

References

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*From strategy to evaluation:
keys to the success of a local
Agenda 21 program
Reference database for the assessment of
regional sustainable development projects*



Présent
pour
l'avenir



Economy, Evaluation and Integration of Sustainable Development Service

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This document reflects only the authors' views and not those of the institutions to which they belong.
The aim of this publication is to encourage debate and request comments and criticisms.

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EDITORIAL

Local Agenda 21 – a regional sustainable development project – is now acknowledged to be the fundamental tool for implementing, at the town, city and local authority level, the international sustainable development objectives defined in Rio in 1992 and set out in a large number of strategic texts, international agreements and action programmes at different levels.

Local agenda 21 is a voluntary, partnership-based approach that is open to residents. In practice, it is reflected by a refocussing of development choices, policies and actions sponsored by a local authority or region and in France, it forms part of the *Loi de programmation relative à la mise en oeuvre du Grenelle de l'Environnement* (Programming Act concerning the implementation of the French “Grenelle de l'Environnement” environmental legislation). Today, nearly 700 local authorities, EPCI (public establishments for inter-municipal cooperation) and project areas have made it the framework of their actions.

The *Cadre de référence des projets territoriaux de développement durable* (Reference framework for territorial sustainable development projects), which has been widely adopted by local authorities and local elected representatives since 2006, defines its principles and makes assessment one of the five key elements of any sustainable development approach.

Indeed, assessment contributes to the governance of the project and its continuous improvement strategy. It adds consistency to the approach. It verifies its progress and helps focus the different stakeholders – elected representatives, technicians, partners and inhabitants – on the objectives and choices that shape their project.

While assessment is at the heart of sustainable development, it is also increasingly becoming a key to public decision-making. Developed under the supervision of the *Commissariat général au développement durable* (French General Commission for Sustainable Development), the “From strategy to assessment” reference database responds to a pressing need of local stakeholders, who need access to a flexible and adaptable shared tool that will allow them to assess the pertinence of their strategies.

So that it can be adapted to all regional levels, it has been jointly developed by numerous elected representatives and regional agents, reflecting the diversity of French local authorities and territories, from villages through to regions.

The extensive feedback, from the working party and the territories that have tried and developed it, have made it a tool that is firmly grounded in the realities and can be used by the majority of local authorities or territories. In particular, it will allow them to measure and obtain concrete proof of how well they are implementing the *Grenelle de l'Environnement* environmental legislation.

We know that the implementation of sustainable development at the local level is a key condition for its adoption and success. Local stakeholders are helping to make it an integral part of the organisation of daily life, both in regional development and in the practices of citizens. This reference document will thus give them the keys to formulating their own strategies and measuring their effects, in order to ensure that sustainable development stays on course!

Dominique DRON

General Commissioner
for Sustainable Development

Introduction

The *Cadre de référence des projets territoriaux de développement durable et agendas 21 locaux* (Reference framework for regional sustainable development projects and local Agenda 21 programmes), which has been widely adopted by the territories and local authorities involved in sustainable development approaches, emphasizes five key procedural elements required for conducting a territorial sustainable development project, amongst which **assessment** occupies a central role.

As set out in the Reference Framework, assessment must "verify the adequacy and pertinence [of the action carried out] with regard to key local issues, sustainable development principles and the expectations of the population", in addition to their efficiency vis-à-vis the allocated resources. "To this end, it is essential to start thinking about assessment processes at the earliest possible stage in the development of Agenda 21 (...)".

Dedicated to continuous improvement throughout the life of Agenda 21, the assessment process provides essential help in guiding and managing the project.

The aim of this reference document, combined with the national reference framework, is to help local authorities and territories begin the assessment process from the start of their Agenda 21 programme.

Intended for all levels of territories (rural municipalities, towns and cities, groups of municipalities, *départements*, areas, regional natural parks and regions), this new tool is designed to offer them a **common framework** that will allow them to create **their own assessment system** adapted to the specificities of their territorial organisation and their local issues, from the launch of their project. It provides a reminder of the essential questions to be asked when assessing a local agenda 21 programme and the expected benefits.

Each project sponsor will use this reference document **according to its margins for manoeuvre** in the implementation of its local sustainable development strategy, its chosen fields of operation, organisational structure and resources. Furthermore, in addition to comparing individual territories and local authorities, it is also a question of **measuring the improvements brought about by Agenda 21** over time, with regard to the outcomes and procedural elements of the reference framework.

This assessment support tool considers Agenda 21 to be a **strategic project**. The proposed interrogations and questions **focus on the added value contributed by Agenda 21** and its capacity to transform policies and practices. At the heart of this added value are efforts to **align** the policies and actions of the local authority and of its partners for the benefit of sustainable development, in addition to **solidarity with future generations** and the **rest of the planet**.

The reference document is a guide in addition to being an interrogation and strategic assessment tool, which must take its place within the assessment system created by the local authority and its partners. **On its own, it cannot assess an entire Agenda 21 programme, but it can play a central role.**

It has been **created in conjunction with the local authorities**. Indeed its relevance depends on taking account of the realities of local conditions and being based on existing experiences and needs.

It has thus been **developed by a working party consisting of agents responsible for sustainable development and assessment, originating from 16 local authorities and project areas**, several resource organisations and **elected representatives in charge of sustainable development** (see lists in the Annex).

A steering committee, consisting of delegates from associations of elected representatives, local authority networks and institutional partners has monitored and guided the works. It was supervised by the General Commission for Sustainable Development.

In 2009-2010, **around twenty local authorities and project territories tested this reference document** in the context of the assessment of their local Agenda 21 programme. The works thus carried out added improvements and ensured that it was better adapted to the daily realities of the territories. It has been in operation since the spring of 2011.

Now stabilised, the reference document has been published online on the MEDDTL website (<http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/Le-referentiel-national-pour-l.html>), where any user that so desires can access all of the information, including an Excel file to be used for conducting the assessment.

FIRST PART: Strategic assessment of local Agenda 21 projects - reasons for doing so and procedures to follow

I. Assessment objectives and principles

A. Why assess one's local Agenda 21 programme?

In the first instance, the reason for a local authority to assess its Agenda 21 programme is to evaluate the contribution that it is making to the territory, on an ongoing basis throughout its implementation.

This involves analysing what has been done with regard to the objectives that have been set and drawing conclusions about the results obtained, in order to learn lessons for the future.

This approach has numerous **benefits**: as an essential condition for initiating a continuous Improvement process, it can be used to **guide** decision-makers and **report** the results of public actions to citizens, while affirming the responsibility of the territory and its stakeholders.

1) Continuous improvement

A territorial sustainable development project seeks to improve the actions and policies of the local authority and its partners continuously with regard to the outcomes of sustainable development.

Its aim is to support the collective changes required by sustainable development: profound changes in behaviours, methods of consumption and production, local development and planning strategies, etc.

Assessment is the ideal way to drive this dynamic forward: it allows us to **measure the magnitude of the changes obtained, learn lessons from successes** and failures and **appraise the methods** used in order to improve them.

It supports the periodic refocussing of public responses to key sustainable development issues in a rapidly evolving socio-economic, technical and environmental context.

2) Optimising the resources

Assessment constitutes an indispensable **management** tool, facilitating the:

- **Preparation of decision-making**: by clearly explaining the impacts of strategic choices on the territory, checking whether the set objectives have been achieved and by seeking the causes of failure (technical, financial, organisational, etc.), assessment ensures that decision-making forms part of a continuous improvement cycle. It offers departments quantitative and qualitative arguments for refocussing territorial strategies, while following the guiding principles of sustainable development.

- **Optimisation of resources**: local authorities must satisfy an obligation for rationality and efficiency, as the needs to provide services are increasing whilst the resources to be mobilised for public action are increasingly constrained. They must constantly seek the best compromise between needs and resources. By seeking to measure the impacts of the actions carried out, assessment allows the resources to be focused on the best ways to take action.

- **Mobilisation of teams and skills**: Participatory assessment offers an opportunity for collective learning. In response to the inherent complexity of sustainable development (proliferation of territories and public action tools, overlapping of over-arching issues, diversity of partners and beneficiaries, etc.), it helps to bring the different stakeholders together in pursuit of ambitious outcomes. It allows the territorial project to be refocussed on realistic priority objectives which are in the general interest.

3) Strengthening local democracy

The assessment of an Agenda 21 programme and the sharing of its results with the inhabitants strengthen the bond of confidence between civil society and the elected representatives. The utility of public action is therefore better understood and shared.

Preparing to assess an Agenda 21 programme firstly involves debating the results that are expected of the

implementation of the territorial project. On this occasion, **a common understanding of the project is developed**. By thinking about the desired changes with the inhabitants, and about how to measure or assess them, it is easier to promote an understanding of the room for manoeuvre available to the local authority and local stakeholders, and the limits of each party's actions.

