

Toward the revised nrg4SD Strategy:
nrg4SD WORK-PROGRAMME (2008-2011)

**Adopted at the nrg4SD Summit General Assembly in Saint-Malo
(October, 2008)**

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2007, the Steering Committee of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD) decided to launch a call for proposals to evaluate the work and results of the Network and to devise a new Strategy 2008-2014 and a new Work Programme 2008-2011 based on such evaluation.

Taking into account that the Work Programme is a matter for the joint discussions and decision of the Network and can be best negotiated internally once the new Strategy is duly assumed and agreed, this nrg4SD Draft Work-Programme (2008-2011) proposal has been drafted by the nrg4SD Secretariat, primarily based on the sketch of the outline of the nrg4SD Work Programme (2008-2011) (Annex 6 of the Report “*Towards the New Strategy*”) elaborated by the team of the University of the Basque Country, (EHU-UPV) to whom the work has been adjudicated to, as well as on the previous nrg4SD work-programme (2005-2008).

In addition, the proposal has also incorporated the results of the Secretariat’s questionnaire on member’s willingness for future contributions and expectations towards the preparation and presentation of the revised nrg4SD Strategy, together with the results of the comparative benchmarking analysis carried out on governance issues.

The main sections and guidelines of the work-programme (2008-2011) coincide with those of the nrg4SD Strategy and will include wherever it is possible, a series of quantitative targets as well as recommended deadlines.

The nrg4SD work-programme 2008-2011 is composed of the following main sections: (1) Thematic priorities, (2) To be a voice & Contributing to the international sustainable development strategies and discussions, (3) Nrg4SD Products & Projects, (4) Communication & Dissemination, (5) Internal organisation of the Network: governance proposal, and (6) Conferences and other events.

The work-programme (2008-2011) will be constantly revised and updated as an ongoing document.

This work-programme (2008-2011) of the nrg4SD Network is adopted at the nrg4SD Summit of Saint Malo (SM08) on October 2008, as required by the Statutes of the Network.

1. THEMATIC PRIORITIES

As it is stated at the nrg4SD Strategy, the thematic priorities of action and partnerships of nrg4SD are to be in line with the global agenda, particularly with the multi-year programme of work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), bearing also in mind the eight Millennium Development Goals with its eighteen measurable targets set at the UN Millennium Declaration of September 2000.

Nevertheless, and despite the fact that the two previous nrg4SD Work-Programmes (2003-2004 & 2005-2008) have focused on the thematic clusters of the multi-year programmes of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the thematic cluster foreseen in the upcoming multi-year programmes of work of the CSD (CSD-16 & CSD-17) —*agriculture, land, drought, rural development, desertification & Africa*— do not correspond with the thematic priorities set up by the new Strategy of the Network.

In fact, having the nrg4SD Network obtained the observer status before the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC in November 2005 nrg4SD has been mainly focusing on Climate Change issues, as it is the case of the nrg4SD Summit “Regions & Climate Change” of Saint Malo (October 2008).

As to the relationship with the Millennium Development Goals, the nrg4SD Network and its member regions should specially focus on its seventh Goal (target 10): Ensure environmental sustainability by increasing access to water and sanitation.

Every year, the Network should confirm the thematic priorities globally and continentally, during the Network’s annual General Assembly meeting or the corresponding continental level meetings.

Accordingly, this work-programme proposes to select 2 or 3 subject areas where the Network excels. The following three global thematic priorities are suggested for the period 2008-2011.

- Climate Change, with special attention to the preparation of the nrg4SD contribution to the post-Kyoto phase.
- Biodiversity.
- Water & Sanitation.

In addition, a programme reflecting the thematic priorities of the continents should also be developed at the **Continental level**.¹ In view of the priorities highlighted by nrg4SD members, two to three continental thematic priorities are defined for each Continent at the nrg4SD Summit (October 2008).

