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**Governance for Sustainable
Development.**
*Governança per al
Desenvolupament Sostenible*

Barcelona Workshop
April 18 - 19, 2002



Generalitat de Catalunya
Consell Assessor per al
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


Preface

The Consell Assessor per al Desenvolupament Sostenible – CADS (Advisory Council for Sustainable Development) is an advisory body formed by well-known personalities from different spheres of Catalan society. It was created by the Government of Catalonia and intended as a body providing participation and advice for the Government on the policies, plans and programs that could have an impact on the environment and on Sustainable Development. Our aim, however, is also to contribute towards reflection on the conditions making it possible for the culture of sustainability to run throughout Catalan society and its decision-making processes, ensuring that sustainability becomes a basic element of the social capital of our country.

Because of this, the Council suggested that the IIG undertake a project to study, debate and disseminate useful information concerning what type of governance was necessary to move toward more sustainable development, and to achieve it effectively. A workshop to reflect on the governance for sustainable development (GDS) was convened in Barcelona between 18 and 19 April 2002 within the framework of this project, in the hope that various European GDS experts would help us to discover, debate and disseminate ideas which should help us to act more effectively in Catalonia, in Europe and throughout the world to resolve the great present and future challenges with which we are confronted. What seems clear is that we (institutions, citizens, scientists) cannot remain indifferent in a time of change, opportunities and great challenges; a time of uncertainties but also, and above all, a time of great expectations. And adapting to this situation of change implies the assumption of a new set of values needed to make the new concepts that appear on the ideas stage compatible: globalism, identity, governance, and sustainability.

The main function of politics today is to find new ideas for the new settings, and to ensure that these ideas have sustainability as a main supporting axis. Sustainability, the values of progress, conservation of natural and cultural heritage and quality of life should form the basis for achieving a new ethic, shared on a local and global scale. The culture of sustainability should be a basic element in the social capital of countries, and should become an integral part in the decision-making process.



In this new world order which appears to be establishing itself, a balance must be sought between economic realities, diverse cultural and social realities and environmental conditions that are the keys for the survival of the planet. This balance is necessary on a world scale, but also on a local and national level. This synthesis will have to be attained in Catalonia as well.

To that end, it is becoming necessary to establish a new type of governance that would allow us to move forward decisively towards more sustainable development. I suppose I am not saying anything new when I note that calm and deep reflection is required on the difficulty of governing a society like ours, which is increasingly complex and in which we have to face debates and conflicts that are intimately linked to sustainable development. We probably have no other answer than to take on unsustainability if we want to understand socio-economic conflicts. And this is done, ultimately, via education, critical thought and the assumption of an emerging system of values.

Sustainable development is, in fact, a “revolutionary” concept and an inevitable process that will involve changes in many of the established stances of society, the economy and politics. To begin with, what is clear is that we cannot approach a model of sustainable development without adopting an innovative vision (in ideas, processes and styles) that takes us far from the cultural stereotypes that still dominate our perception and capacity for analyzing reality. This vision has to lead us from the awareness that there is a need to act, to the awareness that we have the opportunity to act – not only governments or public institutions, of course, but society as a whole. Ultimately, sustainability is something for everyone and we have to be aware of that.

Therefore, education or learning within certain values will be decisive for establishing awareness about sustainable development. Sustainability is also a question of rights and duties - of shared responsibility - both at an individual and a collective level. It is not a question of education seen simply as an activity for transmitting knowledge, but making citizens capable of understanding the problems, and of proposing viable solutions.

Sustainability is linked to the exercise of responsibility and commitment to the country of today and that of tomorrow. Responsibility and commitment that must increase our sense of community and allow the building of a country – a planet – from the awareness that what we are doing now will not jeopardize the development of future generations.

Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual, President of the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development (CADS)





Introduction

In the run-up to the Johannesburg Summit, the International Institute on Governance (<http://www.iigov.org>) conducted a series of workshops on governance and sustainable development; the most recent of these workshops, convened on April 18 and 19, 2002 with the support of the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Development (CADS) of the Regional Government of Catalonia, focused more specifically on governance as the pillar of sustainable development.

In fact, the April 2002 Barcelona Workshop on Governance for Sustainable Development was able to draw on the White Paper on European Governance issued by the European Commission in July 2001, and build upon the IIG's participation in the subsequent conference organized by the Commission's General Directorate for the Environment under the title "The White Paper on Environmental Governance: What's in it for the environment?" The follow-up workshop in Barcelona brought together a group of some twenty experts to reflect and formulate recommendations and proposals on how to enhance the functioning of global and regional governance in support of sustainable development.

As the point of departure, it was understood that "sustainability" implied a distribution of costs and benefits of diverse activities compatible and complementary across temporal, territorial and sectoral dimensions; "governance for sustainable development" referred to the existing and necessary capacities of collective action – whether public, social or private - to bring about the transition towards sustainable development. Such institutional capacities cannot be taken for granted, nor do they necessarily flow from democracy as such, but call for the conscious intervention of citizens and of governmental and non-governmental actors. And while a governance underpinning is of the essence for sustainable development, not all structures and processes of governance are sufficient to provide it. One of the basic objectives of the Barcelona workshop was thus to discuss and identify which specific modes of governance were called for to achieve sustainability.

Indeed, the necessary changes called for by sustainability (be they political, organizational or behavioral) will not be realized or imposed by governments simply by virtue of their authority. Viable changes can only be achieved by



building upon the innovative and creative capacities of social actors, and on their commitment to their implementation by collectively agreed measures.

The Barcelona workshop sought to consider governance for sustainable development from six distinct but interrelated perspectives:

1. Global governance for sustainable development;
2. The role of the regional (subnational) dimension within a local-global axis;
3. Management and prevention of socio-environmental conflicts;
4. Culture of sustainability,
5. Information in governance for sustainable development
6. Indicators of institutional capacity towards sustainable development.

As suggested by the workshop participants, the background papers that served to guide their discussion, along with the different working group conclusions, are reproduced in the form of the present publication.

Joan Prats, IIG Director



List of Abbreviations

A21: Agenda 21.
CEC: Commission of the European Communities.
CSD: Commission on Sustainable Development.
DG: Directorate General.
EC: European Council.
EEA: European Environmental Agency.
EEB: European Environmental Bureau.
EU: European Union.
GDP: Gross Domestic Product.
GNP: Gross National Product.
IMF: International Monetary Fund.
LA21: Local Agenda 21.
MP: Members of Parliament.
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization.
OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
RIO+5: Refers to the Earth Summit follow-up meeting in 1997.
RIO+10: Refers to the Earth Summit follow-up meeting in 2002.
UN: United Nations.
UNCED: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.
UNCSD: United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development .
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.
UNEP: United Nations Environmental Programme.
WCED: World Commission on Environment and Development.
WTO: World Trade Organization.



Papers

The summit process. Moving towards sustainable development governance

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Abstract



This paper aims to provide a brief background to the summit process to date, focusing on the discussion on governance for sustainable development. The paper looks primarily at global institutions and frameworks.

Preliminary analysis: the process so far

The following section focuses on proposals from a paper on “Sustainable Development Governance” presented at the third Preparatory Committee

* NGO perspective.





(Prep Com) meeting for WSSD. The report outlines some principles for good governance, e.g. gender equity, human rights, access to justice. It calls for an evolutionary reform process. It includes the following references:

Environment

UNEP – a reference to UNEP’s International Environmental Governance (IEG) working group, which made some proposals for reform. However, in reality it made few practical commitments.

Development

UNDP – a reference to strengthening the Capacity 21 initiative to build SD at a national level. Stronger environmental integration implied through UNEP joining the UN Development Group.

World Bank – a reference to better Poverty and Environment linkages, e.g. PRSPs, and signs of better institutional integration, e.g. the recent WB, DfID, EC, UNDP report on “Linking Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management: Policy Challenges and Opportunities”.

Trade and Finance

WTO – Some text deals with the WTO, but substantive debate was blocked by the US, G77, Japanese and Australian governments – who argued for the Doha process to run its course before further examination. However, the need for greater institutional coordination was identified.

IMF - called to build partnerships with other international bodies and ensure its programs “take full account of sustainable development priorities” . .

Institutional Integration

Horizontal integration

UN - Some clearer proposals are appearing regarding strengthening SD governance across the UN as whole, including all agencies and Agenda 21 task managers. GA reform was considered. Some of the proposals may require UN Charter amendment.

CSD - ECOSOC and its other commissions should be better tied to the CSD. Universal membership and wider government ministerial representation were proposed.

Vertical integration

Regional Economic Commissions – proposed to become regional SD commissions.

National – calls for establishing further national SD councils, national SD strategies and reforming economic systems, e.g. removal of perverse effect subsidies

Discussion: Additional Proposals

Environment

Many groups were disappointed with the outcomes of the UNEP meeting. Of particular concern was the failure of governments to commit a greater level of funding and universal membership. Also, Principle 10 (on participation) was not addressed.

UNEP - While there is some agreement “to strengthen the role of UNEP” there are few practical commitments. Groups have been lobbying for either the establishment of a World Environmental Organization, transformation of the Trusteeship Council, or enhancing UNEP to become a UN Agency. The latter would secure mandatory annual financial contributions from government members. The UN University “Interlinkages” initiative on IEG indicates this is their preferred option, since it could be achieved more gradually rather than introducing a new institution and another layer of bureaucracy.

Multi-lateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) - Clustering MEAs could be further extended along: administrative lines, e.g. Party conferences; functional lines, e.g. GEF = finance; thematic/issue lines, e.g. chemicals conventions; regional, e.g. regions undergoing desertification; and communicational lines, e.g. GEO report.

Stronger compliance regimens should be implemented through clearer regulatory, monitoring and enforcement systems, e.g. Environmental

Ombudsman, World Environment Court (e.g. ICJ Environment Court).
Simplified national reporting requirements. Further clarification of WTO/
MEA relationship.

Participation - environmental reporting and policy implementation processes
require improved stakeholder involvement. Including Principle 10, regarding
access to information for decision-making, participation and justice in
relation to environmental matters, e.g. Aarhus Convention.

Development

WB – poverty and environment links, moving from rhetoric towards action.
Tackling top-down decision making in frameworks, e.g. PRSP matrix.
Greater strategic integration, e.g. NSSDs, PRSPs, CAS (OECD DAC
initiative).

UNDP – more integration and follow through, e.g. national reports and
Human Development Reports. Ensuring long-term viability of the Capacity
21 initiative.

Economics

IMF – Some progress has been made in terms of the proposed changes
in cases of financial crises – access to SDR and developing bankruptcy
law (based on the US Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Law). However, they are yet
to be utilized. Major proposals focus on increasing participation and
transparency for civil society, enhancing financial reporting (simplified and
technical support), tackling corruption (International Corruption
Convention). Also the need to tackle top-down decision making within
certain frameworks, e.g. Enhanced HIPC.

WTO – On-going push for greater accountability, participation and access
to information, reframing central objectives. UN/WTO relationship.
Framework agreement for Trans-National Corporations, e.g. OECD
Guidelines, ILO standards.



Integration

Horizontal integration

UN - Security Council reform is essential to make progress on peace and security issues, an area frequently sidelined in the SD agenda. Other proposals include establishing an Environment Security Council to tackle the impact on the environment of conflict and natural disasters, environmental refugees and the use of environmental resources as tools of war.

Participation – clarification of principles of civil society engagement, e.g. Stakeholder Forum’s MSP book.

ECOSOC and the CSD - Clarification of relationship. Removal of ECOSOC and strengthening the CSD. Improved reporting and follow-through on commitments.

Vertical integration

Regional – Regional commissions to introduce regional summits at Jo’burg +5. Stronger local/national input.

National – Failure of “joined up” governance is true in developed countries as well as developing and transitional countries. Democratization is only part of the answer.

Local – exchange of good practice, not only between local communities but also for enhancing national to global processes.

Recommendations: Possible Outcomes

At Johannesburg

MEAs - Further capacity, ratification and implementation of existing MEAs

Finance - Further funding for UNEP, GEF and UNDP Capacity 21

Regional strengthening – establish soft forums on SD at regional levels

UNCSD – ten year timetable on new and emerging issues – especially regarding millennium development goals.

Beyond the Summit

Establish an ongoing Governance process - for example by introducing an inter-governmental and/or multi-stakeholder working group to follow-up the debate on global governance.

Implementing wider organizational and institutional reform - particularly regarding the UN, IFIs and WTO.

Principles into practice - practical implementation of good governance principles, e.g. the Convention against Corruption, linkages to human rights conventions, etc.

Participation - clarification of the rules of engagement from civil society/ major groups. Supporting “bottom-up” processes.



1. Introduction

It is useful to start by considering what we mean by governance. The World Humanity Action Trust in their report “Governance for a Sustainable Future” describe governance as:

“The framework of social and economic systems and legal and political structures through which humanity manages itself”.

This definition describes some elements of the governance architecture, but it does not refer to what good or bad governance looks like, or the goals and aims that drive systems of governance. This paper makes an implicit assumption, that governance – public and private, local to global - should be based on principles of sustainability, as defined within the UN generally and Agenda 21 in particular.

This paper aims to provide a brief background to the World Summit on the sustainable development process to date, focusing on the discussions about governance for sustainable development. It addresses some of the proposals coming from various groups involved in the Summit. It also identifies some of the possible aspects of governance reform that may be feasible during and after the Summit.



The paper principally focuses on global institutions and architecture. However, it also touches upon regional to local governance frameworks. It examines the current debate on seeking enhanced institutional coordination and coherence, resources and participation.

2. Preliminary analysis: the process so far

This section profiles some of the initial proposals produced by the third governmental working group on sustainable development governance, which took place at the third Preparatory Committee (Prep Com) meeting for the Johannesburg Summit (25th March - 5th April 2002). The working group focused their discussion on a paper produced by the group's Vice Chairs: Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria) and Lars Goran Engfeldt (Sweden).

2.1. UNEP and International Environmental Governance (IEG)

The governance text makes a commitment to progress further the major proposals on the International Environment Governance (IEG) agenda, which came out of a separate governmental working group based on the UN Environment Program (UNEP). The seventh and final UNEP/IEG meeting made a few proposals for reform (Figure 1).

While the outcomes indicate governmental support for strengthening the UNEP, the process, in reality, did little towards increasing the UNEP's capacity or authority. This was mainly because it failed to produce further financial support for UNEP program activities. Additionally, more fundamental proposals for reform, e.g. the introduction of a World Environment Organization or enhancing UNEP to become a specialized UN agency, were not addressed substantively by the working group. The general view from the working group is to support an iterative process toward gradually strengthening UNEP 's mandate.

2.2. Development, Finance and Trade agencies

The Prep Com 3 text on governance makes broad reference to the need to strengthen the social dimension of development – integrating Sustainable Development into the policies and programs of those organizations with a “primary focus” on social issues. In addition it calls for:

- International Monetary Fund (IMF) - to build partnerships with other international bodies and ensure its programs “take full account of sustainable development priorities of developing countries and avoid adverse affect on the environmental and social goals”;
- World Bank – (only one indirect reference) to ensure policy coherence between Poverty Reduction Strategies and National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs).

Figure 1. Outcomes of UNEP International Environmental Governance working group

90 Environment Ministers met in Cartagena, Colombia (12-17th February 2002), for the 7th Special Session of the Governing Council and 2nd Global Ministerial Environment Forum. It was also the final meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on International Environmental Governance.

The agreed outcomes of the meeting included:

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs): Piloting of the chemical cluster of MEAs was allowed to continue. Simplified reporting structures were encouraged, and collocation of MEA secretariats and back-to-back meetings were supported. No additional reference was made to a World Environment Court to enhance enforcement of agreements. Compliance mechanisms of MEAs were recommended to adopt the voluntary guidelines produced by UNEP

Environment Management Group (EMG): It was agreed that the EMG should take a stronger coordinating role for environmental activities throughout the UN. The EMG will report annually to UNEP’s Governing Council. On a related point, UNEP will join the UN Development Group.

Global Ministerial Environment Forum: Opened for universal participation of governments with consideration for allowing universal membership at the 22nd session of UNEP’s Governing Council. The GMEF’s role includes: Environmental analysis; policy advice; promoting international cooperation; assisting development of international environmental law; enhancing interlinkages between MEAs; and reviewing EMG reports. They also called for the establishment of a new Intergovernmental Panel on Global Environmental Change (mandate and modalities to be decided).



Capacity building and technology transfer: Stronger capacity was recognized as a requirement for developing countries to participate effectively in IEG. Governments called for arrangements to be established for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, as well as an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building. This will be assisted through strategic relationships between UNEP, UNDP, and GEF, among other institutions.

IEG/UNEP: It was recognized that environmental governance should consider international as well as regional and national levels. Some governments called for the establishment of a World Environment Organization or for UNEP to become a specialized UN agency, the options were left open. For dealing with environmental issues that touched on wider areas, e.g. fisheries, forests, wider ministerial representation, was requested. It was agreed that future strengthening of environmental governance should take into account "common but differentiated responsibilities" of countries.

Finance: Adequate, stable and predictable finances were defined as necessary to strengthen UNEP. For administrative activities it was agreed to seek additional funds from the General Assembly. However, UNEP's Environment Fund was more controversial. Governments agreed to continue funding on a voluntary basis. A UN indicative scale of assessment was encouraged, but the agreement retained an opt-out clause that allowed contributions on "any other basis identified by the member state." Additional voluntary contributions would be sought from the major groups, particularly the private sector. Governments called for greater tie-in between the Global Environment Facility and UNEP through strategic partnerships.

Participation: Although there was some confusion regarding the terminology to use when referring to "civil society" or "major groups" or "stakeholders", there was support for wider stakeholder engagement in GMEF and UNEP operations. The agreement allows for formal oral and printed statements, as well as for the creation of a civil society forum to meet alongside the GMEF/GC meetings. Additional finance for capacity building and participation from organizations in developing countries was not addressed. Rule 69 of the GC "Rules of Procedure for major group participation" would be reviewed, for possible amendment by a working party of the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Priority governance areas for the UNEP GC relating to WSSD included: Strengthening the scientific basis of decision making; further implementation of the MEAs and the Montevideo Program on Environmental Law; building



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- World Trade Organization (WTO) – to promote the “full and effective” participation of all countries in the WTO. Particularly, enhancing the capacity of developing countries to participate in trade negotiations. In addition, to promote better understanding of the links between trade, the environment and social development. Substantive debate around the WTO and trade was largely blocked by the US, G77, Japan and Australian governments during Prep Com 3 – who argued that the Doha process needed to run its course before the international community could examine further reforms. However, the need for greater institutional coordination was identified;
 - UNDP – UNDP’s Capacity 21 initiative to better support the production of NSSDs, and increase national technology and capacity. Although there is no reference to other UN development agencies and programs, the text pushes for a stronger national development focus through learning from the experiences of the UN Development Group and UN Development Assistance Framework.

2.3. Integration

The text makes some clearer proposals regarding strengthening SD governance across the UN as whole, and all agencies and programs, including:

- Establishing a strategic partnership between UN, Financial institutions and WTO towards supporting sustainable development implementation;
- A high-level, inter-agency partnership promoting effective collaboration between international institutions;
- Strengthening the Agenda 21 Task manager system;
- Developing inter-agency arrangements on highly crosscutting thematic areas, e.g. freshwater, energy;
- Stronger inter-agency coordination, e.g. the collaborative partnership on forests, and UNEP joining the UN Development Group;
- Stronger tie-in between the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).

With specific regard to ECOSOC, the text recommends that the Council’s



high-level segments should involve development, finance and other ministers according to the nature of issues being discussed. It also calls for ECOSOC to take into account all relevant aspects of the UN's work and transmit any relevant reports to the CSD.

It advises the organization of a sustainable development segment during high-level meetings, in order to consider CSD and other entity reports, as well as to give guidance to future activities, and encourage ECOSOC's expert committees to submit reports to the CSD. It proposes that the CSD continue to coordinate and monitor outcomes, increase its policy formulation, ensuring that the ECOSOC and the other commissions are better tied to the CSD.

It calls on the CSD to address new and emerging issues, to provide a better forum for the integration of policies, and to facilitate implementation, while also carrying out a review of progress, financial commitments, analysis and exchange of experience. Universal membership of the CSD and wider government ministerial representation were also proposed.

At the regional level, the Regional Economic Commissions are proposed to become regional sustainable development commissions. Also, improved regional coordination is suggested via facilitating the commissions to involve UN agencies, regional development banks as well as other bodies. It encourages regional activities such as reporting on national implementation, as well as exchange of best practice, and further to establish regional programs – such as the New Partnership for Africa (NEPAD) Program.

Key points in the text regarding the national level include proposals for establishing further National Councils for Sustainable Development, including stakeholder involvement and policy coherence with PRSPs, ensuring that National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs) are in place by 2005, as well as a thorough reform of national economies, e.g. removal of perverse subsidies.

At the local level, there is short text regarding support for local governments in their local Agenda 21 process. Similarly, there is a text on the participation of civil society, which only includes a brief reference to enhancing partnerships in all major groups at all levels but this is not clarified with specific commitments.

3. Discussion: Proposals

As Section 2 indicates, the current governance text coming out of the Summit process is quite broad. However, there are some key gaps. Particularly weak are the references to local level participation. More importantly much of the text is not action orientated, nor does it offer tangible commitments, e.g. financial support for enhancing governance frameworks. Instead, it indicates a series of good intentions.

The text will be negotiated in full at Prep Com 4 in Bali (27th May – June 7th). At Prep Com. 3 governments merely gave the Summit secretariat separate comments on the current document. Of particular concern is what will remain in the text and what will be lost. Another concern is that it is unlikely anything new can be added to the document at this late stage.



This section looks at some of the ideas coming from various groups. Of key interest to many groups is the need for greater horizontal and vertical integration across governance systems (see 3.3).

3.1. Environment

Many groups were disappointed with the outcomes of the UNEP meeting. Of particular concern was the failure of governments to commit a greater level of funding and practical commitments such as establishing universal membership of UNEP. Also Principle 10 (on participation and access to information) was not addressed in the formal process.

UNEP

Groups have been lobbying for either the establishment of a World Environment Organization, representation in the UN Trusteeship Council, or enhancing UNEP to become a specialized UN Agency, taking into account Article 59 of the UN Charter. The latter would secure mandatory annual financial contributions from government members. The Institute for Advanced Studies of the United Nations University (UNU-IAS) “Inter-linkages” initiative on IEG indicates that this option might be preferable, since it could be achieved more gradually, rather than requiring the introduction of a new institution and another layer of bureaucracy. The IAS also questions whether a more centralized subsidiary body to the General Assembly could be established, under Article 22



of the UN Charter, since the environment could be seen as too intrinsic to the UN's mandate to be placed solely under a specialized agency. Both proposals are aimed towards environmental centralization. However, this would not reduce the need for environmental programs, staff and offices in non-environment related agencies and institutions, e.g. World Bank, ILO, WHO, FAO, UNU, UNESCO, UNCTAD, IAEA, OECD, which all have environmental components. Mainstreaming of the environment into all agencies represents one of the successes of modern environmental policy, even if they may have areas requiring improvement (IAS 2002).

Finance

The Global Environment Facility is playing an increasingly effective role in pulling together fairly distinct institutions (WB, UNDP, UNEP), and encouraging a greater role for regional development banks and NGOs. However, wider investment for the provision of Global Public Goods, such as the climate, oceans and biodiversity environmental areas needs to be addressed.

Multi-lateral Environment Agreements (MEAs)

Clustering of MEAs could be further extended along: Administrative lines, e.g. meetings of Conference of Parties; functional lines, e.g. GEF = finance; thematic/issue lines, e.g. chemicals conventions; regional groupings, e.g. similar countries undergoing desertification; and communicational lines, e.g. UNEP's Global Environment Outlook (GEO) reports. The way that clustering is framed should be understood as a process rather than as a goal in and of itself. Policy makers will need to weigh the pros and cons of integrating different aspects of MEAs. For example, fragmented and autonomous MEAs have been highly innovative over the last 30 years, while more traditionally structured international organizations have been slower to evolve (IAS 2002).

The specialized nature of each MEA means that there is only limited scope for thematic clustering. However, the regional level might provide a better platform for MEA integration along thematic lines, since regional governments are more likely to be facing similar environmental issues and be parties to similar agreements. Moves to integrate MEA reporting should only involve very small clusters at first, e.g. forest related MEAs, before trying to more widely extend the principles (IAS 2002).



Precautionary principle

The politically sensitive nature of risk assessment and application of the precautionary principle make it essential that science and research institutes, independent of state or commercial interests are fostered. Greater support is therefore needed for independent, internationally accepted bodies to provide scientific advice, monitoring and policing of resource use policies (WHAT 2000).

Compliance

Stronger compliance regimes should be implemented through clearer regulatory, monitoring and enforcement systems, e.g. through an Environmental Ombudsman. Some have proposed that UNEP's Executive Director of UNEP (currently Klaus Toepfer) should take on this role. A further option is to introduce a new World Environment Court, or to strengthen one of the existing environmental bodies, e.g. International Court of Justice's Environmental Chamber.

A number of governments have requested that there be simplified national reporting requirements, as well as greater technical assistance and capacity building to support verification, information gathering and monitoring of implementation at the national level. Ensuring compliance will also require the further clarification of the relationship between WTO trade agreements and MEAs.

Participation

Establishing a system of effective environmental reporting, policymaking and implementation will require improved stakeholder involvement at all levels. GEO, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and other reporting processes are beginning to adopt this approach.

3.2. Development, Finance and Trade agencies

It was hoped that the International Conference on Financing for Development in early March 2002 (Monterrey, Mexico) would produce some major proposals for institutional reform in development, aimed at advancing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and assisting strategic commitments for implementation during WSSD. However, institutional issues were controversial from the outset of the meeting. The US and the EU were opposed to demands for tangible institutional reform in international financial architecture. What remained were appeals to involve developing countries more in the decision-making processes of international financial institutions, and to strengthen the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly and ECOSOC (Maier 2002). In addition there was reference to negotiating and finalizing as soon as possible a United Nations Convention Against Corruption and to promote cooperation for eliminating money laundering.

Figure 2. Monterrey Consensus Chapter on “Staying Engaged”

The chapter contained some notable suggestions, including:

- The United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, with the World Trade Organization, should address issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation, as a follow-up to the Conference. This meeting should include an intergovernmental segment, as well as a dialogue with civil society and the private sector;
- The current high-level dialogue on strengthening international cooperation for development through partnership, held every two years in the General Assembly, will consider financing for development-related reports coming from the Economic and Social Council and other bodies, as well as other financing for development-related issues. It would be reconstituted to enable it to become the intergovernmental focal point for the general follow-up to the Conference and related issues. The high-level dialogue would include a policy dialogue, with the participation of the relevant stakeholders, on the implementation of the results of the Conference, including the theme of coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development;

· Governments should continue to improve domestic policy coherence through the continued engagement of ministries of development, finance, trade and foreign affairs, as well as central banks.

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/aconf198-3.pdf>.

Improving the relationship between the United Nations and the WTO regarding development was proposed, particularly to strengthen the capacity of these two organizations to provide technical assistance and follow-up to countries in need of support (Figure 2). Nevertheless, there were a number of perceived weaknesses in the Monterrey Consensus, as indicated by the following Global NGO forum statement presented during the meeting:

*“We are not part of the Monterrey Consensus. We do not consider it a sufficient basis for combating poverty or for advancing economic, social and cultural rights...With respect to systemic issues, we affirm that the prevailing neo-liberal framework undermines sustainable development, and fails to address the needed reform of the system of global economic governance...The governments have talked about reforming the World Bank and IMF and WTO but this is not reflected in the Consensus. Why Not?”*Civil Society Statement to the International Conference on Financing for Development, Friday March 22nd 2002.

World Bank (WB)

The WB is making some progress on encouraging greater strategic integration, e.g. as occurred in the recent OECD Development Assistance Community's pilot initiative looking at coherence between NSSDs, Poverty Reduction Strategies and Country Assistance Strategies. There are other signs of recent cross-institutional coordination, including the recent WB, DfID, EC, UNDP report “Linking Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management: Policy Challenges and Opportunities”, which is the first time these agencies have all worked together. Such activities could be applied not just in reporting processes but also in programmatic areas. However recent studies still call for tackling top-down decision-making, e.g. the WB continues to retain fairly tight control over the development of the initial framework for PRSPs



IMF



There has also been some progress in the IMF such as proposed changes to deal with financial crises – including enabling the use of Special Drawing Rights and developing international bankruptcy law (based on the US Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Law) during national economic crises. However these proposals are yet to be implemented and have not been well received by all governments. In addition there have been on-going calls for increased transparency and civil society participation. Other areas include: Adopting a simplified financial reporting process, and offering greater technical support for countries on financial reporting processes. There is on-going work to tackle corruption (public and private) and money laundering, e.g. through ratification and implementation of the International Corruption Convention. Like the WB, some groups have identified a need to reduce top-down decision-making and the heavy-handed conditionality associated with IMF programs.