Later on in the life of the project, communicating the results of the assessment means **reporting on the local strategies that have been implemented**. Citizens have knowledge of the results obtained, the resources used and the public expenditure committed. This enhances the value of pertinent strategic choices and initiates a debate about the choices to be improved. Access to the assessment indicators employed and their meaning creates a climate of transparency, which is essential to good governance. To this end, it is important to choose clear assessment indicators, which give everyone the means to judge the process and the actions.

4) Being consistent with other levels

France has committed itself to implementing sustainable development principles in several ways: "Agenda 21" and the Rio Declaration, European and French National Sustainable Development Strategies, an Environment Charter backed by the Constitution, etc.

When a local authority undertakes a territorial sustainable development project, it participates in this movement and in these commitments. Assessing one's local Agenda 21 project also means periodically measuring the contribution of one's local strategy to national and international sustainable development objectives. It involves measuring one's own **responsibility** with regard to the planet and future generations.

B. Assessment principles

The assessment of a local Agenda 21 programme must satisfy both the requirements of any assessment approach and the requirements of a sustainable development strategy. Several principles may be employed in order to perform this exercise successfully.

1) Understanding the different assessment levels

Implementing a local Agenda 21 programme in a particular territory firstly involves performing a diagnosis of the **territory's status** in terms of sustainable development, setting several **strategic objectives** and adopting a strategy broken down into an **action programme** in order to achieve them.

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Agenda 21 programme must therefore logically lead to observing the following aspects over time:

- **Status of the territory** with regard to sustainable development. The observation of the context acts as the basis for the diagnosis of the territory and new data must be regularly added in order to keep abreast of the developments.
- The impacts of Agenda 21 on the territory, policies, methods of governance, behaviour of stakeholders, etc. This is the strategic assessment. It consists of setting oneself **strategic objectives** and checking that they have been achieved over time.
- The achievement and visible results of the programmed **actions**. This is the monitoring of the implementation of Agenda 21.

The authors of this reference document set out primarily to contribute elements for the assessment of the **2nd level: the strategic level**.

	Monitoring level-assessment	Focus of the measurement	Associated measurement tools
1	Territory	Changes in the territorial context with regard to sustainable development	Indicators of the territory's status with regard to sustainable development
2	Strategy	The main results and impacts of the sustainable development strategy	Questioning and indicators concerning the results of the strategy
3	Action plan	Implementation of the programmed actions	Scorecard for monitoring actions

A long-term assessment system for Agenda 21

2) Correctly structuring one's sustainable development strategy

Preparing the strategic assessment of one's Agenda 21 programme in advance implies **correctly structuring one's strategy and action programme based on several major strategic objectives** that one wishes to set. In this way, one can compare the strategic objectives with the operational objectives and actions to which we hope they will contribute. At the different assessment times (interim and end-of-programme), one can thus establish clear links between the improvement of the territory in terms of sustainable development, changes in strategic objectives and the implementation of the action programme:

Extract of an objective tree with the associated indicators

	Monitoring – assessment level	Objective tree			Associated indicators
1	Territory	A territory that participates in the fight against climate change  			Inventory or balance of the territory's greenhouse gas emissions <i>(context indicator)</i> 
2	Strategy	Strategic objective 1 Reduce the modal share of the car in favour of other modes of transportation Operational objectives 1. Develop "soft" forms of mobility 2. Develop intermodality, etc.	Strategic objective 2 Etc.		Modal share of home <-> work journeys <i>(impact or strategic indicator)</i> 
3	Action plan	 Action 1: Creation of 20 km of town centre cycle tracks	 Action 2: Car pooling platform	 Action 3 Etc.	Km of cycle tracks created and use of these tracks <i>(achievement indicator)</i> Number of car pooling contracts entered into <i>(result indicator)</i>



Has an impact on



Must contribute to

3) Using what already exists

Territories may often have an existing monitoring system for local finances and departments responsible for assessment and forward planning. It is important to take advantage of them, mobilise these existing internal resources and strengthen them with the broader use of assessment for sustainable development purposes.

It is essential to coordinate the assessment system for the territorial project using management and assessment tools specific to the local authority, in order to **develop synergistic resources rather than simply accumulate different approaches.**

Processes that could be added to the assessment system:

Monitoring (of execution, management, etc.): systematic verification of the conformity of an action to pre-existing standards

Tracking: process by which the actions conducted can be understood and followed over time, by measuring the progress made in the works carried out.

Report: assessment of the current situation drawn up at the end of a project and an inventory of what has been implemented.

Audit: financial or organisational analysis or diagnosis with regard to a certain number of criteria established by a person from outside the audited organisation.

Extra-financial rating: external appraisal of the performance of an institution

Project interrogation grid: an interrogation tool produced internally within a local authority or an institution, which can be applied to any project or policy envisaged, in order to improve the consideration of certain criteria which are ranked as priority items

4) Establishing the assessment firmly within the territory

Sponsoring a local Agenda 21 project involves **situating global issues within a given territory**. This territory is unique: it has been forged by a particular history and geographical situation. It has its own heritage and resources – both human and natural. The task is to pinpoint these specificities, assets and resources and take account of them properly at each stage of the project.

This involves studying how the project **makes use of local resources** in order to promote them, how it **corrects territorial imbalances or inequalities** and moves the territory and its different components forward towards sustainable development.

Consequently, assessment tools (surveys, indicators, assessment reports, etc.) must accurately account for this spatial dimension. Likewise, the presentation of the assessment results must be an accurately reflection of this situation. Certain indicators must be represented cartographically in order to help **locate the observed phenomena, shed light on the territorial inequalities and locate and view the resources and potentials** that need to be used and promoted.

5) Designing the assessment in advance of the project

A comprehensive and well-conducted assessment process must **begin before the territorial project is developed**, and at this stage, assessment can enrich the thinking about the strategy and the formulation of objectives.

It will then **support the entire life cycle of the territorial project**, allowing the stakeholders in the project to step back and reflect on their actions at certain key moments.

The questions and indicators proposed in this reference document will be **useful at each of these assessment times** and experiments have shown their great relevance when used **from the start of deliberations about the strategy to be adopted**.

- In advance: prepare for the assessment as soon as the formulation of the strategy begins

As a strategic project for the territory, Agenda 21 is based on a diagnosis of the territory and constitutes a response to the sustainable development issues thus identified.

In response to the key issues identified, strategic objectives – if possible quantified and planned – are established and a means to achieving them is mapped out: this is the strategy. The definition of strategic objectives expresses the policy priorities, which should in turn be expressed as operational objectives, in a close collaboration between elected representatives, technicians and stakeholders who are partners in the local authority.

The **preparation of the assessment** begins by discussing the strategic objectives that one wishes to establish and the meaning that one wants to give the project before the drafting of the strategy has even begun. This involves agreeing on the **major changes that are expected** of the project, before it is even implemented, and on the ways of measuring these changes.

- Assessing the first results in the process

The assessment system allows for the adaptation or revision of certain aspects of the strategy, so that it can provide a better response to the key local sustainable development issues, which will inevitably evolve during the life of a project. This involves, some time after the launch of the project, **observing the first changes** brought about by the project and, if necessary, **adjusting the strategy** (and its associated resources). At this stage, the assessment may concern just certain aspects whose results are particularly important to monitor on a regular basis during the implementation of the project.

- At the end of an action programme: assess the progress made and prepare for the future

Agenda 21 – an ambitious long-term territorial strategy – is generally deployed in several stages over time, throughout different multi-annual programmes.

The “ex-post” assessment, carried out at the end of a programming period when the entire project is being completely reviewed, allows for an **appraisal of the durability** of the results and impacts, **the identification of success** or failure factors and the **issuing of recommendations** for the development of a new action programme.

At this stage, the assessment results must be **opened up to the widest possible debate**, as must the ensuing recommendations for the continuation of the project.

6) Ensuring the participation of stakeholders and inhabitants

The local authority alone cannot assess its sustainable development project. The assessment approach for an Agenda 21 programme is necessarily **participatory**, putting into practice the essential principles of any sustainable development approach: cross-disciplinarity and participation.

The involvement of elected representatives, stakeholders and inhabitants guarantees both a higher quality of assessment, as it benefits from extensive feedback and a better appropriation of the project by everyone likely to participate in its implementation.

Before implementing this participatory assessment, four questions must be asked to which clear or even formalised answers must be given:

- **Who** do we want to associate with the assessment? What will be the roles of each participant involved (technical or practical expertise, political view, civic knowledge or viewpoints, etc.)?
- **With what** will each participant be associated: the production of evaluative questions and indicators, the analysis of assessment results or the formulation of recommendations for the future of the project?
- **What degree of involvement** would we like to offer each participant (information, consultation, cooperation or joint creation)?
- **How will the contributions** of the participants associated with the assessment strategy **be integrated**?

There is no single answer to these questions and each party will implement a system that is best suited to its aims and capacities.

However, different experiments have shown the added value that can be derived from a participatory assessment as opposed to a closed or expert assessment.

