

National Sustainable
Development Strategy
2010 > 2013

Towards a fair and green economy

& LOCAL AUTHORITIES

October
2011

The National Sustainable Development Strategy **Prolongs** the “Grenelle of Environment” Round Table

What is the 'National Sustainable Development Strategy', or NSDS 2010-2013 for short? Is it just another regulation? How does it tie in with an Agenda 21, a climate plan or a territorial coherence scheme? And how can local authorities take it on board? Everything you need to know.

The NSDS contains all of the “Grenelle of Environment” Round Table and goes beyond: it also broadens the reflection to other areas of sustainable development. The economic and social challenges are taken into consideration alongside the environmental challenges. The aim is to meet the existing and future needs of citizens as fully as possible. Hinged upon nine challenges and forty-seven strategic choices, the NSDS thus offers a project for global society turned towards a greener, fairer economy. This national strategy is not a 'top-down' strategy. Like the Grenelle of environment (the Round Table which gathered all the French stakeholders around environment issues in 2007-2008), it was drawn up collaboratively with the country's different actors: representatives of local communities and businesses, government, associations, trade unions. For each of these it is a tool that presents strategic choices and performance indicators meeting with a wide consensus.

This NSDS is a flexible framework that includes current regulations but also strongly relies on voluntary commitments. It is a reminder of France's goals and main strategic orientations with regard to sustainable development. It invites everybody to contribute to the implementation of the forty-seven strategic choices drawn up at the end of the dialogue process. Local authorities are totally free to choose the means to bring into play, notably via their Agenda 21s or other frameworks.

› NSDS and Agenda 21s, coherence and complementarity

With the NSDS 2010-2013, Agenda 21s become the prime tool for local implementation of development initiatives. The NSDS targets one thousand Agenda 21s elaborated by 2013, with at least two hundred and fifty of these labelled by the national approval body of the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing. It presents local authorities with strategic choices they can then tailor to local specificities. For Frédérique Dequiedt, General Delegate for Urban Ecology for the Plaine Commune urban agglomeration (just outside Paris): "The NSDS does not impose a new framework. In particular by offering a reminder of the main objectives and guidelines determined at the “Grenelle of Environment” Round Table, the Social Cohesion Plan and the European Sustainable Development Strategy, it provides local authorities with a tool that gives direction and brings a national and European dimension to their actions." The force and originality of the NSDS is that it does just that: it draws a local strategy into the dynamic of France's national and international objectives.

This national strategy can only enlighten, enhance and complete local sustainable development strategies, it can never replace them. The NSDS does not force anything on anyone; it proposes objectives that meet with a consensus and lets local authorities choose the means to achieve them (territorial coherence plan, climate plan, Agenda 21...). It is thus the perfect complement to Agenda 21s, which propose an implementation method for the end objectives of sustainable development suited to different local scales. The NSDS contributes toward enabling local authorities to define their own strategies and gives local actions body and coherence. ■

The 9 challenges of the NSDS



- 1/ Sustainable consumption and production
- 2/ Knowledge society
- 3/ Governance
- 4/ Climate change and energies
- 5/ Sustainable transport and mobility
- 6/ Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity
- 7/ Public health, risks prevention and management
- 8/ Demography, immigration and social inclusion
- 9/ International challenges for sustainable development and global poverty

The objectives in figures

For each of its nine challenges the NSDS provides a reminder of some of the objectives in figures. These objectives are the commitments made by France at a national, European or international level.

Agenda 21s

► An Agenda 21 is a local project for sustainable development.

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THE EXAMPLE OF MELLÉ VILLAGE (35)

Committed since 1976 to regaining control of its territory's landscape, Mellé, a village in Ille-et-Vilaine with six hundred and eighty residents, has established its Agenda 21. The local authority has drawn up a list of twenty-three actions, from the purchase of eco-responsible products to better management of public lighting, from the creation of butterfly havens in the village to preserve biodiversity to the transformation of a greenfield site into a business park. "These initiatives, built around the five end objectives of the reference framework for local sustainable development projects and Agenda 21s, are consistent with the challenges and strategic choices of the NSDS," we were told by Claude Duval, the mayor of Mellé. Reinforcing coherence between local and national objectives is important "as it enables our results to be included in the progress measured against NSDS indicators and emphasizes the global aspect of our local action."