Concretely, the proposed thematic priorities for Europe, in line with the priorities set up by the EU for the coming two years, are biodiversity and sustainable production and consumption, including ecoinnovation and technology transfers.

The thematic priorities suggested for Australia and North America are clean technologies & sustainable consumption.

The proposed nrg4SD thematic priorities for the Continents of Africa, Asia & Latin America for the period 2008-2011 are waste management, water and biodiversity.

¹ Possibility which is included at the nrg4SD Statutes (Article II).

2. TO BE A VOICE & CONTRIBUTING TO THE INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND DISCUSSIONS

The nrg4SD Network is gaining a voice internationally. Actually, the **accreditation process** of nrg4SD before the United Nations is advancing rapidly: Being already accredited with the *observer status* before the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC: (since November 2005) and the United Nations Environmental Program's Governing Council /Global Ministerial Environmental Forum, UNEP GC/GMEF (since February 2007), the nrg4SD Network is currently in the process of obtaining the *observer status* before the United Nations Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC.

The two main objectives of the nrg4SD Network during the upcoming three years to gain a voice internationally would be the following.

- The recognition and accreditation of the Network as an **Inter-Governmental Organization** (IGO) before the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- The creation of a **special constituency** by the United Nations and, particularly, the UNFCCC, in which regional networks like nrg4SD would participate representing the contributions and positions of regional governments during the discussions and debates on climate change that will take place during the Post-Kyoto negotiation process.

Nrg4SD will contribute as much as possible to all international or global sustainable development strategies that are being developed and discussed at the international level, including the continental level, especially in relation to UN organizations such as the UNFCCC, UNDP, UNEP, CSD, etc.

These contributions will take mainly the form of written official positions of nrg4SD in relation to the concrete issue, of reports on the experiences of the regions on a certain matter, as well as of side-events organised in the framework of relevant international conferences or sessions in the field of sustainable development.

The Network will also take part in all relevant consultation processes launched in relationship with its thematic priorities by both international and supranational continental organisations, or on its own initiative.

The nrg4SD shall decide on a regular basis, at what international Forum it should be present regarding each of its thematic priorities. In the field of climate change, nrg4SD shall send its contributions to the global consultations launched during the post-Kyoto process, or on the initiative of the Network.

3. NRG4SD PRODUCTS & PROJECTS

The final Strategy Report "*Towards the New Strategy*" elaborated by the team of the University of the Basque Country headed by Dr Joxerramon Bengoetxea concludes that, despite the fact that the Network is gaining a voice internationally, "*it still has to*

*prove how it can contribute and add value to the global agenda and how it can mobilize on the ground concrete cooperation projects between developed and developing member regions”.*² It also concludes that there is a lot to improve as regards the Network’s products and tools like capacity building, policy papers, list of best practices or exchange of experts. It also underlines that cooperation projects between members or between the Network and International Organizations have not really been explored.³

As it is stated at the sketch of the Work-Programme, **the new Strategy “implies a shift in the priorities of the Network: the main focus is to develop products or projects which are going to add value to the Network and its members, suggesting policy recommendations, contributing with its expert advice, enhancing cooperation between them and accessing sources of finance from relevant international institutions. To the extent that the network can valorise from this experience, it will be able to press for recognition at international bodies and it will become attractive to prospective members”.**⁴

In an attempt to further explore, focus and refined future nrg4SD products, the current work-programme 2008-2011 identifies the following actions to be taken.

a. Partnerships

It is a priority for nrg4SD to work together in concrete cooperation projects between regional governments, therefore the Network will continue fostering effective bilateral and multilateral partnerships among the regional governments of the world, mainly between its members regions and associations of regions.

Partnerships should also be promoted together with and involving UN bodies, other international organisations, international associations, networks and stakeholders.

Moreover, multilateral partnerships and cooperation projects such as the Protocol of Intentions signed between the nrg4SD Network and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the establishment of a framework programme of multilateral co-operation to favor sustainable development at regional level for Latin America and the Caribbean should be encouraged in other continents and also involve other international actors.