II. Instructions for using the reference document

A. What should be done before taking action?

1) Share a common assessment culture

Implementing an assessment system for a territorial sustainable development project is not restricted to choosing, informing and analysing quantitative indicators. This process permeates the organisation and the relationships between the local authority and the stakeholders in its area. It concerns elected representatives, technicians and key players in the territorial project, involves the **comparison of different visions** of the key territorial sustainable development issues and the intervention strategies to be used in response to them.

Whatever the purpose of the assessment system, its implementation will certainly lead to changes in terms of internal organisation. The interrogations arising from the assessment process will apply to the project, its managers

and those responsible for its implementation, involving the setting of precise objectives for the results of the actions, while highlighting difficulties or inconsistencies.

All of this implies a collective dialogue and learning process, in addition to a culture of change in ways of operating.

The acquisition of a **common assessment culture** constitutes a stage in this process and is an essential prerequisite. This is the only way to allay the concerns associated with the idea of assessment, on the one hand, and to create a robust system by optimising the use of all the necessary resources and skills, on the other.

2) Establish a dedicated management and organisation system

The assessment of a territorial sustainable development project is eminently strategic and requires management of the highest political and technical standard. This will encourage the necessary cross-disciplinarity of the activities.

The organisation of the **management of assessment** implies choices, to be submitted to the elected representatives and supervisors of Agenda 21 prior to the definition of the assessment system. These choices depend primarily on the answers to two questions:

- **For what will the assessment system be used?** Is it a communication tool intended for the general public, a continuous improvement mechanism, or a tool for collective learning and mobilisation concerning Agenda 21, etc.?
- **Who will be the key players** in the assessment (stakeholders, partners or inhabitants)? What are the expected contributions (participation in defining strategic questions, defining indicators or entering and informing indicators, etc.)?

The answers to these questions will lead to the production of methods and an organisational structure for each stage of the project, including:

- **Organisation and composition of bodies** that will define the system and monitor the assessment
- Definition of assessment times and objectives assigned to these different times.

3) Creating a system specific to the territory

Once the answers to these initial questions have been identified, it is time to create one's own assessment system. It is useful to **record this system in a formal document** (or engagement), setting out the aims, operating procedures and resources: this facilitates the understanding and sharing of the assessment and allows it to be implemented in a participatory manner, including internally by the agents and elected representatives.

Each participant's role in the system is thus defined. Each person knows when to intervene and why, while knowing the type of financial resources and the amount of working time available.

This clarification guarantees the mobilisation of resources over time and the sustainability of the system.

The internal organisational system for the territory or local authority must allow for the **efficient and long-term operation** of the assessment system. Cross-disciplinary coordination - the extent to which the system is firmly established in all departments or with regard to the different agents involved - its organisation and links, if necessary, with the departments responsible for monitoring, auditing and assessment, could lead to changes in this organisational system.

In summary

In order to set up the assessment system properly, the answers to the following questions must be formally answered:

Why?

For what purpose will the assessment be conducted?

In response to which issues?

Is it a question of reporting to citizens, judging the efficiency of actions, decision-making or investing public funds?

What?

What is the subject or the field of the assessment? Agenda 21? Just a part of it? A particular policy?

What aspect of this policy needs to be assessed: its efficiency, usefulness or consistency?

When?

What period must the assessment cover? What will be the different assessment times?

Where?

Does the item assessed cover a specific geographical field? What are its limits? Spatial characteristics?

How?

What tools would ideally be deployed or implemented: monitoring unit, indicators, scorecard or surveys? What resources are available?

Who?

Who orders the assessment and who finances it? Who performs it and who validates the conclusions? For whom is it intended?

B. What does this reference document contain?

1) Strategic questions and key indicators:

To measure and monitor the strategic impacts of Agenda 21, the reference document proposes both strategic questions and key indicators, chosen because they make sense globally but also individually.

The strategic questions stimulate a **debate concerning the focus of the territorial strategy and the aims to be adopted as a priority**.

A limited number of key indicators and a list of diversified secondary indicators are proposed in order to **measure the attainment of the detailed and planned objectives** that will have been set, **over the long term**.

The key indicators need to be considered all together as a coherent system, rather than separately. These indicators, proposed in order to provide an objective view of the changes that a sustainable development strategy can make to a territory, will only be effective if they are monitored **over time and from the start of the project**, thus measuring the progress due to the implementation of Agenda 21.

Technical sheets are available in order to help create these indicators. They give a clear definition of each indicator, the procedures used for collecting the required data and creating the indicators, their benefits, scope and the limits of their use. These sheets are likely to evolve over time as the knowledge of certain subjects develops and in response to changes in the legislative and regulatory context. They can be consulted online on the Ministry's website, in the web version of the reference document for the assessment of local Agenda 21 projects, in the "Boîte à outils" (Toolbox) section.

The strategic questions and key indicators are **structured according to the five outcomes and five procedural elements** of the Reference Framework.

Agenda 21 is a project of change, which affects both the internal operation of the project sponsoring organisation (asset management, public procurements, management and control of human resources, etc.) and all policies and actions carried out by the local authority and its partners.

To account for this specificity of Agenda 21, the questions and indicators concerning the **five outcomes** of the Reference Framework are structured so as to measure the **impacts of Agenda 21**, firstly on the **internal operations** of the project-sponsoring organisation (exemplarity), and secondly **on the territory and its stakeholders**.

As the issue of **ensuring the consistency of the policies and actions carried out** lies at the heart of a sustainable development strategy, it is also systematically questioned.

For each outcome, one will therefore find:

- One question and one or more indicators concerning the internal exemplarity of the project-sponsoring structure (local authority, EPCI [public establishment for inter-municipal cooperation, etc.])
- Questions and indicators concerning the **strategic impacts** of the project, in view of the outcome in question
- One question concerning how the **consistency** of policies, plans, programmes and actions with the objectives set for this outcome, is ensured.

2) Secondary indicators

Varied types of secondary indicators (impact, pressure, monitoring or performance indicators, etc.) are given for information. Borrowed from the scorecards of different local authorities involved in sustainable development approaches, they help to enrich the thinking or broaden the assessment of a given aspect of the strategy.

These secondary indicators can be found in the Web version of the reference document, in the "Consulter le référentiel" ("Consult the reference document") section.

Indicator selection criteria:

The key indicators have been chosen according to different individual quality criteria:

- **Pertinence:** does the indicator actually reflect the result that is expected of the territorial strategy and the added value for sustainable development that is sought?
- **Clarity and simplicity:** can the indicator be presented to the public in a simple and instructive manner that is universally understandable?
- **Association of ways to take action:** does the indicator measure changes that all local authorities have the capacity to implement? (by "capacity to implement" we mean not just the fields of competence, but also other resources such as support, incitements, promotion, etc.).
- **Technical feasibility:** can the indicator be calculated on the basis of the available time series data, adequate quality data or data which are accessible to the different territorial levels concerned?
- **"Usability" at the different territorial levels** (municipality, public establishment for inter-municipal cooperation, project territories and *départements*): Are the data accessible *for the different territorial levels concerned?*
- **Financial accessibility:** does the indicator only require data which are accessible at a "reasonable cost"? Do we need to devise a new process for obtaining basic information so that it can be measured?
- **Responsiveness or sensitivity:** does the indicator detect small changes in the system over time? Is it responsive to the phenomenon that we want to monitor?
- **Reliability:** is the same result obtained if the same indicator is measured two or three times under the same circumstances? Would two researchers reach the same conclusions?

The **technical sheets** associated with the key indicators contain appraisal elements that can be used to situate each indicator in relation to these criteria.

C. How is it used?

Questions and indicators will be used before the project is launched in order to prepare for the assessment and help to structure the strategy. They will be used again during the implementation of the project, in order to measure the added value contributed by Agenda 21 and then to refocus the actions or revise the strategy, if necessary.

1) In advance of the action plan, prepare for the assessment in three stages

It is suggested that strategic questions and indicators be used from the launch of the Agenda 21 project, in order to **help structure the strategy, set clear objectives and share them**, and thus lay the foundations on which the strategic assessment will be based throughout the life of the project.

The questions can be appropriated in three stages:

Stage 1: Read the strategic questions and rank them

The strategic questions allow for an **analysis of the results** that are expected of one's strategy, and **that one would like to measure** after several years of implementation.

They have been chosen because they correspond to the key sustainable development issues shared by the local stakeholders involved in such processes.

These questions form an interesting basis of discussion between elected representatives, but also with other stakeholders: agents, partners and even inhabitants. They allow for a debate concerning the meaning to be given to one's project, priority strategic objectives and the main changes that are expected of the implementation of the project.

Thus, ranking the strategic questions means **agreeing**, from the launch of the project, **on the questions that one would like to be asking after the project has been running for several years**.

Stage 2: Setting measurable objectives and associating indicators with them

Key indicators constitute the heart of this reference document. They make it possible to measure the impacts of a territorial sustainable development strategy in a summarised and consistent manner.

