

Defra

First Soil Action Plan for England: 2004-2006 – Annual Report May 2005

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The First Soil Action Plan for England (SAP) was published in May 2004. This is the first annual report of progress in delivering the plan's 52 actions.

1.2 The aim of the action plan is to work with others, including policy makers, industry leaders and influencers across a wide spectrum of activities that impinge on soils, to ensure that England's soils are protected and managed to optimise their functions in keeping with the principles of sustainable development and on the basis of sound evidence.

1.3 The first SAP is in the main a compilation of existing and planned activities relating to the protection, use and management of soil. There are a number of new commitments especially in the areas of education, the built environment, biodiversity and establishing the evidence base. The core of the plan is devoted to things we can achieve in the short-term and to building a consensus view of what is necessary beyond this and a coalition of partners to drive it forward. The intention has been from the outset to produce a more strategic proposal on soil protection policy in 2007 with a longer forward vision and with greater ownership of actions by other partners.

1.4 The SAP recognises the need to protect and enhance all of the functions of soil. These functions are: environmental interaction (e.g. regulating the flow of and filtering substances from water, emitting and removing atmospheric gases), food and fibre production, support of ecological habitat and biodiversity, protection of cultural heritage, providing a platform for construction and providing raw materials. There is no right or wrong type of soil; different functions require different conditions or soil properties. Therefore, it is difficult to set national targets in the way we often can for air or water. Moreover, most soils supply more than one function at any one point in time and priorities for which function to protect will be dynamic.

2.0 Cross Defra and cross departmental working

2.1 Soil is a fundamental component of the environment and as such has a role to play in the delivery of many of Defra's sustainable development and environmental priorities.

2.2 Defra and its delivery bodies have been working together to deliver the SAP. Additional resources were secured in the last spending review to fund the delivery of our sustainable soil management objectives. We are aiming to embed soil protection into those national, regional and local procedures which will influence outcomes. The Rural Development Service (Natural England in the future) and Government Offices have a key role to play in building partnerships to improve the delivery of soil protection, e.g. among planners both at the regional strategic level and at the more detailed local level where they deal with applications to develop (say) mineral extraction.

2.3 We have also started to establish good links with other Departments, especially DfES and ODPM, in order to work together in delivering common goals and to some extent work on soil proofing their policies. We have had particular success in inserting the consideration of soil protection into the new planning policy statements. We will also be seeking to convert the results of research currently being undertaken in liaison with DfES into practical activity to spread awareness of soils as part of school and college curricula, through consultants and advisers, and more widely.

3.0 Progress

3.1 Good progress has been made over the last year, with the majority of actions on track to meet target deadlines as set out in the programme plan. The table at Annex 1 details progress against each action and indicates current status by the use of a traffic light system. Five actions have been completed in full, 39 actions are at green or amber and 7 actions are at amber/red. One action relating to the Sludge Directive is no longer relevant as we understand the European Commission no longer has plans for its revision.

3.2 Apart from the delivery of specific actions, the SAP is having a wider impact. The action plan is acting as a focus for increased awareness of soils as an essential natural resource and is opening the doors to external stakeholders and industry.

3.3 Key areas where we have made progress towards delivery of sometimes complex actions include CAP cross compliance, soils in the built environment, soil quality indicators, education and developing the evidence base. Progress in these areas is highlighted below.

3.4 Significant progress has been made in delivering the soil components of CAP reform (action 1). The Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions soil guidance was published in January 2005. This was developed with a number of stakeholders, including farming representatives, and has been largely well received. A consortium of stakeholders worked with us on a framework for soil management planning linking management plans for cross compliance and Environmental Stewardship schemes. We have, with RDS, used this to develop templates and associated guidance for soil management plans. These are being farmer tested and the templates will be finalised and submitted to Ministers for approval in early summer.

3.5 There are a number of actions relating to planning, construction and soil management in the built environment (actions 4, 14, 15, 16, 47 and 50). We have determined that the most efficient use of resources is obtained by tackling these actions together. Successful delivery of these actions relies on raising awareness about soils amongst a number of key groups, i.e. planners (spatial decisions, setting of planning permission conditions), construction companies (environmental policy, site managers, landscapers and contractors) and consumers. In particular, to raise standards of soil use and protection on construction sites planners will need to be encouraged to set soil related planning permission conditions. To take these actions forward we have developed a strategy for influencing stakeholders on soils in the built environment, which has received support from the Soil Action Plan Advisory Forum.

