



**Irish Landscape Institute Submission to the Department of Education & Skills
Consultation on a National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development
(ESD)**

September 2013

1. Comments on the Department of Education & Skills background paper:

Landscape Architects are uniquely skilled in providing creative solutions to the problems facing our planet and society. I would hope we could be given an opportunity to demonstrate this in assisting with the formulation of this policy.

Some comments on the background paper:

A clear understanding of sustainable development needs to be established as part of the education system. It is easy to misinterpret 'development' as 'construction' rather than an evolution towards sustainable communities (overlapping business, social and ecological communities).

The proposal for the content of the National Strategy for ESD is essentially contained in one paragraph on page 4:

"The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development will detail the contribution that the education sector and other stakeholders are making towards the promotion of education for sustainable development in Ireland in the context of the Our Sustainable Future strategy. It will also identify a number of measures intended to ensure that current activity levels are sustained and, where possible, enhanced in order to strengthen provision in this area."

I've underlined two parts of the paragraphs above (hopefully you can see them). To simply identify what is already being done by the education sector and encourage enhancement 'where possible' is extremely weak and a may be interpreted as a lack of commitment. This also does not accord with the (slightly) more particular provision of Measure 46 in 'Our Sustainable Future' that proposes the National Strategy for ESD "*integrate ESD into all areas of the curriculum in schools and encourage cross-curricular learning*". The National Strategy for ESD needs to identify not only where provision of ESD is currently being made but also commit to identifying where there are gaps and proposing specific measures and timescales for filling those gaps.

The background paper seems misguided in terms of timescales. By 2020, little more than the short-term (0-5 years) Measures outlined within 'Our Sustainable Future' can be implemented; long-term measures (10+ years) are out of the question and medium-term measures (6-10 years) will have barely commenced.



A further implication for timescales in implementing 'Our Sustainable Future' is that Education for Sustainable Development needs to begin with the institutions and individuals who will deliver that education, establishing programmes and frameworks for delivery.

In the realm of spatial planning and construction education, ESD needs to be established as a foundation for all third level education courses in planning, design and construction (ie as an intense and unsegregated foundation year), with a view to a much more integrated approach amongst built environment professionals such as ourselves. For too long we have learned our professions in isolation from each other and then tried - and often failed - to work together when we leave college and enter the real world. ESD is an opportunity to readdress this and for the professions to understand, respect and work with each other from the outset. This would also help to pave the way towards a more efficient construction industry along the lines of Building Information Modelling and the objectives of quicker, cheaper and better. This in turn feeds back into other aspects of 'Our Sustainable Future' such as the greening of public procurement and the efficient expenditure of limited public finances etc.

2. Submission - Key points (extracts from DES submission template)

What is the key priority for making education for sustainable development (ESD) a reality?

Ensuring adequate training and development of professionals in the built or natural environment. Ensure the public are aware of their part in the development and achievement of objectives.

How can ESD be most effectively embedded at every level of the education system?

Resources and initiatives must be provided at Government level (both local and national) and at other levels such as at universities, public and private institutions, and the public. It is particularly important that children and young adults are aware of the possibilities to ensure a sustainable future. The ILI Education Working Group would be prepared to develop this aspect.

What are the key challenges relating to this objective?

Provision of appropriate resources and initiatives

How can the public awareness of ESD be promoted?

Development of real public consultation based on the Aarhus convention



Additional Submission to the Department of Education & Skills as a result of a workshop session in November 2011.

Our comments on the submission are as follows and are based on the various documents provided by the Department along with notes from the discussion on the 19 th November 2013 at the workshop organised in the Department’s headquarters in Marlborough Street.

Due to the linkages between the Government’s policies, our comments also relate to the document ‘Our Sustainable Future’ published by the Department of the Environment in 2012.

Please note that our comments are in addition to our letter and submission on 27 th September.

Reference	Comment	Note
General Documents provided by the Department	<p>In terms of the further development of the Department’s plans, we strongly suggest that clarity is provided on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliverables and actions in sufficient detail to allow tracking of progress ○ Timescales for actions to ensure each action is given a clear set of milestones and that these are tracked <p>A project management approach needs to be adopted to ensure the delivery of the aims of the planned programme.</p>	
Key Questions for discussion at the workshop.	<p>In terms of the infrastructure namely the school buildings, we recommend that they are used outside school hours to provide facilities for the community.</p> <p>In common with practices in Europe generally, the facilities of the school are used to provide education facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ outside of the usual curriculum, ○ outside of school hours to provide child minding facilities (from 7 am to 7 pm) <p>with the assistance of the local community</p>	
Key Questions for discussion at the workshop.	<p>Innovative designs for all new buildings are welcome and we would strongly recommend that the setting of the school buildings, the schoolyard design, and the location of the site are tasks which require</p>	



Reference	Comment	Note
	<p>the skills of a landscape architect to assist and preferably to lead the design of the outdoor spaces and courtyards.</p> <p>Collaboration between the architects designing the buildings and landscape architects designing the landscape and facilities of the site would provide a learning environment that includes both the interior and exterior of the school.</p> <p>The Irish Landscape Institute would be available to assist the process and a list of our members is available on our website at http://www.irishlandscapeinstitute.com/find-a-landscape-architect/</p>	
Key Questions for discussion at the workshop.	<p>The development of the collaboration outlined above would be facilitated by its' inclusion in the tender documents for the design and construction of school buildings and sits facilities.</p> <p>We would request that the tender documents are amended to ensure these collaborations are part of the requirements of the design and construction.</p>	