UNDP

This institution has not been well received by critics, but some are calling for more integration, e.g. national reports and human development reports, and follow-through by national offices, e.g. ensuring long-term viability of the Capacity 21 initiative (Stakeholder Forum 2002). It also needs to take a stronger role in development coordination at the international level, through the UN Development Group – bringing together not only UN agencies but also external development bodies.

WTO



Another round of trade negotiations was initiated at Doha last November. During Doha, the industrialized countries avoided making concrete commitments on their own domestic governance. This meant that questions of improving market access for poor countries and reducing domestic tariffs and subsidies, e.g. agriculture, were left untouched. The threat of a trade war between Europe and the US, which imposed tariffs on steel imports, also cast a pall on a new trade round (Squire 2002). Some progress was made, such as support for a trust fund to assist training of developing countries within policy and program negotiations. However it is clear that sustainable development was not set as an overarching issue in the Doha process.



The WTO Committees on Trade and Environment, and Trade and Development – initiated as a means to encourage coherence between these areas – have been criticized as “talk shops,” lacking sufficiently clear jurisdiction to make concrete or obligatory policy recommendations. The UNEP and some of the MEAs have observer status at the WTO and, as an intermediate solution, this role could be extended to a clearer advisory/supervisory role, potentially useful when addressing inter-relationships between International Environmental Law and trade agreements. As in the other global organizations there is an ongoing push for greater accountability, participation and access to information by the WTO, as well as a more fundamental call to reframe the WTO’s central objective of trade liberalization. Proposals include increasing UN/WTO interaction, and some even propose bringing the WTO more clearly under the auspices of the UN.

Markets and economies

The Western market model of production and consumption, suggests that markets are seen as the drivers of innovation, prosperity and a better future for all. But there are some groups who argue that markets are too detached from society and collective well-being, “our morality does not mesh with our economic system...we cannot ask the market to define a desirable future” (WHAT 2002). These groups recognize that markets need governance for their own effective operation (through WTO, and regional trade blocks), as well as to ensure that they deliver environmental and social benefits. To tackle this governance gap, there has been a growing call for the development of a Framework Convention for Trans-National Corporations based upon OECD Guidelines, ILO standards, Agenda 21 and UN human rights conventions. However this area is clearly very controversial. The agreement might be viewed by some NGOs as simply another MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment) that was widely criticized when it was proposed by the WTO and OECD, less “progressive” businesses may be unhappy about the potential financial implications of fulfilling the obligations of such an agreement. It was partly a result of these problems that Kofi Annan opted to take a voluntary approach by introducing the Global Compact. Despite some backlash, the Global Compact may yet prove to be a worthwhile venture. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) has recently been brought into the process help provide a reporting standard for those companies signing up to the Compact. Nevertheless, third party, independent, verification of the company reports that are produced will remain essential if the Compact is going to gain greater external legitimacy.



Proposals for reforming macroeconomic governance is another related area. Since 1992 there have been strong calls for the removal of socially and environmentally perverse and market distorting subsidies. The EU currently spends 25% more subsidizing farmers through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) than it does on development assistance. Yet almost all of the \$35bn allocated to the CAP provides subsidies to large commercial farms. Unless industrialized countries can get their own market systems in order, it will remain hard to encourage good practice in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

The NGO Forum presented a paper on “Systemic Issues” at Monterrey, which made several recommendations regarding macroeconomic governance, which are worth consideration:

- Developing countries must have equal voice and vote in standard-setting and economic decision-making processes.
- Ensure the effective participation of civil society organizations representing diverse sectors and interests, including workers’, women’s and indigenous and rural peoples organizations.
- All stakeholders must commit to put in place debt workout mechanisms that uphold the following principles: Neutral decision-making, protection of debtors’ basic needs, co-responsibility of debtors and creditors, transparency and civil society participation.
- Developing countries must have the right to choose their own capital accounts and exchange rate regimes. Those countries under crisis must regain autonomy to implement macroeconomic policies appropriate for recovery.
- All countries should have the right to implement policies which de-emphasize export-led development in favor of domestic demand-driven growth, regional integration and cooperation.
- Adoption and implementation of a UN Convention on Corruption and the transfer of illegally acquired wealth to the countries of origin.
- Stakeholders must commit to the implementation of progressive taxation systems (Frade, 2002)

3.3. Integration

“One of the keys to establishing and mainstreaming coherency within sustainable development governance lies in the relationships between the institutions of different regimes, including, environment, trade, health, and peace and stability”. Institute of Advanced Studies, 2002

Within much of the discussion on governance reform there is a common call for greater “horizontal and vertical integration” between and within institutions and processes. This can be loosely defined as:

- Vertical integration: collaborative action between different levels, i.e. tying in both top-down and bottom-up approaches, e.g. local and subnational to national processes or national to global processes.
- Horizontal integration: Balancing economic, environmental and social objectives through cooperation between different sectors or departments both internally, e.g. between different government departments of finance, trade, health etc., and externally, e.g. between international institutions, such as UN, International Financial Institutions and the WTO (WHAT 2000).

One key argument for greater integration (in both directions) is a problem known in governments as the “Administrative trap”, which recognizes that;

“Administrative structures are typically organized vertically between sectoral, or functional, ministries and departments (agriculture, education, health etc.). This works reasonably well until the system encounters a problem of a very broad and highly integrated nature – such as desertification. Then it tackles only the parts which are identifiable within each ministry and each ministry tackles the symptom as a problem in, and of, itself” ACIPA, 1986

The Sustainable Development paradigm also appears to support integrated or “holistic” governance processes, *“The development of strong and clear complementarity and compatibility between different international regimes and bodies of international law will both help to create, and reflect, a balance between the three pillars (economic, social, and environmental) of sustainable development.”* (IAS 2002). However, it is important to note, as the IAS study points out, that integration in and of itself does not ensure the establishment of good governing systems. One needs to clarify the purposes, risks and benefits of increased institutional cooperation and coherence before undertaking a process of establishing stronger linkages.

3.3.1. Horizontal integration

Figure 3. Background to UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 identifies the setting up of the CSD; it says: *“In order to ensure the effective follow-up of the Conference, as well as to enhance international cooperation and rationalization the intergovernmental decision making capacity for the integration of environment and development issues and to examine the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels, a high level Commission on Sustainable Development should be established in accordance with Article 68 of the Charter of the UN.”* Agenda 21

The CSD's Mandate (Resolution 1993/207) is:

- * To monitor progress on the implementation of Agenda 21 and activities related to the integration of environmental and developmental goals by governments, NGOs, and other UN bodies.
- * To monitor progress towards the target of 0.7% GNP from developed countries for Overseas Development Aid.
- * To review the adequacy of financing and the transfer of technologies as outlined in Agenda 21.
- * To receive and analyse relevant information from competent NGOs in the context of Agenda 21 implementation.
- * To enhance dialogue with NGOs, the independent sector, and other entities outside the UN system, within the UN framework.
- * To provide recommendations to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Representatives of 53 states have been elected by the ECOSOC as members of the CSD bureau for up to three-year terms.

There are nine Major Groups identified to take an active role in implementation of Agenda 21, in addition to governments. These are: Youth, Women, Farmers, NGOs, Local Government, Business, Academics, Indigenous People, and Unions. They are each referred to the Agenda 21 chapters: 24 to 32.

Some proposals for further horizontal integration include:

UN

Security Council reform is seen as essential to make progress on peace and security issues, an area frequently sidelined in the SD agenda, e.g. broader or rotating council membership. Other proposals include establishing an Environment Security Council or Trusteeship Council to tackle environmental impacts of conflict and natural disasters, environmental refugees and the use of environmental resources as tools of war (IAS 2002, WHAT 2000).

Figure 4. Some key outcomes from CSD

Forests - Established an Inter Governmental Panel on Forests (1995) and an International Forum on Forests (1997). Agreed to the setting up of a UN Forest Forum under the General Assembly as a separate body. (2001)

Marine - Supported the Washington Global Plan of Action on protecting the marine environment from land-based activities (1996). And set up a new process in the General Assembly to discuss oceans (1999).

Production and Consumption - Set up a work programme on sustainable consumption and production (1995). Set up a multi-stakeholder group under Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) to look at voluntary agreements in industry (1998). Agreed new consumer guidelines to include sustainable development (1999).

Agriculture - Set up an ongoing multi-stakeholder group on sustainable agriculture and rural development (2000).

Trade and Investment - Called for greater co-operation of the CSD with the governing bodies of the Bretton Woods institutes and the WTO (1994). Informally highlighted to governments the problems of the draft Multilateral Agreement on Investment (1997). Agreed to the establishment of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (1997).

New issues - Added in effect three new chapters to Agenda 21 on Energy, Tourism and Transport (1997). Developed an International Work Programme on Sustainable Tourism (1999).

Reporting - Introduced national reporting to the CSD and started an integrated indicators programme (1994). Set a firm date of 2002 for governments to produce their National Sustainable Development Strategies (1997).

Participation – Multi-stakeholder dialogue formally established (1997). All stakeholders are allowed to address the 1st, 2nd and 4th PrepComs and the Johannesburg Summit.

Adapted from Dodds, 2002

CSD

There is no question that the CSD has been the most interesting UN Commission and has developed the most advanced interaction with Major Groups (Figure 3). There are critics of the CSD, who claim it is merely a talk-shop, dealing with too many environmental interests, too many environment ministers, not enough development ministries, too many northern NGOs, and providing no machinery for implementation. It has not reviewed the adequacy of financing, particularly towards the target of 0.7% GNP, nor has it assessed the transfer of technologies as outlined in Agenda 21 - an often-voiced criticism of G77 countries. While these are all legitimate concerns, the CSD has also seen a number of successes (Dodds 2001) (Figure 4).

The Governance text proposes universal membership of the CSD. However, if this is carried through governments will need to consider the implications on the 54-country member ECOSOC to which the CSD is currently accountable. With greater reporting of UN Commissions and agencies to the CSD, one might begin to question the continued value of ECOSOC in general. More realistically there is certainly room to improve reporting and the follow-through on commitments by governments, international agencies and organizations alike.

In terms of increasing the role of the functioning Commissions (Social Development, Status of Women, Sustainable Development and Population and Development, plus the Commission on Human Settlement, which is a standing committee), there could be a more coordinated approach between the different UN Commissions where each would also strive towards an agreed multi-year thematic program of work, they could work on a set of common meetings and establish joint programs of action wherever possible.

The Inter Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) was not discussed in the Working Group Governance paper. It was set up: to streamline existing inter-agency coordination machinery; allocate and share responsibilities for Agenda 21 implementation by the UN system; monitor new financial requirements of UN organizations for Agenda 21; Assess reporting requirements that are related to the implementation of Agenda 21; and make recommendations on streamlining. The involvement of the UN Agencies as Task Managers for the different chapters of Agenda 21 helps ensure a more cooperative approach and the CSD does offer one of the few places where it is possible to review the work of different agencies outside of their own governing bodies. The IACSD has also proved a good model of how to integrate the work of different UN agencies in the follow-up to a UN Conference. However, there has also been opposition by some UN bodies about how far they should be engaged or required to produce work programs. Their attitude has even been quite hostile at times, to quote one UNESCO official: "we have our own governing bodies". Although this is true, the nature of Rio in particular was to ensure that we had a more integrated approach to sustainable development. It does raise a serious question: if the UN General Assembly endorses the CSD decision, which it does each year, then should a UN Agency be able to just disregard a decision of the GA? In future the IACSD could report to the CSD Intersessional on their interagency work regarding subjects under discussion. The Chair of the IACSD should then be questioned by governments and allowed to make recommendations for further work.

3.3.2. Vertical integration

The Regional level

Beyond becoming Regional Sustainable Development Commissions, the regional Commission could be further utilized in the global reporting process. Furthermore they could introduce Regional Summits five years after WSSD to avoid the expense and the dissipation of a global meeting while retaining the momentum of the process. The Commissions need to ensure stronger local/national input as well as coordination between other key regional "pillars", including UNEP's regional offices, Regional Development Banks, regional trade blocks, e.g. ASEAN, and regional conventions, e.g. transboundary pollution agreements, as well as sub-regional groupings, e.g. the Mediterranean CSD (IAS 2002, Dodds 2001).





National and local levels

All governments need to work to tackle the failure to build united governance structures. The role of national councils for sustainable development, subnational and local councils (typically Local Agenda 21 groups) needs to be enhanced, and involve the participation of different major groups at each level. At the national level the framework established in Mexico is an interesting example, often cited by the Earth Council, which has established platforms of sustainable development at each of these levels. The experience of this and other countries needs to be further exchanged and best practice built into mainstream policy-making. The study by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) of Local Agenda 21 programs across the globe also provides an insight to some practical experiences at the local level. One could argue that this is useful not only for local authorities and local communities to learn principles of good governance for sustainable development, but at other scales as well.

Participation and decentralization

One need only look at a proposed Summit initiative to see why broad participation from the outset of a Sustainable Development project is crucial. The “New Partnership for African Development” (NEPAD) – in principle a very good initiative aiming to help the governance of African economies – has recently been hit by civil society groups because of the lack of transparency in its development phase. Critics question the aims of the program, particularly the heavy liberalization focus and the use of multilateral loans (which they say will start a new cycle of African debt). At a recent African dialogue, convened by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, NEPAD was criticized for its marginalization of women, excessive market focus, and its lack of people-focus. Delegates stated that poverty reduction and increased decentralization would require greater grassroots ownership of NEPAD, *“No civic society, church, political party, parliament or democratic body was consulted in Africa when NEPAD was put together. Instead the first we heard of it was when Thabo Mbeki presented it in Davos at the World Economic Forum”* Secretary of the Southern African Anti-privatization Forum.

Another, not dissimilar example, is the Global Compact – proposed by Kofi Annan at Davos in 1999. While also intended to improve governance, the initial stages of the Compact only included business and government representatives. Only later were other groups invited to participate in the process. Several non-profit lobby groups said it indicated the corporatization of the UN and of busi-



ness using the UN logo to “green wash” the public about their real corporate conduct. In both cases, if such groups had been involved early on, NEPAD and the Global Compact would have had a better chance of evading some of the criticisms regarding lack of transparency and credibility. Both processes could have faced the more challenging questions regarding their structure head on, before the processes were too far developed.

There needs to be UN-wide clarification of principles of civil society engagement. There is currently considerable variation in the rules of participation across the UN, and while this may not be a problem in itself they need to be clarified and made more widely available. The increase of corporate power and the rise of influential NGO movements presents a great challenge for democratic systems.

By addressing this challenge pro-actively, rather than reacting to pressures from powerful stakeholders or engaging in various, rather unconnected individual initiatives, governments and inter-governmental bodies will also avoid their own disempowerment. The challenge is to provide them with the forums to bring their wisdom to the table effectively and equitably. Agreeing advanced mechanisms of transparent, equitable, and legitimate stakeholder participation will ultimately strengthen (inter) governmental institutions.

For MSPs to better contribute their potential, governments and intergovernmental institutions will need to develop more consistent policies as regards to stakeholder participation. At the moment, different bodies are experimenting with different structures and mechanisms and it is often difficult for stakeholders to understand what is expected of them, what they are being invited to do, and how reliable that role will be. Clearly participation is not a simple process, however some general principles and ground rules should be applied to ensure more constructive and balanced dialogue. Multi-stakeholder processes are now being written into many other areas of the UN’s work. Stakeholder Forum has recently produced a review of these and an easy guide on how to do them¹ (Dodds 2002). Some proposals, particularly regarding improving participation in the CSD, include:

- Admitting new Major groups - There are obvious additional Major Groups asking for recognition including the Education Community – since there is

¹ This can be found on www.earthsummit2002.org/msp and will come out in a book form by Earthscan in January 2002. : "Multi-Stakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability. Beyond Deadlock and Conflict" by Minu Hemmati, with contributions from Felix Dodds, Jasmin Enayati, and Jan MacHary

a chapter on education and nearly all chapters mention the role of education. Others mentioned include the media, faith groups and the elderly.

- Reporting - Most Major Group focal points do not represent or have contact with a major part of their constituency. To be able to ask them to report in similar way as governments is unrealistic. However they could report on successful pilot projects and encourage discussion around the possibility of replication. In many cases they may need governmental input to help create the right conditions.

- Dialogues and outputs – Governments should involve stakeholders more effectively, for example by challenging them to discuss implementation of policies and decisions in multi-stakeholder settings. This would alert stakeholders to their responsibilities, generate and encourage their commitment and forge new partnerships.

4. Recommendations

The following section briefly summaries some of the more likely outcomes for the summit and beyond.

4.1. At the Johannesburg Summit

Resources – Governments should commit to further support and funding for UNEP, the GEF, technology and capacity building to help further the ratification and implementation of existing MEAs (e.g. CBD, FCCC, POPS, PICS, straddling fish stocks, forest principles), as well as additional support for specific task managers - UNDP Capacity 21 initiative.

Regional Commissions – a move to be established as Regional Sustainable Development Commissions, adopting a stronger regional coordinator role for Sustainable Development – linking national and global processes.

MEAs - Further capacity, ratification and implementation of key MEAs, i.e. biodiversity and biosafety, climate change and carbon dioxide emission (Kyoto), POPs and PICs, migratory and straddling fish stock and forests.

UNCSD – Establish a five to ten year timetable for new and emerging issues with a special focus on making progress on the Millennium Development Goals (poverty; health – HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, child and maternal mortality; education; environment; gender; water supply; sustainable development)

Participation - Clarification of rules of engagement from civil society/major groups in the CSD.

4.2. Beyond the Summit

It is unlikely that wider questions of organizational and institutional reform - particularly regarding the wider UN, IFIs and WTO - will be addressed at the summit. Therefore, the summit needs to set in place a process to ensure that this takes place afterwards. For example the summit could introduce an inter-governmental, and/or multi-stakeholder working group which would follow-up the debate on global governance (WHAT 2000).

The group could carry out some of the following activities:

- Audit of global governance architecture - Undertake an audit of the present governance institutions and global conferences, focusing on innovation and practical action – bringing together all key stakeholders in dialogue.
- Participation and decentralization - Further work will be required to investigate how to improve bottom-up processes and the wider application of common rules of engagement from civil society /major groups.
- Developing new proposals and recommendations for governance reform
- On-going monitoring of summit outcomes – including agreements on governance reform
- Sustainability indicators – further development and application, e.g. national reports

On a more practical level we would expect to see the principles outlined at the summit put into practice! This would involve the implementation of policy and legislation such as the Convention against Corruption, as well as clearer policy linkages between WSSD commitments and human rights conventions.

5. Open questions

“The present course is unsustainable and postponing action is no longer an option. Inspired political leadership and intense cooperation across all sectors will be needed for both existing and new policy instruments to work” GEO 2000

Do we actually need to reform our current governance frameworks? It is clear that policies, processes and technical solutions aimed at making progress on sustainable development have been emerging over the last ten years.

However there seems to be a continued failure within governance structures to shift from policy rhetoric to mainstream sustainable development implementation. Most governments recognize that there have been some blocks to progress since 1992. It is arguable that a lot of this has to do with a lack of political will and the current frameworks of policy making which have prevented more substantial progress.

“Implementation has become the most problematic aspect of sustainable development policy. Complicated political dynamics and logistical barriers stand in the way” (DESA 2002)

If, as is increasingly recognized, this governance gap is real, we need to identify the specific elements which need to be changed. Alternatively it may mean we need a more fundamental shift in our governance frameworks.

It is important to get back to some fundamental questions in order to be clear about exactly what we mean by good SD governance. A clear definition of good governance for sustainable development is essential before we can look at how to do it. Despite being criticized for being watered down the Monterrey Consensus does contain a fairly clear definition of good governance, which may provide us with a useful starting point.

“Good governance is essential for sustainable development. Sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation. Freedom, peace and security, domestic stability, respect for human rights, including the right to development, and the rule of law, gender equality, market-oriented policies, and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies are also essential and mutually reinforcing.” Draft Monterrey Consensus Section II.

I'd like to put these broad questions to those attending this meeting:

- What are the underlying principles of good governance, e.g. Rio principles, human rights, gender equity, anti-discrimination, accountability, transparency, participation?
- How do we ensure these principles are translated into mainstream governing systems?
- How should we govern sustainable development, e.g. centralized, decentralized or two-way?
- How do we ensure effective monitoring and analysis of governance frameworks?

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
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Papers

The role of the regions in the local/global GSD axis*

Francesc Morata



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Abstract

It is now assumed that the goal of sustainable development requires action at all levels of government, from the global down to the local. The now popular motto of "think globally, act locally" still captures the need to put international commitments into practice in the everyday actions of individuals in the communities in which they go about their daily lives. Besides the fact that many of the challenges to sustainability require glo-

* The term "regional" is used in the sub-national sense.





bal commitments and action to achieve them, other matters can only be undertaken successfully at the EU level, and in other cases, action by national, regional or local governments would be more appropriate.

Governance and sustainable development (SD) share a number of features. They are broad and widely shared concepts involving tensions and conflicts. Programs to promote “good governance” have been launched at various levels, from local to global. There is a long history of agendas, policies and strategies intended to foster SD, including the 1987 Brundtland Report and the UN Conference on Environment and Development of 1992.

The idea of sustainability deeply challenges the traditional division of competencies among the different levels of government. The system of governance through which decisions related to SD are taken and put into practice is of a multi-level character. Multi-level governance and network governance express the shared responsibility which is at the core of such a commitment. Therefore, the institutions and processes that work at any given level of governance can only be fully understood as part of this more extensive system of governance of which any given level forms an integral part. In the EU, cooperation between different tiers of government from the local to the European level has proved to be essential for policy success. Equally, interrelations between local/regional and larger scales play a crucial role. The sometimes fierce debate about the shifting of competencies from the national to the European or the regional level loses importance when the issue is reframed by asking how each level should best contribute towards achieving sustainable development in a system of shared responsibilities.

According to their intermediate position in the local/global axis, to their popular legitimacy and to the functions they perform, the European regions should play a strategic role in promoting sustainable development (SD), including more involvement in the decision making process both at the national and the European level.

The two first sections of the paper will review the current debate about the EU as an emerging system of multi-level governance and its implications for regional governance considering the actual or potential role of the regions as linking pins between European policy programs and local concretization of commitments to SD. The third section will stress the need to enhance regional internal capacities for governing the transition to





sustainability. The fourth one will point to some of the main policy challenges related with societal and territorial diversity in the EU multi-level system.

1. The EU as a system of multi-level governance

The European state is currently undergoing major changes. It is challenged from above, by the complex of processes captured by the term globalization (global governance is perceived to lag behind the global economy, and the global problems it carries with it); from below, by the growing relevance of subnational governments; from beside by the advance of the market and civil society (Keating, 2001, 1). As a result, the state is being restructured both functionally and territorially. Literature has focused on two main transformations (Schobben, 2000; Amin and Tomaney, 1995). The first one involves ideological change and refers to the reorientation of policy principles from the Keynesian model towards neoliberalism. The second transformation is institutional. Institutional capacity for dealing with the new social challenges implies a broader scale of societal activities than only action by government or public authorities acting alone or in a manner that is aimed at “imposing” the behavioral changes needed by means of public policy and regulations. In short, States can no longer act as “sovereign” individuals both in the international and in the domestic arena.

The concept of “governance” captures important changes in the way the function of “governing” societies is performed in contemporary societies and, at the same time, provides a useful analytical perspective for examining the functional prerequisites (or institutional imperatives) in terms of the type of governance needed to organize and manage the collective decision-making. There is a crisis of legitimacy impacting traditional notions of governance, due to a crisis of rationality in political theory and social science. The problems faced by governments and the nature of society itself now present themselves as more complex. Single responses to those problems and centralized policy approaches are no longer convincing. The social, economic and environmental context no longer provides fixed points of reference for governmental response. Both the hierarchical (formal rules, centrality, command and control imperatives) and the extreme free market approaches are undermined by those shifts.

In Europe, some relevant policy functions have been transferred to supranational institutions or are carried out on an intergovernmental/transnational basis. At the same time, institutional transformation involves the sub-state level. There are several decentralized, regionalized and federal states within the EU with regional units which enjoy substantive autonomy to carry out their own





policy strategies. Both the need to cope with central state inefficiency and the emergence of territorial identities have led to a fragmentation of territorial sovereignty into units provided with some of the characteristics of the nation-state: institutions, party system, legislative and executive functions, tax powers, public policies, citizens loyalty and, even, international projection (Morata, 2001). Furthermore, political tensions and territorial conflicts have introduced much more complexity in dealing with policy problems.

European integration has led to the Europeanization of policy-making and administrative procedures in the member states. Most of public policies are shared between the different levels of government, including the environment. Europe is at the hard-core of political debate; it is a functional arena to deal with common problems, resolve conflicts and negotiate consensual solutions. There has been a shift from state-based public policy to a more pluralistic or polycentric system in which public and private actors are taking part in the policy process. "There are many players within each policy area. Sometimes the public actors (states and political regions) are the key players, sometimes industry is, sometimes NGOs are important too. In this setting, private interest groups are active and equal participants, alongside European, national and subnational state officials" (Wallace, 1999).

In other words, the EU is far away from the conceptual framework of the sovereign state. It is not a state, but a new kind of polity. At the present time, we are confronted with a "post-sovereign Europe, a Europe of no longer absolutely sovereign states interacting with and through a Community with an independent legal order of its own which is in turn not (and not within measurable distance of becoming) a sovereign federal union." (McCormick, 1997:339). This polity is "characterized by functional and institutional specialization and the fragmentation of policies and politics." (Rhodes, 1997). There is a multiplicity of actors specific to each policy area; interdependence among them; shared goals; blurred boundaries between public and private sectors; and multiplying and new forms of action, intervention and control. Governance is the result of interactive social-political forms of governing (Rhodes, 1997: 51) which also make possible the emergence of a system of polycentric governance in which subnational units can play a more relevant role through the representation of differentiated territorial interests and the implementation of an increasing number of Community policies.

The recent literature dealing with multi-level governance claims that the EU has become a polity where authority is dispersed between levels of governance and among actors, and where there are significant sectoral variations in





governance patterns (Rosamond, 2001). According to Hooghe and Marks (2001: 4), “(...the point of departure for the multi-level governance approach is the existence of overlapping competencies among multiple levels of government and the interaction of political actors across those levels”.

Multi-level governance stresses the fact there is no a single actor capable of providing unique and universal answers to social problems. This explains why Europeanization of policy making does not lead to increasing uniformity, but to a kind of “patchwork” (Héritier, 1996), a complex mixture of different policy-making styles, instruments and institutions. The network metaphor seems particularly well suited to grasp the essence of multi-level governance: “in essence, the network approach suggests that governance should be based on looser patterns of relationships between public authorities at the different levels, associations and citizens” (Jachtenfuchs, 2001). Networks are created through mutual advantage and shared purpose but they retain the ability to adapt as problems change and new responses are learned. The approach implies not just a decentralization of government, but also an expansion of horizontal linkages in the system of governance. It also implies enhanced communication and a greater emphasis on trust and reciprocity.

Enhanced collective learning must be a key feature of the system of multi-level governance. A more inclusive approach to government would probably allow for handling transboundary problems in a more efficient way, especially with regard to those issues that do not fit in with specific competency or function, such as SD. Last, but not least, the network approach carries with it certain challenges to the parliamentary or representative system of government that is the established across the Union.

2. The regions in the EU multi-level system

One of the main effects of European integration is that it has opened the way to institutional innovation as a response to socioeconomic and political transformations. The transfer of some areas of national sovereignty upwards to the EU and the progressive dismantling of national boundaries have contributed to the transformation of established territorial boundaries and to the redefinition of traditional functions of subnational governments. In a context in which, due to economic deregulation and to public-private interdependence, decisions are no longer adopted by a single central authority, territorial actors have more opportunities to compete and to cooperate below and beyond the state. It's especially the case for regions provided with legislative powers and financial





resources. Institutional changes have led to three converging strategies at the regional level: competition for promoting new activities; the setting up of interregional networks based on common interests; and lobbying central and EU institutions (Morata, 2000).

Over the last decades, all the large member states and some of the smaller ones have established an intermediate level of government between the state and the local level, which takes very different forms. One of the main driving forces towards political devolution is the need to respond to pressures from the ground level, notably in the case of multinational states or those with strong cultural minorities (Spain, Belgium, UK). Regionalization may also be a response to pressures for state reform and democratization more generally (Spain, Italy, France). Another form of regional government merges with the local level. In several countries, it is not the regional or the provincial level but the urban metropolitan region or city region that has emerged as the motor of change and most functionally relevant unit (Keating, 2002).

Both as a result of European integration and domestic decentralization, common problems related with environmental protection, territorial planning, communications, transportation, new technologies, economic development and social cohesion alongside political and financial incentives provided by the EU enhance the role of regional governments. However, institutional and financial resources are necessary, but not sufficient conditions to promote regional development. According to current literature (Keating, 1999) this requires also other ingredients such as a strategic project, problem solving capacities, cooperative arrangements, social cohesion and an adequate economic environment. Regional authorities can strengthen their legitimacy through the promotion of cooperation networks and partnership agreements with social and economic actors. Furthermore, in order to deal with the challenges of globalization, territorial systems can reinforce each other through horizontal cooperation or taking advantage of opportunities provided by the EU.