3.6 There are several ongoing national and European initiatives raising the profile of soil protection and use. As a result we need to determine the state of our national soils and to develop methods to monitor future change. Significant progress has been made identifying appropriate soil quality indicators for future soil monitoring (action 11). The UK Soil Indicators Consortium, led by Defra, is a UK-wide inter-departmental and agency group working towards a national set of soil quality indicators and a UK-wide soil monitoring scheme. An agreed list of scientifically robust and policy relevant indicators will be available in the autumn. Soil organic matter has been selected as a headline indicator for the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy and the relevant Defra PSA target (PSA5). Defra is working with the British National Space Centre to examine the use of earth-observation techniques to monitor soil and we will be jointly funding a scoping study on the monitoring of soil sealing from space. This will be the first Defra project funded by DTI's Government Information From The Space Sector Programme.

3.7 Good progress has been made on a number of soil education initiatives (action 10 and 3). An audit of national soil education has been completed and the recommendations will feed into the education strategy being developed. An on-line soil education resource, SOIL-NET.com, is being created with the involvement of geography teachers and other education professionals. Defra has been working with the DfES on the development of a Further Education learning package on soils. Defra has supported the development of a National Soil Resources Institute (NSRI)/BASIS Soil and Water Management Certificate, which has already trained approximately 90 people with largely positive feedback. Defra is also represented on the technical board of a new MSc on Soil Management being offered by NSRI for this September.

3.8 The evidence requirements in support of the SAP have been identified and a 3-year evidence strategy has been put in place; this will feed into the forthcoming Evidence and Innovation Strategy. Key new areas of research have been identified as the economic valuation of soil functions, the social function of soil and soils in the built environment. There is a need to shift research funding from more traditional research areas, e.g. agricultural soil protection. A very successful 3 month inward secondment of an environmental consultant to the construction sector has delivered the evidence required to tackle issues within the construction sector and an insight into how to take this forward.

3.9 Where we have made less progress on actions this has mostly been due to circumstances beyond our control, e.g. actions relating to negotiating or reviewing EU Directives where the European Commission has yet to publish its proposals. We will look to make progress on these actions over the next year.

4.0 Stakeholder engagement

4.1 We are committed to working with a wide range of stakeholders on all areas of the action plan. A group of approximately 30 key stakeholders make up the SAP Advisory Forum (Annex 2) that contributes to the shape and progress of the programme.

4.2 Regular communication of progress to stakeholders is achieved via a monthly electronic newsletter. Stakeholders also use this newsletter to provide updates of their own progress in helping us to deliver actions. The Defra website also forms a major tool for communication.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Good progress has been made so far. We will aim to build on initial successes and deliver across a broad range of actions during the next year. Future progress relies in large part on the co-operation of existing partners (both internal and external to Defra) and the willingness of new partners to work with us.

5.2 We are also beginning to turn our thoughts to the second action plan, and will be seeking stakeholders' views over the coming months on future priorities.

The First Soil Action Plan for England: annual progress report

	Action	Progress	Traffic Light
1	Defra will implement the CAP cross compliance conditions in such a way as to foster basic good management of soils in the farming industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures have been included into statutory instruments; GAEC guidance was published in January 2005. Largely positive feedback has been received on this; Final Soil Management Planning report was received from consortium in January 2005. The outputs of this work are informing an internal project to develop templates and associated guidance for producing soil management plans. Farmer testing will take place during May-June, with the templates finalised and submitted to Ministers for approval in early summer. We are discussing a communication strategy to disseminate the plans. 	G
2	Defra will encourage better management of agricultural soils that goes beyond the requirements of the Single Payment, through the provision of incentives under the Agri-Environment Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Stewardship scheme launched in March 2005; soil options included in both Entry and Higher Level Schemes; Interim guidance on soil management planning for ELS is available: http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/pdfs/es/guidance/soil-management-plan.pdf; A review of uptake/impact of ES will take place in 2006. 	G
3	Defra will develop a strategy for providing farmers and other land managers with practical information and advice for building good soil management into overall farm planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soils advice is being promoted as key in pollution minimisation/cross-compliance contracts; A new Soil and Water Management Certificate (offered by NSRI and accredited by BASIS) commenced in November 2004. Approximately 90 people have completed this training with largely positive feedback received; Controlling Soil Erosion guidance (published 1999-2001) has been reviewed, and made available electronically; There is ongoing work to develop a soil module under the 	G

