Examples of policy questions

The questions are formulated from the perspective of the policy-maker.

Example questions from Part B include:

- Are we reducing our rates of depletion of key non-renewable resources?
- Are we seeing rapid transfer of eco-efficiency technology into building design, and are resulting gains being complimented by changing behaviour?

Example questions from Part C include:

- Is spending on R&D in eco-innovations and environmental technologies increasing its share in GDP?
- Are sustainable products becoming more affordable than their less sustainable alternatives?
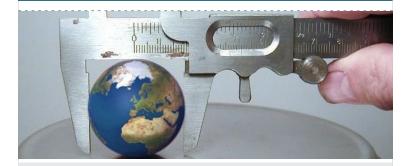
Next stages

The EEA is in the process of producing indicators for addressing the policy questions. First results on SCP progress in Europe are scheduled for 2010 with further improvements by 2012.

Further information

The EEA's SCP indicator reporting framework is available in a web-based format at: http://scp. eionet.europa.eu/publications/SCP_Indicator_frame.

Results of indicator implementation will be available via www.eea.europa.eu and http://scp.eionet. europa.eu/.

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European progress towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP)

A framework for indicator-based reporting

European Environment Agency

Why indicator-based reporting on SCP?

Sustainable consumption and production has gradually become more established on the political agenda since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg with a number of countries in Europe and other regions having adopted SCP strategies and action plans.

With respect to SCP, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation states that:

'All countries should take action, with developed countries taking the lead to identify …monitoring and assessment mechanisms, including, where appropriate…indicators for measuring progress'

Many countries have yet to begin this process. Moreover, there is still uncertainty over what precisely SCP entails and how we will know when we have achieved it.

To aid in this process in its 32 member countries, the European Environment Agency and the European Topic Centre on SCP in consultation with a group of external experts has developed a framework for SCP indicator-based reporting. The objectives are to:

- contribute to a better understanding of SCP in a European context;
- enable EEA regular assessment of progress towards SCP in Europe;
- inspire EEA member countries in their own development of indicators;
- create a communication tool for SCP.

Novel aspects of the approach

The EEA's approach includes a number of innovations:

- an SCP vision that guides the selection of indicators and provides impetus to the development of better indicators in the future;
- a set of policy questions to which the indicators should attempt to answer;
- the integration of policy questions and indicators to form narratives for better communication of SCP trends.

The SCP vision

The SCP vision is based on a synthesis and interpretation of existing statements on SCP made in international documents.

Within the vision the indicator framework should consider the following two broad questions:

- **Are we moving towards sustainability** — are we living within ecological limits, and reducing global environmental pressures caused by our economic activities while improving our welfare?
- **Are the right framework conditions in place** to ensure we get there?

Organisation of SCP policy questions

The indicator framework includes 35 policy questions:

A: 3 headline questions aimed for communication to politicians and the public;

B: 16 policy questions covering trends in consumption and production patterns both along main lifecycle elements in the economy and within most impacting consumption clusters;

C: 16 response-type policy questions aimed at identifying whether the right conditions are in place to ensure that trends presented can begin moving in the right direction.

Organisational structure for policy questions and indicators

A. Headline questions

B. Status and trends in consumption and production

B1 Overall trends in European consumption and production

Resources

Waste   Production

Consumption

B2 Key consumption clusters;
Food and drink;
Housing and buildings;
Mobility

C. SCP — The framework for change
C1 Economic and regulatory framework for a sustainable future
C2 Walking the talk
C3 Enabling and engaging sustainable consumption