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## **Coordination Challenges and Innovations in National Sustainable Development Strategies Based on a 19-Country Analysis**

Integrative approaches to political decision-making have been an ever-present challenge in the pursuit of better government. Since the World Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, one manner in which strategic and coordinated action for sustainable development at the national level has been pursued is through national sustainable development strategies. Current thinking views national sustainable development strategies as representing a transition from the traditional fixed plan towards operating an adaptive system that can continuously improve. It is this type of process that nations at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) were asked to formulate, elaborate and begin implementing by 2005.

To contribute to the growing body of knowledge on national sustainable development strategies, 19 developed and developing countries were studied to identify the key challenges, approaches and innovations in the strategy process. Specific aspects of the strategy process researched included leadership, planning, implementation, monitoring and review and cross-cutting aspects including coordination and participation. This paper presents the research results specifically pertaining to coordination aspects. Country-level research was conducted on an independent basis using publicly available documents and literature, complemented where possible by feedback from government representatives and other experts. Despite some true progress made, the findings indicate that nations are still at the early stages of learning toward effective strategic and co-ordinated action. Few countries are acting truly strategically. Many challenges remain in the continuous cycle of strategic management. Key coordination challenges that emerged from the study included:

- Coordination with the national budget expenditure and revenue generating process;
- Coordination with the sub-national and local sustainable development action; and
- Coordination with other national-level strategy processes.

These challenges are discussed in detail in this paper, along with the innovative approaches and tools observed in the 19 countries used to address these coordination challenges.