In addition, nrg4SD will continue exploring and signing partnerships in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding agreed and signed between nrg4SD and the Hub for Innovative Partnerships of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as a step towards a territorial approach to fighting climate change. Particularly, nrg4SD and its member regions should foster the participation at the program that it is being launched by the UNDP seeking to develop a new financial climate change mechanism

² Point 17 of the Report “Towards the New Strategy”

³ Point 16 of the Report “Towards the New Strategy”

⁴ First paragraph of “Part One: General Priorities and Actions” of the Sketch Work- Programme

to assist around 50 developing regions designing and implementing their Integrated Territorial Climate Plans (ITCP), together with other partners.⁵

As to the year 2008, **climate change partnerships or pilot cooperation projects to be signed between the UNDP and nrg4SD member regions** are to be presented for approval at the nrg4SD Summit of Saint Malo (October 2008).

b. Capacity Building initiatives

Nrg4SD should aim to organize, **at least one Capacity Building project every year** in the areas of adaptation and mitigation on Climate change, biodiversity and Water & Sanitation, with the participation of member regions from developed and developing countries.

In addition, nrg4SD shall organize **at least three capacity building workshops within the Network every year**, such as specialized seminars, smaller Conferences or workshops focusing on best practices, even by video-conferencing. At least one of those capacity building workshops should be held every year (ideally one per Continent) at technical or expert level while another thematic capacity building Conference should be organized every General Assembly at a political level.

c. Organizing and participating at events

The nrg4SD Network will organize global and continental nrg4SD conferences and will also seek to participate at key international conferences and session, as well as sustainable development events organized by its members.

A list of nrg4SD conferences, as well as other key international and members' conferences, side-events, seminars and workshops where the Network is planning to participate in the coming three years is included at the end of this work programme.

⁵ According to this UNDP program to develop the capacity of regions in developing and implementing their Integrated Territorial Climate Change Plans (ITCPs) and face up to the double challenge of mitigation and adaptation to climate change, program partners would support regions or sub-national authorities in the following areas.

- Know-how and **good practice** exchanges between the United Nations, national governments, regions and the private sector etc.
- Conception and provision of **methodological tools** and techniques necessary for the drafting of ITCPs
- **Training** on how to use these tools, as well as how to put in place a strategy and prepare an ITCP
- Assistance to select projects to implement ITCPs and identify appropriate regulatory and financial instruments: **public policy / investment projects**
- Technical assistance to facilitate access to **new financial mechanisms**.

d. Developing an updated list of best practices

Nrg4SD shall adopt and maintain an **updated list of best practices** provided by its members on sustainable development issues.

The List of regional best practices will not only strengthen the exchange of experiences and relationships amongst members of the Network but will also enrich the contribution of regions and the Network itself to the global discussions and debates being held on the sustainable development.

The list of best practices will be published at the nrg4SD Website.

e. Adopting and implementing Policy Papers

The Network will develop and work on the policy papers already adopted, such as on water, sustainable development strategies or renewable energies.

New policy papers will be adopted on the major themes of this work-programme. Nrg4SD policy papers could also gather best practices from its members and focus on concrete recommendations, resulting from the Network's technical capacity building initiatives and the information provided by its members. Nrg4SD policy papers could also be drawn up in cooperation with other UN bodies, such as the UNDP or UNEP. The best policy papers could be presented at international events.

As to the year 2008, the nrg4SD policy paper on climate change is to be approved during nrg4SD Summit of Saint Malo (October 2008).

Member regions are responsible for the implementation of these policy papers in their own policies and may also represent the Network in relevant forum discussing and presenting the policy papers.

The policy papers will be taken as living-documents which will be developed, adapted and implemented in the regions as well as in partnerships and cooperation projects.