There is a double pressure towards territorialization in Europe, from below, through public and private mobilization; and from above, through specific programs and activities aimed at stimulating regions to operate as political and economic actors of European integration. European integration fosters regional mobilization as it is offering different kind of resources (Kohler-Koch, 1997): it provides financial means; it allocates rights to be represented and access to decision making; it gives legitimacy to territorial political aspirations; and it supports claims for superior problem solving capacity.



The Commission's active networking opens new channels of influence to the regional actors and, at the same time, it is improving the rules of the game (Kohler-Koch, 1997). At the same time, the Commission takes advantage of the situation by building coalitions with regional authorities to overcome central governments resistance. Through Community initiatives such as Interreg, Leader or Urban, the Commission has fostered the creation of transnational networks at the EU level allowing for the definition of common interests and improving cooperation among subcentral actors from different member states. At present, interregional and transregional cooperation includes a number of network-organizations such as "Eurocities" (large and medium European cities), the Association of European Regions (ARE), The Four Motors For Europe (Baden-Württemberg, Lombardia, Rhône-Alpes and Catalonia), RETI (Industrial Regions) and RPM (Peripheral and Maritime Regions). A European Conference of Regional Ministers of the Environment has been created already in 1992.



At the domestic level, the increased scope of European policies has allowed national governments, vested as representatives of their states in the Council, to negotiate on matters such as agriculture, regional development, training or the environment, which, in some countries, are constitutionally devolved to the regions. However, regional pressures have led to a greater involvement in community decision-making. At present, the German and the Austrian Länder, and the Belgian Regions are permitted to represent their countries in the Council of Ministers, while Scottish and Welsh ministers participate in UK delegations.

The Maastricht Treaty also established the Committee of the Regions with rights of consultation with the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament on matters of regional concern. It has become a regular part of the EU machinery but the differences of interests and regions and among these and local authorities and its purely consultative status have limited its real powers.

As stated in the White Paper on European Governance (Commission, 2001):

"(...) Yet the way in which the Union currently works does not allow for adequate interaction in a multi-level partnership; a partnership in which national governments involve their regions and cities fully in European policy making. Regions and cities often feel that, in spite of their increased responsibility for implementing EU policies, their role as an elected and representative channel interacting with the public on EU policy is not exploited."

There is also criticism that the legislation adopted by the Council and the European Parliament is either too detailed, or insufficiently adapted to local





conditions and experience; often in stark contrast to the original proposals tabled by the Commission.

Criticism is not just focused on the Union. The principal responsibility for involving the regional and local level in EU policy remains and should remain with national administrations. But national governments are often perceived as not adequately involving regional and local actors in preparing their positions on EU policies. Each Member State should foresee adequate mechanisms for wide consultation when discussing EU decisions and implementing EU policies with a territorial dimension. The process of EU policy making, in particular its timing, should allow Member States to listen to and learn from regional and local experiences.

A complementary response at EU level is needed in three areas to build a better partnership across the various levels:

- Involvement in policy shaping. At EU level, the Commission should ensure that regional and local knowledge and conditions are taken into account when developing policy proposals. For this purpose, it should organize a systematic dialogue with European and national associations of regional and local government, while respecting national constitutional and administrative arrangements. The Commission welcomes on-going efforts to increase cooperation between those associations and the Committee of the Regions. Furthermore, exchange of staff and joint training between administrations at various levels would contribute to a better knowledge of each other's policy objectives, working methods and instruments.
- Greater flexibility. Local conditions can make it difficult to establish one set of rules that covers the whole of the Union, without tying up the legislation in excessive complexity. There should be more flexibility in the means provided for implementing legislation and programs with a strong territorial impact, provided the level playing field at the heart of the internal market can be maintained.
- Overall policy coherence. The territorial impact of EU policies in areas such as transport, energy or environment should be addressed. These policies should form part of a coherent whole as stated in the EU's second cohesion report; there is a need to avoid a logic which is too sector-specific. In the same way, decisions made at regional and local levels should be coherent with a broader set of principles that would underpin more sustainable and balanced territorial development within the Union.



The Commission intends to use the enhanced dialogue with Member States and their regions and cities to develop indicators to identify where coherence is needed. It will build upon existing work, such as the European Spatial Development Perspective adopted in 1999 by Ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development. This work of promoting better coherence between territorial development actions at different levels should also feed the review of policies in view of the Sustainable Development Strategy¹.



3. Enhancing regional governance for sustainable development

Regions act at the interface between the global, the EU and the local level. Their particular role should be the translation of sustainability principles and concepts into concrete action. In addition to their own initiatives dealing with SD concerns (environmental, social and economic development policies, territorial planning, etc.), they are often in charge of implementing international environmental agreements, and especially Community environmental policies. They are also responsible for the management of a number of Community programs related with sustainability (Structural Funds, INTERREG, LEADER, LIFE). Regional Community policy is paying increasing attention to the integration of environmental considerations into economic and social development policies and the Cohesion Fund is providing substantial resources to improve environmental infrastructures impacting on the regional level.

Alongside local governments, the regions are responsible for promoting public debate and stakeholders participation in defining the tasks and sharing responsibilities to cope with it. Drawing on the local experience, in recent years, some European regions, such as Catalonia, have launched Agenda 21 processes. The political discourse on SD has progressively led to the adoption of formal commitments at the various subnational levels of government. These commitments show the increasing relevance of sustainability at least in normative terms.

However, despite the increasing awareness about SD at the different levels of government, there is little concern about the institutional changes and capacities needed to cope with such a commitment. The prevalent focus tends to be on convincing the people that sustainability is a desirable objective, rather than examining what kinds of organizational, management, political and even social capacities are needed in order to reach it. Discussions on the issue too



¹ Communication on a sustainable Europe for a better world, COM(2001) 264 final, 15.5.01



often neglect the questions of institutional capacity and governance. The ability of a country to deal with new challenges - indeed, its ability to perceive and define these challenges - will depend on the way in which existing institutions facilitate or obstruct gathering the insights necessary to formulate and implement an adequate response. We are arguing that any society choosing to pursue a policy of sustainable development will need to create an appropriate set of institutions that will enable it to deal effectively with the implications of this commitment. We are assuming - along with the literature on sustainable development - that a transition to sustainable patterns of socio-economic activity is only possible if a set of "preconditions" is met (GDS, 2001).

While it is assumed that sustainability cannot be realized or contained within just a single jurisdiction or territorial unit, since the basic units of political actions continue to be the different territorial units of government - municipalities, regional governments, national governments and the EU - it is the institutional capacities - and political and social skills of its officials and citizens - that will determine what happens with regard to governing the transition to sustainability. But these, in turn, can only be understood in terms of the relations they have with other actors at different levels of social aggregation, representing different but overlapping political communities. In short, the adequacy of institutional arrangements will be measured in their ability to mobilize the energies and action capabilities of public and private actors at different levels of social action. In this sense, the process towards sustainability will be a product of joint multi-level collective action.

Capacity is a collective product resulting from joint effort of different public and private actors each of whom has some (limited) potential for action of relevance for the problem at hand. In this case, defining and putting into practice measures aimed at changing the present patterns of economic and social behavior, at any given level of action depends both on the joint efforts of the actors present or acting at that level, and on actions taken by decision makers operating at other levels of action - both above and below. Each level of action - whether societal or governmental - possesses only a limited capacity to deal with the problems it confronts. Higher levels of decision making depends on the inputs from below (from both public and private actors) to define problems and formulate responses to them, as well as on the implementation activities of actors "below" in putting these into practice. Lower levels of decision-making cannot or depend solely on their own to deal with problems that surpass their abilities to internalize the relevant dimensions of the problem or to mobilize the resources needed to deal with them.





Public authorities cannot impose the kinds of behavioral changes on which sustainability depends, although they are needed, with the analytical and normative inputs from actors from different levels of aggregation, to create the consensus on society's "meaning" of sustainability and to define the normative framework within which individuals and organizations can pursue their own objectives. Indeed these collective - authoritative - decisions on SD provide the normative and cognitive frame of reference, and create the opportunities and restrictions in terms of which interests are (re)defined and pursued.

The constitutional and legal framework, existing policies, the socio-economic structure of society at different levels, all are important for determining the competencies, the jurisdiction, the resources, the political and social constraints which help shape the capacities available at the regional level. They also determine - along with administrative procedures and organizational division of governmental labor - the opportunities to participate in and define the broader politico-administrative and socio-economic context; the ability to mobilize both endogenous and exogenous resources with respect to development within their own territory; and to co-ordinate or collaborate with other actors whose actions necessarily or potentially impinge on and influence the efforts of regional actors.

Sustainable development strategies - as expressed in A-21, the EU 5th and 6th EAP - are moving away from a state-centric perspective. Partnerships among various types of groups are perceived as vital. The creation of partnerships spanning the governmental/non-governmental divide is emphasized in all these strategies. The grassroots perspective - implying a people-centered bottom-up approach - is heavily emphasized in work on SD and the environmental movement, and also figures prominently in action plans and policy pronouncements (ECF, 1999). Policy documents, especially at the EU level, propose a perspective which is based on citizens participation and an acknowledgement of territorial/local knowledge and experience. A central tenet is a decentralized model of organization.



Yet in spite of a professed intention to change practices in this direction, relatively meager results have so far been accomplished. The growing acknowledgement that the centered and sectorized approach to policy making traditionally employed is faltering has given rise to questioning current theories of policy making. The multi-centric and multi-faceted nature of politics has led many policy scientists to question the ability of traditional institutional arrangements.



"Governance" suggests that these functions need not be performed necessarily or solely by governmental actors. Given the way in which our societies are politically organized - the formal rules of the game - public authority is an important factor in determining how collective problems are dealt with. Since the transition to sustainability involves making decisions that will or are intended to guide social behavior, which will need to be enforced in some way, which involve or presume the allocation of public funds, governmental action is necessary; but neither will government acting on its own be able to guarantee a successful transition. Important will be, however, how these decisions are made and enforced; how other forms of collective problem solving can be mobilized and used to change the existing patterns of consumption and production. It is important to keep in mind that these societal capabilities for problem solving, resource mobilization and conflict resolution take place within a given political and legal order, and more often than not, alongside or parallel to policy and administrative activities organized around the roles and competencies of public actors. Furthermore, governmental actors can use public resources - including law, legitimacy, acts empowering private actors and funds - to facilitate, mobilize and support the problem-solving and resource mobilization activities of societal actors.

Whichever definition of sustainability one chooses to follow, there are certain implications for the way in which society organizes itself and makes decisions on the course to be followed. With respect to the system of governance, what seems to be apparent is that a commitment to SD implies:

- fundamental changes in the behavior of societal actors with regard to the way in which we produce and consume, i.e. the organization of social and economic activities through which a society maintains and sustains itself
- Although government remains a crucial actor in determining the binding normative framework, the task of deciding on and managing the collective transition to a sustainable future is beyond the capacity of government (public authorities) acting on their own.
- On the contrary, the path to sustainability requires the activity participation of the whole range of societal actors - public and private – acting at all levels of decision-making. Only in this way can the total capacities of society as a whole be tapped and mobilized.
- This means that arrangements will have to be developed for new patterns of consultations and involvement of different groups of stakeholders in the





different phases of the collective decision making process. New forms of empowerment of citizens will be necessary. More extensive degrees of decentralization.

- To the extent that debates on and decisions regarding sustainability will generate new and intense forms of social conflicts, new mechanisms for managing and resolving these conflicts will be necessary. The nature of the process of decision-making will become a crucial focus for the institutionalization of the transition to sustainability.

- Indeed institutional capacity for the management of this transition can, to a large extent, be approached and understood in terms of the roles of different actors in organizing and managing, as well as participating in the continual process through which collective decisions are made, applied, controlled, evaluated and revised.

- A holistic perspective suggests that environmental problems can only be resolved through an integrative approach to problems while the traditional approach is based in breaking down problems into sectors and smaller units. Any attempt at setting up overarching organizational structures or problem solving methods in order to meet the demand for such a holistic view will typically meet with resistance. This resistance is due to standard operating procedures, but also to turf battles and organizations rivalries, which place within and between most organizations in the competition for prestige and resources.

- The sectoralization and separation of problems can lead to a very narrow focus on particular environmental problems, obscuring the larger picture. The point is that SD presents a challenge to this instrumental-analytic decision making process - avoiding marginalization of the environment in relation to traditionally important issues such as industrial investment and employment. Integration of environmental issues in this sense would mean something else than considering environment as just one, more or less important, factor in policy making. As the terms SD implies, a key element of the move toward a sustainable future is the ability to integrate effectively economic and environmental considerations in decisions at all levels of collective action. If this kind or quality of policy/decisions/actions is to be achieved – integrated and coherent action – then there must be a capacity to bring about this integration and coordination among different sectoral or functional areas of activity. Both the long-range vision on sustainability





and the more short and medium terms activities through which society moves toward this objective must be coordinated and tested against one another for consistency and cumulative effect on the achievement of the overarching goals. There must also be enough flexibility to accommodate change and adaptation to the emergence of new constraints and opportunities. There must be an institutionalized capacity for collective learning.

- Achieving behavioral changes of the kind implied by a shift to sustainable patterns of economic and social activity will require the use of new mixes of policy instruments. In short, regulatory patterns will shift from a reliance on top-down, command and control forms of direct regulation toward the application of a broader range of instruments designed to stimulate both the capacity of societal actors for self-regulation and the harnessing of the forces of the economic market to promote the objective of SD.

- All of this implies new patterns of relationships between government and society, based on the development of new forms of partnership and cooperation among public and private actors. While the role of the institutions remains crucial, the manner in which this role is performed changes. Public authorities will need to be active in bringing together and stimulating the participation and collaboration of a variety of social actors in a joint effort to define and achieve the objectives of SD.

4. Coping with diversity and change within the multi-level system



If the regions have to enhance their own capacities to promote sustainable policies and behavior within their own territory, cooperation with the different tiers of government and administration, from the local to the European level, is essential. Several European projects have pointed out that the ability of regional actors to establish links to different levels and the existence of supportive policies are key success factors for innovative actions. Other projects have shown how important it is to be able to act simultaneously on different levels. From all these experiences emerges a new way of looking at vertical interrelationships. While it is generally accepted that local and regional competencies are important in the strive of sustainability, it is also important to address the multi-actors dimension and the interrelationships at once. What matters in a context in which political, social and economic actors have to negotiate in complex networks is the quality of the relationships between levels and competencies. Direct links



between the European and the local and regional levels have proved to be very helpful in promoting innovative approaches. By pursuing this approach, the EU can contribute effectively to the empowerment of actors at the regional and the local levels, which is essential for sustainable regional development. The idea that subsidiarity goes beyond the mere distribution of competencies to include relationships between authorities at different levels is actually underlying an increasing number of Community policies. Subsidiarity is used all too often in the hierarchical, old-fashion model as a mechanism to separate and fence off different levels of government, whereas in today's interdependent world, the various spheres of government need to interact and work together. As issues and problems overlap, the functions, responsibilities and resources cannot be set in tidy boxes but have to be open to negotiation and coordination, according to the issue which the system of governance as a whole is trying to address. Modern subsidiarity means that actors within the network such as partnerships, public institutions, non-governmental agencies and citizens themselves at the various levels are able to take a proactive approach to making their own contribution to the overall policy process. The more citizens and their representatives at the lower levels are involved in the process of European policy making, the more awareness, understanding and acceptance will exist for the need and modalities of policies developed.

Subsidiarity can be seen as an essential approach for coping with cultural and territorial diversity. The attempt to develop general approaches for SD in Europe has to deal with variations concerning the societal and territorial aspects of development. In order to cope with cultural diversity and economic change European policy making needs flexible management approaches. In addition, new ways of mutual learning are needed to make better use of the rich variety of regional local experiences and approaches for creative innovations towards a more SD. An improved implementation of European regulations could be reached by putting more emphasis on what they are supposed to achieve and letting regional authorities to find the most appropriate instruments in line with the subsidiarity principle. Regard should be also given to the various administrative cultures.



Continuous efforts are needed to find the appropriate balance between integration and autonomy and efficient support could be given by European programs in order to find more systematic ways to bring together the richness of different experiences. Enhancing the exchange of experiences between regions may even be more effective than funding existing structures. Recent research shows that, in many regions, the most important contribution of the EU to local



development was to open minds and to release creativity by bypassing conventional power structures and offering new opportunities for mutual learning (Schleicher-Tappeser and Strati, 1999).

5. Recommendations from the discussion

- Sustainability is a complex issue which requires and brings about a new perspective which implies fundamental changes in the organization of social, economic and governmental activities at the various levels
- Any society choosing to pursue a policy of SD has to create an appropriate set of institutions to deal effectively with the implications of this commitment. The ability of a given region to address the sustainability challenge will depend on the way in which existing institutions facilitate or obstruct gathering the insights necessary to formulate and implement adequate responses
- The European strategy towards SD is based on the idea that effective governance is a precondition for developing and implementing the measures needed to achieve sustainability. However, the current debate about the “Europe of the Future” is not framed in terms of the institutional/constitutional changes needed to cope with this fundamental challenge. This should be matter of great concern both for academics and policy makers.
- The way in which the European Union currently works does not allow for adequate interaction in a multi-level partnership. Member States should foresee adequate mechanisms for wide consultation when discussing EU decisions and implementing EU policies with a territorial dimension. The process of EU policy making should allow Member States and the European Commission to listen to and learn from regional and local experiences.
- European regulations and programs should leave more room to regional authorities to find the most appropriate instruments in line with the subsidiarity principle.
- The concept of SD requires new approaches for managing complex interrelations between different dimensions of development: horizontal integration, cooperation, networking, and partnership among public and private actors





• The idea of sustainability deeply challenges the traditional division of competencies among the different levels of government. Multi-level governance and network governance express the shared responsibility which is at the core of such a commitment

• In a context in which political, social and economic actors have to negotiate in complex networks, the quality of the relationships between levels and competencies is a crucial issue. Direct links between the European and the local and regional levels have proved to be very helpful in promoting innovative approaches. By pursuing this approach, the EU can contribute effectively to the empowerment of actors at the regional and the local levels, which is essential for sustainable regional development.

• Subsidiarity goes beyond the mere distribution of competencies to include relationships between authorities at different levels. Too often in the hierarchical old-fashioned model subsidiarity is used as a mechanism to separate and fence off different levels of government, whereas in today's interdependent world, the various spheres of government need to interact and work together. As issues and problems overlap, the functions, responsibilities and resources cannot be set in tidy boxes but have to be open to negotiation and coordination, according to the issue which the system of governance as a whole is trying to address.

• Multi-level subsidiarity means that actors within the network, such as partnerships, public institutions, non-governmental agencies and citizens themselves at the various levels, are able to take a proactive approach to making their own contribution to the overall policy process. The more citizens and their representatives at the lower levels are involved in the process of European policy making, the more awareness, understanding and acceptance will exist for the need and modalities of policies developed.

• Subsidiarity can be seen also as an essential approach for coping with cultural and territorial diversity. The attempt to develop general approaches for SD in Europe has to deal with variations concerning the societal and territorial aspects of development. Cultural diversity and economic change in European policymaking needs flexible management approaches. In addition, new ways of mutual learning are needed to make better use of the rich variety of regional local experiences and approaches for creative innovations towards a more SD. An improved implementation of European regulations could be reached by putting more emphasis on what they are supposed to achieve and letting regional authorities find the most



appropriate instruments in line with the subsidiarity principle. Regard should be also given to the various administrative cultures.

- Sustainability is a general idea which can be implemented and made more concrete only through the practical management of policy processes in specific situations. Such a management approach needs general guidelines, procedures for setting specific goals and useful instruments to foster transparency, accountability and public participation.

- Regional Agenda 21 should be used as an attempt to institutionalize a kind of multi-level governance aiming at integrate local concerns (LA21) in a wider strategic perspective. In any case, more political willingness, more cooperative arrangements as well as additional human and technical resources are still needed.

- In general, there is a lack of effective instruments and political will aimed at integrating regional and local concerns into the central government strategy towards SD. To gain more influence, the regions should build interregional coalitions and networks including stakeholders and NGOs.

- Interregional and transregional cooperation provides more opportunities for defining common strategies and fostering mutual learning. However, its potential benefits are weakened by the different types of “regions” existing in the EU (constitutional regions, administrative regions, economic regions, urban areas). In addition, tensions arise as normally there is the lack of correspondence between environmental territorial problems and administrative boundaries. The concept of “ecologically defined regions” (regions based on basic challenges, i.e. tourism), could help to overcome this problem.

- Finally, the links between global and subnational governance for achieving sustainability still warrant further research.

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Papers

Sustainability Culture



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David Tàbara obtained his Ph.D. in environmental sociology in 1995 and also holds degrees in economics, environmental economics and business administration. He is a lecturer in environmental sociology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and also teaches environmental management and politics at the Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona. He formerly worked for the Institute of Advanced Social Research of the Higher Council of Scientific Research (IESA-CSIC), where he was project leader for the Spanish research team of the ULYSSES project (Urban Lifestyles, Sustainability and Integrated Environmental Assessment 1996-1999), financed by the European Commission, DGXII. He has also worked for the United Nations University in the project "Governance and the Environment". At present he is a researcher at the Center of Environmental Studies of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He has carried out research and published extensively on questions of socio-environmental theory and methods with particular attention given to questions of public participation and action in social change and sustainability.

Abstract

In this paper the meaning and normative content of sustainability culture and its implications for governance are explored. First, it argues that sustainability culture should lead to a whole new way of perceiving, rationalizing, moralizing and prescribing reality so that both thought and action emerge from a broader cognitive and moral framework in which the rights of future generations, of non-human species and global common resources are taken into account. Sustainability culture should also enhance societal ability to overcome the limits of current and dominant perceptions,





values and rationalities without falling into new forms of irrationalities. Second, it is argued that sustainability culture should help people to become aware of past and current mistakes and abuses on social and natural systems and to modify such collective and individual worldviews and conducts accordingly. Thus, sustainability can be understood as a continuous reflexive learning process of questioning, rejecting and/or re-addressing some fundamental and socially-created assumptions such as the notions of time, space, nature and happiness so that it is possible to yield high standards of living while reducing the negative impact on socio-environmental systems. And third, it proposes that a genuine and broad representation and/or protection of diversity -both cultural and natural- should be one of its most outstanding principles used to include sustainability culture in governance-related decisions. In particular, and in order to better understand and cope with global and local socio-environmental change sustainability culture should look for commonalities among diversities and seek to integrate and protect knowledge, beliefs, logic, values and ways of living of a very different guise: local and universal, old and young, traditional and modern, male and female, expert and lay, quantitative and qualitative, dominant and repressed, sacred and profane, and from different natural, social, technical and humanities expertise.

Introduction

There is no such thing as one definition or one approach to sustainability. Nor is there only one better definition or practice to improve sustainability standards which can work for every society. While some ideas around this contested concept can be very adequate for one particular place or purpose, they are insufficient, not understandable or inapplicable in others. The polyvalence of sustainability makes it impossible to find a unique conception which can be agreed by all social actors in all different contexts. The many notions of sustainable development vary in relation to different social groups and practices, their particular beliefs, values or interests. And it is precisely in this ambiguity that part of its strength lies.

This, however, as we all know, does not imply that the concept of sustainability is meaningless or useless. Some commonalities among the different interpretations can be found and the power of this meta-concept for political, economic and social transformation has already been demonstrated. Particular improvements in sustainability in specific areas can be observed and even



measured. As a process, sustainability will eventually define itself and its contents, not only by abstract definitions, but mainly by its practices.

Most of the current debates around sustainability agree that sustainability is as much an adjective as it is an objective. Similar to the concepts of freedom, equality or solidarity, sustainability as much describes as qualifies reality, and so explains not only what it is but what it should be. Although this is not the place for a deep discussion about the logic behind, similarities or contrasts between the different approaches to sustainability, in this first section some of the most widely known perspectives are introduced¹; then, an alternative systemic synthesis is proposed in order to deal later on with the challenge of identifying the possible contents of a *sustainability culture* and its implications for governance.

1. Sustainabilities

1.1. Classical approaches to sustainability

In my view, the most usual and pivotal sets of notions in which the concept of sustainability revolves are the concepts of needs, natural ecosystems, and systems integration. First and in relation to needs, and according to the report “Our Common Future” (WCED, 1987), sustainable development implies meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Second, another common interpretation stated at the Second World Conservation Strategy by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the United Nations Environment Program and the World Wide Fund (1991), viewed a society as sustainable if it: (a) preserves the essential ecological processes that maintain life and biodiversity; (b) guaranteed the sustainable use of renewable resources and minimized the use of non-renewable ones; (c) remained within its carrying ecological capacity. And third, sustainability is also understood as a hypothetical state or adaptive process in which three subsystems, the social, the economic, and the biological advance in the integration of their own set of distinct human-ascribed goals and functions. This latter approach emphasizes the interacting character of the different facets of development and how the failure or omission of one function can negatively affect the rest of the whole system. Thus:

¹ For early discussions of the concept of sustainability, see A. Dobson, (1996), D. McKenzie-Mohr & M. Marien, (1994); D. Pearce, (1989); K. Pezzoli, (1997a, 1997b), J. Pezzey, (1992) and M. Redclift (1987).

1. Some economic subsystem functions²:

- Meeting basic needs and reducing poverty
- Increasing the production of goods and services.
- ...

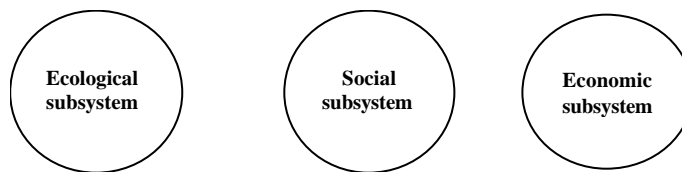
2. Some ecological subsystem functions:

- Maintaining biological diversity
- Maintaining resilience of natural ecosystems
- ...

3. Some Social Subsystem Functions:

- Preserving cultural diversity.
- Enhancing social justice and participation.
- ...

Unsustainable development



Sustainable development

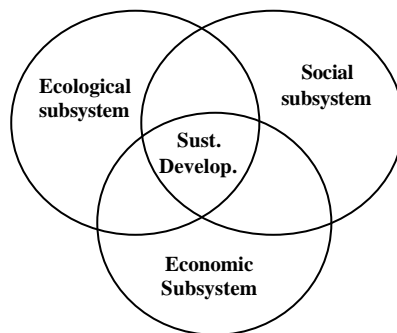




Fig 1. Sustainable development as the adaptative process of progressive integration between the ecological, social and economic subsystems.

² Adapted from E. Barbier, (1987)





Nevertheless, and notwithstanding their strengths, these three approaches to sustainability also have their weaknesses. First, the concept of needs is a historical and socially constructed one. It is therefore difficult to establish in absolute terms a list of needs which is not subject to disagreement and which can be applied to all societies and to all cultures. If we were to satisfy the 'needs' of the global population in the coming generations under the current and most developed first world countries conceptions of needs, ecological catastrophe would probably not take long. In the West, many of what the average citizen considers a need is simply for "the rest" a luxury. Any significant progress towards an improvement in sustainability standards at the global level will call for a profound reflection and redefinition and/or modification of the notion of needs. A previous debate must be opened on *what needs are really necessary*, before talking about sustainability. Market practices do not distinguish between basic needs and superfluous ones or considers whether such demands are really necessary from a social or an ecological point of view. Simply, left alone, for the market all individual demands 'need' to be met.

Second, and with reference to ecosystems, it is almost as impossible to determine their carrying capacities, especially when social and technological aspects are taken into account. To a large extent, the limits of socio-environmental and ecological systems, for example of a city or a region, depend on the ability of their populations to develop new knowledge and technologies that make it possible to import, develop, or manage more soundly resources so that such populations can maintain and expand their social structures. Furthermore, ecological systems maintain multiple interrelations between each other so that it is difficult to establish the boundaries of the carrying capacities of the ecosystems where humans live. In fact, the limits of human ingenuity become and shape the limits to their 'ecological' carrying capacities.

And third, the idea of integration between ecological, social and economic systems as sustainability, although very powerful, shows at least two main flaws that need consideration. On the one hand, it disregards the crucial role that energy, information and knowledge take in the development of socio-environmental systems. And on the other, it does not sufficiently allow us to reveal the consequences and changes on the whole socio-environmental system, normally in the forms of pollution and systemic degradation, derived both from the use of energy and information which result from the process of socio-ecological adaptation.

However, and despite the aforementioned criticisms, the concept of sustainability should not be understood as completely relative. Indeed there are



some very basic common biological needs for all the population in the world as well as there are, in particular contexts, some very clear limiting resources, such as water, energy or the capacity of ecosystems to absorb pollution - all of which act as constraints to human development; and furthermore the degree of integration between ecological, social and economic issues can be in fact a very good indicator of sustainability progress. The ambiguities as well as the commonalities of the concept of sustainability make it subject to multiple interpretations and therefore a source of political inspiration and contention.