When choosing indicators, it is useful to decide on selection criteria. Here are several suggestions:

- Indicators adapted to the means of taking action in the territory:

Key indicators measure the changes possible with regard to the means of taking action in the territory. It is therefore a question of choosing **indicators on which the territorial project can have a real effect**, either by relying on the skills or missions of the project-sponsoring local authority or by involving other stakeholders.

- Individually pertinent indicators:

Each key indicator will be individually chosen if it is **pertinent with regard to the strategic and operational objectives** that one wishes to establish, and also if it seems clear and shareable, while being financially and technically **feasible**.

- Indicators that make sense collectively:

Key indicators were chosen for the reference document according to different individual quality criteria, but also because collectively, they allow a project to be assessed with regard to the 10 outcomes and procedural elements of the national Reference Framework. Each territory will make sure that the chosen indicators also make sense collectively with regard to its own strategy.

If possible, the strategic debate must also lead to the quantifying and planning of the target values to be achieved for the chosen key indicators.

Stage 3: validate the "Strategic Indicator System" politically and inform the indicators.

The strategic indicators must make it possible for elected representatives to **manage** their territorial project and **report on** its progress to the inhabitants and stakeholders of the territory. That is why it is important for the key indicators to be **collectively debated and validated by the elected representatives**, who will assign quantified objectives, threshold values or desired development trends to them.

These indicators will then need to be accurately informed in order to obtain a **baseline situation** according to which progress and developments will be measured. The proposed technical sheets will be used for this purpose, with the

support of local resources including: State statistics departments, regional resource centres and monitoring units, urban planning agencies, water agencies and other agencies with data on the territory, etc.

2) Throughout the life of the project

At the different times stipulated for assessment (mid-term assessment, evaluation report, or “ex-post” assessment), one can objectively measure whether progress has been made due to the implementation of Agenda 21 by providing detailed answers to the strategic questions, and by analysing the development of the key indicators.

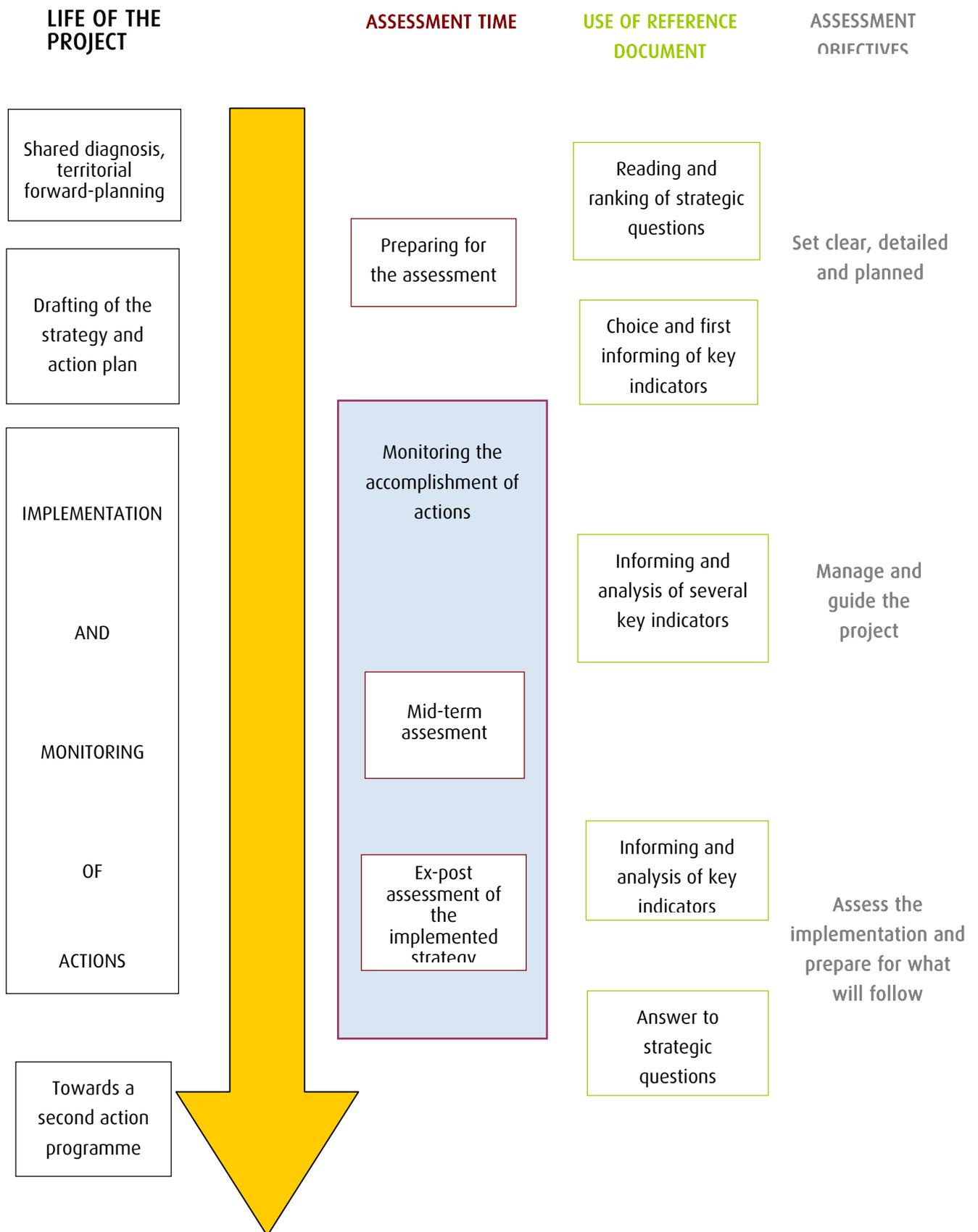
These indicators must, of course, be **compared with the action monitoring indicators**, in order to gain a better understanding of why a given strategic objective has not been achieved, for example. Is it because the action has not been implemented (or only partially), or is it because the actions conducted were inadequate for the objective in question, or not adapted? It is a question of analysing the **adequacy** of the action plan for the project by referring to the logical diagram of the project.

It will also be necessary to **compare the (human and financial) resource indicators that have been implemented** in order to analyse the efficiency of the resource allocation.

At **mid-term**, one can concentrate on several questions and chosen indicators concerning several objectives that need to be accurately monitored over time.

This will be an opportunity to refocus a particular action or part of the strategy according to the observed results.

At the end of the action programme, it will be necessary to go back over all the strategic questions and key indicators chosen in order to obtain a complete strategic assessment of the project, and compare this strategic assessment to the resources implemented. In this way, the next phase can be approached with a clear vision of the progress that has already made and still needs to be made.



3) Limitations to the use of the reference document

The strategic questions and the indicators proposed in this reference document offer numerous important aids to thinking about the expected results of a territorial sustainable development project.

However, the proposed indicators have their limits, which are associated with:

- **Knowledge**: when this reference document was produced, the knowledge of certain indicators was incomplete. Studies have been launched in order to offer local authorities an accurate method for calculating or constructing these indicators, but some of them are still at the exploratory stage. Furthermore, **emerging phenomena** – which provide notice of breakdown – have been more difficult to integrate into the indicator system. Therefore, the reference document is intended to be **added to over the years** and as knowledge develops.
- The **regulatory context**: certain indicators were chosen because they make sense with regard to national commitments and the **laws or regulations** arising from them. If the regulations change, they will still be pertinent, but less suitable for reporting on the territory's participation in these commitments.
- The **type of territory** that applies the reference document: the challenge does indeed consist of proposing a tool that is common to all territorial levels. For all that, its application must be related to different types of territories, their skills or missions, means of acting, specificities, etc. To support this adaptation to different types of territories, several additional elements are mentioned in the next paragraph ("Stakeholders' testimonies").
- **Availability of basic data and information**: To be informed, certain indicators require the regular collection of basic data and, for this purpose, information collection methods. These methods may be inherent to the local authority and require an analysis of the internal organisational system. They may also relate to partnerships with data-providing organisations (which will need to be associated). Certain information may be sought from beneficiaries or service providers for the territory and will thus depend on the management of these cases. In all cases, it is important to **plan the resources (time and any financing) required to acquire this information in order to inform the chosen indicators**.

SECOND PART: Preparing for and conducting a strategic assessment

Strategic questions, benchmarks and key indicators

(In green: questions about the consistency of policies and actions)

(In grey: questions and indicators about internal exemplarity)

SOCIAL COHESION AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN TERRITORIES AND GENERATIONS

National commitments:

Include 6% of disabled workers in companies with more than 20 employees¹

Reduce poverty in France² by one third by 2012.

Renovate the 800,000 social housing units that consume the most energy by 2020³

Increase public development aid to 0.7% of the gross national product by 2015⁴ compared to 0.39% in 2008.