		<p>Whole Farm Approach. This is expected to be piloted in September 2005 and available in February 2006;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are working with the Nutrient Management Unit to ensure that soils advice is included in wider nutrient/farm management advice. 	
4	Defra will engage with DTI and other professional bodies to raise standards of sustainable construction practices, and disseminate knowledge throughout the development and construction sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A secondee from WSP Environmental worked with us between January-April 2005 to progress this work area. A report outlining the current state of knowledge in this area (covering Actions 4, 15, 47 and 50) and suggested next steps has been completed; We are seeking to get soils included in the Sustainable Buildings Code. 	G
5	Defra will engage with key stakeholders across Government Departments and Agencies to seek to deliver improved Training/Career Path Development programmes for Defra-funded conservation and environmental advisors that incorporate soil function and protection techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action will be taken forward alongside action 8; A regional network of special interest Resource Protection advisers is near complete; RDS are identifying people to work alongside EA/EN colleagues in five identified catchments. 	A
6	Defra will agree a framework with other departments to help ensure that Government's wider policies take proper account of their impacts on soils and recognise soil as a strategic national resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy paper has been developed following the November AF meeting. This is available for comment; Defra has committed to develop a clear vision and coherent approach to the protection of natural resources by the end of 2005. Management of soil resources is a key element of the natural resource protection agenda; Strategy for influencing has been developed for soils in the built environment. 	A
7	Defra will work during the Spending Review 2004 process to embed soil protection into its forward strategies and, if appropriate, targets on natural resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource has been secured to take forward the SAP; Resource is also being spent on wider-Defra policy areas (e.g. Water Framework Directive), which include soils. 	A

	protection		
8	Defra will ensure that, during the process of reconstructing the Government's rural delivery landscape in response to the Haskins report, all new and reconstructed agencies concerned with land management issues have regard to the proper management of soils alongside other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This action will be taken forward alongside action 5. It also links to action 42; • Meetings have taken place to develop Memorandums of Understanding between Natural England, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission; • Papers on rural strategies have been drafted. 	A
9	Defra will work with the European Commission, UK stakeholders and other member states to try and ensure that outcomes of the EU Soil Thematic Strategy are appropriate to UK soils and the pressures on them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication expected from the Commission in November 2005 at the earliest, latest indications suggest that a 'light touch' Soil Framework Directive will be adopted; • Sewage Sludge and Biowaste are no longer being considered under the Soil Thematic Strategy – instead they will be addressed under the Waste and Recycling Thematic Strategy. 	A
10	Defra will work with stakeholders to develop a programme of education and awareness of soil issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project has been let to NSRI to audit national soil education initiatives. This reported at the end-April 2005; • NSRI are starting to develop concepts for Soil-Net.com, a web-based educational resource aimed at key stages 1-4 (ages 5-16); • The DfES Standards Unit has put together a Further Education learning package on soils. This is currently being piloted and Defra will send feedback on this; • A way forward for developing a programme of soils education and awareness has been developed following the November AF meeting. From this we have completed a marketing project to identify our key stakeholders and messages. 	G
11	Defra will work with stakeholders to identify indicators which should be built into a national soil monitoring scheme, aiming to develop a scheme meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cross-government working group (UK Soil Indicators Consortium), led by Defra, has been established to test the robustness of a set of proposed indicators. Full details of the work of the UK SIC is available on the Defra website; 	