1.2. An alternative systemic synthesis to sustainability

Another way of looking at sustainability is by focusing not so much on what sustainability is or should be but on what sustainability improvements mostly depend on. To do so we can center our attention on three large sets of elements or key subsystems, closely interrelated, on which basic phenomena occurring to all living creatures and communities, like evolution and adaptation, seem mainly to depend. These are information and energy subsystems, as well as the overall systemic change that results from the use of energy and information³. Using a very synthetic perspective, one can understand the development of all life forms and communities, including human societies, as a function of use of *energy* (E) and *information* (I), the demands of which create new systemic changes and conditions that affect the whole system. In the case of socio-environmental systems, the systemic change or consequences of getting both energy and information are often socially defined as *degradation* (D) and are mainly of two types, ecological and cultural: obtaining higher amounts of energy usually implies higher levels of pollution or a loss of biodiversity in a parallel way that the use and expansion of powerful systems of information usually derives in a loss of cultural diversity.

³ *Social structures* (S) are formed by the whole set of social institutions that regulate human behaviour, like the family, the law, the political parties system or education institutions. *Energy subsystems* (E) also contain natural resources and materials. *Information subsystems* (I) include, among others: price valuing systems, the mass media, libraries and the new communication technologies as well as language, moral values, traditions or myths. *Degradation subsystems* (D) comprise the socially defined irreversible impact on the whole socio-environmental system, mainly pollution and the loss of cultural and biological diversities. Each of these four subsystems is closely interdependent to the others, although they maintain and produce their own distinct properties, dynamics and results. For instance, the structure of a given society grows and becomes more complex, and does so faster, thanks to a mounting use of energy and/or information, but at the same time this generates a systemic change of a large scale and intensity, normally in the form of pollution. Furthermore, and in a similar way that energy tends to entropy, in the absence of social institutions to control it, pollution tends to dissipation (D. Tàbara, (2001a, 2002).

Thus, if we accept these premises as correct, in conditions of limited resources, increasing the sustainability of our *social structures* (S) would mean optimizing the use of available energy -and by extension, reducing the pressure on the environment- by maximizing our capacity to gather and process information in an efficient way and also lessening the negative consequences on both natural and cultural systems. By using a simple model, we can draw the following sustainability equation:

$$\Delta_{\text{Sust S}} = f(\text{Max I, Min E, Min D})$$

Where,

$\Delta_{\text{Sust S}}$ = Improvements in sustainability of a social structure

I = Information and knowledge systems use.

E = Energy and natural resources systems use.

D = Socio-environmental systemic degradation (irreversible negative impact, pollution and loss of cultural and biological diversities).

In other words, a human society would progress towards higher standards of sustainability if it were able, by means of better and more efficient use of the knowledge and information subsystems, to obtain and provide the minimum necessary energy and natural resources while at the same time minimizing pollution and preserving the highest level social and biological diversities of the whole socio-environmental system.

1.3. Sustainability as a meta-objective

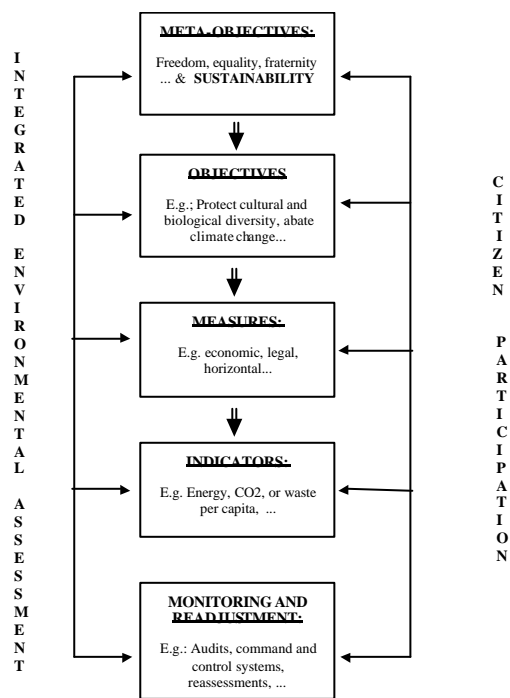
Sustainability can also function as a political ideology. In fact, I believe that in the twentieth century a very distinctive, powerful and invigorating ideal to the French revolutionary cry of *'liberté, égalité, et fraternité'* has been incorporated. That is, simply and so complexly, sustainability. In the same way that many of the liberal discourses based their ideology on the ideas of freedom, communists and the socialists on equality, and conservatives and nationalists on fraternity, a new movement, organized not only as a political party but as a social movement, finds its inspiration in the polysemy of the sustainability ideal.

Certainly, more and more people are recognizing that neither freedom, equality nor solidarity are possible without sustainability, in the same way that sustainability must in turn integrate to some degree all of these other ideals in order to become a reality. In the decades to come, some of the main challenges for politics, and



in particular for governance, will be the development of institutions and procedures that guarantee improvements in sustainability in a similar fashion that other advances have been achieved in areas such as human liberties or gender equalities. (Or maybe, in the next few decades, and in the face of the current globalization civic movement, of new global solidarity institutions, by building a kind of global nation).

Therefore, in my view, one satisfactory way to approach sustainability from politics is to treat it as one of the aforementioned political meta-objectives or ideals. From this abstract reflection, then, it should be possible to identify a set of more operational objectives, such as preventing the loss of biodiversity or abating climate change. Needless to say, the particular objectives, measures, indicators, and procedures to follow-up the actions taken will depend on and must be adapted to the perceptions, values and interests of different actors and institutions of different contexts. In the same way that there is no one definition of sustainability, there is no one procedure to follow-up its progress. Graphically ⁴,

Fig. 2. Some possible stages in turning sustainability ideology into practice.



⁴ Adapted from D. Tàbara, (2001a)



From a normative point of view and for this process of policymaking to yield equitable and effective results, it needs both the participation of large sectors of the population during all the stages as well as an integrated procedure to evaluate the adequacy of the objectives chosen and the options, measures and indicators taken. One such participatory procedure is the methodological approach of Integrated Environmental Assessment, on which a good deal of the current intellectual development of the emergent *Sustainability Science* is based⁵.

2. Sustainability culture

2.1. The social creation of culture



Culture both enables and constrains. We create our culture and yet we are its captives. On the one hand, access to abstract and universalistic cultural systems of reference⁶ enables people to reflect critically upon some of the most brutal irrationalities and inequalities of the past. On the other, through cultural development and innovation we create new beliefs, new values and new meanings that become once again both the guide and the restraints of our actions.

Therefore, our ideals and ambitions are entrapped by our culture. One cannot imagine a higher degree of freedom than being able to overcome the constraints imposed on our feelings and thoughts by our native culture. The irony of all this, however, is that at the same time we need culture in order to get free from our culture.

Sustainability culture, if it ever comes to being, will do the same. On the one hand, it will liberate current societies from the most unsustainable attitudes and practices with regard to the destruction of the natural and social worlds so that new opportunities for collective and individual meanings and action are created. But on the other, it will also imply new constraints on our consciences and our actions to prevent us from falling again into the irrationalities, inequalities and mistakes of the past. The challenge for a sustainability culture, then, is to create new opportunities and constrictions for meaning making and action, more attuned with the present socio-environmental situation. As will be argued next, sustainability culture entails a whole new way of perceiving, rationalizing, moralizing and prescribing reality so that both thought and action emerge from a broader cognitive and moral framework in which the rights of future generations, of non-human species and the global common resources are taken into account.

⁵ R. W. Kates, (2000) & B. Kasemir, et. al. (2002).

⁶ See J. C. Alexander (1996).



Sustainability culture, is an *historical development*. To a large extent, it is the result of the convergence of many social, economic, ecological and cultural global trends⁷.

Hence it is not only a different combination of the existing individual preference systems, or a fashion in taste, or only change in post-material values in Western societies, but originates from a particular historical mixture of science and values, knowledge and beliefs, as well as interests and aesthetics. It affects politics, economics and technology as well as education and even religious practices⁸.

One can say, without too much risk of being mistaken, that sustainability is becoming the largest cultural and political development experienced in the West since the French Revolution. .

2.2. The cultural frameworks of sustainability

Different cultures entail different ways of perceiving, rationalizing, moralizing and prescribing reality. The limits to our perceptions set the limits to our ethics, rationalities and actions. If it ever materializes, sustainability culture will conceive new realities and incorporate new logic, values and aesthetics about global resources, nature, and the future of coming generations which have not been sufficiently considered so far. .

It is very difficult, not to say impossible, to approach an understanding of the complexities of culture without employing certain heuristic reality-reduction devices. One of these procedures, which can yield both empirically and theoretically relevant results, is by using the concept of *cultural frameworks*. A cultural framework can be understood as a coherent system of cultural elements relative to the way of perceiving, rationalizing, evaluating and prescribing certain objects of reality so that they become meaningful and memorable for different

⁷ Within environmental sociology, there have been several attempts to empirically trace the cultural shift, in particular of the public in the West towards a more ecologically and/or sustainable worldview (s. Olsen, 1992). In this sense, R. Dunlap et. al. (2000) indicated that the move toward a 'New Ecological Paradigm' which contrasts with the 'Human Exemptionalist Paradigm' can be characterised mainly by five sets of elements, and in particular their beliefs in: (a) the existence of ecological limits to growth, (b) in the balance of nature (c) the anthropocentrism and the human domination on the natural environment (d) the rejection of human exemptionalism, and (e) the belief in an ecological catastrophe. However, while such effort of methodological synthesis is worthwhile, it is also evident that such scale is unable to capture the large diversity and variety of meanings, aesthetic and moral elements which sustainability conceptions take in different cultures and social contexts.

⁸ S. Giner & D. Tàbara, (1999).

social actors in a particular situation⁹. Every culture can be understood as formed by a collection of peculiar, context-created and multiple cultural frameworks in constant interaction.

Furthermore, a similar cultural framework may contain different meanings and elements in different social contexts, and at the same time, each social situation may create its own set of cultural frameworks. In order to simplify these discussions, and for the effects of the present paper, we may only propose that a cultural framework is formed by the following components:

a) A *perceptivity*: cultural frameworks select those elements of reality to which collective attention should be given. In this way, they emphasize what is important to observe, as well as what should be broadened, reduced, remembered or forgotten from public or individual consciences.

b) A *desirability* and a taste: moral frameworks set both preference systems and aesthetics about what individuals or collectivities should desire or avoid, as well as what should be considered nice and beautiful or ugly and distasteful¹⁰.

c) A *rationality*: cultural frameworks provide a structure to evaluate what is logical and illogical, and simultaneously, they provide a system of meaning to interpret reality. In this way, a cultural framework makes it possible to explain by rational means the causes and the consequences of certain phenomena or processes.

d) A *morality*: they provide value judgments about what is morally right or wrong from a selected part of reality.

e) A *prescriptivity*: they prescribe, implicitly or explicitly, the desirable and undesirable aspects of possible courses of action, and at the same time they propose and structure prescriptions about how every situation should be handled.

⁹ An alternative 'top-down' approach to the study of culture is by using the so-called 'Cultural Theory' developed in the works of M. Douglas, A. Wildasky and M. Thompson among others. See, for instance, M. Douglas & A. Wildasky (1982), and M. Thompson (1990) & M. Thompson et al. (1999). In a recent investigation (D. Tàbara & M. Costejà, 2001) about the cultural frameworks of water management in Spain (during the period of elaboration and approval of a very contested hydrological plan in Spain; IX-2000 to VIII-2001), six main cultural frameworks were identified via a content analysis of 275 articles of the main press: the 'nationalist', the territorialist, the catastrophist, the naturalist, the growthist, and the sustainabilist. The sustainable cultural framework, despite being subject to cyclical movements, showed an ascendant trend and gained prominence during the whole period.

¹⁰ These components can also be considered as part of perceptivity.

Thus for a sustainability culture to become a reality, it would imply both a radical modification and expansion of current cultural frameworks from which actions emerge. On the one hand, a deeper awareness of environmental problems with greater attention paid to systemic thinking, to the limits to natural resources, and to key ideas such as diversity and integration should have to be enhanced, together with a change in values, aesthetics and rationalities. On the other, sustainability cultural frameworks should also incorporate new and extended conceptions of time, space, and rights. The moral and cognitive cultural systems of reference from which meanings for social action emerge should be extended to the rights of future generations, of non-human species and take into account not only the benefits of the individual use of natural resources but also the effects on the global commons. This would mean that if current dominant cultural frameworks were to increase their sustainability content they should consider: (a) not only time spans of present generations but also of future generations; (b) not only human beings but also other non-human species and natural objects and eventually the biosphere as a whole; and (c) not only the interests for one country or place, e.g. of using natural resources, but of all humankind. And from this broader frame of perception, reason and reflection, new notions of individual and national rights and obligations may arise, as well as more equitable decisions and actions with regard to intergenerational, global, and environmental issues.

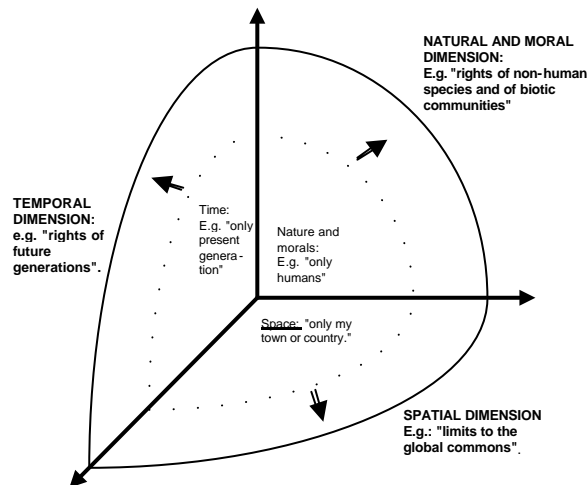


Fig. 3. Extended cultural system of references from which sustainability perceptions, rationalities, ethics, aesthetics and prescriptions could emerge¹¹.

¹¹ D. Tàbara (1999).

2.3. Simple learning and reflexive learning

Sustainability culture cannot be imposed, only learnt. Nor can it be developed by one institution, social group or society alone. In a parallel manner that attempts to impose equality (dogmatic socialism), fraternity (radical nationalism), or freedom (disintegrating *laissez-faire*) are inevitably bound to fail and create very disastrous effects, the rationalities, ethics and aesthetics of sustainability cannot be acquired except from the inside, as a relation that is forged, mainly through education and experience, between the individual and collective consciousness and the reality that surrounds it.

Learning to redirect social change toward a more sustainable future can either happen by a process involving previous reflection or, more dramatically, by confronting those aims and means directly with external conditions in a trial and error mode. Meta-goals such as freedom, equality or in our case, sustainability can become definable goals through the observation of what works in practice or can be done and what does not work or cannot be done. The first kind of process, *reflexive learning*, is a must under conditions of growing complexity, uncertainty and unsustainability, while the second, *simple learning*, may have catastrophic outcomes in these situations (s. fig 4)¹²:

• **SIMPLE LEARNING:** Taken-for-granted assumptions, perceptions, ethics, aesthetics, rationalities and goals (as well as the means to achieve such goals) with regard to the view and uses of natural resources and socio-environmental systems are not consciously and purposely questioned apart from when unwanted and unexpected results appear. Social routines and cultural frameworks are only modified by a trial and error mode and actions are taken mainly without open and mutual reflection.

¹² A related and earlier version of this reflexive approach to sustainability was also argued by L. Milbrath (1989) who stated that a *learning society towards sustainability* could be defined by the following traits: (a) uses of a wealth of information; (b) finds better ways to disseminate and use information; (c) emphasises integrative and probabilistic thinking; (d) emphasises values as much as facts; (e) is critical of science and technology; (f) combines theory with practice; (g) is consciously anticipatory; (h) thinks that change is possible; (i) examines outcomes to learn from them; (j) develops institutions to foster systemic and futures thinking; (j) institutionalises the practice of analysing future impacts; (k) reorients education toward social learning; (l) supports research; (m) maintains openness and encourages citizen participation. Social learning toward sustainability is a process that involves a multiple-agent strategy in which a whole set of social assumptions, objectives and means and established institutions to achieve those objectives that are usually taken for granted are put into question and finally redefined and modified through a collective action. In our case, what is important to preserve are those common knowledges, experiences or values within diversity that can help current societies to learn more about sustainability

• REFLEXIVE LEARNING: An active and constant attitude is promoted in order to question and discuss taken-for-granted assumptions, perceptions, ethics, aesthetics, rationalities, as well as goals and means related to the use of natural resources so that past mistakes are avoided. Thus, the best options available are taken *before* their unwanted side effects materialise. Dialogic *reflexive reflection*, based on respect, protection and integration of diverse sources of knowledge and cultural frameworks, helps to find ways to correct the most unsustainable routines of the past.

Fig. 4. Sustainability as a reflexive learning process.

Indeed, sustainability can be understood as a continuous reflexive learning process of questioning, rejecting and/or re-addressing some fundamental and socially-created assumptions such as the notions of time, space, nature and happiness so that it is possible to maintain high standards of living while reducing the negative impact on the global and local socio-environmental systems caused by the growth and increasing complexity of human societies. The acceptance of sustainability as a reflexive learning process entails a radical change in many contemporary political attitudes and social sciences dealing with environmental problems. It leads to a greater awareness of the limitations of present practices, to more tolerant attitudes and a serious respect for plural ways of conceiving reality as well as to a growing recognition of the urgent need to develop new science approaches (as is now the case with the new sustainability science) to integrate and apply all the relevant and available sources of knowledge. From the new cultural frameworks of sustainability, we may eventually regard and qualify as completely irrational many of the current perceptions and trade-offs that we hold between the conservation and the exploitation of our natural resources -such as the idea that gaining time is more important than preserving the environment. Therefore, sustainability culture should then help people to become aware of past and current mistakes and abuses on social and natural systems and to modify such collective and individual worldviews and conducts accordingly.



4. Some implications for Governance

4.1. Protection and integration of diversity

The prospects for a more sustainable society may depend, above all, on the preservation of both biological and cultural diversities. The loss of the genetic natural resources provokes irreversible damage for both present and future generations, as very likely, the development of future medicines, food production and quality of life will depend on the conservation of global biological diversity. Needless to say at this stage, important aesthetic and moral considerations also compel us to avoid actions which provoke negative irreversible effects on our natural heritage.

In addition, the preservation of cultural diversity is also crucial if the West is to learn other views and values that can generate new ideas, conceptions and standards about happiness and the good collective life which put less pressure on our ecosystems. For instance, we can learn from other cultures different ways of conceiving time, space and nature that may yield more sustainable lifestyles, pleasures and actions (which at present, often are regarded by highly industrialized and intensive energy/information consumption societies as part of a primitive past that needs to be 'modernized', erased and overcome). Diverse cultures contain implicit, peculiar, and also diverse forms of knowledge –such as myths, beliefs and rituals- which are the result of particular experiences of human life in interaction with their natural environment. Our societies should be open to the possibility of learning from other worldviews and perspectives new fundamental matters related to our current use and misuse of the natural world. First, by protecting cultural diversity, and then, by engaging in a process of integration and mutual learning, it may possible to question and reject some of the most destructive cultural frameworks which we use to decide our present and our future in relation to the environment. In particular, the integration of cultural diversities, in relation to sustainability issues, demands to seek what different cultures have in common with regard to the ways of improving the use of natural resources and lessen the exploitation of natural ecosystems so that each one is open and can learn from the others in this respect.

By learning that the key to sustainability may lie in the conservation of integration of diversities, we also may start to recognize and appreciate the crucial role that governance-related decisions may play in this respect. Possibly, it is only in the sphere of politics that the opportunities for such preservation of diversities remain. At a time when market and information society forces tend to erode both natural and cultural diversities, mainly by economic (mis) conceptions



of time and value, the active role for a governance to ensure the maintenance of diverse social and ecological structures appears not only unavoidable but also decisive in terms of sustainability¹³.



4.2. Plural, strong, competent and fair participation

At present, there is little doubt that if large sectors of the population are responsible for the creation of global environmental problems, they must also have the means to participate in the definition, assessment and actions to deal with them. Not only for reasons of fairness but also because of proved efficiency, the strategies for the improvement of sustainability must incorporate the views and cultural frameworks of the diverse publics who are not only expected to do something about such problems but also likely to be affected by them. One of the most urgent tasks nowadays is not so much to devise sophisticated, expert, top-down solutions for this complex *problematique* but to find ways to engage the largest part of the citizenry possible in their resolution¹⁴.

The complex dynamics and variability of the problems of sustainability, as well as the number of actors at stake, make it necessary to increase the possibilities for reflexive learning for most of the members in society. In particular, it seems now peremptory to debate the common sense of many taken-for-granted current dominant and unsustainable cultural frameworks. Not only should large sectors of the population participate in the debate, but they should also be empowered enough to engage them in their modification. This would demand a multiple-agent mutual learning process where a whole set of present social assumptions, objectives and means are put into question and finally redefined and modified through a collective participatory strategy. Improvements in the sustainability of our social structures undoubtedly will require new forms integration of knowledge and cultural frameworks which can overcome present forms of cultural exclusion. A systematic omission of large social sectors in the generation of legitimate knowledge and alternative worldviews has also resulted in the loss of highly valuable options for safe and sustainable social change. By excluding people from entering in the production, communication and reflexive

¹³ I understand that the preservation of cultural diversity should not be taken as a means to justify and maintain inequalities and should be compatible with the aforementioned ideals of freedom, equity and solidarity.

¹⁴ See S. O. Funtowicz,; J. Ravetz, & M. O'Connor, M. (1998); and A. King & B. Schneider (1991). A missed opportunity to do so has been the lack of decisive public action and sufficient resources invested in the making of many of the Local Agendas 21. For instance, in Catalonia, and according to a recent official poll, 86.1 per cent of the population does not know what Agenda 21 means (DMA, 2001), results that may be similar or even worst in many other parts of Europe.



critique of what is finally considered to be 'objective' knowledge and policy criteria for sustainability, they are also excluded from understanding them, from controlling some of their possible side-effects, and from participating meaningfully in the design of possible solutions. Sustainability demands that every group and every person is empowered enough to say something and to do something about it.



All in all, active and innovative participation channels will be indispensable for the acceptance, understanding and emergence of less polluting and less energy intensive societies of a possibly more sustainable future. Regular civic intervention will be necessary for the creation of the least unfair social structure that can provide the highest quality and diversity of life, freedom, equity and solidarity in a world of increasingly scarce non-renewable natural resources. Only by extending the participation in the production of the culture and the knowledge for sustainability will it be possible to lessen the potential negative impact on social inequality derived from the conscious emergence of more resource-scarce social situations.

4.3. Sustainability learning

To avoid sustainability illiteracy¹⁵, politics may start by acknowledging what it does not know about sustainability, what it urgently needs to know, and what it could do to know more about all this. Our industrial social organizations will either learn to correct the mistakes from the most unsustainable present routines or these societies may well cease to exist. Human societies have already learnt how to make use of increasing amounts of information and energy, but they still need to learn how to maximize the use of information and knowledge to minimize the use of energy and natural resources while maintaining high standards of quality of life, freedom, equality and solidarity. Existing communication and education institutions prove to be largely unable to help citizens to advance in this direction, so new strategies that effectively integrate and use different sources of relevant knowledge and cultural frameworks for sustainability are now more necessary than ever before.

However, the growing awareness of current global and local environmental problems is in fact leading to a situation which we could call 'the environmental knowledge paradox'. On the one hand, many international polls and social research studies have for long revealed that the public is increasingly concerned

¹⁵ See D. W. Orr (1992).





about the dangers related to the environment and sustainability¹⁶. But on the other, many of these studies also reveal that the public knows little when it comes to explaining their causes, effects and possible options for action. The same expansion of knowledge and communications has made, more than ever before, a greater number of western citizens and public officials realize how little they really know. It seems that the mounting perception of the potential irreversible harm of environmental change has illustrated the growing ignorance about what we can or we cannot do. Finding ways to overcome this situation will entail not only seriously rethinking the role of sciences and education in this respect but above all finding new procedures for reorienting radically the current generation of knowledge. As we all know, not all information will be turned into knowledge, and not all knowledge will be relevant for sustainability. In fact the opposite may be true -more information and wrong knowledge can lead to a growing ecosystems exploitation and unsustainability- unless decisive collective action is taken.

5. Conclusion

A key aspect of contemporary western societies is their inability -some might say pathology- of our culture to generate the awareness, values and knowledge to deal with the misuse of natural resources and global environmental degradation. The scale and the intensity of the consumption of energy, space and ecosystems required to carry out our daily human activities has lead to a situation of unprecedented pollution generation levels and extinction of non-human species. Therefore, it is now crucial to explore new communication and educational strategies not only to increase the awareness of such problems, but to enhance society's learning capacities to create, assess and disseminate the knowledge necessary to redirect institutions, production processes and individual lifestyles more in accord with the present conditions of global environmental change.

Sustainability culture commences when a society starts perceiving and acting in a reflexive way in order to reduce its energy consumption and pollution levels by integrating the more diverse cultural frameworks and plural sources of knowledge. Sustainability is both a cultural and a historical product, a result of cultural development and integration, not just a different combination of the existing individual preference systems. Specifically, and from a normative point of view, a culture for sustainability, should look for commonality and seek to

¹⁶ See for instance, R. E. Dunlap, (1994) & T. Collins, T. (1997)





integrate and protect knowledge, beliefs, logic, values and ways of living of a very diverse guise: local and universal, old and young, traditional and modern, male and female, expert and lay, quantitative and qualitative, dominant and repressed, sacred and profane, and from different natural, social, technical and humanities expertise. It should be based on the sensitivity of the interconnectedness of the global human and the ecological systems and incorporate the lessons from the failures and successes of previous stages of social developments. Thus it is very unlikely that a good sustainable global governance program could emerge without a culture which takes seriously into account a vision of the good life for future generations in a global, biologically and socially diverse world.

However, such sustainability culture cannot be *imposed* 'from above' and in all societies. It must emerge as a result of individual and collective contextual and participatory reflection which incorporates the values, beliefs and ideals of diverse people and different societies in their own contexts of action¹⁷. The kind of reflexive social learning that sustainability demands will entail that large parts of society are sufficiently motivated and empowered to participate in a plural debate about the sense of maintaining many of the current taken-for-granted beliefs, assumptions, collective ideals and aims -such as limitless economic growth- well as the means to achieve these goals. Therefore, it must persuade and engage so that people can start feeling themselves as part of the *project of sustainability*. But to achieve improvements in this direction, far-reaching changes in the organization of present social structures are needed, as well as large efforts and gains in public imagination, participation and reflexivity.

An important hindrance, which impedes many of the current advances towards a more sustainable near future, is related to an extended misconception of the role information and knowledge play in these matters. Neither the information society nor the knowledge society lead spontaneously to the sustainable society. The *knowledge for sustainability* is only a fraction, albeit very crucial, of all the processed information and knowledge generated within a particular social organization. A large part of the current knowledge production and information systems' use is oriented precisely in the opposite direction: towards increasing the consumption of energy and non-renewable resources and generating a mounting global socio-environmental systemic degradation. Both political and educational institutions must regain their place in ensuring the *common environmental good*, not only for present and future generations of humans, but now under a more extended cultural framework of thinking, which includes glo-

¹⁷ s. K. Burningham, & M. O'Brien (1994).



bal resources, longer time-spans, and the value of non-human species. And this is why governance institutions in particular must also take a pro-active role in the re-orientation of the current trends of knowledge production and destruction, by incorporating the criteria of diversity protection and integration into their most crucial collective decisions.

Finally, it is worth remembering again the fact that it is always us who make our culture and in turn, our culture makes us. Through culture, we select a particular set of objects that we call 'nature' or 'environment' and subsequently, these selected objects -whether they are birds, mountains or germs- tell us new meanings and norms about what to do or not to do. The constant process of culture and nature re-creation generates hybrid quasi-objects and quasi-subjects in which both science and lay culture intervene in different degrees, but never alone¹⁸. Western culture tells us, for instance, that time is usually more important than nature. This is not something that we have consciously decided; however, is something that once socially accepted we must believe and then act on accordingly. We have constructed many of such cultural unsustainable conceptions about time, nature and the others and now they construct us. Although much of the contents of our culture escapes human control and volition, it is high time we started creating, whenever possible, new ideas, new perceptions, and new ethics and aesthetics more in tune with the present socio-environmental situation and with the cultural frameworks of sustainability.

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¹⁸ B. Latour (1993); J.D. Tàbara, (2001b).

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Papers

Environmental Conflicts, Sustainable Development and the Use of Consensus Forming Decision Techniques



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Abstract

Conflict is an inherent factor of social life. Social change causes and, in an important sense, is driven by conflicts. Environmental conflicts most





frequently have to do with the allocation of relative costs and gains resulting from measures intended to protect the environment. Efforts to translate the general commitment to sustainable development into practical programs have drawn attention to the need to find effective means for managing the inevitable conflicts associated with the transition to more sustainable futures. Increasing dissatisfaction with traditional methods for managing environmental conflicts have led to growing interest in the potential of so-called alternative dispute resolution techniques. This paper explores briefly some of the features of consensus forming processes and considers the conditions under which they can effectively be used. Some of the advantages that can be expected from applying these decision-making techniques to questions of sustainable development are also examined.

