



## **Sustainable development strategies – Status, national challenges and the role of management instruments**

**Dr. Jörg Mayer-Ries**

German Federal Ministry for Environment &  
Steering Group Member of European Sustainable Development Network

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### **What can you expect?**

- **My institutional background – Sustainability Policy in the German Federal Ministry for Environment & ESDN**
- **My conceptual basis – Sustainable Development as a learning governance paradigm**
- **Germany's SD strategy and management – characteristics, status and perspectives**
- **National SD strategies in EU member states – developments and trends**
- **Challenges and opportunities**



## Federal Environmental Ministry Division General Aspects



- ✓ Responsible for national **environmental policy strategies**
- ✓ Responsible for **environmental aspects of SD-policy**
- ✓ Coordinating **environmental policy input into national SD strategy** of the Federal Government (NSDS)
- ✓ **Coordinating development of SD indicators** within the Federal Government
- ✓ Part of **interministerial group for SD strategy development and SD management**
  - preparation of the decisions of state secretaries committee
  - formulation of progress reports
- ✓ **Steering group member of ESDN** (together with colleagues from 8 other EU member states)



## European Sustainable Development Network



- ✓ **Informal network** of public administrators dealing with SD strategies and policies in Europe (since 2002)
- ✓ **Main network for SD policy-makers** in Europe (250 members from 36 countries, incl. EU-27)
- ✓ **ESDN** included in renewed EU SD-Strategy of 2006 (para 42)
- ✓ **Exchange experiences, knowledge and good practices**
- ✓ **Policy briefs/recommendations** on specific SD topics
- ✓ **ESDN conferences** and **thematic workshops**
- ✓ **ESDN homepage:** country profiles, Quarterly Reports, case studies, etc.

European Sustainable Development Network

ESDN

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**Welcome to the website of the ESDN**

The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) is an informal network of public administrators and other experts dealing with sustainable development (SD) strategies in Europe.

This website serves as a one-stop-shop for SD strategies in Europe, and is the communication platform of the ESDN.

The activities guide...

The ESDN maintains and updates this website regularly.

For further information about the ESDN, the Steering Group, the ESDN Office, the network members and associated partners, please visit the section "About us" and read the ESDN Joint Understanding.

**Subscribe to the ESDN Newsletter**

If you want to receive quarterly updates on SD governance and strategies in Europe and on new entries on this website, please subscribe to the ESDN Newsletter by clicking here. To view the latest ESDN Newsletter, please click here.

**Perspectives for Governance in the recent EU policy strategies and Rio+20"**

The 7th ESDN Workshop "Perspectives for European SD Policy & Governance in the context of recent EU policy strategies and Rio+20" will take place on 27-28 October 2011 in Berlin. It will focus on questions such as: Which SD topics and targets are currently included in EU policy strategies and which governance mechanisms are applied? Which experiences have been made with SD policy and governance in Europe? What is the added-value and future of national SD strategies?

[More](#) [2011-09-19]

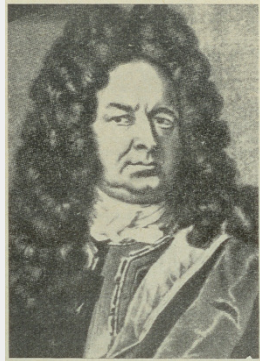
**ESDN Conference 2011 - "Framing and Focussing: European Resource Policies in the Context of Sustainable Development"**

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## SD Concept & Definition I

- ✓ Originally: **economic principle** of forest management
- ✓ Saxonian **feudal forest administrator** Hans Carl von Carlowitz 1713
- ✓ background: timber crisis by pre-industrial overexploitation (e.g. for iron production)
- ✓ standard **rule for renewable resources**: use **flows (services)** per anno only up to annual reproduction of **stock (system)**
- ✓ **longterm**, but **one-dimensional quantitative concept**
- ✓ **focus is revenues from timber**, not revenues from the **ecological system & social space** of 18th century forests



Dr. Jörg Mayer-Ries, German Federal Ministry for Environment



## SD Concept & Definition II



- ✓ From 1972 Stockholm to 1992 Rio de Janeiro:  
**global leading policy principle**
- ✓ Brundtland Commission 1987: **Meet needs of the present**  
without compromising the **ability of future generations**
- ✓ background: LDC debt & poverty, DC oil & resources crisis  
leading to **systemic crisis of economic, social and  
environmental wealth**
- ✓ **International** responsibility, **intergenerational** justice and  
**integration** of economic, social & ecological perspectives
- ✓ Interlinking problem and problem solving economic, social  
and ecological dimensions, **not balancing isolated pillars**



## SD Concept & Definition III



- ✓ Today, 300 years after Carlowitz 1713: Rio+20 searches for  
**SD Goals 2015ff. (as part of new global SD Strategy)**
- ✓ SD as **principle for new governance**
- ✓ **Integration and reflexivity**
  - intersectoral integration (disciplines, social actors)
  - vertical integration (from local to global)
  - horizontal integration (policy fields, nexus approach)
  - spatial integration (international responsibility, cohesion)
  - temporal integration (linking short-, mid- and longterm)
- ✓ **Responsibility ethics, precautionary principle,  
risk awareness**
- ✓ **Accountability, transparency, participative governance**



## German SD Strategy – General characteristics



- **Context of non-governmental SD** policies and strategies: science, funding, business (SD related markets, CSR) and civil society (awareness and actions)
- **Context of non-national SD policies** and strategies: UN Agenda 21 and EU SDS, regional and local SD frames
- **German national SD frame:** 4 guidelines along Brundtland: **intergenerational equity, social cohesion, quality of life and international responsibility**
- More or less integrative **SD postulates for all policy fields**, operationalized by objectives, timelines and indicators
- **SD management and governance system**
  - a) management rules
  - b) monitoring
  - c) governance institutions and mechanisms