	national and European requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An indicator of soil organic matter has been developed under the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy. Research into biological indicators, led by CEH, has been carried out. The reporting of this has been delayed, but will influence work of the UK SIC. The most suitable indicators may be used in CS2006. 	G
12	Defra will review its soil research programme in light of the recently completed UK Soils Research Audit, and issues identified in this plan, to ensure that resources are focussed on the most urgent questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised funding rationale (ROAME) statements for the Soil Protection assessment units have been completed and shared with research funders. Priorities for 2005-08 have also been established and will be shared. 	Complete
13	Defra will work with other Government Departments and Agencies (including the Devolved Administrations), and other soil data users, to develop and provide better access to information on soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cross-government survey of information needs has been completed; results paper is now complete. From this it can be determined that responses received do not meet our needs and we are therefore letting a project to fully determine cross-government soils information requirements and ownership; We are considering the means to improve access to LandIS data for Defra's delivery bodies 	A
14	Defra will consider with ODPM and Local Government organisations how to increase understanding of soil issues throughout the Regional and Local Government structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSRI have produced a report for Hampshire CC on the functions Hampshire's soils provide. It is intended that this will assist planners in Hampshire. Strategy for influencing has been developed for soils in the built environment; We are currently considering the option of developing soils guidance for planners. 	G
15	Defra will work with ODPM to clarify the use of existing mechanisms, including the Building Regulations, to ensure proper consideration of soil issues during the planning and development process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are considering how this might be taken forward as part of work to develop a robust land use framework. We are funding research to establish the potential for Agricultural Land Classification field survey data to be coupled with existing soil data to develop soil function maps. 	

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16	Defra will work with ODPM to ensure that soil issues are taken into account, where appropriate, in the creation and implementation of plans at both the regional and local level under the proposed new planning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have ensured that appropriate consideration of soils is given in the different Planning Policy Statements as they come into existence/are revised; Met with all statutory consultees re: Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. 	G	
17	Defra and the Environment Agency will commission work to assess routes of contamination by heavy metals and persistent organic compounds to soils, and to examine the feasibility of new criteria to protect the long term functioning of soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action is being tackled together with Actions 25 and 28; ADAS are undertaking a project (a review of "Sources and Impacts of Past, Current and Future Contamination of Soil") to address these actions. It is due to report in September 2005. 	G	
18	Defra will work with partners to examine results from the inventory of metal inputs to soils, to ensure that necessary controls are in place to retain the long term functioning of soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No progress has yet been made on this action, as it will build upon the results of action 17. 	A	
19	The Environment Agency, Defra and partners will continue to develop soil guideline values for protection of human health from contaminants in soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Soil Guideline Values have been developed over the past year. 	A	R
20	Defra will seek to negotiate the proposed revisions to the Sewage Sludge Directive to ensure that controls on the application of sludge to land recognise potential benefits, while ensuring that sludge does not impair the long term functioning of soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latest news from the Commission is that Sewage Sludge will no longer be covered by the Soil Thematic Strategy; There are currently no proposals from the Commission to revise the Sewage Sludge Directive. 		
21	Defra will seek, during negotiations on the proposed Bio-Waste Directive, to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latest news from the Commission is that Biowaste will no longer be covered by the Soil Thematic Strategy; 		

	agree arrangements which encourage the return of organic material to the soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is however expected that proposals for Biowastes will be announced by the Commission under the Waste and Recycling Thematic Strategy (due to report in June 2005). 	A	R
22	Defra, the Environment Agency and partners will work to deliver changes to Waste Management Licensing Regulations to ensure that applications of licensed and exempt wastes does not impair long-term soils functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft changes to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations were submitted to Ministers in October 2004. The soil-related changes cover spreading of animal and industrial wastes, and storage and use of construction wastes and sewage sludge (where not covered by the 1998 Sewage Sludge Directive), where such treatment results in benefit to agriculture or ecological improvement; These have been approved and are due to come into force on 1 July 2005. 	Complete	
23	Defra will work with partners to ensure the effective enforcement of regulations on permissible metal concentrations in animal feeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VLA is currently reviewing the situation; a consultation to revise some metal levels has been undertaken. 	A	
24	Defra will consider whether controls on the use of metal-containing veterinary medicines are appropriate to balance environmental and livestock interests and how they are enforced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action is being tackled alongside action 29; 	A	
25	Defra and the Environment Agency will review and evaluate the impacts of contaminants mobilised and transported by floodwaters, on diffuse pollution of soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action is being tackled together with Actions 17 and 28; ADAS are undertaking a project (a review of "Sources and Impacts of Past, Current and Future Contamination of Soil") to address these actions. It is due to report in September 2005. 	G	
26	Defra will ensure that appropriate measures are in place or in train to achieve the requirements for 2010 as set out in the National Emissions Ceilings Directive and Gothenburg Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review of the Directive is now not likely until end-2005/2006; no progress can be made until then. 	A	R