Introduction

Without a doubt, sustainable development (SD) is a fine idea, one that enjoys general support. In its most general form, there is no one who could be against it. Who could oppose a policy that promises economic growth, the protection of the environment and more social progress? However, once we move beyond agreement on these basics, SD suffers from a high degree of conceptual ambiguity and ambivalence. Consequently, this notion acquires different meanings depending upon the parameters within which it takes shape. On the one hand, the general message is clear. On the other hand, however, the specific implications of a commitment to SD are not quite that clear - ideas and opinions diverge markedly when it comes to applying it in concrete situations.

Perhaps it should not be so surprising that the difficulties become visible when we try to translate this idea into concrete objectives and tasks to be realized or carried out in a concrete location under specific social, economic and political conditions. It is here that that its impacts on particular groups become manifest and the distribution of costs and benefits of a "sustainable community" become apparent to those who will feel the consequences of these decisions. Here, beneath the abstract level, the general consensus begins to disintegrate in the face of conflicts caused by the demands that SD - in concrete terms - makes on the different groups of societal actors whose behavior must be changed in the specific situation.

No matter how you look at it, SD remains both an attractive and equivocal strategy. It promises a balance between growth and environmental quality. It offers a strategy for transforming a situation of conflict (where we have to choose



between one or the other objective) into a situation of positive gain, where we can satisfy our desire for material gain and for more environmental quality at the same time. In this sense, SD would seem to have solved the problem of squaring the circle. And yet committing to this set of policy objectives does not absolve us of the need to operationalize this commitment in the real political world, where it is still necessary to make often hard choices among alternatives with their different political and social costs and benefits. The fundamental difficulty lies in translating this vague but intuitively simple principle into definite policies, which lead to the concrete changes, needed to effect a transition to more sustainable patterns of societal development. Sustainable futures require fundamental social changes and will, therefore, not come free of charge. Sustainable development, despite its attractiveness, will not be achieved without disputes and social conflict.

The translation of this goal into operational measures will be fraught with difficult decisions in spelling out what such a balance will mean to specific interests in concrete situations. Transformation of areas of society will involve economic adjustments and conformation to environmental goals can lead to conflict between the objective of economic growth and environmental interests. In any case, legitimate and necessary societal activities will need to be adapted to the means of environmental quality. In this sense, present environmental disputes can be seen as a specific type of social conflict: the environmental objectives at issue command broad societal support in an abstract sense. Each party to the conflict subscribes to the overall objective of preserving the quality of the physical environment as a common interest. Environmental conflict is, as a result, always about the effects of activities which otherwise tend to be appreciated.



In this paper, we will examine further the character - and consequences - of social conflicts that emerge with regard to attempts to regulate or limit the use of parts of the environment. It will consider the emerging interest in innovative ways of handling these kinds disputes in a constructive way that can support effective collective decision making on the transition to sustainable futures. In particular we are interested in examining the potential of introducing different forms of consensus forming processes as the institutional arena within which different stakeholders can seek cooperative solutions to environmental problems within the broader context of plans for sustainable development. In conclusion we will look briefly at the way in which such processes of communication and interaction among different societal interests can be organized and managed as the vehicle for making collective decisions on the operational meaning of a general policy commitment to sustainable development.

Environmental conflicts and social change

The existence of different values, interests and points of view are a normal feature of a living society. Where "engaged" or "committed" people, with different goals and views, interact, conflicts will be inevitable. Different interests, imbalances in power as well as insufficient information and willingness to talk play an essential role in the emergence of a conflict. That is, a frequent cause of conflicts is lack of information or the supply - too late or not at all - of incomplete, false or taken-for-false information. When people feel they are inadequately informed, and their needs and fears are not seriously taken into consideration or decisions are taken without giving them a chance to be heard, this can lead to dissatisfaction.

This may particularly be the case in connection with environmentally relevant projects, where there are, at first glance, many conflicting interests: preservation of the quality of life, economic concerns, maintaining employment, securing social peace, use of nature and the countryside, etc. Indeed with regard to environmental protection, not least because of the frequently vehement commitment of citizens' groups to action against environmental damage, it was evident right from the start that this policy field would be characterized by numerous conflicts (Federal Ministry, 2000:3). This is hardly surprising since this subject always deals with the question of how a society manages its natural living resources. The water people drink, the air they breathe, the soil that produces their food are of primary importance to them. Perhaps even more important than difference of opinion on the substance of these decisions are the distributive impacts on the different parties to the dispute. Consequently, situations often emerge where it appears to be difficult if not impossible to find a solution acceptable to all involved. Unresolved conflict can escalate further, exacerbating the relations between the different parties.

Not surprisingly then, since the seventies there has been an observable increase in the number of environmental conflicts, as well as in their degree of severity, all over the Western world. At the level of basic decisions on alternative uses of the environment or the introduction of new technologies, the public debate has been characterized by growing fundamentalism and increasingly often by violent confrontation. Planning and development that impact the environment have more and more frequently become the targets of lengthy and tedious, and all-to-often costly, conflict. As Helmut Weidner has observed, "Some areas of environmental protection have proved particularly resistant, or even allergic, to any attempts by environmental policy makers to exert control. These include large industrial and public projects in virtually all industrialized countries where





people are afraid of the negative consequences for health and the environment" (Weidner, 1998: 13). Frequently, the objects of such disputes have been facilities and infrastructure projects, which are crucial to the functioning of an industrialized society (such as landfills, waste incineration plants, airports, motorways, dams, power stations). Consequently, disturbances that may be environmental in origin also cause serious political and societal conflicts, where powerful economic interests and state institutions are actively involved. The projects are opposed not only by members of the public who would be negatively affected by them as well as by environmental organizations, but also more and more by local public administrators and politicians. This makes the strict enforcement of state decisions using conventional instruments considerably more difficult than if it were a case of dealing "merely" with societal representatives and their organizations. Opposition from parties who understand all the intricacies of the political and legal system must increasingly also be taken into account in such cases. (Weidner, 1998:13)

In those cases where the project in question is not dropped in the face of these conflicts, its realization often becomes a very time consuming and expensive business. The original objectives are watered down and the unresolved conflicts are shifted onto the implementation phase. This, in turn, often leads to enforcement deficits. The groups involved become embittered, with destructive effects on the social relations within the town or region affected (Weidner, 1998: 13).

Environmental problems are an inevitable outcome of actions taken to fulfill the necessities of daily life. This simple statement, as Glasbergen has pointed out, "is of far-reaching consequence for the way in which we deal with environmental problems" (1993:7). Consequently, he continues, if we regard environmental problems as disturbances of the material world around us, which stem from the ways in which we make a living, then we will have to accept that the search for effective solutions more and more will involve radical change of traditional patterns of societal organization and behavior (Loc. cit.). Such change will require a redefinition of what we call the "necessities of daily life." Moreover as a consequence of a modification of the status quo, vested interests are very likely to be disturbed, acquired freedoms limited and traditional property rights called into question (Loc. cit.). Clearly, these issues will profoundly affect society at large.



The term "conflict of interest" is often readily associated with clearly defined material interests. The conflicts surrounding environmental problems are somewhat at variance with the usual picture. This is largely a result of the shift



which has taken place in the nature of environmental problems and the way in which they are viewed by society. There has been dramatic change in the nature of environmental pollution over the past few decades. For one thing, the regulation and control of large point-source pollution have been dealt with relatively successfully. Today the problem is more that of controlling various kinds of diffuse mobile sources of pollution. A second change is the increase there has been in the scale of environmental problems from the local to a more regional even global scale. Thirdly, as a result of these changes in the nature and scale of environmental problems, the time span of cause, effect and recovery has been greatly extended. This has increased the degree of scientific uncertainty, both in defining the problem at issue and in selecting the appropriate response for dealing with it. As a result of these trends there has also been a change in the pattern of interests surrounding environmental issues. First of all it has broadened: there are more interested and affected interests demanding to be heard on the matter. In addition, the interests themselves have grown more diffuse. It is becoming extremely difficult to decide which interests benefit and which suffer from particular measures taken to deal with environmental problems. Finally, it should also be pointed out that immaterial interests have begun to feature more prominently. The intrinsic value of nature and the uniqueness of certain ecosystems are in themselves sufficient grounds for protective action.

As a result of all these various developments, environmental policy has undergone a profound change, reflected in a switch in thinking away from a hygienic perspective towards the adoption of a framework based on the conditions which need to be met in order to ensure the survival of ecosystems. According to current thinking, less faith is put in the ability of technology alone to solve environmental problems. The central theme now is the need for a change in the attitudes and habits of producers and consumers.



We are often at pains to translate cause and effect relationships affecting the environmental problems into conflicts of interest involving an offender on the one hand and a victim on the other. In this scenario the offenders are those who are responsible for the problem in question and who need to change their behavior accordingly. In many cases, however, the situation is not as simple as this suggests. The chief reason for this is that, in certain respects, environmental conflicts are highly specific forms of social clashes. They involve situations in which there is often a broad acceptance of environmental policy aims at an abstract level, and yet great difficulty encountered in following this through to its logical conclusion in order to achieve the desired modification of social behavior (Glasbergen, 1995: 6).



From the viewpoint of public administration environmental policy has traditionally been concerned with questions of the allocation of scarce resources (Glasbergen, 1993:7). It draws the line on the utilization of the physical space. This, as Glasbergen (1993:7) points out, will limit the scope for developing certain interests. For example, industrial development can only take place under specific preconditions while in other locations, the intensification of agricultural production will have to be scaled down. Glasbergen also notes that under the emerging regime of land use planning, opportunities for exploiting mineral resources will need to be phased out over time. At the same time, in compensation, actions imposing these kinds of limits on certain societal activities will also open doors on new possibilities for a healthier way of living, a greater variety of species, or more chances to enjoy nature and scenery. Furthermore, there will be greater scope for future generations to utilize whatever constitutes the physical environment in their age. All of these decisions creating both limits and new opportunities impact differentially on the activities and interests of different groups in society. Consequently, the same actions will be judged differently by these various stakeholders depending on the way in which they promote or obstruct the realization of their objectives. The distribution of the costs and benefits of environmental measures serve to mobilize and sustain interventions in public decision making to different or varying degrees.

When questions of allocation are raised by environmental policy, we can expect significant social conflict. The experience of environmental policy making, though relatively recent, has made this quite clear. The road that leads from the perception of environmental problems to their solution is paved with conflict. In this context we speak of environmental conflict, since it is some desired quality of the physical environment that triggers the conflict. But in effect, the underlying conflicts of a much broader importance (nature), which are pre-eminently of a social nature. Environmental objectives clash with other social priorities, which are often appreciated just as greatly. Present modes of industrial development, agricultural production and exploitation of mineral resources serve important functions for society. Moreover, the developments in their field have their own dynamics, which are initially unrelated to environmental goals. Changes therefore cannot be realized overnight. That is, not without giving rise to social disruption.

Things become even more complicated, in this regard, when questions of environmental quality are placed in the broader context and at the service of the pursuit of sustainable development (SD). The term SD embraces the idea that environmental, economic and social needs are complex and require integrated decision making. SD is only possible when environmental considerations are taken into account in all policy areas. However, if this is to happen, interest





conflicts need to be ordered and dealt with in a result-oriented manner. The search for solutions to conflicts that are acceptable to the interests of communities, citizens, and enterprises is a challenging and increasingly important task. Building a sustainable future requires processes that reconcile competing interests, forge new cooperating partnerships and explore innovative solutions.

The general policy commitment to the objectives of SD, increasingly present at all levels of government, has meant that there is a broad consensus as to the direction in which the necessary process of environmental renewal should proceed. There are no social forces urging us to step up the level of pollution, to quicken the speed at which the supply of natural resources is being depleted and to launch fiercer attacks on flora and fauna. There is no one who may be said to be seeking deliberately to cause environmental problems. In other words, the social activities which lead to environmental problems do not stem from a desire to damage the environment. In fact, virtually all conflicts of interest come into being around social activities which are regarded as being beneficial from a non-environmental viewpoint. To this extent, the term SD has the same force and appeal as words like freedom and equality. Everyone is in favor and it is not until words need to be turned into action that certain conflicts of interest emerge.

Decision Making for Sustainable Futures



It is clear that a positive appreciation of environmental conflict in itself does not take us very far. While it may be interpreted as both a precondition and an indicator of social change, it is more important to find out how the conflicts may serve as a starting point for continued change that does not lead to social disruption. Environmental conflict in itself may be considered a positive phenomenon. It signals the inception of an inescapable process of social transition. Environmental conflict, however, may easily become dysfunctional, when it causes social developments to stagnate, Legal deadlock, delayed investment and symbolic policy are possible results. Environmental policy has traditionally been overly concerned with the problem of allocation, that is with determining and imposing limitations on otherwise legitimate societal activities. This focus is, of course, related to the way in which these policies have developed as measures designed to "correct" the negative aspects of social and economic activities on environmental quality (Glasbergen, 1995:3-8).

According to Glasbergen (1993:11; 1995:9-13), a policy approach that stresses the management of the processes of social change ought to be given a more prominent place. By providing promising perspectives for those interests affected



(positively or negatively) by environmental policy decisions, this would provide a broader, potentially more positive context within which to deal with questions of allocation. The implication is that environmental policy should put less emphasis on correction and greater stress on the creation of conditions for realizing social change; less emphasis on the setting of standards and more stress on processes to attain those standards (1993:12). Such a policy approach would provide a broader definition of the problem at issue, by putting at the center of attention the need to provide opportunities for enterprise to adapt itself, for agriculture to restructure, alternative strategies for energy supply to emerge. To this effect, environmental policy should not function as an external, counteracting force, but rather should be an integral aspect - defining important limiting conditions on collective actions - of a joint search for paths of sustainable societal development. The problem of (re)allocation would then become one of creating new opportunities for pursuing legitimate interests within the broader context of social development. This is, of course, exactly the context or the perspective from which the definition and pursuit of SD objectives are sought, if the management of the transition toward these goals, is to take place.

The effectiveness of such an approach depends on finding non-traditional ways of dealing with perennial conflicts. The traditional way is to impose standards, defined at the national level to be realized at the regional and local levels. However beneficial the standards to the environment, they are bound to be "harmful" to the agricultural and industrial sectors. Where these sectors offer resistance, there are times when they are even more or less backed by other government institutions. Particularly interesting examples of a new strategy for managing environmental conflicts can be found in what in the Netherlands at that time was referred to as "area-directed environmental policy making" - where a number of government bodies and private interests work together in a project organization in order to work out a joint plan of approach for regional development through structured negotiations (1993:12). Here the planning process is not merely directed at the attainment of certain environmental objectives but also at the creation of new opportunities for other interests to achieve their particular goals. Situations in which winners imply losers can be transformed into potential win-win situations. Working in this way it has proved possible to reach environmental goals and create opportunities for industrial expansion at the same time by working with a broader interpretation of environmental policy as "comprehensive regional (societal) development." By creating conditions for processes of interaction and communication between private and public interests the way can be cleared for formulating a shared definition of the problem and for combining into a joint effort the singular problem-solving capabilities of the





participants. (For more examples of the application of this approach in the Netherlands, see Glasbergen, 1995.)

The sustainability discussion has provided fresh support and valuable innovative impetus to seeking consensus among the numerous parties involved with regard to the strategy to be followed in dealing with the issues at conflict. If the concept of sustainability is to be socially compatible, we will not only need appropriate economic instruments but also a wide range of new forms of public participation giving the people involved a considerable amount of freedom in developing suitable measures. This means that neither a political nor a moral (ecological) authority may determine and impose a decision on which measures and decisions conform to the concept of sustainability (Federal Ministry, 2000:4). This can only be developed in a social process of learning, searching and designing. This requires innovative as well as intelligent forms of participation reliably ensuring the level of communication and reflection necessary for this process. In this sense, the new political concept of SD is not only integrative in terms of substance. It also tries to achieve these objectives by means of a formally integrative policy. It tries to include as many social interest groups as possible in the political process because the national governments by themselves are not deemed capable of successfully tackling these complex tasks in a way that society will accept the results (Federal Ministry, 2000:6). Once the political discussion, at all levels, begins to focus on the question of how to implement the concept of SD in practical policies, the role of different methods for increasing public participation and resolving conflicts also comes to the fore. Starting with the Brundtland Report on through to Rio and its Agenda 21 as well as in the evolution of EU policy thinking regarding SD, the need to find new forms for involving social groups in the development of concrete steps towards sustainability has been stressed.

More generally, as public conflicts about environmental decisions have increased, it has become obvious that traditional forms of conflict resolution are inadequate. Citizens and organizations involved have become more and more reluctant to accept that these conflicts are resolved from the "top down" by authoritative administrative power. On the contrary, groups affected by or involved in environmental conflicts demand to take part in their resolution in order to have an effective say in decisions they consider vital to their lives.

More than ever, individuals are coming to understand how decisions made today affect the quality of life for future generations. This realization of the impact that decisions involving sustainability have on the quality of life for current and future generations has prompted many people to demand the right to participate





in a meaningful way in the processes through which decisions this matters are taken. They are demanding more meaningful input to decisions that directly affect them or the place where they live. This means that with regard to many of the decisions that we face in the years ahead it will be necessary to find ways to listen to opposing points of view and to accommodate deeply held and differing values. Conventional decision-making mechanisms tend to exclude rather than include diverse interests and do not cope well with the complexity that issues of sustainability present.

Consensus forming processes as alternative techniques for resolving disputes

Even when we accept conflicts as a normal part of social life, it is necessary - and in many cases possible - to avoid allowing them to degenerate into sharp confrontations which block effective collective action. There are encouraging signs that solutions can be found that are acceptable to all. Although Glasbergen saw a promising path for the management of environmental conflict in the Dutch model integrated regional development planning, the range of responses to the challenges of managing the transition to sustainable paths of development is much wider. The point of departure of all of them is the growing realization that traditional methods for handling the social conflicts related to SD are inadequate.

As a result of these developments there is at present growing support - and supporting practical experience - for trying new consensus-oriented procedures. Consensus processes are seen as encouraging creative and innovative solutions to complex problems by bringing a diversity of knowledge and expertise together to resolve issues. Many discussions of this kind of decision-making technique focus on decisions regarding the location and construction of large-scale infrastructure projects. However, opportunities for using consensus processes exist at all stages of decision making involving issues of sustainability - from the establishment of broad policies and regulations, to long range planning, to allocating land and resources, to resolving specific disputes, to licensing, monitoring, and enforcement (Canadian Round Tables:5).



A consensus process is one in which all those who have a stake in the outcome aim to reach agreement on actions and outcomes that resolve or advance issues related to environmental, social and economic sustainability. Consensus building requires informal, face-to-face interaction among specially chosen representatives of all "stakeholding" groups who engage in a voluntary effort to seek all gain rather than win-lose solutions or watered-down political compromise.



The strength of a consensus process flows from its voluntary nature. In principle can depart at any time. A neutral facilitator or mediator often assists them. As Susskind and Cruikshank point out, such approaches must be treated as supplements - and not alternatives - to conventional decision making. "Officials with statutory power must retain their authority in order to ensure accountability" (Cruikshank and Susskind, 1987:11). A consensus process provides an opportunity for participants to work together as equals to realize acceptable actions or outcomes without imposing the views or authority of one group over another (Canadian Round Tables:6). In a consensus process, participants work together to design a process that maximizes their ability to resolve their differences. Such processes are designed to provide a forum, which fosters cooperative problem solving in the search for innovative solutions that maximize all interests and promote sustainability. Although the participants may not agree with all aspects of the agreement, consensus is reached if all are willing to live with "the total package."

The consensus formation or consensus building perspective emphasizes the importance of process in achieving the goals of sustainable development. These processes need to mobilize the abilities (and partial problem-solving capacities) of all parties to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations. Consensus processes ensure that the people affected are involved from the start in identifying and agreeing on issues, sharing different perspectives, and making choices with which people can live. The use of consensus processes is supposed to help decision makers to be proactive by anticipating and avoiding disputes and problems.

Traditional instruments at the disposal of governments for implementing their public policy objectives and responsibilities are proving to be increasingly unsuitable for achieving solutions to major environmental disputes - solutions, which are not only economically viable but also compatible with environmental needs and the wishes of society. In the environmental policy arena, attempts have been made to find a way out of these problems by trying out new, cooperative forms of conflict resolution, based upon negotiation and increased participation, such as policy dialogue, round tables, participatory technology assessment or mediation. Supporters of such cooperative procedures have usually had elevated expectations concerning increased participation, procedural justice and greater transparency. It is expected that a rational, cooperative approach to a conflict should result in quicker, fairer, less costly and more consensual dissolution of conflict, as well as in increased public welfare. In this way, decisions taken by the state should find greater acceptance among the





public, social integration should improve, and efficiency of state action should increase significantly.

Such a process of consensus formation can ensure that when making decisions, the different interests are carefully taken into consideration and all the different solutions are thoroughly examined so that for the least costs the greatest environmental benefit can be obtained (Koppen, 1993: 2). The essential goal of consensus is to get a better overview of the different interests and the possible solutions, which, it is assumed, will lead to better results in relation to the financial costs. Only under these conditions can a consensus emerge that will continue to be supported by all parties.



It is not easy to achieve this kind of a result. This approach to decision making makes great demands on all participants. It requires a great amount of knowledge and preparation on the part of the participants. In addition, in some situations it will be necessary, through explicit measures intended to "empower" less experienced or capable participants. All parties must have an equal opportunity to participate in designing the process. It is important that all parties have equal access to relevant information and the opportunity to participate effectively through the process. Not everyone starts from the same point - particularly in terms of experience, knowledge and resources. Therefore specific actions may be necessary to ensure or to promote equal opportunity or equal chances for effective participation in the form of training or in consensus processes and negotiating skills, adequate and fair access to all relevant information and expertise, or resources for all participants to participate meaningfully (Canadian Round Tables: 13).

Parties to a given dispute or parties interested in a certain problem need to share a common concern in finding a mutually acceptable solution and to believe that a consensus process offers the best opportunity for addressing it. They need to understand what a consensus process can and cannot do, as well as what alternatives are available for handling the issue. The different kinds of alternative dispute resolution methods can be generally understood to be procedures in which the disputing parties voluntarily come together in an attempt to find a better solution or achieve a better result than they would have, had they done without such a procedure. The attractiveness of these approaches depends on the alternative courses of action available to the contending parties on the basis of the constitution, the political and economic system, and specifically tailored law. The following options are conceivable:

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- Resolving the issue by state-level parliamentary decision or local level spacing community government decision
 - Resolving the issue by decision of an administrative agency with the legal authority to make such determinations
 - Exercising the right of participation in administrative decision making procedures
 - Exercising the right to have industrial activities approved or facilities licensed for operation
 - Resolving the issue through litigation
 - Exerting influence upon policy makers, lobbying
 - Initiating a referendum
 - Mobilizing public support
 - Exercising illegal forms of protest

In this sense, consensus processes always have to be viewed and evaluated within the larger institutional context of which they form a part. A consensus process may complement other processes. It asks the parties to make their best efforts to address issues through consensus. If that process fails, participants are free to pursue other avenues.



This broader institutional context is especially important when the talk is of creating win-win situations. What is at issue, in the first instance, is exploring supplementary possibilities together, solutions that, due to limited information and inadequate communication, have not been taken into consideration. This is a crucial aspect of consensus formation as a process of communication. Experience shows that parties to a dispute often cannot express or formulate their own interests or concerns and scarcely have insight into that which the other parties are seeking. Often, the use of a neutral facilitator is required in order to structure this process. As noted, consensus formation always takes place within a set of limiting conditions - for example, the default option, that is to say, what happens if no agreement can be reached? The answer to this question determines which relative "gain" can be achieved. "Winning" is always related to the situation in which one finds oneself if agreement cannot be reached.



Environmental conflicts are highly complex. They do not only deal with concrete decisions on specific measures, but also with environmentally controversial plans and programs. Consequently, it cannot be expected that one single form of public participation will be a cure all. There are many forms that a consensus process can take. Each situation, issue or problem prompts the need for participants to design a process specifically suited to their abilities, circumstances and issues. There will necessarily be different institutional arrangements for resolving different kinds of environmental conflicts. (Indeed the "tailor-made" character of consensus processes is seen as one of their particular advantages over standardized traditional decision-making arrangements.) Still all share a common interest in achieving broad-scale participation by relevant stakeholders as a precondition for coming up with a mutually acceptable solution based on a consensus among these parties. Although consensus processes are not appropriate for all issues, they can be an invaluable tool that can be used to solve many complex environmental, economic, and social problems. Under given conditions, consensus processes reward expenditures in time and effort by generating creative and lasting solutions to complex problems.

Although it has been argued that consensus-forming processes can be used in all phases of the decision making or problem solving process, some observers stress their particular applicability to more limited, project-specific decision situations. They point out that we cannot assume that there will be a social consensus regarding something as comprehensive as "SD" or "environmental policy." Consequently, for these students of consensus processes, consensus formation refers to the application of a communication technique that puts the parties to a dispute in a better position to reach agreement with regard to the measures to be taken. These measures have to do with a specific problem in a concrete decision context, which sets the limiting conditions under which action is to be taken. According to Ida Koppen (1993:2), "the consensus that is to be achieved regards the optimal use of limited resources in light of the different interests that are at odds in the specific case." However, experiences in countries such as the Netherlands and with regard to local Agenda 21 planning processes, show that consensus forming based on extensive stakeholder participation can be effectively used in situation of strategic planning or policy development situations. Of course, the specific features of the process used will vary with the specificity of the decision to be taken and the phase in the decision process where the techniques are applied.



In all cases, however, it is necessary to engage the stakeholders as early as possible in the process - before the "experts" have defined the general trajectory of the process by presenting their definition of the problem and the general



course of action that should be followed in dealing with it. Cooperation does not start only when a solution established by policy makers or administrative authorities is to be legitimated by a public blessing or implemented but rather when the problem is to be defined and possible solutions are sought. From this perspective, determining the role that science and other experts are to play in the process is also extremely important. How - and by whom - are the relevant facts of the situation to be determined? What happens if "scientific opinions" on the issue differ? As Koppen reminds us (1993:2), in environmental policy scientific uncertainty plays a big role and there can be serious differences of opinion as to what we know or don't know. In consensus forming the parties to the dispute jointly determine what facts are known, what the best available technology is, what additional research is necessary for the decision to be made and by whom this research will be carried out. The process of consensus formation must therefore also be concerned with the research that is to be done, as well as with the use to which that information is to be put in the decision process.

It should be clear, that consensus processes do not avoid decisions or require abdication of leadership. On the contrary, they call upon leaders to forge partnerships that work toward developing solutions. A consensus process provides an opportunity for participants to work together as equals, to realize acceptable actions or outcomes without imposing the views or authority of one group over another. Another question is whether a strategy that aims at including social organization in the decision making process is not, in effect, a way to cover up or put the lid on conflicts of interests (Koppen, 1993:3). Often with good reason, people have become suspicious of government attempts to orchestrate cooperative decision making; we are haunted by unpleasant memories of attempts to co-opt critical opposition. However, the core of the consensus process is just the bringing into the open of the different interests - making them explicit as the object of open discussion and debate. Likewise the explicit consideration of different possible solutions to the problem or question at issue (a concrete problem) increases the chances of finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Well-structured and well-managed consensus forming processes provide the context for the productive confrontation of disputes, differences of opinion, and conflicting interest. An exaggerated polarization of opinion - "conflict" regarding the positions taken by the different parties to the point at issue - often makes it difficult to see the underlying interests and concerns of the different parties involved. Polarization leads to a situation where parties are opposed to one another. As a result there is little opportunity for a substantive conversation. Under such conditions, it is difficult to find out what it is that is really of concern





or worry to the different parties; about which discussions could then be carried out in the search for an acceptable solution. The search for consensus on joint solutions requires that the parties to the dispute know what, in the first instance, it is all about.

Consensus does not mean that everyone acts as if he or she agrees with the others. As Ida Koppen (1993:3) argues, consensus means that the government and interest groups begin the "battle to get their way" in an earlier phase of the decision process instead of waiting until the measures to be decided have been proposed. (Also the notion of "getting your way" takes on a different significance in a consensus process.) In this way different interest(s) or interest groups get a chance to raise their voices much sooner, which increases the chance that they will be able to influence the final result. If, as Koppen goes on to observe, only joint solutions are possible in environmental policy, by means of well structured consultation we should be able to discover more win-win situations than originally appeared to be the case.

Consensus processes can help build respect for and a better understanding of different viewpoints among the participants. They therefore lead to better informed, more creative, balanced and enduring decisions because of the shared commitment to and responsibility for the process, results and implementation. Mediation or consensus processes can also have effects that go beyond the specific concrete project involved. They represent learning processes where participants can bring or express their interests, fears and wishes, can develop mutual understanding (comprehension) and responsibility for the jointly made decisions. A wider variety of solution possibilities can become apparent as a result of the clearly structured procedure through which consensual decisions emerge. Even if all matters are not resolved through consensus, the process can crystallize the discussion, clarify the underlying issues, identify the options for dealing with outstanding disagreements, and build respect and understanding among the parties affected.

