

SD21 project: Context and approach

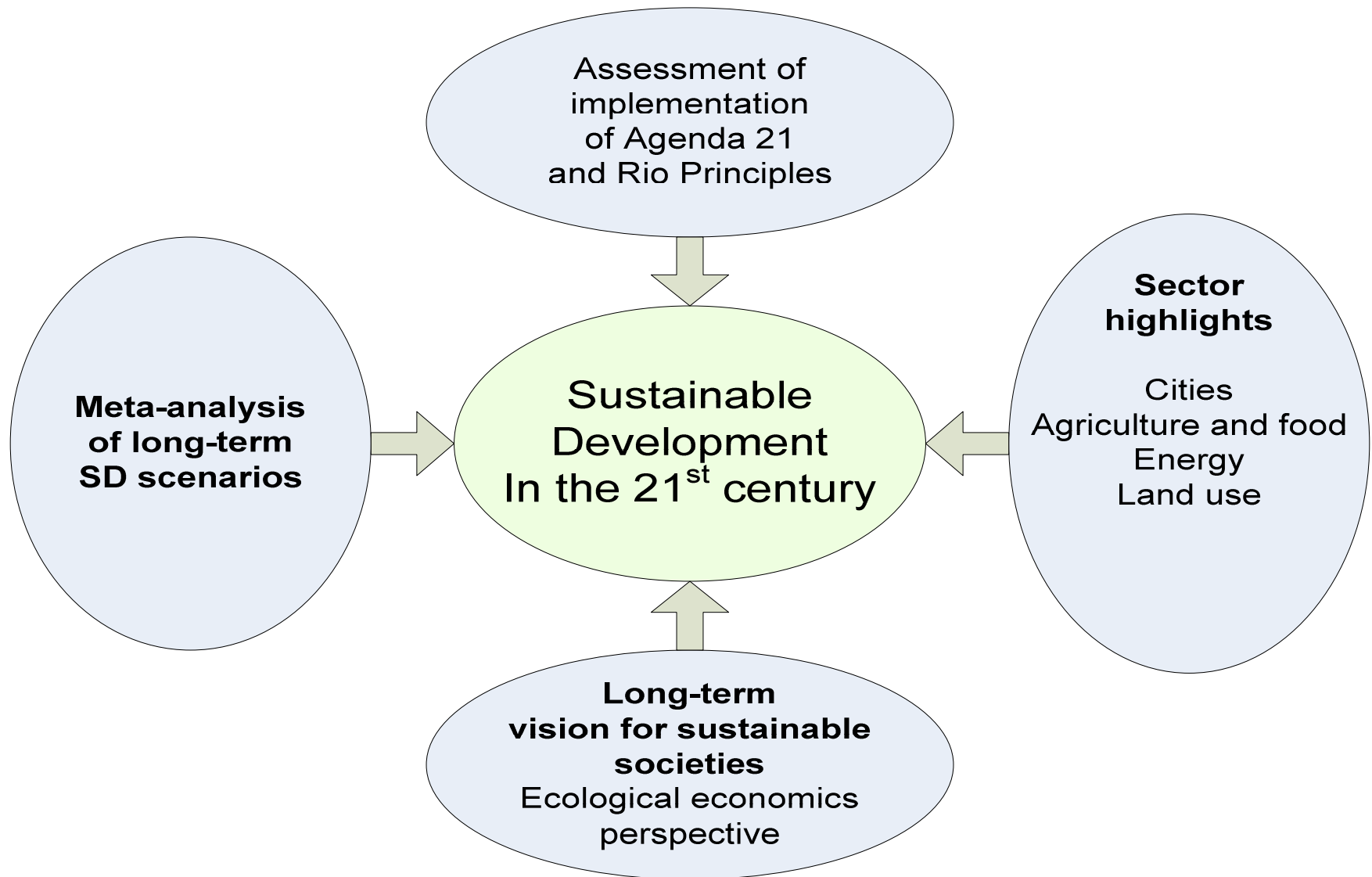
SD21 launch side event
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SD21: context

- Project supported by the European Community – DG Environment
- Overall Objective: Construct a coherent vision of sustainable development in the 21st century
 - Takes stock of the changes having occurred since 1992 in the area of SD
 - Proposes a vision and way forward for progressing the SD agenda for :
 - the international community,
 - national governments,
 - other stakeholders.
- Mobilize substantive contributions on core topics of the Conference
 - Use knowledge produced by assessments,
 - Mobilize expertise in areas where perceived gaps exist

SD 21 Project components



Reports available at: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_sd21st/21_reports.shtml

Sample (general) views

- *Elements of a sustainable future are already visible. Corporations and NGOs are showing the way. All we need to do is to quickly scale-up all these initiatives.*
- While we are not yet on a sustainable development path, we know what is to be done, and we have the means to do it. All that is needed is political will to implement commitments in terms of finance, technology and capacity development.
- *The current trends are unsustainable. Markets are the most efficient way to guide us on the right path. What is needed is full internalization of environmental externalities, and expansion of markets for ecosystem services.*
- We are on a fundamentally unsustainable path in most dimensions. Drastic changes in behaviour and lifestyles are necessary to achieve the necessary “great transition” towards sustainable development.
- *Humanity has transgressed the Earth’s carrying capacity already long ago. Only an immediate stop to ecosystem destruction, as well as population control and large-scale restoration of ecosystems might restore global biotic regulation and prevent total collapse of ecosystems, including the human species.*

SD21 Approach

- Not normative or prescriptive
- Recognize different world views
 - What commonalities?
 - Where are the differences?
 - How to go forward?
- Synthesis: provides structure of analysis of SD discourse
- 5 levels:
 - Sustainable development as an overarching goal
 - overall vision of and approach to SD
 - nature and content of SD strategies (international community, national governments)
 - details of the blueprints (e.g. Agenda 21) upon which action is based
 - Progress and shortcomings in implementation of specific actions and plans
- Reflect different views for each level
- Frame for analysis of discourse on SD from different sources