Guarantee the accessibility of transportation and public access buildings by 2015⁵

Sign a total of 45,000 *contrats d'autonomie* ("Independence Contracts") for the employment of young people in disadvantaged districts⁶

Achieve a target of 40% daytime working hours for cleaning services purchased by the State and its public establishments⁷

Strategic questions:

- Does Agenda 21 allow us to **increase knowledge** about social cohesion and solidarity in the territory?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Tools for observing and acquiring knowledge of populations living in the territory, their lifestyles, networks and places where they socialise.
- Shared and forward-looking analysis of social needs and expectations.
- System for observing inequalities (observation of social and professional inequalities, territorial inequalities within the territory and male-female parity in the actions sponsored or supported, etc.)**

- Does Agenda 21 allow for the **reinforcement of social links and solidarity between inhabitants, between generations** and with other territories?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Collective mobilisation** for the development and implementation of **actions promoting social links**
- Development plan for public areas** promoting a feeling of "living together" (welcoming street furniture, presence of water and plants, good mix of traffic/relaxation/catering/residential functions and coexistence of uses, etc.)
- Implementation of resources and mechanisms for:
 - Increasing the **inhabitants' capacity** to act and communicate
 - Increasing the **stakeholders' capacity** to act and communicate
 - Allowing inhabitants to take responsibility for their district
- Support for cooperative actions **that have led to concrete sustainable development projects** (projects sponsored by local associations and decentralised cooperation)
- Participation in a **network of exchanges** between territories on the subject of sustainable development

¹ *Loi handicap* (Disability Act) no. 2005-102 of 11/02/05.

² *Grenelle de l'Insertion* (National Action Plan for Integration) - PNAI 2008.

³ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 5.

⁴ Member States whose PDA has not yet reached 0.51 % of their GNI undertake to achieve this level by 2010; those that have exceeded it undertake to continue their efforts (aim of the European Sustainable Development Strategy).

⁵ *Loi handicap* (Disability Act) no. 2005-102 of 11/02/05.

⁶ *Plan espoir banlieue* (Hope for the Suburbs Plan)

⁷ *Circulaire Etat exemplaire* (Exemplary State Circular) of 2008

3. Does Agenda 21 include an organised strategy to **combat insecurity**?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of **objectives shared** with partners for the prevention and reduction of insecurity and dealing with emergency situations
- Concerted monitoring of people in difficulty or the unemployed
- Long-term territorial coordination and **mobilisation of partnerships** to reduce inequalities and prevent insecurity
- **Action programmes or interventions** in favour of **non-discrimination and the integration of minorities** (travellers, homeless people, foreigners, etc.)
- Programme or actions to prevent **energy insecurity**
- **Formal commitment** in favour of **accessibility for persons with reduced mobility** and their better integration (“Ville-handicap” (Town-Handicap) or similar commitment, etc.) in addition to the regulatory obligations

4. Does Agenda 21 promote the consistency of all policies and actions carried out by the local authority and its partners in favour of social cohesion?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Organisation of the systematic pooling of information possessed by all stakeholders in the territory in favour of social cohesion.
- Coordination of meetings of all stakeholders operating in the social sector, and support for making their actions consistent.
 - Incitement to take account of social cohesion objectives in all actions and policies of the territory or local authority (habitat, mobility – transportation, economic development, environment and protection of resources, etc.).
 - Mobilisation of resources to promote synergies between stakeholders in the provision of support for people in difficulty.

5. Does the local authority (or territory) set an example through its internal practices?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of **detailed social cohesion objectives** (disability, parity, non-discrimination, etc.) in the **human resources management policy**
- Implementation of new **methods of cooperation between agents and with partners**
- Existence of a **commitment to internal, social and environmental exemplarity** (e.g. RSE [Corporate Social Responsibility] or another type of commitment – charter, internal Agenda 21, etc.).

Key indicators

Number of poor workers and recipients of minimum social benefits receiving personalised assistance for employment, supported by the local authority
Proportion of real estate and development operations integrating the requirements of social and generational mixing
Access to essential public services and services to the public
Vulnerability of households to rising energy costs
Proportion of the local authority’s budget dedicated to international solidarity and development
Disparity with the regulations for disabled people in the local authority’s workforce
Proportion of women and their levels of responsibility in the administration and amongst the elected representatives

PRESERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY, PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTS AND RESOURCES

National commitments:

Stop the loss of wild and domestic biodiversity⁸

By 2012, ensure the protection of the five hundred catchment areas most threatened by large-area pollution, especially by nitrates and phytosanitary products⁹

By 2012, establish a consistent network of protected marine areas¹⁰ for 10% of territorial waters under French jurisdiction and then 20% by 2020, in accordance with the international objectives of the agreement on biological diversity¹¹

By 2015, ensure that good ecological status is achieved for 66% of water bodies¹²

By 2015, produce SCOTs (Territorial Consistency Plans) incorporating a coastline component for coastal regions and territories¹³

Before 2020, place at least 2% of the national terrestrial territory of mainland France under strict protection¹⁴

Acquire and preserve 20,000 hectares of wetlands¹⁵

By 2020-2030, preserve one third of the French sea shores ("the "wild third")¹⁶

Optimise the quantitative management of water resources¹⁷ : watercourses, lakes, water tables and the sea

From 2010, aim for 15 microgrammes of fine particles per m³ of air (15 µg/m³), with this objective becoming mandatory in 2015¹⁸

By 2013, reduce the emissions of fine particles into the air by 30% and reduce the emissions of six toxic substances into the air and water: mercury, arsenic, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), benzene, perchloroethylene and PCB/dioxins¹⁹

By 2012, develop 2,500 new natural risk prevention plans

From 2010, for all purchases by the French State of wooden furniture or other products derived from wood, 100% of wood products shall originate from legal sources or sustainably managed forests (PEFC label)²⁰

⁸ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 23.

⁹ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 27.

¹⁰ Definition of the UICN's protected marine areas: "Any intertidal or infra-tidal area, in addition to its overlying waters, flora, fauna and its historical and cultural resources that the law or other efficient means have placed in reserve for the total or partial protection of the environment thus delimited."

¹¹ *Grenelle de la Mer* (Marine Forum): 14th commitment.

¹² *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 27. *Directive cadre sur l'eau* (Water Framework Directive) of 23 October 2000.

¹³ *Grenelle de la Mer* (Marine Forum): 72nd commitment.

¹⁴ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 23.

¹⁵ Same as above.

¹⁶ *Grenelle de la Mer* (Marine Forum) commitment 70c.

¹⁷ *Grenelle Environnement* (*Grenelle* Environment Forum commitments 117 to 119: adapt the sampling to the resources, develop new systems to recover and reuse rainwater and wastewater, strengthen bans on illegal products and the monitoring of their application.

¹⁸ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 40. This concerns particles with a diameter of under 2.5 micrometres (PM 2.5). The European Air Directive imposes a target value of 25 µg/m³ for the Member States to achieve by 2010.

¹⁹ PNSE 2.

²⁰ *Circulaire Etat exemplaire* (Exemplary State Circular) of 2008

Strategic questions:

1. Does Agenda 21 allow for the **enrichment and sharing of knowledge of the territory's biodiversity?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Tools for acquiring knowledge and performing dynamic monitoring** of biodiversity, environmental status and ecological infrastructures, throughout the entire territory (inventories, monitoring centres, ecological diagnoses, etc.)
- **Identification and mapping** of areas that have **key issues** in terms of:
 - Maintenance of biodiversity, including "ordinary" biodiversity
 - Efficient operation of environments
 - Ecological continuities
 - Prevention of natural risks
- **Spatial landscape analysis** (mapping of different landscape areas of the territory, identification of key cultural and planning issues, etc.)
- **Tools for making knowledge** relating to the territory's biodiversity **widely available**
- Organisation of a **collective dynamic** associating public stakeholders and civil society, dedicated to **collecting information** about the biodiversity of the territory
- **Federating events or places** allowing for exchanges concerning the territory's biodiversity and resources

2. Does Agenda 21 favour a **strategy to preserve and manage the territory's natural and landscape resources sustainably?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Formulation of strategic objectives** – quantified, if possible – for the protection and sustainable management of areas facing major challenges
- Definition and implementation of an **action plan** for the **preservation and management** of the territory's areas facing major challenges, integrating elements including:
 - Constitution of a green and/or blue infrastructure dedicated to ecological continuities
 - Preservation and management of sensitive natural environments (wetlands, mountainous areas, coastline, etc.)
 - Fight against the disruption of ecosystems (invasive species, light pollution, etc.)
- **Shared strategy to protect and promote landscapes** (Charter, document of objectives, etc.)

