A new set of indicators of sustainable development are proposed in a Defra-led Government consultation, and responses are invited from today until 15 October 2012.

The indicators are intended to provide an overview of national progress on key issues that are important economically, socially and environmentally in the long term.

They are intended to complement the National Wellbeing Measures published today by the Office for National Statistics.

Twelve headline indicators are proposed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>economic prosperity</td>
<td>healthy life expectancy</td>
<td>greenhouse gas emissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long term unemployment</td>
<td>social capital</td>
<td>natural resource use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poverty</td>
<td>social mobility in adulthood</td>
<td>wildlife and biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge and skills</td>
<td>housing provision</td>
<td>water availability</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

along with 25 supplementary indicators.

The consultation document can be found at: [www.defra.gov.uk/consult/open/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/open/)

Updates on the indicators will be published annually with a scorecard showing whether progress is in the right direction. Sustainable Development Indicators and have been also widely used outside of Government by academics, non-Governmental Organisations and businesses. This consultation will give stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the choice and coverage of a new set.
Main notes


2. The first set of sustainable development indicators was published in 1996, followed by revised sets in 1999 and 2005.

3. A National Statistics compendium ‘Sustainable Development Indicators in Your Pocket’, presenting charts, commentary and assessments for the previous set of indicators, was published annually by Defra from 2005 to 2010.1,2

4. Sustainable development recognises that the three ‘pillars’ of the economy, society and the environment are interconnected. A commonly used definition is ensuring that our development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.3

5. The Government’s vision for ‘mainstreaming sustainable development’4 was published in 2011. It included a commitment to develop a new set of sustainable development indicators, and the consultation document is a key step to meeting that commitment.

6. An earlier consultation5 sought stakeholder views on the 68 indicators6 reported on from 2005 to 2010, and the results have fed into the new set proposed.

7. The proposed indicators represent a rationalisation of the indicators to reflect emerging issues, the development of National Wellbeing Measures by the Office for National Statistics, and to reduce the number in order to make the indicators more manageable and simpler to interpret.

8. Defra and ONS are working together to develop the sustainable development indicators and measures of national wellbeing to ensure they are complementary.

9. The proposed indicators are not binding on the other countries in the UK, which have their own approaches to Sustainable Development.


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A Defra National Statistics publication

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Responsible Defra statistician: Stephen Hall

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3 [www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm](http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm)