



Mutual learning through the ESDN and Peer Reviews

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ESDN Office at RIMAS

www.sd-network.eu



Ø How does **learning in the ESDN** work?

- n The ESDN
- n The ESDN Office
- n Key activities

Ø How does **learning in Peer Reviews** work?

- n Overview
- n Success factors and benefits
- n Key steps

Ø How can we link **the ESDN** and **Peer Reviews**?



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∅ How can we link the ESDN and Peer Reviews?



- Ø **It is** an informal network of public administrators dealing with SD strategies in Europe
- Ø **It aims** to exchange experiences, knowledge and good practices regarding SD strategy processes
- Ø **The history** of the ESDN starts with a workshop-like exchange of experiences in the Netherlands in 2002
- Ø **ESDN Office** as network support mechanism established in spring 2006

The ESDN Office



∅ = 2 half-day positions fulfilled by 5 researchers with different backgrounds and qualifications

∅ Operated by RIMAS --- Research Institute for Managing Sustainability, Vienna



∅ Activities overseen and financed by the ESDN Steering Group (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK)

Functions of the ESDN Office



Facilitate exchange of experience and knowledge in order to make SD strategies more effective

§ Support the **ESDN members**

§ Contribute to **ESDN Conferences**

§ Assist **Steering Group** in developing the ESDN further

§ **Website** at www.sd-network.eu

- Support Northern Council of Ministers
- Start-up of Norwegian Peer Review

Next ESDN Conference in Berlin, 3-5 June 2007

ESDN Joint Understanding

One-stop-shop on SDS in Europe & ESDN membership section

ESDN Website: One-stop-shop



European Sustainable Development Network



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Welcome to the website of the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN)

The ESDN is an informal network of public administrators and other experts dealing with sustainable development (SD) strategies in Europe.

This website serves as a one-stop-shop for SD strategies in Europe, and is the communication platform of the ESDN.

The activities of the ESDN are guided by a Steering Group with representatives from seven European countries. Since early 2006, the networking activities have been supported by the ESDN Office.

For further information about the ESDN, the Steering Group and the ESDN Office, please see the  [ESDN Joint Understanding](#) and visit the section "[About us](#)"

Please note that this website is updated regularly. If you want to subscribe to the quarterly ESDNewsletter, please [click here](#). For the latest ESDNewsletter, please [click here](#).



What's new at www.sd-network.eu?

2006-11-22 Events and Activities

In the section "Events and Activities" we have added links to event calendars that are provided by the European Commission.

[→ More](#)

2006-10-18 Finland's new SD strategy published

Finland's new national strategy for sustainable development has been published and is also available for download on the internet.

[→ More](#)

[Only the last 2 entries are displayed.](#)

[Click here to see all entries.](#)

Current ESDN Quarterly Report

September 2006 [Evaluation and Review of NSDS](#)

[by Gerald Berger & Reinhard Steurer](#)

[→ Overview of previous ESDN Quarterly Reports](#)

This website is maintained by the ESDN Office Team at the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability



ESDN Website: Discussion Fora



European Sustainable Development Network 

You are here: [Home](#) > [Members](#) > [Discussion forum](#)

ESDN Discussion Forum

Please note that a key purpose of the ESDN Discussion Fora is to exchange information and experiences informally. Therefore, **all statements reflect personal opinions** and not official positions!

Evaluation and Review of NSDS

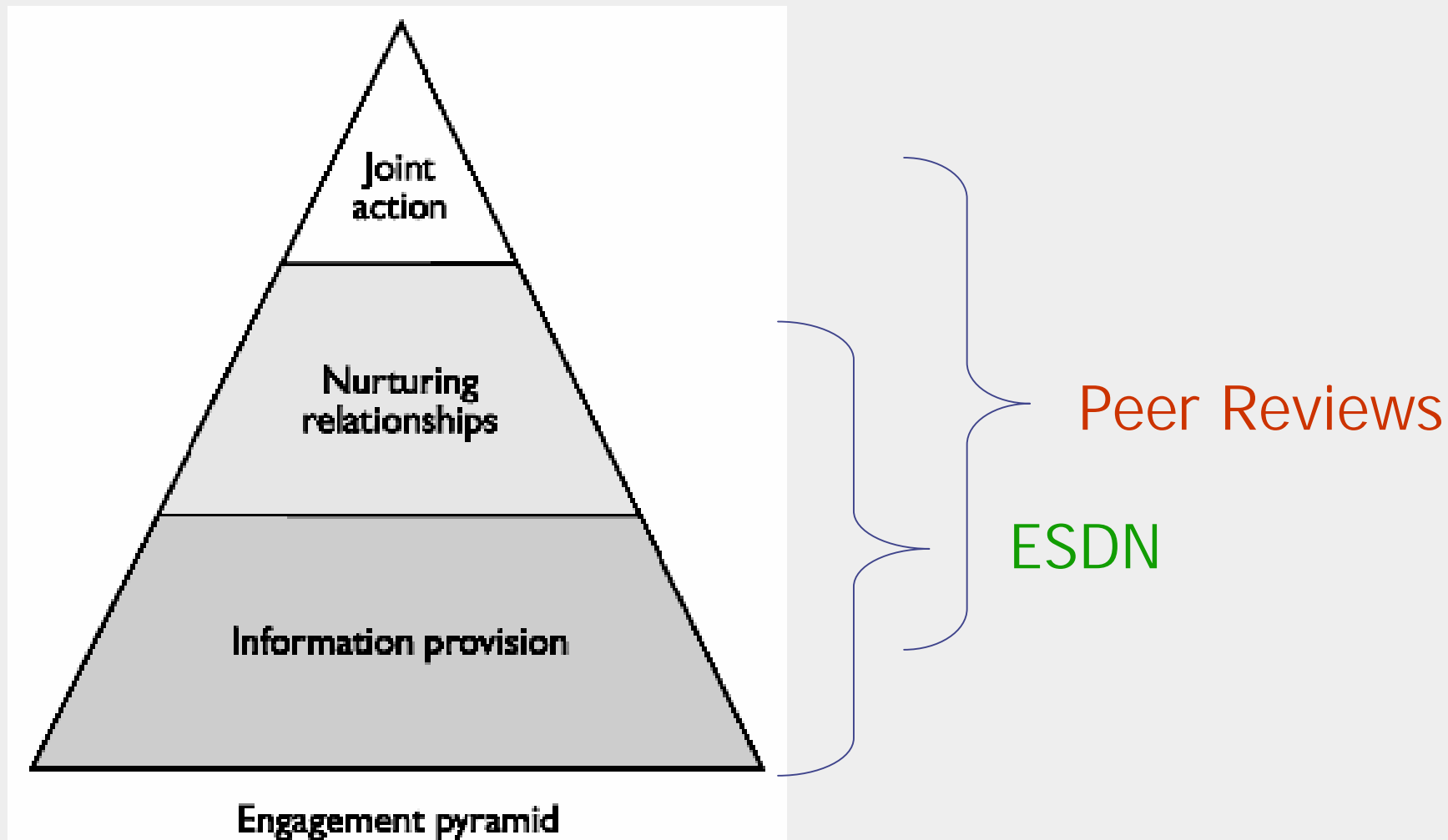
This thematic forum heads off from the second ESDN Quarterly Report from September 2006 that provides an overview of different approaches to evaluate and review NSDS in Europe. [\[Show full forum description\]](#)

Enter keyword(s) to search in this forum

Topic	Replies	Posted by	Date
Links to new studies, evaluations, reviews of SD strategies etc. I want to encourage all ESDN members to post links to new studies dealing with the topic of this forum, and to actual evaluation and review reports of SD strategies here. This way we could interactively build up a collection of resources. [...] >> enter this topic for postings	1	Reinhard Steurer ESDN Office	2006-10-19
Clarification of concepts In the second ESDN Quarterly Report we argue that most policy documents, reports and academic literature use the terms evaluation, assessment, review, audit and monitoring synonymously without providing a proper clarification how they differ from each other. Especially after reading the OECD report "A review of monitoring mechanisms for National Sustainable Development Strategies" (http://www.nssd.net/otherdocuments/OECD_Review_final.pdf) that uses different terms and concepts without specifying them we thought it is necessary to first clarify these concepts. For example, the report refers to the approach taken in Austria as "external audit" whereas others speak of "external evaluation". Moreover, does 'external' refer to evaluators / auditors coming from another country (as used in the OECD report), or from outside government? Generally, we propose to distinguish between 'process-oriented approaches' and 'performance-oriented approaches'. While th [...] >> enter this topic for postings	3	Gerald Berger ESDN Office	2006-10-31

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Learning and the engagement pyramid



Source: IISD, Strategic Intentions: Managing knowledge networks for sustainable development, p. 42



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∅ How does learning in **Peer Reviews** work?