3. Does Agenda 21 allow for the **preservation and development of the diversity of "ordinary" nature?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Implementation of partnerships with organisations in charge of management, exploitation or maintenance** (nature parks, green spaces, agricultural and forestry areas, etc.) for **actions to preserve and develop the diversity of "ordinary" nature**, incorporating:
 - Development of nature in urban areas
 - Preservation of natural, agricultural and forestry areas
 - Restoration of degraded forestry or agricultural areas
 - Reduction in waterproofed surface areas
 - Fight against invasive species
- **Integration of these priorities into opposable planning documents**

4. Does Agenda 21 integrate a **strategy to prevent risks, combat nuisances and control pollution (industrial, agricultural or domestic)?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Knowledge of the **natural risks** to which the territory is or will be exposed

- Implementation of actions to preserve and restore **soil quality** (polluted sites, preservation or restoration of agricultural quality, fight against waterproofing of surfaces, erosion and chemical pollution, etc.)
- Implementation of actions to preserve and restore **water quality (surface and ground water)**
- Existence of objectives and tools to improve **air quality**

5. Does Agenda 21 allow the **preservation of resources to be placed at the heart of all development and planning choices of the local authority and its partners?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Knowledge and integration of the **key local issues for the preservation of agricultural, natural and forestry lands in Agenda 21**
- **Inclusion of areas with key issues and zones identified** as being at risk in the **opposable planning documents and new development projects**
- Detailed objectives for **controlling urban sprawl**, incorporated into the policies and actions relating to development, habitat, land policies, etc.
- Existence and integration of a **forward-thinking analysis** of the development of the territory according to the stocks of **available resources** (water, land resources and raw materials, especially for construction):
 - In sectoral plans (economic, development, etc.)
 - In opposable planning documents
- **Inclusion of resource preservation and biodiversity protection objectives in actions relating to energy, habitat, mobility and transportation, sports, education and culture**

6. Does the local authority (or territory) **set an example through its internal practices?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of an action plan for the **ecological management of green areas**
- Monitoring of **water consumption and measures designed to reduce it**
- **Existence of an action plan** for the environmentally friendly maintenance of buildings and equipment

Key indicators

Surface area of areas identified as facing major issues and proportion of them covered by a sustainable development measure
Contribution to the national and regional (or <i>département</i> -level) ecological infrastructure
Proportion and distribution of agricultural, wooded and natural areas lost to urbanisation
Mean monthly consumption of drinking water per inhabitant
Proportion of water bodies with good ecological status
Phytosanitary pressure exerted on areas managed by the local authority
Proportion of foodstuffs derived from biological or HVE (High Environmental Value) agriculture in the local authority's catering contracts

DEVELOPMENT DYNAMICS ACCORDING TO SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MODES OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

National commitments:

By 2012, double the sales volumes of products awarded an eco-label (French NF environmental standard or European Eco-label).

By 2013, reduce the production of household and similar wastes by 7% per inhabitant during the next five years, i.e. 25 kg per inhabitant²¹.

By 2012, recycle 35% of household and similar wastes and 45% in 2015²².

By 2012, recycle 75% of household packaging²³ compared to 60% in 2006.

By 2012, recycle 75% of wastes produced by companies, excluding the building, public works and agriculture sectors²⁴, compared to 68% in 2004.

Cultivate 6% of the utilised agricultural area (UAA) using organic farming methods in 2012²⁵.

Achieve a target of 20% of organic products in public collective catering in 2012²⁶.

Increase the proportion of farms involved in an environmental certification process to 50% in 2012²⁷ and the proportion of "low-energy" farms to 30% by 2013²⁸.

Reduce the use of phytosanitary products containing substances of concern and without an alternative solution by 50% by 2018²⁹.

For the State, increase the proportion of the total value of State equipment contracts concerning French eco-labelled or eco-designed products to 50%

Strategic questions:

1. Does Agenda 21 integrate an **incitement and support strategy for socially responsible consumption practices?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of a shared local strategy of **incitement and support** for socially responsible consumption practices aimed at:
 - Inhabitants
 - Local stakeholders
- Support for the dissemination of **training modules on social and environmental responsibility** in training centres (continuing and initial training, short and long courses, etc.)
- Existence of a **tax policy that encourages responsible modes of consumption**

²¹ Loi Grenelle 1 (1st Grenelle Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 46.

²² Same as above.

²³ Same as above.

²⁴ Commitment of the Grenelle Environment Forum, round table discussion on wastes, 20/12/07.

²⁵ Loi Grenelle 1 (1st Grenelle Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 31.

²⁶ Grenelle Environment Forum Commitment no.120.

²⁷ Loi Grenelle 1 (1st Grenelle Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 31.

²⁸ Same as above.

²⁹ Same as above.

2. Does Agenda 21 facilitate the **involvement of economic stakeholders in responsible production?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Support (information, awareness-raising, project partnerships, territorial coordination, etc.)** to help companies, farmers, Chamber of Commerce and Industry representatives, trade unions and other **local development stakeholders move towards sustainable modes of production and processes**
- Organisation of **waste collections** from companies
- For business parks:
 - Existence of a sustainable development manager and sponsor for each business park in the territory
 - Consideration of the **management of flows** (materials, energy, transportation, products, water, etc.) when **choosing the sites** for economic activities
- Delivery of **training modules on social and environmental responsibility** in training centres

3. Does Agenda 21 facilitate a **partnership approach to the development of jobs and skills at the local level, and adaptation to future changes?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Forward-looking approach, shared** with economic stakeholders, to employment and vocational training, in terms of sustainable development (climate change / limitation of raw materials / demographics, etc.):
 - Concerning the economic activities and professions of the future
 - Focusing on the needs for training and new skills
 - Linked to the regional policy level for vocational training and employment

4. Does Agenda 21 **facilitate interactions between a variety of stakeholders and the emergence of new projects concerning responsible production and consumption?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Interaction and exchange mechanisms** for a **variety of stakeholders** on the subject of responsible production and consumption
- Emergence of **collective projects** on responsible production and consumption

5. Does Agenda 21 promote the **consistency of all policies and actions carried out by the local authority and its partners in favour of responsible production and consumption?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Integration of responsible production and consumption objectives into **social, cultural, sporting, etc. actions**
- Integration of responsible production and consumption objectives **into development choices and documents**
- Existence of **coordinated tax policies** encouraging responsible production and consumption

6. How does the local authority (or territory) set an **example though its internal practices?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Commitment of agents and elected representatives** to more responsible behaviours (information and awareness-raising, involvement of "eco-agents", etc.)
- **Training of agents and elected representatives** in responsible purchasing
- **Definition of a responsible purchasing policy** and training of the local authority's public buyers
- **Implementation of public procurement/environmental and social clauses** in public procurement
- **Analysis of investment projects** in terms of overall costs
- **Participation in national and local feedback exchange networks** on responsible public procurement

Key indicators:

Quantity of household wastes and similar collected per inhabitant
Proportion of companies in the territory involved in responsible approaches
Number of jobs created in sustainable production branches, the social and solidarity-based economy and innovative activities for sustainable development
Proportion of aid granted by the local authority, subjected to sustainable development criteria
Proportion of local authority contracts integrating sustainable development criteria

FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE AND PROTECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE

National commitments:

European objective of a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 compared to 1990³⁰.

For France, the sectors covered by the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU-ETS) – energy, metallurgy, cement manufacturing, paper manufacturing, chemicals, etc.)³¹ shall participate in the European effort to reduce emissions by 21% between 2005 and 2020 and the emissions from sectors outside the ECT (including agriculture, construction and transportation) shall be reduced by 14%.

Increase the proportion of renewable energies in final energy consumption in France to 23% in 2020³².

In French overseas *départements*³³, attain a target of 50% of renewable energies in 2020 and achieve total energy self-sufficiency in 2030.

By 2012, increase the proportion of non-road and non-air freight to 25%³⁴

By 2015, double the proportion of non-road freight to and from the ports³⁵.

By 2020, use 10% of biofuels in petrol and diesel consumption³⁶.

By 2020, reduce the mean emissions of new vehicles to 95 g of CO₂/km³⁷.

By 2020 attain a target of 10% of renewable energy in transportation³⁸.

For the State, by 2050, divide the CO₂ emissions from the journeys undertaken by government officers by 4³⁹

Strategic questions:

1. Does Agenda 21 integrate a **global approach in response to climate change**?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Performance of a **greenhouse gases diagnosis and/or an energy diagnosis throughout the territory** (carbon balance, energy audit, etc.)
- Coordination of a **forward-thinking analysis** concerning adaptation to climate change, transformed into actions
- Formulation of clear objectives, shared with the main stakeholders concerned, with regard to:
 - **Control of energy consumption and production of renewable energies**
 - **Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions**
- Sharing of these objectives with **infra and/or supra territories**

2. Does Agenda 21 facilitate the **mobilisation of the stakeholders** with regard to climate-related objectives?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of **partnerships to motivate key players** (companies, lessors, farmers, tourism stakeholders, associations, etc.)

³⁰ May rise to 30% in the event of international agreement.

³¹ Objective adopted by the European Parliament on 17/12/08 in the framework of the revision of Directive no. 2003/87/EC which improves and extends the European Union Emissions Trading System for GHG emissions.