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THE INDICATORS OF THE NSDS

Four indicators reflecting the economic and social context, fifteen headline indicators and thirty-five background indicators were selected to help measure the impact of the NSDS. They were all chosen collaboratively with the actors concerned. The action of each local community has an impact on the global tendency of these indicators. When a local authority registers its action in the framework of the NSDS, it contributes to the progress of the indicators and thus to achieving the objectives of the NSDS. Certain indicators have particular relevance for local authorities, for example those measuring soil contamination, the carbon footprint or energy consumption for public transport.

www.statistiques.developpement-durable.gouv.fr
www.insee.fr

› An educational undertaking

A local sustainable development strategy may sometimes be misunderstood by certain local residents or elected representatives, even if it is drawn up collaboratively. But for a local strategy to be successful, it is essential to obtain the support of as many people as possible. By repositioning Agenda 21s in a broader perspective than a purely local one, the National Sustainable Development Strategy empowers local authorities to enlist the support of all.

It makes it easier for citizens to comprehend actions engaged in pursuit of a greener and fairer economy and societal organization, as well as underlining the way in which local action helps to meet the challenges of sustainable development.

According to Frédérique Dequiedt of the Plaine Commune urban agglomeration (just outside Paris), "It is important to seize any chance to show communities that efforts made locally really do contribute to meeting the key challenges of sustainable development. This gives credibility and consistency to the projects developed. One of the core virtues of the NSDS lies in its ability to inspire a feeling of common purpose."

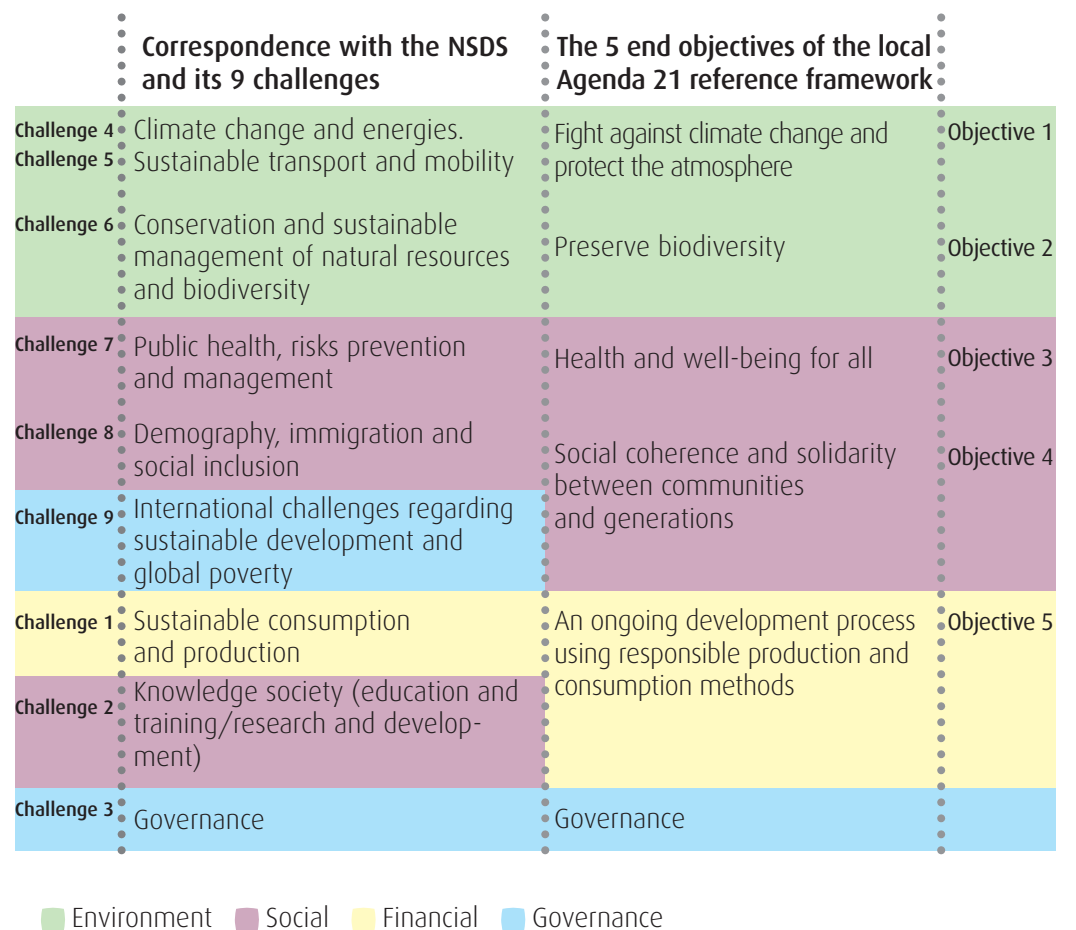
› A dialogue tool for local communities

The NSDS acts as a common denominator and naturally serves as an effective tool for enhancing dialogue between the different actors of a local community. It rallies them and brings them together around strategic choices and shared indicators.