## SD Management I – SD management rules



- *Basic rule (1):*  
**„Each generation must solve its own problems and not burden the next generations with them. It must also make provisions for foreseeable future problems.”**  
  
... and 9 SD rules for specific areas of action, e.g.
- *Rule (7):* **“Public budgets are to take account of intergenerational equity. The Federal Government, the Länder and the municipalities should present balanced budgets and then take the further step of continually reducing their debt position.”**
- *Rule (4):* **“Dangers and unjustifiable risks to human health should be avoided.”**

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## German SD Strategy – Development since 2002

ESD:N

- “Perspectives for Germany” Strategy 2002
- “Progress Report” 2004
- “Landmark Sustainability” Report 2005
- Report on Indicators 2006
- “Progress Report” 2008
- Report on Indicators 2010
- “Progress Report” 2012




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## SD Management II – SD monitoring

ESD:N

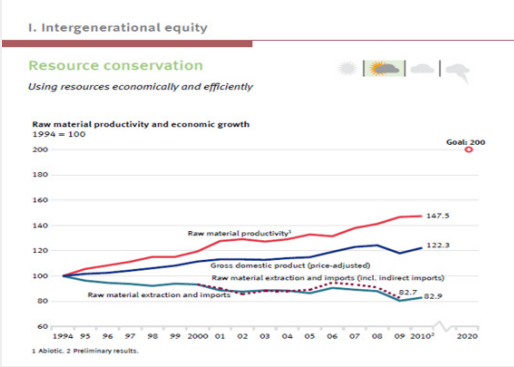
- 38 quantitative indicators for 21 goals across all policy fields
- Independent analysis and reporting by the German Statistical Office



I. Intergenerational equity

Resource conservation  
Using resources economically and efficiently

Raw material productivity and economic growth  
1994 = 100



1 Actual; 2 Preliminary results.

Dr. Jörg Mayer-Ries, German Federal Ministry for Environment

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## SD Management II – SD monitoring





Target will be achieved or nearly achieved



Development in the right direction, but gap between 5 and 20 % will remain



Development in the right direction, but gap of more than 20 % will remain



Development in the wrong direction

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## SD Management III – SD Institutions



- Chancellery is steering the SD Strategy and chairing the State Secretaries Committee
- Sustainability impact assessment of all legislative acts (quality control by Parliamentary SD Advisory Committee):
 

*A declaration must be made on whether the impact of the project is in line with sustainable development, especially what the long-term impact of the project will be.*
- Civil Societies German SD Council: advice & public debate

Management of sustainability



Legislation impact assessment



Deutscher Bundestag  
Parlamentarischer Beirat für nachhaltige Entwicklung



Rat für NACHHALTIGE Entwicklung

Dr. Jörg Mayer-Ries, German Federal Ministry for Environment



## SD Activities



- Implementing SD Impact Assessment for all national legislative acts
- Initiative for "Sustainable Government": public procurement, property management, event management, EMAS certification
- Peer Review of the SD strategy by international experts 2009 and forthcoming 2013
- Implementing an SD reporting scheme of all ministries



## SD governance challenges



### Various challenges for SD governance exist

- context of uncertainty and ongoing crises
- context of interlinked (financial – economic – social – environmental) crises, also including crisis of democracy: systemic wealth model and governance crisis
- long-term thinking vs dominant myopic paradigm
- complexity of multiple sectors and governance level
- consistency of instruments mix (regulation, market-based instruments, awareness raising, policy strategies, etc.)





## SD Governance in EU Member States I



- ✓ 2006 renewed EU SDS as overarching policy frame ...  
... but since then focus on EU 2020, i.e. growth and  
employment, without strengthening environment, global  
responsibility & SD interlinkages
- ✓ Until financial crisis NSDSs in all EU Member States ...  
... but recently partially playing down or giving up SD  
strategies, reducing resources & institutions (SD councils!)
- ✓ Impact assessment and Peer Reviews partially existing ...  
... but no continuous, strong trends and commitments
- ✓ SD public procurement initiatives partially existing ...  
...limited to environmental aspects & difficult to implement



## SD Governance in EU Member States II



- ✓ Development of SD indicator sets ...  
... but financial & economic crisis shifts focus and resources  
towards traditional statistics  
... without EU SDS as coordinating governance frame  
indicator initiatives loose coherence  
... competing paradigms of "progress", "happiness" and  
"green", "smart" and "inclusive growth" produce parallel  
uncoordinated indicator developments
- ✓ Partially integrated policy objectives ...  
... but still lack of coherent sets of SD goals (Rio+20!), a  
consistent concept of global, national and individual wealth  
and a model for a sustainable management of stocks and  
flows, knowledge and risk within planetary boundaries



## Some success factors and key mechanisms



- Top-level political commitment – as integrated strategies Prime Ministers are responsible
- All policy sectors involved and committed to rules, indicators and institutional mechanisms
- Monitoring and evaluation is key - by neutral agencies, in a transparent way, and able to communicate
- SD policy-making needs to address pressing problems (financial crisis, unemployment, health, migration, etc.)
- SD as general concept for new and better governance, including accountability and auditing (see e.g. EMAS for CSR on the micro level of private and public organisations)



**Thank you for your attention!**

**Dr. Jörg Mayer-Ries**

Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

Email: [joerg.mayer-ries@bmu.bund.de](mailto:joerg.mayer-ries@bmu.bund.de)  
[www.bmu.de](http://www.bmu.de)