



Rural Payments Agency

Sustainable Development
Action Plan 2005-2006



Introduction

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) was established on 16th October 2001 as a Next Steps Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It is the single paying agency responsible for CAP schemes in England and for certain schemes throughout the UK and handles some non CAP schemes.

It has responsibility for the CAP payment functions formerly delivered by the Defra Paying Agency and the Intervention Board (IB). This includes administering the Integrated Administration and Control Systems (IACS), Import and Export Licences and Milk Quotas. It is also makes payments for non CAP schemes that it operates and is taking over payments for schemes operated by other bodies.

The overall policy and financial framework within which RPA operates is determined by The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, RPA operates on behalf of the Devolved Administrations through Service Level and /or Agency Agreements.

RPA is the UK Funding Body responsible for funding CAP schemes administered by all the UK paying agencies and has responsibility for the receipt and administration of monies from the Guarantee Section of the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF).

RPA recognises that its operations have an impact on the global and local environment. As a Defra Executive Agency we are committed to the establishment and maintenance of environmental management systems to manage our environmental impacts and give continuous improvement to our environmental performance. Through this action plan we are committed to energy and water conservation; use of our purchasing power to support sustainable development objectives; avoiding use of non-renewable resources in maintaining our estate; use of renewable energy; reducing pollution from business travel/staff travel to work; improving the biodiversity of the RPA estate; minimising emissions of greenhouse gases and reducing the total amount of waste produced and increasing the proportion re-used and recycled.

Sustainable Development in RPA

As an Executive Agency of Defra, RPA mirrors all of Defra's policies on Sustainable Development. We are also working towards the targets and guidance published in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate (FSDGE), which covers all key environmental and social impacts of the running of departments.

Defra's Estate Division (ED) provides RPA's Facilities and Estate Management Services and in doing so will;

- ensure that RPA is aware of cross-Government objectives and targets published in:
 - the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/index.htm> and
 - Departmental policies and strategies for addressing them <http://defraweb/corporate/sdstrategy/operations/index.htm>
- support the efforts in buildings and sites occupied by the RPA to meet the mandatory targets for improving performance on Environment Management Systems (EMS), emissions from business travel, water consumption, waste and recycling, energy efficiency, sustainable procurement, estate management and biodiversity.

In mirroring Defra's policies/objectives/targets RPA will also be focusing their actions on the five priorities identified in Defra's five year strategy:

- Travel
- Waste
- Water
- Energy
- Procurement

As well as the priority actions we are continuing to;

- Review the major impacts of our business and working to improve the way that we manage them through Environmental Management Systems, certified to ISO 14001 standard.
- Identify the sustainable development impacts of our operational activities, and work with others to manage/minimise negative impacts.
- To monitor performance against targets, identifying means of making improvements.
- To raise staff awareness of the sustainable operation agenda and ways that they can contribute to its success.

Operations

As mentioned previously RPA has a very close working relationship with Defra's Estate Division (ED) and the Business Support Unit (BSU). RPA reports all relevant figures to ED/BSU either monthly or yearly depending on the requirements of Defra. RPA's performance is reported on as part of Defra's response on the annual Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) Questionnaire which is co-ordinated by the BSU.

All Sustainable Development issues/requirements are directed through RPA HQ Sustainable Development team and are then filtered to the sites for their input/action. Each of the sites then reports back through HQ. RPA consists of six regional sites:-

Reading RPA HQ
Exeter
Northallerton
Newcastle
Carlisle
Workington

Each of the above locations has its own SD/Accommodation team which are responsible for the running of the sites within the Defra/RPA policies and Best Practice Guidelines set.

RPA is currently in the process of implementing an Environmental Management System across all of its sites and are hoping to gain ISO14001 certification early in 2006. This will result in taking sustainability into account in all our operations, and continually seeking to improve impacts of our operations.

RPA is also incorporating sustainable development throughout its procurement policies. RPA is following Defra's Sustainable Procurement Strategy which was published in December 2005. The strategy has been developed to ensure that Defra/RPA procurement decisions will be underpinned by the five priorities of sustainable development.