27	Defra, the Environment Agency and partners will seek to establish criteria for the assessment of the impact on and benefits to soil functional capacity for remediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra and the Environment Agency are reviewing what has already been done and considering what further research might be required. 	A	R
28	Defra will work with partners to examine current data sources of the burden on soil resource from diffuse sources; and assess the implications of the results for policy and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action is being tackled together with Actions 17 and 25; ADAS are undertaking a project (a review of "Sources and Impacts of Past, Current and Future Contamination of Soil") to address these actions. It is due to report in September 2005. 	G	
29	Defra will work with the veterinary medicines industry and other partners to gain better understanding of the potential impacts of veterinary products on soil biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action is being tackled alongside action 24; 	A	
30	UKCIP and Defra will establish a scoping study of the impacts of climate change on soil types in England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSRI have completed this scoping study and the final report has been received. 	Complete	
31	Following on from Action 30, Defra and partners will undertake further (including development of tools to manage the risks to soils from climate change)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress has not yet been made on this action as it will follow on from action 30. 	A	
32	Defra will review the COGAP for the protection of soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review has taken place; there is to be no update of the COGAP at present, as water and air have no plans, and updates should be coordinated; Ideas for combined soil, air and water advice need to be discussed with Nutrient Management Unit; Good Practice guidance has been produced for GAEC (this is not in place of the COGAP, which has a wider remit) – content will be reviewed in September 2005 in line with comments received. 	A	
33	Defra will work with the farming industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Voluntary Initiatives is now complete; 		

	to examine current and/or novel means of encouraging voluntary change in soil management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We met with the NFU in April to discuss next steps – possibility of producing joint guidance; Challenge Fund, piloting self-help groups for farmers, is now complete; we will follow this up to determine any resulting opportunities re: voluntary change in soil management. 	A	R
34	Defra will work with partners to fund further research on the relationships between farm soil management practice, physical characteristics, functions of soils and subsequent impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is ongoing research in this area, for example, projects are being undertaken on sludge to land; impact of organic carbon returns to soil quality; and documenting soil erosion rates; We are in touch with NERC re: sustainable soils thematic programme. 	A	
35	With the Forestry Commission, Defra will examine the scope for inclusion of soil issues in the England Woodland Grant Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> England Woodland Grant Scheme is not being reviewed at this time – when it is we will ensure that we have an input; In the meantime the England Forestry Strategy is being developed this year, and soils will be considered in this; Working relations have been established with the Forestry Commission; looking to alert farmers of opportunities for strategic forestry through GAEC guidance etc. 	A	
36	Defra will work with partners to re-examine current soil management advice, to take account of the potential impacts of inappropriate management on flooding, aquifer recharge and water and air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action will be taken on in conjunction with action 32. 	A	
37	Defra will complete research, and take account of results, to provide further understanding of the role that land and soil management might play in flood management at water catchment level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Government response to ‘Making space for water’ consultation exercise was published in March 2005. Within this it states that priority research will be undertaken into the role rural land management techniques might play in managing flood risk at catchment level. Pilots will also be funded to test different approaches to integrated management. These pilots will look at upstream catchments where appropriate and may include encouraging rural land management changes; This action is now complete. Further research has been 	Complete	

