing countries, through mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries."

## 2.4 Key questions for the working group

Key questions to be discussed among the participants in the working group on the “National SCP Programmes and Action Plans: guidelines and indicators” (28 June, Group 2) are suggested as below:

1. What are the key actions required to support national governments to develop and implement their SCP programmes?
2. What are the best mechanisms to integrate SCP into the existing national strategies (e.g. NSDS, PRS) or other development plans?
3. How to catalyse support from development agencies and regional institutions (e.g. AMCEN, MERCOSUR) for the implementation of national SCP programmes?
4. Given the clear need for national SCP programmes, how could they be reflected in the 10YFP and what would be realistic targets and indicators for their development?
5. What monitoring mechanisms are required for national SCP programmes (including national SCP indicators and international-level monitoring such as peer reviews)? How can these mechanisms be best supported?