Operations Action Points

No.	ENERGY ACTIONS:	Target Date:	Responsibility:
FM1	Increase energy efficiency by 1.5% pa against baseline figure for 1999-2000. Local Facilities Managers to monitor and provide energy efficiency reduction options.	December 2006	Local Facilities Management / Accommodation
FM2	Reduce absolute Carbon emissions by 1.5% pa across the RPA estate based on baseline figures for 1999-2000.	December 2006	Local Facilities Management / Accommodation
FM3	Raise staff awareness of energy saving schemes including turning off lights, computer equipment, faxes and photocopies when leaving the office at night.	February 2006	Accommodation Managers
	WATER ACTIONS:	Target Date:	Responsibility:
FM4	Identify any opportunities for implementing more water saving devices and more efficient measures across the RPA estate	December 2006	Local Facilities Management / Accommodation
	WASTE ACTIONS:	Target Date:	Responsibility:
FM5	Reduce waste disposal by 1% by ensuring all staff are aware and participating in the waste procedures at all the RPA sites. All waste figures to be recorded and monitored monthly.	December 2006	Local Facilities Management / Accommodation

FM6	Increase recycling by 5% across each RPA site by looking at all recycling possibilities and ensuring staff are aware of recycling procedures.	December 2006	Local Facilities Management / Accommodation
	PROCUREMENT ACTIONS:	Target Date:	Responsibility:
FM7	Ensure that the sustainable development principles are embedded in all call off contracts for goods and services.	April 2006	Head of Contracts & Purchasing
FM8	Ensure all relevant staff are appropriately trained in sustainable procurement.	August 2006	Head of Contracts & Purchasing
	TRAVEL	Target Date:	Responsibility:
FM9	To reduce impact of travel on the environment by promoting video conferencing, completing Green Travel Plans and reviewing car hire procedures across the whole Agency	December 2006	Sustainable Operations / Local Accommodation Managers
	EMS ACTIONS:	Target Date:	Responsibility:
FM10	Ensure RPA's Environmental Management Programme is in Place and ISO 14001 certification is gained.	May 2006	Sustainable Operations

Sustainable Farming

RPA is contributing towards Defra's aims and sustainability in agriculture and rural development by implementing:

CAP Reform

A vision for the Common Agricultural Policy paper published December 2005.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/capreform/index.htm> The context for this is Sustainable Development. The Aim is to progress economic, social and environmental improvements in a co-ordinated way, in order to improve quality of life for all, without compromising the quality of life for the future generations. As well as promoting Sustainable Development within the EU, policies must look beyond borders and support the Sustainable Development of the rest of the world.

Agricultural policy has a fundamental part to play. It has a significant effect on the EU and International economy. It has an important role in the development of thriving rural communities. And it has a major influence on the landscape, biodiversity and pollution.

Single Payment Scheme

The Single Payments Scheme (SPS) has replaced most existing crop and livestock payments from 1 January 2005. There is no longer a link between production and support instead, to receive payments, farmers will be asked to demonstrate that they are keeping their land in good agricultural and environmental condition and complying with a number of specified legal requirements relating to the environment, public health and plant health and animal health and welfare. Meeting these requirements is described in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) legislation as 'cross compliance'

Farmers will have greater freedom to farm to the demands of the market as subsidies will be decoupled from production. At the same time, environmentally friendly farming practices will be better acknowledged and rewarded. The implementation of the CAP reform is central to England's strategy for sustainable farming and food.

Assisting with rural development by working with core Defra and other Defra Agencies and bodies on creation of a single customer database, single land database and single animal database. This will ensure that a whole farm approach can be implemented and that agencies do not conflict in advice and services to farmers.

Action	Target Date	Responsibility
Successful implementation of the new Single Payments Scheme. Including allocation of entitlements and the start of payments to farmers.	February 2006	Head of Operations

Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for sustainable development. This is delegated through the Executive Board (EB) to key operational managers.

The progress against targets set in this plan will be monitored and evaluated quarterly by the Sustainable Operations Team and reported to the Executive Board annually. This action plan is a living document. The plan will be reviewed on a frequent basis during this first year to include significant additional actions that were unknown at the time of publication. The plan will then be finally reviewed in November 2006 (for period January 2007 - March 2008) and annually thereafter for the next financial year.