New and additional external funding, resources and assistance should be explored, identified and seek by the Network and its members in order to promote the above defined actions. Particularly, nrg4SD should identify & send **applications in response to the Call for proposals issued by international organizations**, such as the EU call for proposals for non-state actors.

4. COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION

As it is stated at the sketch of the Work-Programme, the nrg4SD Network is nothing without the contribution of its members. The Network needs to innovate and create knowledge by drawing more from the potential offered by its current and prospective members. Members must be more proactive. Nrg4SD needs to generate know-how, valorise it and transmit it better.

The current work-programme 2008-2011 identifies the following communication and dissemination actions or commitments that would be required from the Network and its members.

4.1. Communication actions within the Network (Internal Networking)

The relationships amongst members of the Network should continuously be strengthened by exchanging experiences and good practices amongst the members of the Network and informing about their preferences for products, projects, initiatives, mainly through the nrg4SD webpage and actively interacting with the Network through the Secretariat and the Continental Focal Points.

Concretely, the current work-programme 2008-2011 identifies the following communication actions to be undertaken.

- **Members' preferences for products, projects, initiatives.** Each member should clearly state and fill up the Secretariat's questionnaire on member's willingness for future contributions and expectations, in order to promote joint concrete actions through cooperation agreements and partnerships between members.
- **Best practices.** Members should identify and notify their best practices within the Network every year through their Continental Focal Points, in order for the Network to prepare an annual list of best practices.

Members should annually present their best practices to the corresponding Continental Focal Points, which should then present their Continental proposals to the Secretariat. The Secretariat should prepare a report for the STEERING COMMITTEE to decide. The final list of best practices of the Network would need to be updated every three years through the Continental Focal Points in close cooperation with the Secretariat, under approval of the STEERING COMMITTEE.

- **Members' updated contact information and news** on sustainable development initiatives should be provided to the nrg4SD Secretariat on a regular basis.
- **Awareness-raising about the Network.** With a view to make known widely the activities and the initiatives undertaken under nrg4SD, all members will include a reference and information on the Network in their convenient domestic publications, documentation and cooperation projects as well as a link to the nrg4SD webpage —www.nrg4sd.net— in their respective web pages.

Members should also inform the Secretariat every year on what they have done to inform about nrg4SD within the region/association of regions and to implement the Network's proposals and initiatives within their regions/associations of regions. Each member should have an internal plan or strategy to inform relevant actors on the existence and activities of the Network:

peer departments in the regional government, local authorities, state administration, relevant NGOs, relevant business, experts and consultants, universities, etc.

Nrg4SD shall produce different materials providing information on the Network as such (i.e. leaflet or information package), reports on issues of common interests as well as articles to be distributed openly.

The nrg4SD webpage —www.nrg4sd.net— is a key element to promote and facilitate this communication among the members of the Network. Nrg4SD members are committed to contribute to the content of this webpage by providing pieces of information considered of interest for the Network and other visitors. In order to support and take full advantage of all these actions and initiatives, the nrg4SD Secretariat, together with the Continental Focal Points, should adequately organize, update and distribute the above information provided by members at the nrg4SD Website (at the open area or the private “members’ corner” area), as well as at the E-Newsletter.

Additionally, updated information on the Networks’ activities, participation in major international Conferences and Summits, interviews with member regional representatives and other relevant news should be included at the nrg4SD Website and the E-Newsletter.

The Steering Committee should decide about the need for additional communication actions, such as awareness-raising campaigns, elaboration of leaflets and brochures, elaboration of Plans of action for boosting the use of the nrg4SD Website and E-Newsletter, on an ongoing basis.

4.2. Dissemination actions about the Network: Membership and External Networking

Membership

Nrg4SD will continue working for the increase of active membership ensuring not only a geographical balance throughout the planet but also a balance among developing and developed regions.

The participation of all members of the Network in all nrg4SD initiatives and activities will be fostered.

A campaign to attract new members should be decided by the Steering Committee within 2009 on a proposal from the Continental Focal Points.