Today, all of these actors (businesses, associations, local authorities, government departments and agencies...) are adopting the NSDS. Ministries are fine-tuning their own strategies. Training courses are gradually being set up at different levels. And prefectures and the decentralized departments of the ministry for sustainable development are now relay points empowering local authorities to draw up and implement their local sustainable development strategies (see diagram).

The National Sustainable Development Strategy is a lever that can be used by local authorities in their sustainable development strategies; it reinforces and adds value to their actions. It facilitates and catalyzes the support of the largest possible number of people. When all the different actors can relate to this shared and desired ambition, why try to do without it? ■

THE CHALLENGES OF THE NSDS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF LOCAL AGENDA 21S

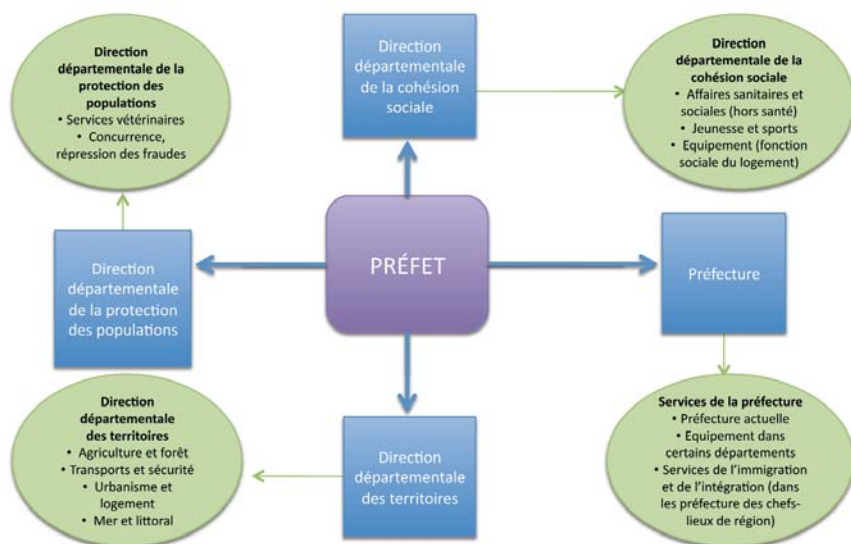


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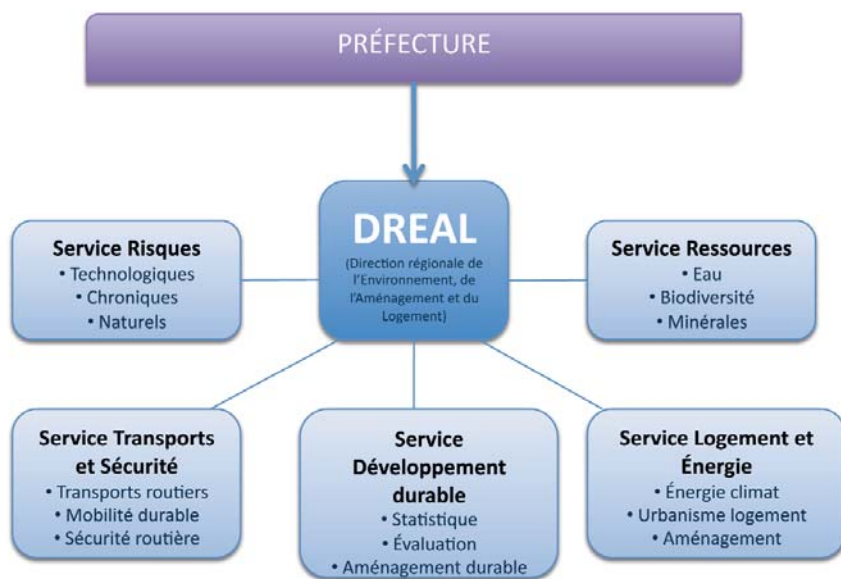
› The NSDS encourages local authorities and stakeholders to contact and work in partnership with locally recognized associations for the protection of nature and the environment.

Territorial governance gives local Agenda 21s their full meaning

> DEPARTMENTAL ORGANISATION CHART



> REGIONAL ORGANISATION CHART



3 QUESTIONS FOR

Julie Chabaud

In charge of the Agenda 21 mission at the Gironde Regional Council (33)

How is governance ⁽²⁾ a major asset for the implementation of a local sustainable development strategy?