³² Directive of the European Parliament on promoting the use of energy produced from renewable sources. *Grenelle* commitment no.7.

³³ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art.56.

³⁴ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 11 (using 2006 as the basis).

³⁵ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st *Grenelle* Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 10

³⁶ European Council of 8 and 9 March 2007.

³⁷ European regulation on the reduction of CO₂ emissions from new cars adopted on 17 December 2008 and the Energy-Climate package.

³⁸ European Council of 8 and 9 March 2007.

³⁹ *Circulaire Etat exemplaire* (Exemplary State Circular) of 2008

- and climate-related coordination tools (prevention and adaptation)
- Existence of **actions to mobilise inhabitants**
- **Infra or supra-mobilisation** of local authorities for climate-related actions in their field of competence.

3. Are all **policies and actions carried out by the local authority consistent with** the objectives for reducing greenhouse gases and adapting to climate change?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Ensuring the consistency of the **planning documents** (PDU [Urban Transport Plan], PLH [Local Housing Plan], etc.) and the **urban planning documents** (PLU [Local Urban Development Plan], SCOT [Territorial Consistency Plan], etc.) with the climate-related objectives (prevention and adaptation)
- Ensuring the consistency of **investment programmes** with climate-related objectives
- Transformation of climate-related objectives into the **local authority's choices and actions** concerning economic development (agriculture, industry, services, tourism), regional development, housing, mobility and transport, environmental protection, social action, sport and culture, etc.?

4. Does the local authority (or territory) **set an example through its internal practices?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of a **detailed GHG reduction objective** relating to the local authority's practices
- Taking account of "energy" or "greenhouse gas emissions" criteria in **public procurements**
- Existence of an **action plan** to reduce energy consumption in the built heritage and the operations of the local authority
- Existence of a **transport plan** (PDA – Administration Travel Plan) or an **action programme to promote sustainable mobility** for agents and elected representatives.

Key indicators:

Proportion of renewable energies in the territory's energy consumption
Greenhouse gas emissions at the territorial level
Proportion of old housing renovated from an energy-saving standpoint
Modal share of home-work journeys
Greenhouse gas emissions related to the local authority's practices
Energy consumption in the public domain and relating to the local authority's property

DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS

National commitments:

By 2020 in Europe⁴⁰, to obtain:

- On average, 15% of adults participating in life-long learning activities
- Less than 10% of young people dropping out of school early.

At the national level, by 2013:

- Increasing the proportion of children and adolescents benefiting from educational and cultural actions from 20% to 25%
- Reducing the percentage of the population that has never visited a cultural venue to 25%

By 2015, give all children – boys and girls – everywhere in the world, the means to complete a full cycle of primary education⁴¹

Create an additional 60,000 places in day nurseries by 2016⁴²

By 2012, reduce the most dangerous noise black spots for health⁴³

Reduce the number of occupational accidents by 25% and stabilise the number of occupational diseases⁴⁴

Integrate the Sustainable Development module into the initial training of government officers from 2010⁴⁵

Strategic questions:

1. Does Agenda 21 integrate a strategy for improving the quality of life and moving towards a sustainable lifestyle for everyone?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Implement actions aiming to **satisfy the essential needs of everyone**, which include education, access to employment, housing, health, culture and leisure opportunities.
- Long-term housing **renovation and development strategy** in order to offer residents sustainable living conditions (new districts, old housing)?
- Strategy in terms of **accessibility to public services, transportation, ICT infrastructures, health services**, etc.
- Fight against the population's exposure to nuisances: noise, electro-magnetic waves, (GSM and Wi-Fi aerials, etc.), soil and air pollution
- **Delinquency prevention** strategy involving key players

2. Does Agenda 21 incorporate a sustainable development education strategy for all and people of all ages, and does it allow inhabitants to appropriate sustainable development on a daily basis?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of a **sustainable development education policy with schools** at the territorial level (primary and secondary schools, etc.)
- Existence of an action plan to raise the awareness of inhabitants, decision-makers and stakeholders
- Existence of actions facilitating the **appropriation of sustainable development** in the daily life of inhabitants (mobility, purchasing, involvement of citizens, etc.)
- Development and dissemination of a risk culture appropriate to the territory's degree of exposure to natural and technological risks
- Existence of an **Internet area dedicated to sustainable development**, on the local authority's website

⁴⁰ Council of the European Union of 11 and 12 May 2009. European Education and Training Strategy for 2020.

⁴¹ Millennium Development Goals

⁴² Objectives and management agreement entered into by the French State and the National Family Allowances Fund (CNAF) in April 2010

⁴³ *Loi Grenelle 1* (1st Grenelle Environment Act) no. 2009-967 of 03/08/09, art. 41 - Grenelle Environment commitment no. 153.

⁴⁴ Second Plan for Occupational Health (2010-2014)

⁴⁵ *Circulaire Etat exemplaire* (Exemplary State Circular) of 2008

3. Does Agenda 21 allow everyone access to the local heritage and culture?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Support mechanisms for cultural practices for all groups of people
- Tools to promote knowledge about the local cultural heritage (gathering of knowledge, identification of heritage, etc.)
- Collective dynamic for the preservation and appropriation of the local cultural and architectural heritage (with public and private stakeholders, associations, etc.)?
- Existence of areas, places (physical and virtual) and policies allowing for the practice and promotion of local cultures (languages, expertise, history, architecture and the arts)

4. Are all the policies and actions carried out by the local authority and its partners consistent with the objectives of developing everyone's potential and adopting sustainable lifestyles?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Integration of the objectives of the territorial sustainable development project with regard to social housing, mobility and environmental health, etc., **into the planning documents**
- **Incorporation** of the objectives of developing everyone's potential **into the local authority's** (or territory's) **choices and actions** concerning:
 - Economic development
 - Energy
 - Environmental protection
 - Social policies
 - Mobility, etc.

5. Does the local authority (or territory) set an example through its internal practices?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Parity agreement** integrating the **human resources management policy**
- **Health diagnosis** (environmental, psychological, etc.) for agents and elected representatives (interior air quality, magnetic nuisances, hygrometry, ergonomics of working conditions, etc.)
- **Formalised system for informing new agents** about the local authority's (or territory's) **commitment to sustainable development**

Key indicators:

Appraisal by the inhabitants of changes to their lifestyle and the possibility of adopting a sustainable lifestyle
Local human development indicator
Proportion and distribution of the population living in a sustainably developed area
Proportion of agents and elected representatives that have benefitted from continuing education training days (and number of days)

PARTICIPATION

Strategic questions:

1. Have the **objectives and rules for participation** in Agenda 21 been **clearly and formally stipulated**?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Written document stating the principles** (transparency, equality of treatment, argumentation, etc.) **and the rules** for participation
- **Identification of the stakeholders** to be associated with the Agenda 21 procedure (type of stakeholders, required skills or expertise, territorial scale of intervention)
- Objective of **diversity** of stakeholders and inhabitants associated with Agenda 21
- **Identification of pre-existing mechanisms and places for mobilisation** that already exist (lists, mapping, ICT tools, etc.)
- **Statement of the level of association** of the inhabitants and stakeholders (information, consultation, discussion, co-construction, etc.) **at each stage** of the life of the territorial project

2. Are the **implementation procedures for participation satisfactory**?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Implementation of **procedures for expressing** sources of both agreement and disagreement (conflict management)
- Implementation of **procedures for integrating and correlating each participant's expertise and know-how**
- Implementation of **innovative collective working procedures**, allowing for the coordination of the contribution of information, listening, dialogue and co-construction
- Implementation of **varied information tools in order to reach all types of groups** (website, regular link with stakeholders and inhabitants, other interactive tools, etc.)