In addition, each member should commit to bring into the Network a new member from a different World region, for the next three years.

External Networking

Nrg4SD will collaborate with other international networks or associations, institutions, organisations and other stakeholders committed to sustainable development, paying special attention to the collaboration with other international associations of regions at the sub-national level.

Nrg4SD shall also further explore the possibilities of its representation by other agents. Taking into account that, since March 2007, nrg4SD represents the Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR) in the area of sustainable development, the Network will approach those regions which are members of associations of regions of FOGAR but are not yet members of nrg4SD, with a view to attract new memberships and promote partnerships.

The participation of nrg4SD in international events, such as the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Commission on Sustainable Development of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (CSD) sessions in New York will serve to contact and work closely with other organizations.

Nrg4SD will continue exploring ways of cooperation with international organisations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding agreed and signed between nrg4SD and the Hub for Innovative Partnerships of the UNDP, or the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under the umbrella of the Protocol of Intentions signed with the nrg4SD for the establishment of a framework programme of multilateral co-operation to favour sustainable development at regional level for Latin America and the Caribbean.

At continental level, nrg4SD shall promote the collaboration with associations of similar nature, such as the Environmental Conference of the European Regions (ENCORE).

The nrg4SD webpage —www.nrg4sd.net— is also a key element to promote and facilitate communication with other external bodies, Networks and interested persons.

5. INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE NETWORK: GOVERNANCE PROPOSAL

5.1. Background

In the spring of 2007, the Steering Committee of nrg4SD decided to evaluate the work and results of the nrg4SD Network and to devise a new Strategy for the years 2008-2014.

The Governance of the Network has been one of the main areas analyzed at the Evaluation process, being one of results that, although the nrg4SD Network has flexible

and efficient decision-making systems and practices, it has still to improve its governance.

Concretely, the final Strategy Report prepared by the team of the University of the Basque Country headed by Dr Joxerramon Bengoetxea states the following on point 28, under the heading of *Areas for improvement towards the New Strategy*.

Point 28 of the Report “Towards the New Strategy.”

*28. As regards, the **governance** of the Network, some problems have been detected: Network members do not always inform the Secretariat of relevant documents, agreements, or initiatives... The functions of the Focal Points and their relationship to the Secretariat should be clearer. The whole issue of maintaining the Secretariat or the Treasury by one member of the Network instead of having a permanent Secretariat like most of the other Networks, or the location of these two functions – treasury and secretariat - in different members should perhaps be re-examined; the responsibilities of the Focal Points could do with more clarity. Members of the network who are not represented in the STEERING COMMITTEE seem to be relegated to a second rate membership. They could have a greater role in the General Assembly. Generally, functions should be clearer, and there is too little horizontal network communication. There are no major problems with the frequency of meetings but rather with their routine aspect and the lack of political involvement by some members, which means these meetings are not always strategic and forward looking.*

Subsequently, the nrg4SD Secretariat elaborated and presented a first draft of a comparative “Benchmarking on Governance” document at the nrg4SD Sao Paulo meeting held on 13 March 2008. Following that meeting, the nrg4SD Secretariat has completed the final comparative document entitled “Benchmarking on Governance” (annex 1) and has come up with the following “Governance Proposal.”

5.2. Proposal to set up Internal Commissions

Internal Thematic and Geographical Commissions could be set up for the coming years, through the existing Continental Focal Points of the nrg4SD Network and in close coordination with the Secretariat.

Currently, the nrg4SD Standing Rules provide the possibility to establish Internal Commissions in any subject matter in the field of SD.⁶ In line with the priorities set up at this Draft Work Programme (point 2), the two main thematic Commissions or Working Groups to be created would focus on Climate Change and Water & Sanitation.

In addition, the nrg4SD Secretariat proposes setting up Geographical Commissions through the existing Continental Focal Points of the Network, as it is the case of some of the organizations analysed at the Benchmarking on Governance. The final aim of the Geographical Commissions would be to have one representative region/association of regions of each Member State in each Continent.

