

DCMS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: SECTORS

MEDIA & BROADCASTING

Sustainable development is a dynamic process, which enables all people to realise their potential, and to improve their quality of life, in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems.
(*Forum for the Future Annual Report 2000*).

CURRENT POSITION

While DCMS is not in a position to try to direct the broadcasters in terms of programme content, we (and colleagues in DfES) are naturally aware of the tremendous potential influence this sector holds on public awareness and understanding of the issues.

Perhaps more than any other of our sectors, media and broadcasting can make a difference to the fundamental attitudes of society. This sector is powerfully influential in introducing new concepts and ideas, and planting in individuals' minds the seed of further study that can be delivered through their own hugely impressive websites, and spread through other DCMS sectors, such as libraries and museums. DCMS is delighted to work with them in exploring ways in which their programmes can impact beyond their scheduled timeslot and make a real difference to people's lives.

An excellent example of this interaction between DCMS' sectors was the BBC's History 2000 series. While it is a matter for the BBC whether it chooses to repeat the exercise on this sort of scale, there is clearly the potential here for closer co-operation between the sectors and we shall be exploring this with them in the near future.

A useful collection of BBC programmes and quizzes is accessible by clicking on to the BBC website <http://www.bbc.co.uk/a-z/e.shtml> under the general heading of Environment.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Green Housekeeping

Internally, the principles of corporate social responsibility apply to the media and broadcasters, as to any large organization. The BBC was among the first to join the Media Sector CSR Forum, set up by Business in the Community, which includes other broadcasting companies in its membership as well as representatives from the music and press industries.

The BBC has used innovative methods to interest its own staff in adopting more sustainable approaches in the work place, like the Eco-challenge: handing out video cameras to staff who volunteered to discover just how green their life styles really are. The corporation published a formal Environmental Policy in 2000 and followed this in 2002 with an Environment Report showing progress against that policy. Other initiatives to reduce the corporation's environmental impact include developing green transport plans and renewable energy schemes.

EMI, the world's largest independent music company, has built on ten years of environmental reporting to produce 'Sound Values', its first social responsibility report, published in early 2003. This clearly sets out EMI's policies on the environment, employment, community, human rights, product values and suppliers. A member of the Media Sector CSR Forum, EMI also belongs to the Forum for the Future's Business Network, and as part of Business in the Community's PerCent club invests more than 1% of its pre-tax profits in the community through a combination of cash, time and gifts in kind.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT VISION

DCMS would like the media and broadcasters to use their great potential to raise public knowledge and awareness of sustainable development issues. It wants to see:

- Programmes showing what individual and community efforts can do to promote sustainable development
- Debates on sustainable development issues
- Providing publicity for examples of best practice
- Media and broadcasters continuing to develop their own corporate approaches to sustainable development issues within their organizations; and where appropriate underpinning such approaches by published strategies.
- Media and broadcasters working together, and with other DCMS NDPBs, to share best practice and develop further understanding of the principles of sustainable development.
- Media and Broadcasters increasingly adopting the principles of sustainability, such as whole life costing, in making funding decisions.
- Media and Broadcasters encouraging programmers and presenters to publicise and incorporate environmental innovations in their programmes.

FUTURE ACTION

DCMS aims to achieve this by:

- Encouraging the media and broadcasters to consider how their corporate approaches to sustainable development fit with this strategy.
- Supporting broadcasters who publicise sustainable development strategies, and working with them to introduce these;
- Encouraging distributors to work with one another, and other NDPBs, within the planned DCMS sustainable development Forum.