To be pragmatic and effective in this day and age, it is essential to address the issue of governance rather than just stringing together exemplary actions. Of all the NSDS challenges, governance may well be the one that makes the biggest difference. Awareness of the national and international objectives, their urgency, their complexity and the interdependences makes it clear that none of the stakeholder have the means to achieve these objectives alone. The only way forward is therefore collectively, with all the actors getting together and pulling together and each one contributing on the basis of their responsibilities, competences and resources. To meet this challenge, the Gironde General Council formed the Departmental Council for Local Agenda 21s (CDA21) in 2005.

What are its objectives?

The Gironde CDA21 groups together 61 local authorities and several hundred partners from the public and private sectors. It has considerable potential. The aim is to stop working in sector-based, individual ways and start working across the board to translate the objectives into actions. The national strategic objectives are shared and interpreted in the light of Gironde's specificities with a view to reaching an agreement as to how to implement these objectives at the local level.

Rising to the challenges together, identifying locally what already exists and the operational levers that can be used to make improvements or transformations, sharing and testing joint projects measured against set performance indicators: this all makes us much more coherent and effective.

Does the NSDS help you to do this?

Yes, because it establishes common national objectives that were formed together and up to which local actors can measure their individual and participative contribution. Its utility lies in its capacity to consolidate a local project, by which I mean that it defines a 'common responsibility' at a national level; it is then up to local actors from the public and private sectors to agree on the way to succeed responsibly and collaboratively, in accordance with individual resources and local realities.

(1) Pierre CALAME, La démocratie en miettes. Pour une révolution de la gouvernance. (Democracy in tatters. For a revolution of governance.) Published by Descartes & Cie - Paris - 2003 (p. 124)

(2) Governance, challenge no. 3 of the NSDS 2010-2013, is one of the basic axes of any Agenda 21. One of its objectives is to establish one thousand Agenda 21s by 2013.

"The key to the governance of the future is no longer the principle of allocating competencies between levels but on the contrary that of cooperating between levels." ⁽¹⁾

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.cg33.fr

The National Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-2013

A trump card helping local sustainable development strategies **towards a greener, fairer economy**

INTERVIEW WITH

Jacques PELISSARD,
President of the AMF (Association
of Mayors of France)



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How can a local representative take on board the national sustainable development strategy?

This strategy enables local authorities to place their actions in a national and European framework. It aims to empower all of our country's actors by providing strategic orientations and major challenges that they can rise to meet together.

Once these challenges are known and shared, the actors can then commit to them and translate them into their individual projects.

Local authorities are at the heart of the economic, social and environmental concerns of local territories. They have the key operational competencies and grassroots contact with residents required to achieve sustainable territorial development. Every day local authorities deliberate on the conservation of open spaces, landscapes and natural resources, on accessibility, mobility, energy efficiency... The NSDS gives direction in all these fields. It is a grid for analysis at a national scale and a catalyst for a policy of sustainable development in the field.

Is the NSDS of any use if the local authority already has a local Agenda 21?

The two initiatives are compatible and complementary and the NSDS considers local Agenda 21s to be the tool for implementation of sustainable development in local communities. For local authorities with an Agenda 21 based on the end objectives and initiatives adopted in the Grenelle 2 law, the NSDS 2010-2013 is a landmark providing a reminder of the main objectives to which France has made commitments at national, European and international levels.

From this point of view, the indicators provided by the NSDS 2010- 2013 are a unique measurement

and evaluation tool. The NSDS also bears witness to our country's collective commitment to sustainable development and a green economy.

For example?

A town that carries out an energy audit of its buildings and undertakes renovation work to reduce their energy consumption will contribute, on a local level, to the fight against climate change. This contribution can now be measured and will be included in progress measured against the indicator for emissions of the six greenhouse gases.

Do you think this is a good demonstration of "thinking globally, acting locally"?

It is true that the NSDS 2010-2013 creates links between the local strategies of local authorities and reinforces the coherence of this collective impetus in favour of sustainable development for France. It also adds value to the actions undertaken. This is very important. The evaluation of a local authority's actions on issues as global as climate change or energy is complex and can seem ridiculously insignificant given the scope of the challenges to be met. The NSDS indicators make it possible to read a real meaning into the results of local authorities, and hence give them value.

When you add together the results of all the different actions, you realise that the mass effect really does have weight. We all know that the only solution to such problems is a collective one. With the NSDS we are more effective, together. ■



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