⁶ Nrg4SD Standing Rules, article IX

5.3. Political representation and periodicity of internal nrg4SD meetings

Within 2009, nrg4SD should decide whether it needs to revise the representation and periodicity of its internal meetings and its Standing Rules, in the light of the benchmarking with the other relevant Networks.

With respect to member's representation at nrg4SD meetings, the current nrg4SD Standing Rules state that the normal representative of the member regions shall be a Minister or a figure of similar level of representation according to the internal governing structure of the member region.⁷

The political commitment of regional representatives at nrg4SD meetings is critical and should be encouraged. It is not enough that representatives of regions should have the capacity or the mandate to represent their government; they must also have political responsibility and leadership to be able to present initiatives and to think strategically.

As to the periodicity of internal nrg4SD meetings, the nrg4SD Secretariat proposes the following.

- Proposal to held Summits every two years, where members should be represented at the highest political possible level
- Proposal to held Continental meetings at least every years BY PRESENCE OR BY VIDEO CONFERENCE
- Proposal to held two Steering Committee meetings a year. One Strategic Steering Committee meeting with ministerial participation at the end of the year (coinciding with the COPs) and one meeting with a more technical character during the first semester of the year.
- Maintaining an annual Ordinary General Assembly and the possibility to celebrate Extraordinary General Assemblies.

6. CONFERENCES & OTHER EVENTS

The nrg4SD Network will organize global nrg4SD conferences as well as other continental or sub continental conferences such as the Latin American and Caribbean nrg4SD Conferences.

The Network will also seek to participate and organize side-events at key international conferences and sessions. For these occasions, nrg4SD will define an integral approach of its participation in these international conferences by accompanying its side-events with a contribution of the Network to the concerned conference in the form of a report or a position paper, for example. This integral approach will include a programme of meetings to contact other relevant bodies or networks present in these conferences or sessions.

⁷ Nrg4SD Standing Rules, article II

In addition, the nrg4SD will also participate at sustainable development events organized by its members.

The Network shall prepare a chronogram of actions to be undertaken in the upcoming three years for the next Steering Committee meeting. Concretely, during 2008-2011, nrg4SD could organize and take part in the following not exhaustive list of nrg4SD conferences, as well as other key international and members' conferences, side-events, seminars and workshops.

2008

- Second nrg4SD World Summit (Saint Malo, Brittany, 28-31 October)
- OLAGI Summit. Workshop on water and sanitation. (Cuenca, Ecuador, December, 2008)
- UNFCCC-CoP14 (Poznan, Poland, 1-12 December)
http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php
- Nrg4SD Steering Committee meeting (together with CoP-14)

2009

- nrg4SD Steering Committee and Ordinary General Assembly meeting (dates and venue to be defined)
- V Water World Forum (Istanbul, Turkey, March 2009)
http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/fileadmin/WWF5/Fair_Expo/English/EN_brosur.pdf
- CSD-17 (New York, 2009)
- UNFCCC-CoP15 (November-December, 2009)
- Nrg4SD Steering Committee meeting (together with CoP-15)
- Upcoming Global Civil Society Forum and Special Session of the UNEP Governing council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) (dates and venue to be defined)

2010

- Nrg4SD Steering Committee and Third nrg4SD World Summit (exact dates and venue to be defined)
- CSD-18 (New York, 2010)
- UNFCCC-CoP16 (November-December, 2010)
- Nrg4SD Steering Committee meeting (together with CoP-16)

2011

- Nrg4SD Steering Committee and Ordinary General Assembly (dates and venue to be defined)
- CSD-19 (New York, 2011)
- UNFCCC-CoP17 (November-December, 2011)
- Nrg4SD Steering Committee meeting (together with CoP-17)

For detailed information on activities held each year by nrg4SD, the “Annual Report of Activities” of the respective year will be attached to the Work Programme 2008-2011.