In the broadest sense, environmental mediation is a social technique, which helps to discuss, clarify, and possibly resolve conflicts (of interests) among two or more parties, often by involving an impartial third party. By means of the mutual exploration of negotiation leeway and the search for new solutions, mediation procedures are used to search for solutions to a problem that are acceptable to all those involved in the conflict. In short, such processes take the form of negotiation processes aiming at the resolution of a conflict by consensus (Federal Ministry, 2000:3). A consensus process affords an opportunity for all participants to better understand one another's diverse values, interests and



knowledge. This increased understanding can foster trust and openness, which invaluable assists the participants in moving beyond bargaining over positions to explore their underlying, interests and needs. Recognizing and addressing the values and interests of all relevant stakeholders provides a basis for crafting creative solutions that are more likely to last. Reaching a consensus agreement involves exploring and developing common interests despite differences in values.

Conclusion

Alternative dispute resolution procedures, of different kinds, were first employed in the USA. They have now become a common instrument for the dissolution of conflict over environmental policies as well as over land use and siting decisions in Canada and Japan. A recent (2000) survey of European experiences with environmental mediation (in the widest sense, not only procedures facilitated by a neutral third party) concludes that "environmental mediation is actually known only to relatively few experts in the fields of mediation, practical environmental policy and relevant research." (2000:69). Consequently, the report notes, "considerable efforts are still needed...in order to explore and evaluate the conflict resolving potential of this technique and to raise political awareness of it" (Loc. cit.).

As we have seen, any transition toward concrete versions of a sustainable society will be confronted with innumerable and serious conflicts regarding what SD will in fact mean in terms of the costs and benefits to be borne or enjoyed by different social groups. Within the broader context of the overall vision of this sustainable future, decisions will still have to be made regarding where the balance is to be struck, in specific situations, between economic growth, environmental quality and social equity. Infrastructure projects and the local of both industrial plants will still give rise to disputes. Limits on the exercise of property rights and restrictions on land use will continue to be the source of serious conflicts between contending groups. It has not only been the interest in increasing the democratic content of our societies by complementing traditional institutions of representative democracy by various forms of direct participation in public decision making that has stimulated interest in different kinds of so-called "alternative dispute resolution" techniques. Equally, if not more, important has been the growing concern with how best to cope with the complexity of the problems around development and environment so as to guarantee that the measures eventually taken will be effective. The hope is that, by applying processes of consensus formation to the resolution of the conflicts associated with the operationalization of the strategy of SD in concrete situations, we can

enlarge the potential solution space available to society by involving all interested parties in a process of mutual exploration of ways to deal with the problems confronted.

Agreement on the general objective of more sustainable paths of societal development is but the first step. If any given country, or part of that country, is to progress further than this, it will need to develop a capacity for dealing effectively with the conflicts that arise when SD is put into practice. Institutionalizing this process for making, implementing and revising collective decisions on the concrete meaning of SD is truly one of the basic institutional prerequisites of the successful management of the transition to a sustainable future.

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Papers

Public and Private Sector Information Mechanisms for Governance and Partnership for Sustainable Development

Dr. Julia Walton



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Abstract

This paper considers information for governance of sustainable development within the public and private sectors. This is approached in terms of strategies, frameworks and indicators to generate information and inform decision making which will enhance informed dialogue with the EU. Specifically in terms of information and participatory forms of integrated assessment this paper outlines three related areas:

- UK national and regional frameworks and indicators for governance of sustainable development.

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- Partnerships and new modes of cooperation between government and the business community.
 - Corporate social responsibility and corporate governance.

Introduction



The White Paper on European Governance proposes opening up the policy-making process to get more people and organizations involved in shaping and delivering EU policy. This promotes greater openness, accountability and responsibility for all those involved. However, introducing change requires effort from all the other institutions, central governments, regions, cities, and civil society in the current and future Member States.

Decisions made at regional and local levels should be coherent with a broader set of principles that would underpin more sustainable and balanced territorial development within the Union. Enhanced dialogue is necessary with Member States and their regions and cities to develop indicators to identify where coherence is needed. This work of promoting better coherence between territorial development actions at different levels should also feed the review of policies in view of the Sustainable Development Strategy, (Commission of the European Communities, 2001b).

This paper considers information on governance for sustainable development within the public and private sectors. This is approached in terms of mechanisms such as frameworks and indicators to generate information and inform decision making which will enhance informed dialogue with the EU. Specifically in terms of information and participatory forms of integrated assessment this paper outlines three related areas:

- UK national and regional frameworks and indicators for governance of sustainable development.
- Partnerships and new modes of cooperation between governments and the business community.
- Corporate social responsibility and corporate governance.

In terms of the role of information for governance, "while information plays a prime role, it is not sufficient per se to advance towards sustainability.



Sustainability and environmental information can become a powerful source of change only when it can be broadly incorporated into the social contexts and policy processes and, in this way, influence substantial decisions on the use of natural resources and the quality of the environment.” (EEA, 1998). In the UK both the public and private sectors have been developing sustainable development strategies and indicators for policy processes over a number of years.



1. UK national and regional frameworks for governance of sustainable development

In the Executive Summary of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development it is stated that: “policy should focus on steady long-term management and ambitious, verifiable objectives, which allow business and individuals to plan better and adjust gradually, thereby greatly reducing the costs of change. To assess progress toward these objectives, they need to be supplemented by a set of accurate indicators, for what is not measured proves hard to manage. However, better co-ordination, dialogue and long-term targets in themselves will not be enough. What ultimately matters is the content of policy.” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001a). An overall approach for evaluating progress in the context of sustainable development via the appraisal of existing and future policies, has been developed by the UK government. An outline of progress in this area is provided below.

Within the UK government the early 1990s saw a number of important changes in the political environment following the Rio Earth Summit. There was a perceived need for a more participatory political process that would engage individuals, business and environmental organizations in discussing how to move forward the environmental agenda. One outcome of this was the setting up of a number of new advisory bodies, with different membership compositions and remits, (DETR, 2000).

1.1. Sustainable Development Commission

The Government has established the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC). The Commission’s role is to advocate sustainable development across all sectors in the UK, review progress towards it, and build consensus on the actions needed if further progress is to be achieved. In April 2001 the Sustainable Development Commission published its mission statement, strategic objectives



and program of work for the next two years. This built on a range of preparatory exercises, including four reports, and a targeted consultation of key stakeholders, (DEFRA, 2002).

1.2. Consultation process on Sustainable Development

In 1997 the new UK Government built on the existing Sustainable Development Strategy (adding the social dimensions of sustainability alongside economic issues, the environment and resource use). From the beginning a consultative approach was taken with the general public, “Opportunities for Change: Consultation paper on a revised UK strategy for sustainable development” was published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR, 1998a). The Government also consulted on a set of headline indicators of sustainable development, “Sustainability Counts, consultation paper on a set of headline indicators of sustainable development,” was produced in 1998 by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR, 1998b). The government provides access to these reports via a sustainable development website, hence encouraging participation through a flow of information to the public: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/>

The approach above follows the principle that information needs to be collected and presented within a framework and in a format which ensures that it is not merely being consumed but can be used in new ways, for example:

- Addressing areas of priority for various stakeholder groups
- Illustrating medium and long term trends
- Revealing areas requiring further attention
- Enabling new modes of decision making that encompass various priorities
- Enabling evaluation of current and future strategies, policies and proposals
- Highlighting issues and problems.

1.3. Publication of UK national strategy on Sustainable Development

“A better quality of life - A strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom,” was published in 1999, (DETR, 1999a). A second document on indicators was published, “Quality of life counts - indicators for a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment” (DETR, 1999b). This began the process of developing a more holistic framework to enhance the capacity to generate and analyze sustainable development information.

1.4. Review of the national strategy on Sustainable Development

The review of progress on the strategy was published in 2001, 'Achieving a better quality of life - Review of progress towards sustainable development: Government annual report 2000,' (DETR, 2001). The second annual report 'Achieving a better quality of life- Review of progress towards sustainable development in 2001' was recently published in March 2002, (DEFRA, 2002). In terms of information input for policy choice the reviews are designed to highlight areas of poor performance in order to prioritize action. The Sustainable Development Strategy made clear that the Government would take action where a trend in any of the indicators was unacceptable, (DEFRA, 2002).

In the second “Annual Report Achieving a Better Quality of Life: Review of progress towards sustainable development: Government annual report 2001” (DEFRA, 2002), the Sustainable Development Commission states that: 'Governance is a major cross-cutting theme for sustainable development, with international as well as national aspects.

At the national level, the UK Government has devolved much domestic policy, which also includes sustainable development strategies. Devolution is an important part of the UK Strategy. Bringing government closer to the people through devolution is itself a policy for sustainable development: the idea of 'thinking globally, acting locally' has long been associated with sustainable development. Where matters are devolved, the new administrations decide how to proceed in the light of their country's particular circumstances and the needs and wishes of their people. Thus, while some of the policies described in the UK Strategy apply to the UK as a whole, others are exclusive to England. The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have the opportunity to deliver policies for sustainable development which reflect their institutions, their landscape, their culture and their way of life, (DEFRA, 2002).

1.5. Regional frameworks for sustainable development

Regional frameworks have been developed as a tool to appraise existing and future policies. This will provide regional flows of information and opportunities for participation at regional level. All English regions have now agreed Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks, the high-level visions for sustainable development promised in the Strategy. They have been developed by broad regional partnerships and also draw on Local Agenda 21 and Community Strategies. They will provide a clear reference point for other regional and sub-regional plans, and are an important link between targets for sustainable development at the local level set out in community strategies, and achieving sustainable development at the national level. The regional level focus provides a new level of decision making and policy appraisal. The regional sustainable development frameworks are available on the web encouraging participation through a flow of regional level information to the public: http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/search_by/sector/regional.htm

1.6. The North East of England framework

The North East has a regional level, multi-stakeholder approach to governance for sustainable development. The framework builds on previous regional economic strategies and regional planning guidance and will provide a tool to guide sustainability appraisals of strategies, policies and decisions. The framework is structured around objectives, targets and indicators. During the consultation period, the University of Sunderland was responsible for organizing a Regional Conference held in May 2000 which was attended by representatives of regional private, public, and third sector organizations and a Regional Workshop held in September 2000.

This is the first time that a document has been written that attempts to bring together work that is being done in the region and set this in the context of sustainable development. It recognizes that which is unique about this region, and goes some way towards identifying regionally specific priorities. The role of the framework is to set out an agreed overall direction for the future development of the region based on the principles of sustainable development. In terms of new modes of decision making the framework contains a table on how various decision makers can use it, these groups include: regional networks, statutory agencies, regional assemblies, sub-regional partnerships, unitary and county councils, businesses, community organizations and the voluntary sector, district and unitary authorities and community planning.



The framework has two key purposes:

- To provide the high-level framework and reference point for the future development, implementation, appraisal and review of regional strategies.
- To provide the basis for monitoring and measuring the region's performance in improving people's quality of life now and in the future.

In doing this, the framework:

- Provides the tools for sustainability appraisal within the region.
- Helps organizations to achieve more integrated decision making. A checklist is provided towards implementing sustainability appraisals. It is vital that all objectives be considered together.
- Identifies gaps where targets need to be set.

The suggested uses of the framework include:

Benchmarking against other strategies, monitoring regional sustainability performance, reviewing regional strategies, appraisal of structural/development plans, appraisal of transport, economic and development strategies and plans, informing business plans, inform content of LA 21 strategies, appraisal of working practices, better use of resources, identifying priorities and actions, educating and informing partners and employees. This will enable participatory integrated assessment.

Future revisions will build on this first version and account of developments in understanding and progress within the region. The publication of the framework in January 2002 is seen as the beginning of a process. There remains more work to be done before the full range of targets can be agreed. This work will feed in and reflect the results of ongoing discussions between Central Government and One Northeast on output targets for the region. (North East Assembly, 2002).

Key regional bodies have been established within the last two to three years which has enabled the development of the regional framework for sustainable development.





North East Assembly

The Assembly's unique strength lies in its breadth of representation. It is the only body which brings together the many sectors that together make up the North East community. These include local authorities, the world of business, trade unions, the voluntary sector, education and training, the Westminster and European Parliaments, health, rural and the environment. The Assembly is seen by many as representing a key stage in the move towards the establishment of elected regional government. These types of regional body can facilitate extensive stakeholder participation.

One North East

One North East is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for the North East of England. The RDA was established by the Government to further economic development and regeneration and has created a 10-year regional economic strategy, together with regional partners.

Government Office for the North East

Government Office for the North East works with regional partners and local people to maximize competitiveness and prosperity in the region, and to support integrated policies for social inclusion. Four particularly important themes underlie the work of the government offices. These come from national government policy, and are part of the overall approach to economic and social change. The four themes are: Competitiveness; Sustainable development; Regeneration; Social exclusion.

Both the UK government and the regions now encompass indicators to guide and monitor their strategies and frameworks. The UK national government welcomes 'the fact that indicator sets are now available at regional and local level, and updated annually through a transparent reporting process involving the use of a well-structured and accessible website.: http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/search_by/sector/regional.htm

1.7. Extensive active stakeholder participation at UK government planning level



Public participation in important policy decisions is also reaching new levels. The government wants to start a national debate on the options for managing the UK's radioactive waste. The consultation paper 'Managing Radioactive Waste Safely' (September 2001) seeks the public's views on how they can be best engaged in the discussions. The views expressed in response to this consultation exercise will inform the government's thinking on the strategy for public involvement.

In December 2001 Rural Affairs Minister Alun Michael confirmed the setting up of a Rural Affairs Forum, giving stakeholders the opportunity to put any issues of concern to the rural community straight into the heart of government. The first meeting of the Forum will take place early in 2002.

The Chemicals Stakeholder Forum is another example of innovative participation between the government and interested parties. The Forum was created in September 2000 and advises government on the voluntary action the chemical industry should take to protect people and the environment from the adverse effects of chemicals. Bodies from all sectors are represented on the Forum. The Forum's meetings are open to the public and all papers, including the first annual report published in November 2001, are available on the Internet, (DEFRA, 2002).

2. Partnerships and new modes of cooperation between government and the business community

The UK government has made significant progress in terms of adopting methods more commonly used in business, as Domingo Jiménez-Beltrán, Executive Director, EEA, states: The business sector has been very keen on answering the question 'What is really important', to be able to use environment like other criteria in business management. As many of the "new" approaches such as benchmarking, steering by indicators, etc. stem from business management and financial accounting, it is no wonder that the business sector has applied these tools also for environmental and sustainability issues. Few people are aware of this progress and government administrations certainly can learn from the companies. This interaction between companies and government could even lead to a reinforced cooperation in the field of the environment and sustainability, (EEA, 2001b).



Considered in light of the EU Green Paper: Promoting a framework for corporate social responsibility, this type of cooperation will become increasingly necessary, as valuable lessons can be learned, and a better understanding of complex issues developed. The EU Green Paper on Corporate Social Responsibility aims to launch a wide debate. The Commission hopes that the outcome of this initiative will be a new framework for the promotion of corporate responsibility, (Commission of the European Communities 2001b).

Corporate Social Responsibility, or CSR, has become a core issue for many large businesses. About 80% of the FTSE-100 companies now provide information about their environmental performance, social impact, or both. Corporate social responsibility covers such areas as environmental practice; health and safety at work; fair pay; and commitment to and involvement in the community. These principles apply both at home and abroad where many companies source their products.



Warhurst (2001) argues that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is key to operationalizing the strategic role of business in contributing towards this sustainable development process, so that business is able to engage in and contribute to society as a corporate citizen. This implies a need for both internal change and adjustment on the part of companies and external proactivity with respect to their relationships with stakeholders.

Project partnerships between leading NGOs and business have produced guidance documents such as 'To Whose Profit? Building a Business Case for Sustainability.' This was a result of a partnership between the World Wide Fund for Nature-UK and Cable and Wireless, (WWF-UK, 2001).

2.1. CSR and Government

CSR can contribute to social, developmental or environmental objectives at the local, national or international level, but governments need to recognize that the prime mover lies within each organization in the context of its unique market position. National action may be appropriate in developing partnerships for sharing good practice (e.g. on business action in developing countries), agreeing and monitoring standards or setting the overall market framework, (DTI, 2001).

While governments can provide leadership on CSR by helping to raise awareness of the business case and helping to build consensus on priorities for action, they should work in partnership with the private sector on CSR, recognizing



the need to avoid duplicating or displacing the contribution that the private sector is already making in this area. Policy debate should not focus only on the balance of arguments between a voluntary or regulatory approach. The issues are more complex and a greater degree of subtlety will be needed to maximize the benefits of CSR. Intervention may be helpful to support productivity and competitiveness, to ensure that the market mechanisms that drive CSR's development work effectively, or to register key policy concerns.

But public authorities should recognize the power of the independence of this voluntary approach. Private sector initiatives can go further and faster in setting standards and encouraging innovation than is possible for governments, given the ongoing development of this area. Government has an important role to play in creating the conditions for responsible business through "intelligent" regulation, incentives and encouraging partnerships between stakeholders such as business/unions/NGOs. Partnerships between business, other stakeholders and government can be effective in meeting mutually advantageous objectives, with the government acting as broker or providing funding to reflect the public policy interest, e.g. in economic regeneration.



Government can also have a role in recognizing achievements and progress to date, celebrating innovations and ensuring that its own initiatives provide a consistent framework within which the CSR agenda can be driven forward. It is by an effective partnership between government, business and other sectors of society that we can best fulfill the real potential of the Corporate Social Responsibility agenda, (Alexander, 2002).

2.2. UK government links with the business community

In the UK the Government is considering recommendations of the independent Company Law Review, which proposed that economically significant companies be required to produce an Operating and Financial Review as part of their annual report and accounts. This would be an annual review by the directors of everything they consider relevant to the performance and prospects of the company and in many cases would include social and environmental issues, (DTI, 2001).

2.3. Regional and local levels of cooperation

The Sustainable Development Commission seeks to work with a range of sectors: not only central government and the devolved administrations, but also





business and English regional organizations; and it aims to encourage sustainable development at a local level. On the business front, the Commission will be publishing in Spring 2002, in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry, a guide to the production of business sectoral strategies, an assessment methodology, and a good practice review.

CSR takes place at the level of the individual company, which has to make decisions on priorities, purpose and values, strategy and engagement with its stakeholders. Multinational enterprises need to find an appropriate response to social and environmental challenges in each of the communities in which they operate. At the local and regional levels joint action may be helpful in addressing local community needs, such as in regeneration, employment or partnership with education. The public sector may provide some appropriate funding or provide assistance in brokering business partnerships, (DTI, 2001).

2.4. Mechanisms for regional level cooperation

The North East sustainable development framework outlined earlier, recommends that business decision makers use the framework for a number of purposes, including: Informing business plans; informing content of LA 21 strategies; tracking and comparing progress on sustainable development; appraisal of working practices; better use of resources; identifying priorities/actions; and educating and informing employees and partners.



There is a growing need for companies to acquire a 'social license' to operate as well as the more customary regulatory license. As yet, unlike in the environmental arena where a failure to comply can be clearly linked by law to the penalty of withdrawal of permits, the social license exists on an iterative and informal basis and requires collaboration and mutual trust and a self-governing structure for monitoring performance throughout. Warhurst offers suggestions for the potential types of 'social license' partnership between the business community, government and the local community. Management tools, such as tri-sector partnership models (between business, government agencies/ intergovernmental organizations and local communities or civil society organizations) and sustainability performance indicators, have a role to play in assisting both companies and their stakeholders in assessing the extent to which their production activities are contributing to, and not detracting from, sustainable development goals, (Warhurst, 2001).



A tri-sector partnership could provide a model or framework for managing coherently and systematically over time project-level partnerships, and address areas of concern by establishing agreed partnership goals, monitoring and reporting systems and collaborative activities. Such partnership agreements may pre-date or post-date the project development phase and be used as a mechanism to ensure communication and participation in relevant decision making.

Such partnerships could address the following:

- Social and political risk management.
- Relationship management, including the resolution of local disputes.
- New local skills and local procurement.
- More effective environmental impact assessment and social impact assessment.
- More effective public consultation.
- Environmental management after site closure.
- International standards, voluntary codes of practice.
- Involvement of local contractors in social risk management and social investment.
- Building trust and confidence and cooperation.
- Consultation processes.
- Integration of business strategies with regional development plans, rural poverty adjustment schemes and local education programs.
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities between partners and defining community expectations of business.
- Closure planning, decommissioning, site remediation, viable future land-use options and employment options.

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- The funding of social investment projects aimed at local community development priorities.
 - The management of foundations as vehicles for social investment.

It could be called a 'sustainability license,' since it is suggested that, increasingly, communities and special-interest groups, and some governments, will require from the outset that industrial development projects meet pre-defined criteria of sustainability on the one hand and, on the other, that the ongoing project demonstrates good progress towards contributing to sustainability goals of enhanced human health, well-being, quality of life and ecosystem health, (Warhurst, 2001).

3. Corporate social responsibility and corporate governance

The key to effectiveness is transparency. Clarity in reporting and communicating on CSR allows companies to manage their activities, gain recognition for their achievements and enables stakeholders to exert their influence, (DTI, 2001). Environmental and, more recently, sustainability reporting have emerged over the last ten years and much progress has been made. However at a deeper level this type of information provision is still very much at an evolutionary stage and many challenges remain.

From the early 1990s corporate environment reports have quickly become the key channel for companies to communicate their environmental performance and, just as importantly, have become an effective tool to demonstrate company-wide integrated environmental management systems, corporate responsibility and the implementation of industry voluntary codes of conduct to a range of stakeholder groups, (UNEP/SustainAbility, 1994).

The first international survey of corporate environmental reporting was published in 1993. "Coming Clean — Corporate environmental reporting, opening up for sustainable development," was produced jointly by SustainAbility, Deloitte & Touche Tohmatsu International (DTTI) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (SustainAbility, DTTI and IISD, 1993).

There have since been a number of benchmarking reports produced by a variety of organizations. Within the Centre for Environmental Informatics at the University of Sunderland researchers undertook a critical analysis of scoring systems utilized for benchmarking, (Jones and Alabaster, 1999). UNEP/



SustainAbility have provided a number of benchmarking reports and in subsequent UNEP/SustainAbility reports, 50 environmental reporting ingredients are listed under the following five categories:

- Management policies and systems
- Input/output inventory
- Finance
- Stakeholder relations
- Sustainable development.

A five stage model was developed in order to track the evolution of environmental reports. Stages 1 to 4 cover disclosures such as short statements in the Annual Reports, one-off environmental reports and annual environmental reporting. Stage 5 was significantly expanded.

This was an early attempt to outline the actions that would be needed within and outside the business community for substantial improvements in information provision and decision making for sustainable development.

3.1. Stage 5

Sustainable Development Reporting. Aim: no net loss of carrying capacity. Linking of environmental, economic, and social aspects of corporate performance, supported by indicators of sustainability. Integration of full cost accounting.

Opening out of stage 5: Institutionalized 'multi-way' stakeholder engagement

Company - triple bottom line - Responsibility

Full, standardized, state-of-the-art environmental, financial and social reporting. True and fair view of global and local impacts. Reporting in all world regions against global operating standards. Responsible lobbying. Internal and external evaluation of social and environmental performance.



Government - Triple bottom line - Accountability

Minimum mandatory reporting frameworks. Common environmental and social accounting methodologies and indicators. Enforceable environmental quality standards. Punitive measures for corporate non-performers. Environmental and social tax reform. Sustainability-screened public procurement and investment.

Market - Triple bottom line - Sustainability

Pressure for greater corporate disclosure across the triple bottom line. Information needs made explicit. Use of disclosed information in all investment and consumption decisions. Rewarding good performers and penalizing laggards. Striking a balance between rights and needs as a shareholder, consumer and citizen, (SustainAbility/UNEP, 1996).

Numerous voluntary charters and guidelines exist to guide public and private sector environmental strategy and reporting, however environmental reporting is rarely found to be a mandatory element of membership as a signatory, (Walton et al, 2000, Walton, 2000). This is a key mismatch in terms of information provision and monitoring.

Awards schemes exist for environmental reporting. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) now run social, sustainability and Internet reporting awards as well as the environmental reporting awards. ACCA was one of three co-founders of the European Environmental Reporting Awards (EERA). Each participant is an accountancy body from a European country. 2001 is the sixth cycle of the scheme and there are now fourteen European countries (and therefore fourteen accountancy bodies) participating in it.

The rating/ranking of environmental reports promotes environmental reporting and provides incentives to improve the quality of environmental reports. The criteria for rating and ranking reports also act as guidelines for environmental reporting. Awards and benchmarking surveys often get a lot of attention from the media, and in this way they promote a wider adoption of environmental reporting. But they can be misinterpreted as a rating/ranking of the environmental performance and/or environmental management of the companies, rather than a ranking of environmental reports. Corporate performance ranking tools are therefore needed.

3.2. Issues for reporting



CERs need to provide comparable, credible and reliable information on the size and nature of impacts and how companies are dealing with them, much of this reporting is poor. The information provided in environmental reports is unevenly reported across companies and sectors and its relationship to the financial fortunes of a company is unclear. The reporting of financially relevant environmental risks is limited, which jeopardizes sound investment. The reporting of environmental external costs, which represent a large but hidden subsidy from society to company shareholders, is virtually non-existent, (EEA, 2001a).

3.3. Challenges: continuity, comparability and credibility

The major challenges of corporate environmental reporting can be summarized as:

- Continuity: in that the same methods and metrics are used year after year; comparability: to allow for benchmarking and assessing progress;
- Credibility: to ensure that the information provides a 'true and fair' picture of the company's environmental performance.
- Continuity can be ensured by publishing environmental reports at regular intervals, by setting targets and reporting back on progress, and by using the same performance indicators over time.
- Comparability is best achieved by using standardized and normalized environmental performance indicators, based on harmonized accounting systems.
- Credibility requires transparency, an inclusive approach to stakeholders, and verification of the environmental reports by independent and authoritative auditors.
(EEA, 2001a).

The Centre for Environmental Informatics at the University of Sunderland undertook an EU project entitled 'Study of Environmental Reporting by Companies'. This report surveyed the annual financial reports of a large number of companies (mainly EU companies or companies that operate in the EU) with a view to identify best practice and to evaluate the relevance and comparability



of the environmental information that is disclosed. The report also recommends ways of improving the reliability, comparability and usefulness of the disclosures, (Jones, 2000).

3.4. Indicators

A variety of environmental performance indicators are in use and there is a range of guidelines under development. To ensure comparability and credibility, a consensus needs to be reached by the business sector on a portfolio of core environmental indicators, both overall and on sector-specific levels. These environmental indicators need to be qualitative, quantitative and monetary. They need to concern both environmental performance and environmental impact. They need to cover the process, the products and the management system.

Environmental indicators need to be constructed so that they can capture whether or not the aims of environmental management are being achieved, i.e. improving environmental performance and moving towards a more sustainable society. The draft Standard on Environmental Performance Evaluation, ISO 14031, the WBCSD Eco-Efficiency Metrics, and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) are first steps towards such a consensus. This is an area in which the business community, NGOs, governmental authorities and the EEA can work together during the next couple of years, especially in developing indicators that can be used by the smaller companies. (EEA, 2001a).

The EU, national and local governments are making significant moves towards making information available via the Internet and using it as an electronic consultation forum. The business community has also been publishing a variety of environmental information, including environmental reports on the Internet, for a number of years.

A small number of companies have attempted online forums, the most comprehensive example currently is Shell. However, companies do not always fully understand the potential of the Internet and have tended to under use it in the past.

The Centre for Environmental Informatics at the University of Sunderland has undertaken Internet studies to explore how companies actually use the web and to appraise the effectiveness of their environmental reporting websites, (Jones et al, 1998, 1999a, 1999b).

3.5. Sustainability reporting



Reporting on the wider social and ethical dimensions of sustainability is a more recent and additional challenge for both the business and the financial sectors. Leading companies are beginning to address not only environmental factors but also social and ethical issues and their interlinkages, often driven by consumer and investor pressure. Reporting guidelines such as the Global Reporting Initiative are currently receiving much attention. The Global Reporting Initiative was launched by the Coalition of Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES). This is significant for two important reasons. Firstly, the early CERES principles were one of the few examples containing a mandatory reporting requirement. Secondly, CERES is an NGO, not an industry network, and as such has produced a challenging set of guidelines for business.

The CERES Coalition established in 1989 is comprised of investment institutions which explicitly consider environmental factors in their investment decisions, environmental advocacy organizations, labor unions, public interest groups and community-based activists, a key component of the organization's work is the promotion of environmental reporting.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is the first set of sustainability corporate reporting guidelines, and was launched as a draft by CERES in March 1999 (CERES, 1999). The GRI is the result of a multi-stakeholder process initiated by CERES in 1997 to establish an international framework for environmental reporting. During the first meetings in early 1998, the GRI widened its scope to aim to establish guidelines for sustainability reporting, including not only the environment, but also social and economic factors. Several organizations were involved in the process, such as WBCSD, the New Economics Foundation (NEF), the Council on Economic Priorities (CEP), the UNEP-IE, ACCA and the big auditing firms, companies such as General Motors, Electrolux and Tokyo Electric Power, as well as researchers and academics.