		outlined and it is our intention to develop further actions for the Second Soil Action Plan in line with this.	
38	Defra will research the capacity of different soils to attenuate substances in relation to the protection of groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We intend to let a project to undertake a literature review of completed research; Environment Agency are looking into what research the Agency are already doing re: natural attenuation and groundwater. 	A
39	Defra will work with the Environment Agency and other partners to continue to examine a range of policy options for the control of sediment and soil-bound nutrient losses to water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are fully inputting into Catchment Sensitive Farming, with a range of options and milestones; further milestones need to be developed after the analysis of consultation responses. 	A
40	Defra and partners will review and synthesise the published material on links between biodiversity, pollution, contamination and land management, to identify an initial list of biological and biochemical indicators of functional diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is being covered by action 11. Once further progress has been made on developing a set of national soil indicators, we will be in a position to determine an initial list of biological and biochemical indicators. 	A
41	Defra will consider with English Nature and other partners the benefits which might arise from the establishment of a national series of benchmark sites for soil biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting took place between Defra and English Nature in December 2004 to clarify the objective behind this action. This action will now be progressed by a research project. Specification has been discussed with UK nature conservation agencies and is being published imminently for comment. 	G
42	English Nature will prepare a position statement on the role of soil management and protection within statutory nature conservation sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action fits with action 8; Draft paper on soils and nature conservation is now available. This will be presented to the EN Council in June, followed by a second paper with the position statement to be submitted to the EN Council in September. 	G
43	English Nature will publish guidance on the use of soil information in the restoration of wildlife and wildlife habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership research with SNH is being progressed. Research specification for more specific consultancy for this action has been discussed with UK nature conservation agencies and a draft will be published imminently. 	G

44	English Heritage will monitor the state of the landscape and historic environment and, where needed, develop new indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra have provided funding for EH to approach consultants to develop indicators further, and a small working group has been set up by EH. Several consultants have been approached, and it is expected that the contract will be let fairly soon; it is not yet clear whether landscape and archaeology will be included in the same project or will be dealt with by different consultants. 	A	
45	English Heritage will research into the threats and mechanisms of loss and degradation of soils supporting historic landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EH held a workshop in December 2004 to discuss this action with experts, and it is now a priority theme in the EH draft Research Strategy. A research strategy for the preservation of archaeology <i>in situ</i> has been developed from this, and is due to be considered by the EH Research Advisory Panel in June 2005. 	A	
46	English Heritage will improve understanding of soils and the historic landscape through research on the importance of the landscape and historic environment to the economy, and to quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EH has commissioned a series of Heritage Dividend studies, which quantify the economic impact of its area grant schemes. The new EH research strategy will be published later this year, and will identify further social and economic research as a key priority. 	A	
47	Defra will promote with industry better understanding of the potential benefits to sustainable construction through specific tests and British Standards for soil use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSRI have completed a review of the British Standards. Final report will be available end-April; We are seeking to get soils included in the Sustainable Buildings Code. 	A	
48	Defra will continue to support the development of recycling and composting to provide alternative growing material and soil conditioners to peat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A LINK project is being considered to develop soil conditioner from category 3 waste (animal, food factory waste etc). This will be proposed for consideration in July 2005; Defra and the EA are considering how controls on recycling biowaste compost might be developed to encourage application of high quality composts to land and the place that a revised PAS 100 might play in this. Confirmation is awaited from Brussels on how EU-wide initiatives might develop. 	A	
49	Defra will examine the practicality of introducing and monitoring a programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra is consulting stakeholders to finalise how to take this action forward. 	A	R

	to integrate minerals and waste policies which will increase the recycling of materials for re-use or for restoration			
50	Defra will consult the Environment Agency and local planning authorities to improve monitoring of use of soils in relation to built development, compliance with soil protection conditions of planning permissions, and for reducing off-site impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action has been discussed with the EA. Given the low level of understanding of soil in LA's and the fact that there are no planning permission conditions relating to soils, it seems that this action is ahead of its time. We are looking to determine what progress can be made. 	A	R
51	Defra will continue to work closely with ODPM, minerals planning authorities, and the industry, to promote and develop practical guidance on minerals site restorations and aftercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDS guidance on site restoration has been sent to mineral planning authorities and is also available on the Defra website. 	Complete	
52	The Defra Soils Team will measure and report progress on all actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports have been produced twice yearly for use at AF meetings; An informal monthly newsletter of progress is being produced to inform the AF. 	G	

Soil Action Plan Advisory Forum Member Organisations

ADAS
BBSRC/NERC Soil Science Advisory Committee
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
British Society for Soil Science
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Country Land and Business Association
Countryside Agency
Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management
CIRIA
Defra
English Heritage
English Nature
Environment Agency
Forest Research
Forum for the Future
Hampshire County Council
Highways Agency
Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research
Linking Environment And Farming
National Farmers Union
National Soil Resources Institute
National Trust
Natural Environment Research Council
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Rothamsted Research
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Rural Development Service, Defra
Soil Association