3. Are the **benefits of participation taken into account in the key stages** of Agenda 21?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Integration of **opinions (positive and negative) concerning the diagnosis and civic priorities in terms of key issues**
- Integration of the **priorities of civil society** (inhabitants and stakeholders) **in terms of strategic thrusts**
- **Participation of stakeholders in the preparation of the assessment and at the different assessment times**
- Integration of the **proposals for action** that emerged from the participation, into the **action programme**
- **Clear mention in the various documents** of the points of agreement or disagreement, and requiring mediation or arbitration

4. Is there a **permanent participatory body** in the framework of Agenda 21?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of a **permanent participatory body** (participatory steering committee, consultative committee, citizen's monitoring unit, etc.) playing a role in the life of Agenda 21 and **coordinated with the other existing participatory mechanisms**
- Formalisation of **renewal procedures for members** of the participatory body (inhabitants and stakeholders)
- **Possible opening up of the participatory body to new stakeholders or inhabitants**
- Opportunity for the participatory body to **issue an opinion at each stage** of Agenda 21 (implementation, monitoring and assessment)

5. Does the participation **play an active role in influencing the stakeholders' commitment to sustainable development?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Emergence of **collective (internal and external) dynamics** surrounding sustainable development issues
- Identification and support for **new initiatives concerning sustainable development, sponsored by stakeholders or inhabitants** of the territory
- **Widespread participation of stakeholders in territorial projects other than Agenda 21**

Key indicators:

Proportion, number, age, geographical origin and diversity of inhabitants and stakeholders contributing to Agenda 21
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Proportion of Agenda 21 actions initiated by the territory's inhabitants or stakeholders
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PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Strategic questions:

1. Does Agenda 21 benefit from **strong, cross-disciplinary political backing for all delegations?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Political **backing for Agenda 21 at the level of the mayor or president and/or the local authority's managing bodies (committee, majority team, etc.)**
- Participation of **deputy mayors or vice-presidents in key stages of Agenda 21**
- Regular mobilisation (at least annually) of a **significant proportion of elected representatives of the council** with regard to Agenda 21
- Existence of a **debate and an attractive political choice** (deliberation, choice of the assembly, etc.) **at the strategic stages** of Agenda 21 (launch, shared key issues, strategic orientations, operational objectives and action programme, resources allocated to the action plan, sharing of assessment results)

2. Is there a **strategic steering committee**, involving the partners, for the Agenda 21 programme?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Systematic issuing of an **opinion by the strategic orientation body**, prior to the strategic decisions for Agenda 21
- Existence of a **link between the strategic orientation body and the permanent participation body** at the different stages of the project's life

3. Does the Agenda 21 programme benefit from "efficient" **cross-disciplinary operational management?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of an **operational committee** (or technical committee) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities
- Implementation of procedures facilitating **project-related work** (involving different elected representatives, agents, departments or directorates in relation to joint projects)
- **Tools, of the scorecard type**, allowing for the **regular monitoring of Agenda 21's progress**

4. Are the **resources required for management** provided and deployed?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Existence of a **long-term mission dedicated to sustainable development**
- **Financial resources dedicated to the organisation, coordination and management** of Agenda 21
- **Resources dedicated to territorial forward-planning** or to debating the long-term future of the territory, its needs and resources, etc.

Key indicators:

Proportion of stages and proportion of actions of the project subject to deliberation

Number and diversity of internal and external stakeholders involved in the management system
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CROSS-DISCIPLINARITY

Strategic questions:

1. Does Agenda 21 favour the **association of the local authority's (or the territory's) actions, skills and strategies** with a view to improving their consistency?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Mobilisation** of the different territorial levels (infra and supra) in the project
- **Formalisation of shared sustainable development objectives with infra and/or supra territories** (municipalities, groups of municipalities, areas, parks, *départements* and region)
- **Linking of different strategies and/or sector-specific policies** found in the territory (e.g. urban planning, travel, economic development, environment, social, culture, sport, education, etc.)
- Existence of **incitement or support tools for the global procedures of local stakeholders** with regard to sustainable development (municipalities' and schools' Agenda 21 projects, etc.)
- **Mobilisation of cross-disciplinary financing** for implementing the Agenda 21 programme's actions

1. Does the **internal organisational system** favour the cross-disciplinarity of the policies or actions, and the practices?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Cross-disciplinary positioning of the department or agent dedicated to sustainable development** in the internal organisational system
- Implementation of tools facilitating cross-disciplinarity in the operation and internal organisational system:
 - In the **implementation of the actions** (e.g. cross-disciplinary coordination of project groups, nomination of project managers, internal training of the management in project mode, implementation of management software in project mode, etc.)
 - In the **implementation of skills, missions and policies of the local authority** (e.g. Cross-disciplinary management allowing for the implementation of different sectoral policies, etc.)
 - In the **practices of all agents** (e.g. establishment of sustainable development correspondents, sustainable development training for agents, integration of sustainable development into job descriptions, etc.)
- **Internal communications** actions favouring cross-disciplinarity

2. Is decision-making based on a **cross-disciplinary analysis** of the impacts with regard to all the outcomes of sustainable development?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Use of decision-making support tools** such as questioning grids and "sustainable development" criteria (for projects, actions and strategic documents)
- **Accounting for the cross-disciplinary analysis** of impacts concerning all the outcomes of sustainable development (sustainable development information block in deliberations and decisions, etc.), **in decision-making**
- **Improving decision-making by using the results of other assessments** (environmental assessment, assessment of social and economic impacts, etc.)

Key indicators:

Proportion of deliberations integrating a specific reference to Agenda 21
Number of sustainable development approaches supported, encouraged or networked in the framework of Agenda 21
Proportion of projects managed by several departments or committees

ASSESSMENT

Strategic questions:

1. Is the Agenda 21 assessment system **formalised and accompanied by resources**?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Definition of the aims** of the assessment system, its use and targets
- Clarity of the **scope of the assessment** (territory, strategy, action programme, practices, etc.)
- Definition of the **indicators and detailed objectives** to be achieved
- Existence of a long-term system for **informing the indicators**
- Deployment of human and/or financial **resources** for the assessment
- **Validation** of the system by the elected representatives or senior manager(s) in charge of it

2. **Is the assessment of Agenda 21 participatory?**

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Participation** of inhabitants, partners or agents in the **implementation of the assessment system**
 - Choice of objectives, targets and use of the assessment
 - Definition of the assessment system
 - Choice of indicators
- **Participation** of inhabitants, partners and agents in the **assessment**
 - Quantitative and qualitative analysis
 - Formulation of recommendations
- Existence of **resources and time dedicated** to creating a common assessment culture (by agents, elected representatives and stakeholders)

3. Does the **assessment system** prove to be **satisfactory and useful**?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Assessment that allows for the effective evaluation of:
 - **Achievement of strategic objectives set for Agenda 21** (efficiency)
 - **Efficiency and pertinence of the resources** implemented in Agenda 21
 - **Impacts of Agenda 21** on the territory
 - Improvement of the **internal organisation and practices**
- **Taking account of the assessment results** (development of missions, objectives initially chosen, internal organisation, practices, commitment of territorial stakeholders, etc.)

4. Are the assessment **results disseminated** in an exhaustive way which is transparent and accessible to all?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Publication of the informed indicators online (Intranet and Internet)
- **Dissemination of the assessment results** and the **recommendations** (internally and externally)

Key indicators:

Percentage of strategic objectives allocated to a quantified results indicator (or trend), accompanied by a deadline and regularly monitored
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Proportion of strategic indicators whose changes are made public
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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

Strategic questions:

1. Does Agenda 21 form part of a clear and shared continuous improvement strategy?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- **Shared definition of the continuous improvement approach** (planning of assessments, definition of procedures for developing Agenda 21 following the assessments, etc.)
- **Programming of actions over time and commitment to achieving objectives on a progressive basis**
- **After the assessment, sharing the areas for improvement that have been identified** (with decision-making bodies, all agents, external stakeholders and inhabitants)

2. Are the agents and elected representatives involved in a continuous learning and improvement progress (working in a network, exchanges of experience and strategic monitoring)?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Setting times for internal **meetings, discussions and debates**
- Existence of a **continuing vocational training policy on sustainable development** for agents and elected representatives.
- **Participation** of agents and elected representatives in sustainable development **networks**
- Evolution of management methods (cross-disciplinarity and co-construction)
- Existence of a **clear commitment to internal, social and environmental exemplarity** (RSE [Corporate Social Responsibility] type or other – charter, internal Agenda 21, etc.).
- **Specific resources dedicated to the coordination and management of the exemplarity approach**

3. Does the Agenda 21 encourage innovation in terms of sustainable development?

Benchmarks for improvement:

- Incitement and support for **innovative experiments** in sustainable development (calls for projects, technical support for innovative operations, etc.)
- **Dissemination and promotion** of experiments whose assessments have been positive
- **Support for the transfer** and reproduction of successful experiments

Key indicators:

Completion rate of the action programme
Number of days dedicated to the creation of a shared sustainable development culture by elected representatives and agents

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Abstract

This tool is intended for local authorities involved in a sustainable development project in their region. By implementing a strategic assessment approach, it is designed to help them promote the added value contributed by Agenda 21, its capacity to transform the region and develop the practices of the participating stakeholders (elected representatives and agents of the local authority, economic partners, associations, institutions, inhabitants and users of the region).

Collectively produced by a working group mainly consisting of representatives of local authorities and regions involved in the projects, this reference document has been developed with the support of all associations of elected representatives.

It is intended to be used well in advance of the Agenda 21 programme (while a strategy is being developed, key objectives are being chosen, and during the discussion of the major changes anticipated due to the implementation of the project). It asks precise evaluative questions which allow for the analysis of Agenda 21's contributions to all sustainable development outcomes and the resulting progress in terms of governance. It also proposes 40 key indicators, chosen for monitoring the main results of such a sustainable regional development strategy.

Already tested by around twenty regions, this reference document, launched in the spring of 2011, will allow the regions involved to make the changes arising within the region due to this approach more tangible, while raising their profile and encouraging everyone involved to continue and further the process.



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