The GRI was created because:

- Companies receive diverse incompatible, and unclear requests for information from internal managers, investors, and citizens;
- Managers, investors, labor; human rights groups receive diverse, incompatible inconsistent, unverified information.



The GRI proposes to meet these problems by creating a common reporting framework developed through a multi-stakeholder process.

The GRI's reporting guidelines stand a good chance of being accepted as the global standard by governments. Oxfam has decided to support the (GRI) guidelines because it saw other organizations such as Amnesty International taking part and found the GRI open to the idea that governments might use the framework as a basis for legislation, (Maitland, 2002).

3.6. The development of financial sustainability indices

In February 2001, one of the world's most respected equity index calculation specialists, (FTSE), launched the FTSE4Good Index series. One aim of the series is to establish a global standard for socially responsible investment (SRI). The series, created and managed by global index provider FTSE, covers four markets: UK, Europe, US and Global. Constituents of the FTSE4Good series will be determined by assessing a company's achievements in the following areas:

- Working towards environmental sustainability
- Developing positive relationships with stakeholders
- Upholding and supporting universal human rights

In October 2001, Dow Jones Indexes, STOXX Limited and SAM Group launched a new set of European sustainability indexes. The Dow Jones STOXX Sustainability Indexes will track the financial performance of the leading companies in terms of economic, environmental and social criteria in Europe. The Dow Jones STOXX Sustainability Indexes will be part of the family of Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes (DJSI) which were launched as the first global sustainability benchmarks in 1999.

3.7. Sustainability indicators

But how can corporate sustainability be measured? Much research is required to develop sustainability indicators that are generally acceptable, particularly in the social/ethical area, where expectations are changing quickly, and experience is scarce. A key sustainability issue raised during GRI's pilot stage was the

unclear linkage between corporate indicators and biological/ecological limits, i.e. the need for indicators to be linked to scientifically and politically determined environmental limits: 'performance indicators.' (EEA, 2001a). At country and EU level there are initiatives that are making sustainability accountable via 'headline indicators', such as those being developed by the EU, and some Member States, e.g. Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Similar 'headline' indicators are being used at a corporate level in order to focus the attention of managers and the financial sector on measures of performance that can be used to encourage and monitor the more eco-efficient use of capital. Examples include the 'core' indicators of WBCSD or the 'key' indicators of the global reporting initiative.

Conclusions

Opportunities now exist for the public and private sectors to re-invigorate cooperative efforts to learn from the development and application of information generation and decision-making mechanisms such as strategies, frameworks and indicators. As agreed in the Dublin Declaration, private bodies as part of a consortia, via enhanced networking and coordinating mechanisms, can help achieve a sustainable interactive information system. Additionally new partnerships based on tangible criteria will enable more effective appraisal of policies and projects at a variety of levels. The public disclosure of this process and performance against targets, particularly via the Internet and online consultations, will enable the citizenry to play a far more participatory role. Therefore, the linear model of dispensing policies from above can be replaced by a virtuous circle, based on feedback, networks and involvement from policy creation to implementation at all levels, (Commission of the European Communities, 2001b).

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
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Papers

Institutions for sustainable development: indicators for performance assessment

Joachim H. Spangenberg



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Abstract

In the course of evaluating the progress in implementing Agenda 21 (United Nations 1992) the "Commission on Sustainable Development" began developing a set of indicators of sustainable development.

The first version was finalized in 1996 with the suggestion of 134 indicators (UNDP/CDSD 1996) and put to a field test, resulting in a final version published in 2001 (UNDESA 2001). In both versions, the indicators are divided up into four thematic areas corresponding to four dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental, social, and institutional. The further conceptual separation into driving force, state, and response indicators was not used in the final version. Generally, (inter-) governmental organizations are explicitly referred to as institutions, which



in the course of decision making have to take aspects of sustainable development into consideration.

Objectives of sustainable development are mainly defined for the economic, social and environmental dimension, but for effective compliance, as well as for sustainability characteristics like justice or participation, they must be complemented by core institutional objectives.



The CSD's set of sustainability indicators was the first one to explicitly take into account the institutional dimension of sustainability, and other organizations like the World Bank and the OECD have followed suit. As is the case with most land-breaking pioneer projects, the indicators suggested offer significant room for improvement.

In order to measure the effectiveness of the institutions officially recognized as important for sustainable development, Agenda 21, as an unanimously agreed global document, has been analyzed regarding its institutional content (organizations, mechanisms, orientations). On this basis, the purposes of the institutions have been determined in a stepwise approach and indicators developed which permit measuring the progress achieved against the purposes of the respective institution.

The use of terms related to institutional contexts in Agenda 21 implies that the underlying understanding of institutions is broader, since it refers not only to organizations, but also to institutional mechanisms like procedures and legal norms (formal or informal, explicit or implicit systems of rules).

Applying the even more extended definition of social sciences, including institutional orientations such as societal norms and ideals, reveals an additional wealth of institutional aspects in Agenda 21, which - as opposed to organizations and mechanisms - have obviously not been considered institutions by the authors.

This has been illustrated by a complete "screening" of all chapters of Agenda 21 according to all three classes of institution. The analysis uncovers various important institutional aspects of sustainable development that are not yet reflected in the current set of indicators. They are covered by a rather complete list of institutions in Agenda 21 (Spangenberg et al. 2000); some examples from it are provided with this paper.



Furthermore, new indicators need to be derived from Agenda 21, based on high scientific standards as well as on operational concerns in day-to-day application. For organizations, for instance, it is obvious that their very existence (yes/no) cannot be the basis for indicator development, but their effectiveness must be the point of reference.

Instead of taking the DSR system as an analytical framework, performance indicators for types of institutions and for all dimensions of sustainability can be derived by assessing to which degree the institutional setting and the institution nominated for such a task have a proven capability of fulfilling the tasks allocated them. We call this the “carrying capacity” of the institutional setting.

Starting with the four dimensions of sustainable development, indicators have been derived for the dimensions as well as for their interlinkages following a systematic stepwise approach described in the paper. As a result, a rich reservoir of institutional indicators from which to choose have been suggested for analyzing development processes.

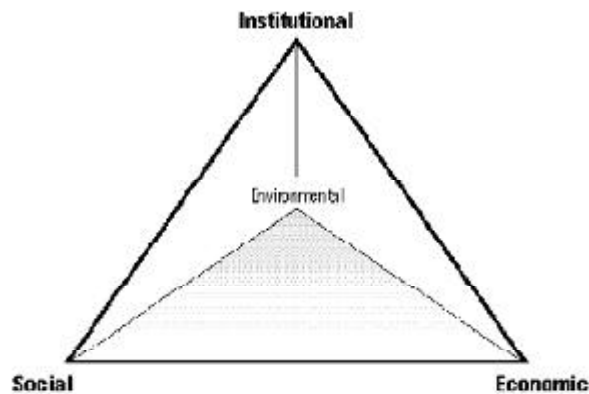
1. Introduction

In 1992 the United Nations assembled the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, based on the 1997 Brundtland report (WCED World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) and on extensive preparatory work. It adopted a number of documents, in particular the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, the Climate and the Biodiversity Conventions (United Nations 1993) pointing out pathways towards sustainable development. These included how to reconcile social development and environmental protection in a vibrant but resource-efficient economy.

Although all the resulting documents are referring to the institutional setting necessary for sustainable development, institutions were not yet singled out as a separate dimension of sustainability besides the environmental, economic and social one.

This did not occur until 1995, when the CSD's 3rd session approved the work program on indicators, including a subset of indicators for institutional sustainability (UNDP/CSD 1995), resulting in a four-dimensional concept of sustainability.

Figure 1: The Four Dimensions of Sustainability (according to CSD 1995)





Source: Joachim Spangenberg, Wuppertal Institute, 1997

As in this concept each dimension interacts with all others, this situation is best visualized by the “Prism of Sustainable Development” in Figure 1, illustrating the four dimensions and their interlinkages (Valentin, Spangenberg 2000). The prism provides a framework capable of accommodating the vast majority of sustainable development concepts, distinguished by the different emphasis given to certain dimensions and linkages. The concept used throughout this paper is based upon a balanced approach, aimed at avoiding irreversible damage in either dimension with equal emphasis. This is equivalent to not overburdening the carrying capacities of the subsystems underlying the different dimensions.

Phrased as an imperative it might read: “Do not cause irreversible damage to, run down or exploit

- humans (i.e. secure health and self-realization);
- the environment (i.e. safeguard viability);
- the economy (i.e. guaranty competitiveness and satisfaction of material needs); and
- the institutional system (i.e. make it reliable, trustworthy but open to evolve).”

The great political challenge is then to integrate the dimensional objectives and policy goals into a joint perspective of sustainable development, avoiding or at least minimizing trade-offs between the different objectives. To this end, their



interlinkages must be considered, as they are the fields of policy and decision making where synergies as well as compromises need to be found.

Even if the dimensional and interlinking objectives are given, sustainable development is not just any kind of development towards these objectives, but the process itself is also subject to procedural sustainability criteria, many of them institutional. Consequently, the UNCED conference not only put the challenge of reconciling economic, social and environmental needs on the agenda of international politics but also called for new institutions and new patterns of governance, and even established new institutional patterns and procedures itself, which have been guiding the work of the CSD and the WSSD (the Rio+10 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg) preparations ever since. Participatory openness to major groups, gender equality or the decentralization of power are prominent examples from Agenda 21.

These criteria also represent what should be the core of not only effective, but “good governance”, an important issue, e.g. in the EU sustainability strategy draft (CEC Commission of the European Communities 2001), now singled out as a separate process (European Council 2001)

Based on this understanding of sustainable development, Section Two briefly introduces the concept of institutions as used in this paper, Section Three describes the necessary characteristics of indicators to assess the effectiveness of institutions. For illustration purposes, two case studies (concerning an integrated set of sustainability indicators for Europe, and analyzing the institutional content of Agenda 21) are briefly introduced in Sections Four and Five.

Whereas the former is based on a SERI discussion paper regarding the future development of the EU sustainability headline indicators, the latter summarizes the results of a study for UNCSD on behalf of the German Environment Agency, UBA. The result is a menu of indicators for the national level, designed to be integrated into UNCSD’s set of sustainable development indicators (SDI). As different institutional arrangements may be most suitable in different nations, regions, cultures and phases of development, the indicators necessarily focus on the effects institutions have on implementing Agenda 21, and not on the internal structure of the respective institutions.

Section Six concludes, and Section Seven discusses the relevance of the indicators developed for the national and supranational level for local and regional sustainable development.



2. The concept of institutions

Institutions can be analyzed at different levels, from the micro level of individual decision making to the macro level of national politics and international regimes. The institution analysis in this paper provides a macro framework concentrating on the effective functioning of systems and their functional elements.

Different sciences have developed different understandings of what institutions are and how they function. One particular distinction is the perception of the role of individual preferences. While institutional economics sees them as exogenously given and constant, focusing on the influence they have on institutions, their structure and results, psychology is mainly interested in the opposite, i.e. in the influence of the institutional setting on human behavior and on the emergence of preferences. Historical institutionalism analyses the way institutions have developed, and sociology asks how institutional orientations shape mechanisms and organizations.

Already this brief list of approaches illustrates that no result of institutional analysis can be independent of its scientific as well as its real-world context. Their definition and the functions allocated to them vary with the analytical tools applied. None of these disciplinary approaches is capable of providing a complete and lasting analysis, as on the one hand these approaches are more complementary than mutually exclusive, each covering a different aspect of reality.

On the other hand, institutions co-evolve with their social and physical environment. Thus, any analysis gives more of a glimpse into selected aspects of a process of context-dependent, co-evolutionary development rather than characterizing the institutions as such.

2.1. Institutions as systems of rules

In this paper an approach from political science has been chosen, since it integrates most of the views mentioned. It analyses the mutual interaction and the respective influence of individual attitudes and institutional structures, their evolution and function. More specifically, the focus is on the effect institutions have on the political decision-making process and its results, well in line with the task of institutions as perceived by Agenda 21.

Institutions are here understood as formal and informal systems of rules for authoritative conflict solution disposing of mechanisms for rule enforcement (Czada 1995:205). Thus political institutions:

"are systems of rules for the development and implementation of mandatory, societal relevant decisions and organs of symbolically facilitating societal orientation" (Göhler 1997:28).

This includes, e.g. procedures, arrangements and rules, which set parameters for defining political problems, as well as for developing and implementing decisions. Political organizations include both. They are social entities, appearing as actors in political processes, as well as systems of rules, structuring political behavior. This definition encompasses "social and cultural rules" on the national and subnational level only as long as they play a role in the political process.

Institutions as decision-making bodies and the means to implement them are not static, but evolving entities, embedded in the overall framework of society. This process of evolution is shaped by their own functions as much as by the interaction with other institutions and the evolving values and attitudes of the respective society.

2.2. Typology of institutions

Whereas general social rules like values, ideas and principles are the domain of "ideas", the domain of "institutions" as politically relevant social rules can be subdivided into the three levels of institutional orientations, institutional mechanisms and organizations (see Table 1). Regarding organizations, those relevant for societal decision making are taken into account. They are as easily identified as the mechanisms which include the systems of rules governing all kinds of policy-relevant societal decision-making processes. The case is not as easy with institutional orientations, i.e. less intuitively obvious. These include operational principles like reflexivity, resonance and reciprocity in human and social relations (the latter being a special case of the ethical orientation in Kant's categorical imperative), as well as organizing principles of societal arrangements like efficiency, sufficiency and consistency.

From this perspective, sustainable development is essentially a distinctive set of institutional orientations, based on a broad variety of values and implemented by mechanisms and organizations suitable to the specific circumstances.

Institutions cannot only be explicit like political organizations, bylaws of an organization (mechanisms) or a declaration of rights (orientations), but also implicit as loose networks, behavioral codes, and shared attitudes.

Table 1: Ideas and Institutions

Domain	Elements	Equivalent in the governance approach	Equivalent in the sustainability culture analysis
Ideas	behaviour guiding general expectations of a society, values, ideas, principles	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>meta-objectives</i>
Institutions III: institutional orientations	norms, leitbilder, imperatives	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>objectives</i>
Institutions II: institutional mechanisms	administrative, political, social procedures, legal norms	<i>regimes</i>	<i>Measures, indicators, adjustments</i>
Institutions I: organisations	structured and permanent organisations with implicit and explicit internal rules	<i>institutions</i>	<i>n.a.</i>

Source: Spangenberg et al. 2002

Based on this conceptualization of political institutions in general, two functions have been identified that are specific for institutions for sustainability:

- They facilitate decision making directed towards the various implicit and explicit objectives of the sustainability paradigm, and/or
- they facilitate the implementation of political decisions directed towards the various implicit and explicit objectives of the sustainability paradigm.

From these descriptions, two characteristics of the approach chosen are obvious: on the one hand, the focus is not on the (symbolic) meaning of institutions, but on their functions in terms of implementing the tasks that have been allocated to them. On the other hand, these tasks are not necessarily institutional ones (like increased reflexivity or participation), but can be designated environmental, social and economic ones. The latter provide the interlinkages of the different dimensions of sustainable development, whereas the former constitute the core institutional aspects of sustainability (see Section Four).

Compared to this concept, the Sustainability Culture Approach suggested by Tábara (2002) lacks the level of organizations and consequently faces an implementation dilemma, while the Governance Concept as introduced, e.g. by Morata (2002), covers only two of the three levels of institutions relevant for decisions towards sustainability. Failing to take into account institutional orientations creates a policy dilemma: orientations are least accessible to direct

political influence, while defining the freedom to act by limiting the degree to which mechanisms and organizations may be changed without losing legitimacy and thus their effectiveness. Furthermore, for conflict solutions, shared orientations can provide a framework for voluntary coordination, thus reducing transaction costs and providing synergies. Alternatively the lack of common orientations usually leads to rather fruitless negotiations ending with a formal minimum consensus; the Kyoto Protocol negotiations provide a range of illustrative material for both options.

2.3. Assessing institutions



To assess the functioning of institutions, there are – at least in principle – two approaches: the bottom-up one is to analyze their internal structure, the capacities and the obstacles preventing certain outcomes, while the top-down one is to assess their performance against the tasks they have been allocated (Spangenberg et al. 2001). The top-down approach has been chosen for this paper for three reasons: It is an appropriate first step for solving institutional problems; it is the only procedure applicable on the national and international level; and it accommodates the evolutionary dynamics of the institutional arrangements.

For institutions, as for any other object, before fixing a hole (before measures can be developed, implemented and the results can be monitored) it must be recognized and identified. Table 2 illustrates that the analysis in this paper is focused on the first and the last step, i.e. on aspects which are more specific to the concept of sustainable development than to a certain case. The OECD process on institutional aspects of policy integration goes one step further by focusing on functions (rather than on specific structures), which is probably as close as one can get to a specific situation with a general approach.

Table 2: Stepwise solving institutional problems

Detecting a problem	sustainability specific	indicators suggested here
→ analysing its functional nature	system specific	OECD work in progress
→ finding the structural cause	} Country + culture specific	must be case by case
→ developing a solution		
→ implementing the cure	sustainability specific	indicators suggested here
→ monitoring the problem solving		



Source: Spangenberg et al. 2002



Assessing the effectiveness of an institution within a given setting against the policy tasks and objectives is like a fire alarm: it warns of emerging or manifest risks and indicates roughly where they can be found, but provides no information on the exact reasons nor gives instructions on what precisely to do. Once the alarm has been registered, experts will have to analyze the situation and determine which measures are to be taken to solve the problem of institutional malfunction and safeguard the carrying capacity of the respective institution. The latter can be defined as an institution's ability to accommodate the functions and execute the tasks allocated to it without irreversibly losing its core function or meaning, provided an appropriate institutional setting is given.

As institutions are based on values or meta-objectives, and since values as well as institutions are undergoing co-evolutionary development processes, the appropriate institutional setting will differ between cultures (even at the subnational level or between social groups) and will change over time in details as well as in fundamentals. When describing these changes at the level of structural elements of institutions and their interaction, the analysis can only be specific to a single institution at a specific point in time, without providing sufficient information about the core question "what does this change mean for sustainable development?" If the co-evolutionary process enhances the effectiveness or at least maintains it in a changing social environment, this change is indeed a desirable one. From a dynamic point of view, the top-down process of performance monitoring, i.e. measuring the results relevant for sustainable development with performance indicators (see Section Three) is of particular importance. The performance of a system is not independent of its internal structure, but it is more than can be explained by analyzing the system elements. Co-evolutionary processes in particular are driven by the permanent interaction of system structure, system behavior and external responses: structure shapes the performance and vice versa.

Institutions are usually characterized by specific functions and associated with specific tasks they should fulfill, alone or in interaction with others. Whereas organizations are founded and mechanisms are introduced for certain purposes, the case is different with institutional orientations. They are not made deliberately, but evolve, and they can be allocated different tasks from different actors in society according to their respective situation. The importance of specific tasks for organizations and mechanisms to justify their mere existence is illustrated by the way organizations tend to pick up new tasks once the original ones have become less prominent or even obsolete. Similar developments can be seen for mechanisms like the European Common Agricultural Policy CAP, which was a sensible response to post-war food shortage but tends to survive against logic





in the midst of the food surplus in Europe. Whereas for organizations and mechanisms it is relatively easy to derive a clear-cut judgment based on the reasons for founding/introducing the respective institution, the case is less clear for orientations. Here the judgment will necessarily remain subjective, since to a significant degree it is in the eye of the observer to decide which task to assess the institution against.

Due to the dynamic and context-dependent character of institutions, their activity feeds back onto their structure. If an institution fails to execute the task that has been allocated to it in a number of subsequent attempts, the probability is high that this will change the institution, by minimizing its relevance, by changing its structures to improve its effectiveness, by redefining its focus and/or task or by identifying a new one more appropriate to its inherent capabilities. This process of redefinition could even change the institution in such a way that its initial function no longer exists and its meaning changes.

Positively, an institution will also be changed by successfully implementing a specific task. It may further specialize in this activity, risking even a lock-in situation where a change in the task definition can no longer be accommodated and the future functionality of the institution in an ever changing context is at risk (“institutional sclerosis”).

Other reasons that do not permit immediate changes when needed could be that the institution has embarked on a path-dependant development, or that the inherent inertia has become too great to cope with a changing societal environment. Whereas inertia provides crucial contributions to a system’s viability by immunizing it against the effects of short term variations, it can also lead to the erosion of its functionality if it slows down the speed of reactions below the change rate in the environment.

It is hard to imagine any institution that is specifically responsible for one process, i.e. having no other tasks but one and no other actors involved in this one task. Instead, institutions tend to cover a variety of explicit and implicit tasks (organizations offering self-esteem, mechanisms providing accountability beyond the core, decision-making purpose, etc.). Furthermore, every political decision is the result of interacting institutions (orientations to support the decision in the public, mechanisms to communicate it, organizations to decide, mechanisms to enforce the decision, etc.). Consequently, no single institution can be held exclusively responsible for the implementation of a specific task.



This interdependency of institutions is politically relevant. In particular when no formalized rules exist or when existing procedures and legal standards contradict the socially and culturally prescribed orientations, as the latter tend to dominate political decisions. This generates one of the key dilemmas in policy making for sustainable development: whereas many organizations and institutional mechanisms can be directly influenced by policy making, institutional orientations cannot. However, if procedures are developed deliberately or sets of legal norms are too far off the institutional orientations and out of reach of short-term policy making, they will lose their legitimacy - and possibly their supporters at the next election. Political leadership then means coping with the policy dilemma as well as with the inertia of the institutional system by using the attributes of power to gradually transform the institutional orientations.

3. Towards effective indicators

The high complexity of sustainable development processes, attempting to integrate a number of otherwise politically rather unlinked dimensions and involving all sectors of society makes decision making a difficult task.

3.1. Core characteristics

Sustainable development indicators have been suggested as innovative tools for this behalf (Lafferty 1994; Rechatin, Theys 1997; EuroStat 1999). Indicators are not simple statistical figures, but refined and concentrated pieces of information distilled from statistics by well-defined selection and/or aggregation procedures. They are tools to support the policy process. This process includes monitoring the status quo and its changes by means of state and trend indicators, identifying the need for change by defining policy targets and developing strategies, as well as by communicating those strategies and targets to decision makers and the public at large:

- Indicators should help to generate a simple yet not oversimplified description of reality, identifying the key problems to be dealt with and permitting the development of adequate and effective solutions in line with long term sustainable development targets. If at all possible, targets should be quantitative. If not, they should at least be defined by directionally safe imperatives (see Figure 1) and linked to ordinal scales of measurement (see below). Such indicators must be reproducible, i.e. based on sound scientific basis; robust, i.e. immune against those small variations in data

and methodology that do not indicate a changing trend; and general, i.e. not specific to a single case.

- Systems of indicators can guide data collection to monitor sensitively the progress achieved, providing early warning signals on the success or failure of policies adopted. For this, indicators must react early and clearly to relevant changes in what they are intended to monitor. Preferably, they should measure “distance to target” and sound an alarm whenever this distance increases in size or the speed of overcoming it reduces. Sensitivity and robustness are obviously competing demands, and a balance must be found based on the specific purpose for which the indicators are developed.

- Furthermore, indicators should be suitable to pass a message to the public at large regarding the challenges of sustainable development, the policy programs developed and implemented and on the results achieved so far and the setbacks suffered. Public support for targets and strategies can best be achieved if they are plausible, i.e. derived in a transparent manner from an easily understood but not oversimplified description of reality. Thus they must reduce complexity and enhance transparency in a plausible and meaningful way, be limited in number and help structure the debate in a clear and simple way. This is best achieved if they are derived systematically, as suggested in Section 4. Otherwise, i.e. with non-transparent methodologies, the complexity of reality is just substituted with the complexity of the methodology, without gains in communicating policy. Communication is not a one-way process: the public has information demands concerning, e.g. the number of jobless or the level of unemployment, air quality as a private health issue, the quality of the schools their children attend and the standards of the health care system aunt Mary has fallen victim to last month. Governments have to respond to these information demands of their voters as business to customers and NGOs to their constituency, not by providing just any information (like aggregated monetized data useful for experts but of little meaning or resonance for the population at large), but by answering their questions. From this perspective, the population formulates the questions, not groups of scientific experts and economists, and indicators are a tool to help political actors to answer them properly (Spangenberg 1999).

Comprehensive policy steering cannot possibly be done without having many more indicators at hand than only the limited number useful for communication. Therefore, a hierarchy of indicators seems most appropriate, with the highest

level of headline indicators useful for communication purposes, and with more details on the lower level, to be used by administration and experts (Hillier 1999).

Obviously, not all of these recommendations can be followed at all times, nor are they of equal importance in all circumstances, but in all cases good indicator systems should try to strike a balance without neglecting a specific element. Prioritizing certain indicator qualities however will be much easier once the future field of application for the indicator is known.

3.2. Scales of measurement

Indicators can only be meaningful if it is clear which indicator value is better than another; otherwise neither policy development towards sustainability nor monitoring progress is possible. As mentioned, indicators are most meaningful when combined with explicit and quantified targets. In these cases it possible to directly determine a “distance to target” and use this as a performance indicator. In many cases such an agreed quantitative target is missing, in particular on the international level. Without any targets, neither policy formulation nor monitoring is possible. However, often a consensus on qualitative criteria is possible (less illiteracy is better than more, but how much is acceptable?), thus permitting progress monitoring. This requires a gradation of “good to bad” results, which may take different forms:



- Nominal or binary existence indicators refer to the existence criterion (yes/no). They can only assume one of two given values: a certain characteristic is either given or not. They are only of limited value for the purpose of policy evaluation and steering, but exactly for this reason they are the easiest to agree upon in politically controversial themes. For example, whereas the effectiveness of a national sustainability council may give rise to intense disputes, their very existence is easy to report.
- Ordinal or descriptive indicators are based on qualitative concerns. They give information on the factor reported about as a member of a specific class of cases which would be considered better or worse than other classes, thus referring to a hierarchy of qualitative states, e.g. in quality of public participation. To apply them properly, the hierarchy (e.g. elections, right to know, right to be consulted, right to appeal to courts, co-decision procedures) would have to be made explicit and the relative distances (better or worse) between the different classes defined. These distances, however, are necessarily based on value judgments (is the step from right

to appeal to co-decision as big as the one from elections to right to know?) and are often not easily agreeable. As long as this is the case, important preconditions for the application of ordinal indicators are not given, and no clear guidance is provided. Still ordinal indicators are useful tools for sustainability assessments as they provide a means to integrate qualitative aspects into multi-criteria decision approaches MCDA (Omann, Spangenberg 2002).

- Cardinal progress indicators give quantitative information. If associated with a quantitative target and measuring the distance towards it, they are called “performance indicators” (World Bank 1995). Before sustainable development performance indicators can be applied, targets have to be agreed upon politically – the most meaningful process for indicator development, but also the most problematic in the political arena. More often than not targets, at least desirable directions of development are either explicitly agreed or are implied by the documents defining the indicators. In these cases, when it is quite obvious that a growth or decline within a homogenous continuum would be most desirable for sustainable development, this growth or decline can also serve as a basis for indicator development.

For a workable set of performance indicators, targets concerning all four dimensions of sustainability are needed. Such targets have a specific characteristic: it is neither probable nor necessary that all of them are fully reached at the same time. As the task of steering the system towards sustainability is a multi-criteria optimization process between largely independent variables, it does not have one single ideal solution, but employs a spectrum, distinguished by the level of reaching one or the other objective (even more so if trade-offs between them emerge). This situation is the starting point for policy processes, setting priorities and deciding which path to follow within the spectrum of sustainable solutions.

This political task must not be replaced by artificial common numeraires and aggregation procedures for indicators with no common denominator, as this takes the policy process from the hand of legitimate actors and puts it into those of probably competent but not legitimized experts. Instead, a comprehensive set of SDIs (sustainable development indicators) is politically most helpful if it reflects the diversity of sustainability issues, concerns and objectives and stops short of claiming the existence of one specific optimal solution. Such a broader set allows political actors and interest groups to compete for the better, i.e. more acceptable version of interpreting and implementing the concept of



sustainable development and its measurement. Opposed to this, an optimal solution or even a single measure – besides all their scientific shortcomings – would force those interest groups and parties opposed to the governments' suggestions to reject the concept right away. The risk would then be that with every change in government sustainability policies and monitoring programs would be dismantled immediately. So for theoretical, philosophic and pragmatic reasons a broader set of performance indicators seems to be more helpful than a few aggregated indices, let alone one aggregated monetary figure for all dimensions of sustainable development like in concepts such as genuine savings and capital stock assessments (Spangenberg 1999).

More technically, indicators need to have a well-defined methodology clearly stating what the indicators can cover, and what is beyond their capability. Otherwise, confusion might arise, like in economics where the GDP is all too often misinterpreted as a measure of welfare. An ideal system of sustainable development indicators should provide room to include such crosscutting issues as gender or North-South. It should encourage public debates and take their results into account, thus reflecting the evolving pattern of sustainability concerns shared by the population at large. In this way, the regular reporting based on the system of indicators will have optimal resonance with its audience.