- n Overview
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- n Key steps

∅ How can we link the ESDN and Peer Reviews?

- ∅ **It is** a „systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a state by other states“ (OECD, 2002).

- ∅ **It aims** to help the reviewed state
 - n improve its policy-making
 - n adopt best practices
 - n comply with established standards and principles

- ∅ **The rationale** is mutual learning through a voluntary process

- ∅ **The history** of peer reviews is mainly associated with the OECD that began to use the tool in the 1960s. Since then, it lies at the heart of international cooperation (EU, UN, WTO).

Based on the experiences with Peer Review in France:

- Ø Strong **political commitment** (resources & follow-up)
- Ø Clear objectives about **reason and scope** of the peer review
- Ø **Positive approach** of and relationship between the peer countries (mutual learning, exchange of experiences)

Potential Benefits



- ü **Improve** strategy process and SD policies
- ü Reviewed countries learn from **external perspectives**
(„think out of the box“)
- ü **Peers learn** about administrative processes
- ü Close **relationship** between peer countries
- ü **Networking** with involved stakeholders
- ü Higher **acceptance** of outcomes among public administrators and politicians

Overview of key steps of a Peer Review



- Ø **Deciding** to undertake the Peer Review
- Ø **Preparing** the Peer Review
- Ø **Undertaking** the Peer Review
- Ø **Disseminating** the review findings
- Ø **Implementing** the review findings

Source: European Commission, Peer Review Improvement through Mutual Exchange on Sustainable Development: A guidebook for peer reviews of national sustainable development strategies, February 2006, pp. 14-33,
<http://www.sd-network.eu/pdf/resources/Handbook%20on%20peer%20review%20of%20NSDS-final.pdf>

Key steps of a Peer Review



Ø Preparing for the review

Secure
commitment &
resources

Establish
lead authority

Select and involve
• peers &
• stakeholders

Define
• scope & focus of
review and
• role of peers

Draft background material
• internally or
• with external support



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∅ How does learning in Peer Reviews work?

