

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Summary of responses to the consultation on the merger of the WSSD Implementation (WIF) and Environment for Europe (EfE) funds into the International Sustainable Development Fund (ISDF)

1. Introduction

1.1 The consultation started on 02 April 2007 and finished on 14 May 2007. Stakeholders were invited to respond by commenting on:

- a) *the general proposal to merge the WIF and EfE funds into a single ISDF ; and*
- b) *the proposed broad criteria for funding particular activities and projects.*

A six-week, rather than the normal 12-week, consultation period was allowed in this case, as the substance of the proposal was technical, and it was desirable to establish certainty about the ISDF early in the financial year.

2. Responses

2.1 One hundred and twenty stakeholders were invited to comment on the proposals, and the consultation document was placed in the Defra library; in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament; and on the Defra website at the following address:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/isdf/index.htm>

2.2 Eleven responses were received including two that made no comment of any kind. A list of the names of the organisations who responded is included at the end of this paper.

3. Summary

3.1 None of the respondents to the consultation document objected specifically to the substantive proposal to make a statutory Order setting up the ISDF. Defra will therefore proceed to make the Order as soon as possible.

3.2 Some respondents, as detailed below, were concerned about the future funding for the ISDF, or had detailed comments on its operation. The proposed Order has no effect on funding, which will continue to be considered, as for the WSSD and EfE funds, on the basis of the overall level of resource available to

Defra, as well as its strategic objectives and priorities. As explained in the consultation document, the future operation of the ISDF will be aligned to those objectives and priorities, whilst retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to innovative ways of achieving them, such as via multi-stakeholder partnerships.

3.2 The following organisations explicitly supported the proposed merger of the two funds. and the broad criteria for funding, or had no comments:

- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- The National School of Government
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- The Society for the Environment
- The British Embassy in Zagreb, Croatia

3.3 Some respondents had comments on specific matters relating to the future operation of the ISDF:

- The Department for International Development (DFID) said they would welcome a more strategic approach and a stronger focus on reform and policy dialogue.
- Practical Action thought that there could still be some confusion and overlap between the UK's commitments on 'international development' and 'international environment' where DFID lead on the first and Defra on the second.
- Dunira wanted Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asian (EECCA) countries to continue to receive strong support and not be neglected in favour of larger countries. They also suggested that tourism should be given more recognition as a viable and effective tool for sustainable development.
- The International Institute for Environment and Development thought that it might be useful to have some consideration of the sustainable development priorities of the host government and people.

3.4 Two organisations had specific reservations:

- Westden International were concerned that the proposed merger could widen the divide between policy makers and project implementers on the ground and weaken the value of multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as PECE.
- Imperial College were concerned about future levels of funding, and the possible loss of focus on activities, particularly in relation to the natural environment, in the EECCA region.

4. The detailed responses will be available in the Defra library on request. No changes were proposed to the Statutory Instrument.

5. Organisations who responded to this consultation:

- Department for International Development (DfID)
- Dunira Strategy
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
- Imperial College, London
- International Institute for Environment and Development
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- National School of Government (NSG)
- Practical Action Consulting
- The Society for the Environment
- British Embassy Zagreb, Croatia
- Westden International