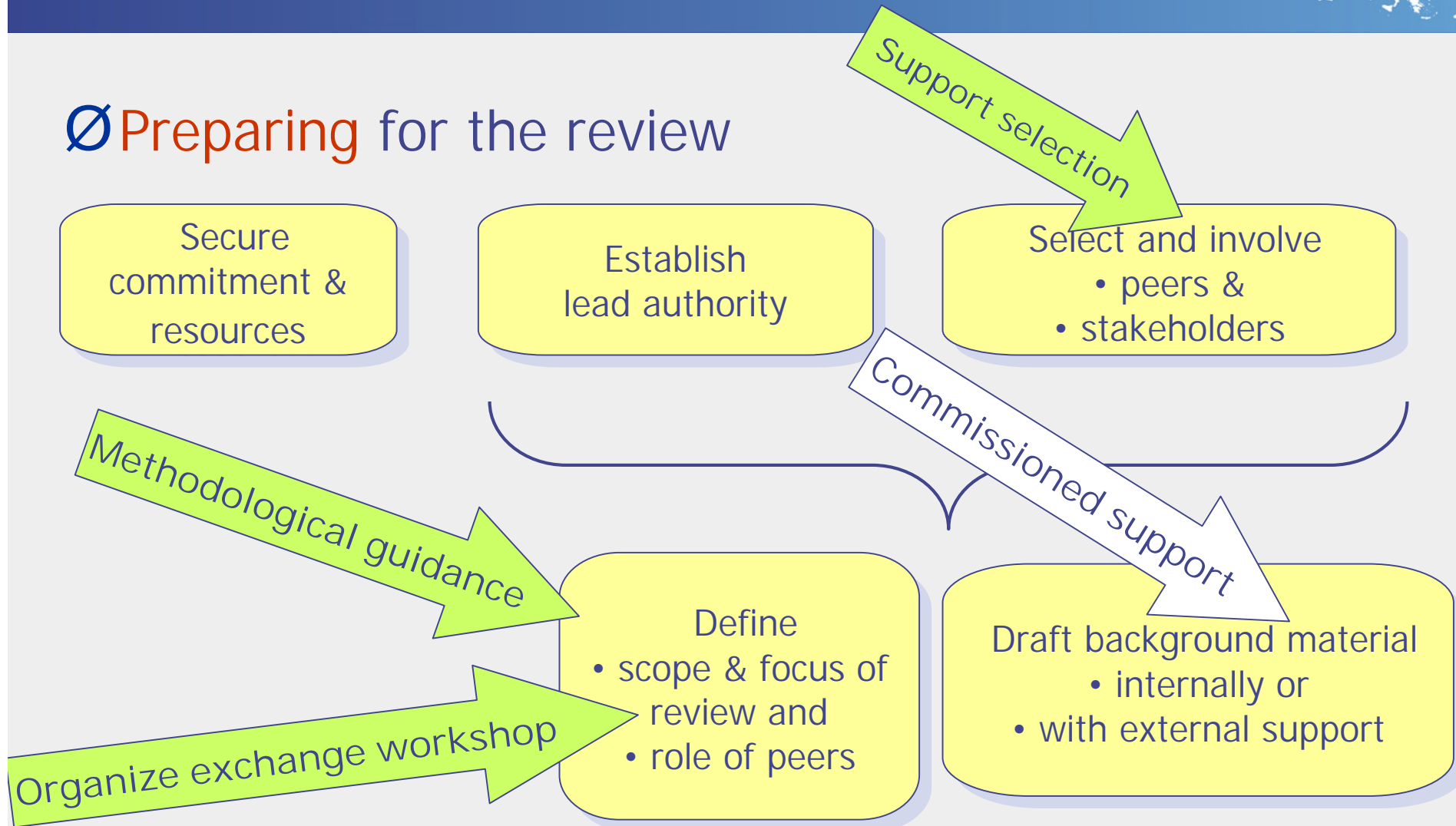
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∅ How can we link the ESDN and Peer Reviews?

... and possible roles of the ESDN



∅ Preparing for the review





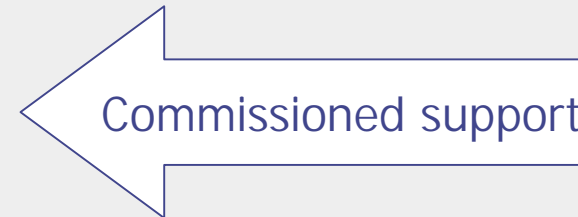
Ø Undertaking the review

- n Gather in depth information:
 - w peers, (external support)
- n Prepare draft chapters of the review report (key topics and questions)
- n Review workshop with peers & stakeholders
 - w Discussion & work on draft review report
- n Finalize review report
 - w Focus on conclusions and recommendations



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Make use of Discussion Forum in ESDN membership section

∅ Disseminating the review findings

- n Report back to stakeholders and the public
- n Share experiences with other countries

∅ Implementing the review findings

- n Discuss findings with decision makers
- n Adapt strategy process
 - w Interplay of formal strategy and dynamic strategy process



∅ Disseminating the review findings

- n Report back to stakeholders and the public
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Dissemination through

- ESDN website
- ESDN Conferences
- discussion forum
- Exchange workshops

∅ Implementing the review findings

- n Discuss findings with decision makers
- n Adapt strategy process
 - w Interplay of formal strategy and day-to-day

Make use of
continuous exchange
in ESDN



∅ Similarities

- n Cross-country exchange
- n Mutual learning exercise

∅ Differences

- n **Peer reviews:** more focused exercise (regarding themes and actors)
- n **ESDN:** more continuous exchange

Complementary
approaches
with similar aims

Synergies desirable
regarding
learning and
dissemination



Thank you!

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