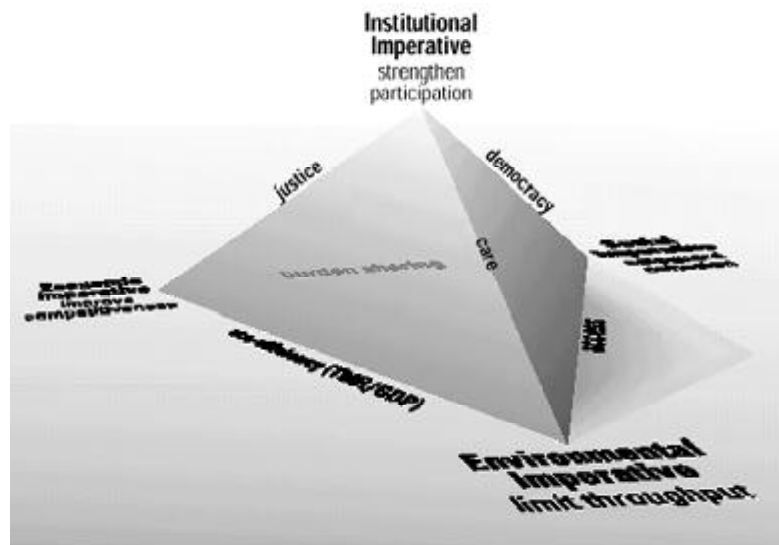
4. Case study 1: Headline indicators for European sustainability policy integration

Although necessarily limited in number, any core set of headline indicators for sustainable development needs to cover all four dimensions (social, environmental, economic and institutional). The one presented here was developed as a proposal for a future reporting system for the EU sustainable development strategy. It is consequently based on objectives and imperatives derived from the strategy. To reconcile the partly complementary, partly competing objectives, the “Prism of Sustainability,” as introduced in Section One, is used as a basic structure.

Each dimension is characterized by relevant sustainable development objectives, or sustainability imperatives. Reduction of environmental pressures, social cohesion, participation, competitive economy – no doubt, all of these are important sustainability objectives, but how do they fit together? For instance, as an environmental-economic interlinkage, resource efficiency helps bridge the gap between environment and economy, and the distribution of income describes the interlinkage of the economic and the social dimension.

Figure 2: The Prism of Sustainable Development and its imperatives

Indicators can then be derived based on the sustainability objectives defined for the dimensions and their interlinkages, measuring the progress towards the implementation of the imperatives. As explained earlier, the number of indicators



Source: Spangenberg, 2002

must be limited. With four dimensions and six interlinkages, a set of core indicators must consist of at least ten indicators, and if three indicators are selected to characterize each element of the prism, the number immediately rises to thirty – probably well beyond the number that can effectively be communicated. With only two key indicators chosen for each dimension and interlinkage, the result is a set of twenty core sustainable development indicators, two of them core institutional and six institutional interlinkage indicators. A draft comprehensive set of key indicators is suggested in Table 3, with the indicators suggested based as far as possible on indicators or objectives from the EU sustainable development strategy. The eight institutional indicators are printed in bold.

This one or a similar set of indicators would provide a useful basis for long term monitoring of the progress of sustainable development; even if the main concerns change, individual indicators can be methodologically updated or even replaced without changing the structure.



Table 3: A suggestion for an integrated set of indicators

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Source (e.g.)</i>
I. Dimensional Indicators		
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of GDP/capita • Inflation rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU SD indicator • EU SD indicator
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP Human Poverty Index HPI 2 • Unemployment rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU objective, UNDP indicator • EU SD indicator
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Space use • Protected reserves (IUCN class 3, 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU, UNDESA objective • UNEP, EEA indicator
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voter turnout in elections • UNDP Gender Empowerment Measure GEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCSD indicator • UNDP indicator
II. Interlinkage Indicators		
Environment-economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource productivity (GDP/TMI) • Transport intensity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU objective, UNDESA, WBCSD indicator • UNDESA objective, Spangenberg 1995 indicator
Socio-economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour productivity (production per capita) • Income distribution per decile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU (per hour) • UNCSD, UNDP
Socio-environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental health problems • Access to common goods (to be specified regionally) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU (for cities) • Spangenberg 2001; Altwater 2002 objective
Economic-institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption rate • Share of taxes on labour, capital and the environment in total tax revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency International • Deller, Spangenberg 1997 indicator
Socio-institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-decision rights of workers • Reliability of the health care and social security system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spangenberg et al. 2001 ind. • Empacher, Wehling 1999 objective+satisfaction indicator
Environment-institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO right to file suit • Freedom of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aarhus, UN-ECE objective • EU, UNCSD objective

Source: Spangenberg, Hinterberger, 2002

The different quality of dimensions and interlinkages is reflected in the indicators suggested. Whereas the dimensional indicators in this table basically correspond to institutional orientations (well-being for growth and poverty, security/risk avoidance for inflation rate, environmental space use and nature protection, cohesiveness for unemployment rate and poverty, participation for voter turnout and equity for GEM, the gender empowerment measure), the interlinkage indicators focus on institutional mechanisms integrating the dimensional objectives.

Selecting indicators such as those in Table 3 is no easy task. For instance, one well-known example of procedural sustainability based on institutional orientations is the dimensional objective of civil society participation. It is implemented by means of appropriate mechanisms like freedom of information and other operational codification of citizens' rights. Nonetheless, the menu suggested covers only specific aspects of participation, but not the issue as such. This is not by mistake, but due to two reasons: on the one hand, forms of participation vary greatly with the cultural context and the institutional setting, so



that no generalizing description has been found. On the other hand, for all its merits, participation – at least based on the institutional mechanisms dominating in the North – is an ambiguous objective. Whereas in societies without formal democracy participation is rightfully one key demand, in the affluent countries' formal democracies civil society turns out to be a two-edged sword. It enhances the access of certain groups to societal decision making, but not for everybody. Education, knowledge and economic status are crucial factors in determining who can successfully participate: participation rewards education. As civil society participation, even if offered equally, can only be used to a different degree by different social groups, it fixes and even enhances the elitist structure of modern democracies. Thus it consolidates and strengthens the oligarchic structure of decision making by extending the circle of corporate actors, while giving additional weight to corporate structures. With an unchanged institutional orientation, the intended innovation is transformed into a factor strengthening the mechanisms which were to be overcome.

5. Case study 2: A menu of institutional sustainability indicators for Agenda 21

The UNCSD set of sustainable development indicators, although pioneering the integration of the institutional dimension, left significant room for improvement, in particular regarding the institutional indicators (UNDESA 1999; Spangenberg et al. 2002). To fill this gap, the German Environment Agency commissioned a study to derive institutional sustainability indicators complementing the existing CSD set. For this behalf the indicators were structured as those used by the CSD, i.e. national in scope, for global application, and providing a rather complete menu derived from Agenda 21 than developing headline indicators as in the previous case study.

Screening Agenda 21 for its institutional aspects is far from being a simple, mechanical task. Agenda 21 reflects the factual and intellectual cleavages of the representatives of the signing governments, which result in partially contradictory passages or extremely diplomatic wording. Agenda 21 does not give any explicit explanation on the understanding of institutions used. The case study has analyzed in which context institutions are addressed and which kind of entities or structures are explicitly or implicitly understood as institutions. The procedure of screening is based on applying the three definitions of institutions - organizations, mechanisms and orientations. In general, Agenda 21 and its relevant background documents put high emphasis on institutions as formal political organizations. Furthermore civil society associations and informal

networks like NGOs or academia are included and specifically dealt with in the section on "major groups". Institutional mechanisms and orientations are discussed in the agenda as well. The former ones are referred to as "institutional", whereas the latter ones are mentioned without any reference to their character as institutions. Nonetheless Agenda 21 provides a basis for analyzing institutional orientations as well, by not only discussing them, but linking them to specific sustainability objectives and the concrete tasks that put them into practice.

5.1. Institutions in Agenda 21

The screening of Agenda 21 (Spangenberg et al. 2002) discloses a duality of institutions. The first type of reference mentions institutions as organizations and links them to functions, i.e. to specific tasks to be initiated or completed. All chapters of Agenda 21 refer to the United Nations and its sub organizations as actors, including for example the General Assembly, ECOSOC, Secretary General, UNEP, UNDP, UNCTAD, etc. Other international institutions mentioned include the GATT, the World Bank, transnational corporations and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). On the national and subnational level authorities like governments and indigenous and religious authorities are mentioned, as well as non-governmental organizations, business or the private sector, community groups etc. Task-specific organizations included are schools, universities, cultural organizations, academic/scientific institutions, industry-based institutions or national advisory environmental coordinating bodies/round tables. These organizations are referred to by Agenda 21 using the noun "institutions".

Institutional mechanisms are frequently identified not as institutions, but by using the adjective "institutional" combined with "... mechanisms", "... frameworks" and the like. This perception of institutions refers to "systems of rules" which structure collective (societal) decision-making and decision-implementing processes. These institutional mechanisms are again allocated specific functions (although in different chapters more than function per institutional mechanism is suggested) and tasks they are expected to execute. The various institutional mechanisms Agenda 21 refers to cover the whole process of decision making, from the preconditions of the process to the shape and structure of the process and its results.

Institutional orientations are not referred to in terms of institutions throughout Agenda 21, but play a major role in all strategic proposals for sustainable development in Agenda 21 and beyond. So, e.g. the readiness of societies to accept new institutional mechanisms, and thus their effectiveness, will depend

to a large degree on whether they are compatible with the institutional orientations dominant in the respective society. Obviously, human behavior is not only structured by exogenous rules and norms, but also by inherent orientations (a different kind of rules). Even if individuals meet in their roles as representatives of political entities, they behave according to social and cultural norms and role models. This makes orientations as highly relevant to sustainable development as the examples of “patterns of production and consumption” or “precautionary approach” illustrate.

5.2. Core and interlinkages: selected indicator suggestions

In order to derive institutional sustainability indicators for Agenda 21, an innovative seven step procedure has been developed (Spangenberg et al. 2001).

- First, all institutions mentioned in Agenda 21 have been identified chapter by chapter, based on the triple definition including organizations, mechanisms and orientations. Together with the institutions, the purposes they refer to were documented. The result is a systematic list of all institutional aspects in Agenda 21 as the basis for the further analysis.
- Secondly, the institutions have been classified according to the type of purpose they are intended to serve, i.e. allocated to social, economic, environmental and essentially institutional objectives. Thus a list of institutions was derived, which refer either to one of the three linkages or are core institutional ones, i.e. institutions serving institutional purposes.
- As a third step, the purposes were cross-checked with the CSD's set of sustainability indicators to find out whether or not they had already been covered by the CSD set. In this way, a number of non-institutional indicators were identified which are measuring the effectiveness of institutions through assessing the implementation of their purposes. In all further steps, similar cross-checking was included.
- Based on this analysis, a fourth step examined which institutions are allocated clearly defined purposes in Agenda 21, without these purposes being represented in the CSD's set of indicators. For these purposes indicators are suggested, again based on measuring the effectiveness of institutions through assessing the implementation of their purposes.

• Having exhausted the explicitly mentioned purposes of institutions in Agenda 21, the implicit ones had to be based from Step Five on the indicator development. This refers to institutions mentioned in Agenda 21 which have not explicitly been given clearly defined purposes, or for which the scope of purposes mentioned is clearly only a fraction of the functions the respective institution in reality has. The purposes were derived by plausible conclusion from the objectives, actors and institutions mentioned and made explicit. Then the corresponding indicators were developed as described above.

• In Step Six the purposes of institutions referred to in Agenda 21 were tested against the sustainability objectives mentioned in the same context. To the extent the objectives were not covered by the purposes mentioned or developed so far, further amendments to the purpose list were derived based on the objectives, together with the corresponding indicators. With this step, the total of implicit and explicit purposes of institutions in Agenda 21 has been covered and indicators developed.

• Step Seven finally asks for objectives and institutions not mentioned in Agenda 21 but important for sustainable development. Sources for the identification of additional objectives and institutions are UN decisions, international conventions and conference results, the work of other international organizations, etc.

This is obviously disputable, since “important for sustainable development” is a criterion that will always be dependent on subjective assessments. However, without at least an attempt towards integrating objectives from other UN meetings into the list of institutions and purposes, a significant lack of coherence would remain when operationalizing sustainable development.

The result is a huge number of indicators, necessarily going far beyond the core set described earlier. However, for detailed analysis or for a focus on specific aspects of sustainable development, they offer a menu to choose from according to purpose.

Core institutional indicators derived include (Spangenberg 2002) by theme:

Decentralization and accountability

• Share of local authorities in public expenditure

- Number of elected members of parliament/council per 100,000 inhabitants
- Locally managed credit systems as share of national volume of commercial loans
- Share of municipalities which implement Local Agenda 21,
- share of population which actively takes part in implementing Local Agenda 21.

Public policies and civil society empowerment

- Share of development plans including EIA, social and economic acceptability assessments
- Ratio of full time paid/voluntary sustainability and development experts in government, business, academia and NGOs to total staff by gender
- Financial support for NGOs as % of total subsidies
- Number of court cases on claims of violating sustainability legislation per billion dollars GDP.

Gender related

- Constitutional and legal rights in the areas of electoral rights, inheritance, contractual relations, divorce and choice of profession
- Data based on problem definitions by women
- Percentage of female experts in expert data bases
- Share of men in top positions with demonstrated qualifications in reproductive and care work
- Relation of average incomes in production and reproduction work.

Risk and Vulnerability

- Peripherality/accessibility: distance to main partners. Export concentration: share of main products
- Convergence of export destination: share of recipients
- Dependence upon import energy: share of total
- Disaster preparedness: share of population trained in first aid, trained helpers in disaster protection (above 1% of the population)
- Frequency of risk assessments and contingency plans in business.

Besides core institutional indicators, a selection of which has been quoted here by theme, comprehensive sets of indicators for the social, environmental and economic dimension have been derived.

The economic and environmental indicators selected are presented below, and health and labor indicators illustrate how the social dimension has been dealt with.

Health issues

- Percentage of persons with basic health training per 1000 inhabitants
- Contraceptive prevalence rate
- Percentage of births assisted by health personnel trained in midwifery
- Percentage of population with access to primary health care services
- Maternal mortality ratio.

Labor and income related

- Percentage of population employed
- Ratio of average female wage to male wage
- Spending on recreation as share of disposable income per gender
- Share of employees represented by elected councils or comparable institutions of the workplace.

Economy and Trade

- Debt servicing as percentage of total governmental revenue. Estimated share of national income not covered by taxation. Relation of net national interest rate to average annual GDP growth in the last three years
- Percentage of BAT in a) foreign private, b) domestic private, c) public investment
- National trade balance in terms of embodied energy and materials
- Intensity of resource use: energy, material and water consumed/\$ GDP (resource productivity).



Environment

- Eco-system fragmentation by infrastructure development (in addition to endangered species and protected areas as in the CSD list)
- Distance traveled per capita by mode of transport per gender
- Hazardous waste a) recovered, b) dumped, c) traded.

6. Discussion and Recommendations

From the analysis in this paper some clues regarding the development of institutional sustainability indicators can be derived:

- The definition of four dimensions of sustainable development, notably the introduction of institutions as the fourth dimension, has made tremendous progress in operationalizing sustainable development. However, so far the lack of a clear-cut definition of “institutions” hinders the full exploitation of these achievements.
- Although four dimensions are taken into account, this is not the optimal way of organizing sustainable development indicators. In particular the abundant problem overlapping is not easily dealt with in this structure. Instead, the clustering of indicators should pay due respect to the importance of interlinkages as categories in their own right, in addition to the aforementioned four categories.
- One of the problems undermining the transparency of many indicator systems so far is the principle that each indicator is mentioned only once, even if it is meaningful in different contexts. The latter applies in particular to institutions, which are relevant for a broad set of tasks and objectives.
- Alternatively every indicator could be mentioned in each place where it is relevant, irrespective of how often this may be the case (the number of references to a specific indicator may help to identify suitable headline indicators by identifying those obviously relevant since quoted frequently).
- Quality criteria for indicators have been suggested by the CSD. Although helpful and important, they are all too often ignored. As a minimum each indicator must refer to a scale that specifies if a certain change of the indicator value is regarded as positive or negative. Nominal indicators cannot deliver this information on progress but ordinal and cardinal indicators can. For qualitative ordinal indicators, a table of qualitative states is required, ordered according to their desirability. For quantitative cardinal indicators, a clear direction (e.g. “increasing” or minimizing” the respective numeraire) has to be defined.
- Much better than just an indication of improvement or worsening is a quantified target. In cases where there is an optimum value, with less as well as more indicating a less favorable situation, such a quantified target



is indispensable. As an added value such targets permit assessment of the “distance to target” as a measure of success and urgency of action. Such indications are extremely useful in policy definition because they help to identify the most appropriate priorities.



- Finding indicators for the interlinkages of different sustainability issues has thus far been neglected. For the institutional dimension in particular, there is no set of indicators for core and interlinkage aspects of the institutional dimension, nor is there any methodologically systematic approach to derive them. The case study presented in this paper offers both, the indicators and the methodology to derive them, with Agenda 21 taken as an exemplary resource of information.

- Using the tasks allocated to certain institutions to assess their performance permits referring to the outcome to the tasks allocated to that institution, and thus quantitatively measuring the effectiveness of the institution within the prevailing institutional setting. However, to be fully effective the methodology needs quantified targets. As a proxy, qualitative scales can be used.

- It is more the institutional system that has to be assessed, not the institutions one by one. In particular, for a globally applicable system of indicators it is necessary to leave enough room for the diverse characteristics of and circumstances in each country, which might make the use of a culturally adapted set of institutional indicators a necessity, rather than fixating too specifically on an institution to do a specific task in a specific way.

- A number of institutional indicators, in particular interlinkage indicators may be found amongst the existing non-institutional indicators. This gives an additional meaning to some of them, which underlines the need of permitting frequent references to the same indicator. There is rarely an indicator that specifically refers to one institution and fully characterizes it. This would only be possible if an institution with only one task was exclusively responsible for the implementation of one task – a situation hard to imagine for organizations and institutional mechanisms, and impossible with institutional orientations.

Regarding institutional sustainability indicators, the work is far from completed. In particular the political agreement on what to report about, the rephrasing of a number of indicators and finally the selection of a



limited number of headline indicators based on international consensus will require additional efforts.

- Once a proper set of institutional sustainability indicators has been selected, methodology sheets need to be developed and internationally harmonized, preferably in a format similar to that developed for the CSD list of sustainability indicators.
- For policy integration, a core institutional principle of sustainable development, no internationally applicable indicators could be derived so far. This is partly due to cultural reality – the high variability of forms that policy integration can take. Although difficult, additional conceptual work may help solve this problem, at least on a level of abstraction that permits assessing and comparing the results of this sustainability principle, regardless of the cultural diversity of the political systems to which it must be applied.

7. Outlook: from global to local?

Just as national or even global decisions regarding social or environmental sustainability cannot be achieved by aggregating local level decisions (and vice versa), neither desegregation of (inter-)national indicators for the local level nor aggregation of local indicators to regional, national and global indicators is feasible. The widely differing framework conditions as well as the different competencies on each level of decision making are prohibitive to any such effort.

Nevertheless, a fruitful link between the levels can be constructed, permitting valuable insights and supporting the development of coherent multilevel policy strategies. Instead of the “atomistic approach” of aggregating local indicators it is based on the principle of “structural analogy”.

Institutions for sustainable development are means for taking, implementing, enforcing and monitoring decisions for sustainable development. Whereas the four dimensions and their interlinkages are structuring this challenge on all levels, the kind of decisions to be taken for the benefit of “institutional” or “economic sustainability” differs significantly between the levels of decision making. So for instance “socially sustainable development” needs decisions on all levels, based on level-specific objectives, implemented by level-specific measures and monitored by level-specific indicators.

A scheme like the Prism of Sustainability permits easy identification of the corresponding objectives and indicators of different levels, as they occupy the topologically identical places. Only if corresponding measures on different levels are mutually supportive, thus providing coherent politics, has effective political prioritizing occurred (which says nothing about the quality of the common denominator chosen).

Using corresponding indicators on different levels permits them to be tailor-made to local and regional needs, thus enhancing the resonance with the public at large, without losing the link to decisions on other levels. However, this would require an intensive discourse between all levels involved on the common basic structure to be chosen, the definition of key objectives and on collaboration in data collection and processing. This will probably not be successful on the national level in the first instance – regions could be a pilot of policy integration and sustainability communication in this respect.

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Working Groups Conclusions

Global Governance for Sustainable Development

Rapporteur: **Peider Könz**

Starting from the premise that sustainable development is a universally recognized, holistic concept in which environmental, social, economic and cultural imperatives must be reconciled in time and in space, its institutional underpinning at global level must:

- Be horizontally integrated, with an cross-sectoral perspective
- Draw on formal as well as on informal institutions, involving both governments and civil society;
- Be part of a vertically integrated institutional architecture in which all levels – global, regional, national and local – are interlinked and must thus intercommunicate, interact and be mutually supportive in a synergic mode.

In this perspective, the specific functions of global governance are broad goal-setting and policy formulation on SD issues of global concern, but also monitoring and reporting and education, feeding into basic – and often long-term, incremental processes of social learning and the emergence of a sustainable development culture; global governance policy and institutions also have a role in promoting scientific research, transmitting information and knowledge, and in providing technical and financial assistance.

Implementation, on the other hand, i.e. the adoption and enforcement of executory norms, regulatory schemes and the underlying policies, will generally occur at national, regional (or eco-regional) and local level. In fact, the only global enforcement tools are at present indirect – with regard to sustainable environmental policy and MEAs, the inducements (and potential sanctions) derived from conditionalities to IFI lending, and trade restraints compatible with the exceptions of GATT/WTO Article XX.

Against this background, the following general comments were made with respect to the present institutional infrastructure for global SD governance:

- UNEP continues to play a key role in environmental policy reflection, policy formulation and monitoring; its openness to non-environmental dimensions of SD, as well as to NGO participation, and its decentralized mode of operation involving regional or eco-regional institutions, seem particularly important. The suggestion to turn it into a specialized agency might present some advantages, but was not fully discussed. It was generally agreed, however, that UNEP - whatever its status - should be strengthened and given adequate financial resources, and perhaps also assume the secretariat for all or most of the MEAs.
- Apart from the decennial World Summits, including their many pre-summit meetings and broadly participatory consultations (and the contributions made to them by NGOs), the institutional infrastructure for coordination and central orchestration of SD policy in the UN – essentially the CSD, reporting to ECOSOC (where some key actors are not present as members, e.g. the WB and the WTO), and followed by a bi-annual UN/GA debate - has not proved a fully effective forum for joint policy reflection and strategy planning.
 - While the more radical suggestion to transform the UN Trustee Council into a Sustainable Development Council would of course upgrade the level of representation and discussion, it would imply major UN Charter surgery which might not be politically feasible at this stage.
 - With regard to the internal coordination efforts in the UN family - IACSD and Thematic Task Forces, and ACC oversight – they have not resulted in real systemic synergy.
 - At both levels – intergovernmental and internal - further efforts, also on the part of member states, are clearly needed to reinforce the institutional underpinning of global SD, ensuring systemic coherence, transparency and effective civil society (and NGO) participation
- Conflict management at global level is important, but given their nature, most SD conflicts would probably best be resolved by participatory negotiation and consensus building in deliberative bodies or on an ad hoc

basis, in which transparency, participation and access of all parties to knowledge and impartial scientific information will be of the essence. Ultimately, an International Environmental Court, an Environmental Ombudsman, or a more active use of the Environmental Chamber of the ICJ, may play a role in some conflicts, but would as such not be the most effective mechanisms for SD conflict management. Other, still “softer” approaches might be considered to defuse or resolve conflicts in which environmental, social and economic imperatives must be reconciled: GATT/WTO – type panels; impartial scientific expert panels to consider issues of fact, etc.



Working Groups Conclusions

The role of the regions in the GSD local/global axis

Rapporteur: **F. Morata**

Recommendations from the discussion


- Sustainability is a complex issue which requires and brings about a new perspective and implies fundamental changes in the organization of social, economic and governmental activities at the various levels

- Any society choosing to pursue a policy of SD has to create an appropriate set of institutions to deal effectively with the implications of this commitment. The ability of a given region to address the sustainability challenge will depend on the way in which existing institutions facilitate or obstruct gathering the insights necessary to formulate and implement adequate responses

- The European strategy towards SD is based on the idea that effective governance is a precondition for developing and implementing the measures needed to achieve sustainability. However, the current debate about the “Europe of the Future” is not framed in terms of the institutional/constitutional changes needed to cope with this fundamental challenge. This should be matter of great concern both for academics and policy makers.

- The way in which the European Union currently works does not allow for adequate interaction in a multi-level partnership. Member States should foresee adequate mechanisms for wide consultation when discussing EU decisions and implementing EU policies with a territorial dimension. The process of EU policy making should allow Member States and the European Commission to listen to and learn from regional and local experiences.

- European regulations and programs should leave more room to regional authorities to find most appropriate instruments in line with the subsidiarity principle.



- The concept of SD requires new approaches for managing complex interrelations between different dimensions of development: horizontal integration, cooperation, networking, partnership among public and private actors



- The idea of sustainability deeply challenges the traditional division of competencies among the different levels of government. Multi-level governance and network governance express the shared responsibility which is at the core of such a commitment

- In a context in which political, social and economic actors have to negotiate in complex networks, the quality of the relationships between levels and competencies is a crucial issue. Direct links between the European and the local and regional levels have proved to be very helpful in promoting innovative approaches. By pursuing this approach, the EU can contribute effectively to the empowerment of actors at the regional and the local levels, which is essential for sustainable regional development.

- Subsidiarity goes beyond the mere distribution of competencies to include relationships between authorities at different levels. Too often in the old fashioned hierarchical model subsidiarity is used as a mechanism to separate and fence off different levels of government, whereas in today's interdependent world, the various spheres of government need to interact and work together. As issues and problems overlap, the functions, responsibilities and resources cannot be set in tidy boxes but have to be open to negotiation and coordination, depending on the issue which the system of governance as a whole is trying to address.

- Multi-level subsidiarity means that actors within the network such as partnerships, public institutions, non-governmental agencies and citizens themselves at the various levels are able to take a proactive approach to making their own contribution to the overall policy process. The more citizens and their representatives at the lower levels are involved in the process of European policy making, the more awareness, understanding and acceptance will exist for the needs and modalities of policies developed.

- Subsidiarity can be seen also as an essential approach for coping with cultural and territorial diversity. The attempt to develop general approaches for SD in Europe has to deal with variations concerning the societal and territorial aspects of development. Cultural diversity and economic change in European policy making needs flexible management approaches. In addition, new ways of mutual learning are needed to make better use of the rich variety of regional local experiences and approaches for creative innovations towards a more SD.



An improved implementation of European regulations could be reached by putting more emphasis on what they are supposed to achieve and letting regional authorities find more appropriate instruments in line with the subsidiarity principle. The various administrative cultures should also be considered.

- Sustainability is a general idea which can be implemented and made more concrete only through the practical management of policy processes in specific situations. Such a management approach needs general guidelines, procedures for setting specific goals and useful instruments to foster transparency, accountability and public participation.

- Regional Agendas 21 should be used as an attempt to institutionalize a kind of multi-level governance aimed at integrating local concerns (LA21) in a wider strategic perspective. In any case, more political willingness, more cooperative arrangements as well as additional human and technical resources are still needed.

- In general, there is a lack of effective instruments and political will aimed at integrating regional and local concerns into the central government strategy towards SD. To gain more influence, the regions should build up interregional coalitions and networks including stakeholders and NGOs.

- Interregional and transregional cooperation provides for more opportunities for defining common strategies and fostering mutual learning. However, its potential benefits are weakened by the different types of “regions” existing in the EU (constitutional regions, administrative regions, economic regions, urban areas). In addition, tensions arise as there is normally a lack of correspondence between environmental territorial problems and administrative boundaries. The concept of “ecologically defined regions” (regions based on basic challenges, i.e. tourism), could help to overcome this problem.

- Finally, the links between global and subnational governance for achieving sustainability still warrant further research.





Working Groups Conclusions

Sustainability Culture and Culture for Sustainable Development

Rapporteur: **Kenneth Hanf**



The discussion began with a short look at the reason for including this theme in the conference program. The idea in the minds of the conference organizers was that an important component of a country's capacity to move toward more sustainable paths of socio-economic development, in addition to its institutional arrangements, is the more general social context in which the commitment to sustainable development is translated into the kinds of behavioral changes required. In particular, the amount (and kind) of social capital available to the society is important. One aspect of such social capital supporting or required by successful transitions toward sustainable development is culture. It was assumed that it would be necessary to modify the social norms, values, beliefs and patterns of collective behavior in order to prepare people to act in ways that will be more consistent with the demands made by sustainable lifestyles. For this reason, this axis was included to provide an opportunity to examine the kinds of cultural changes the transition to sustainable development would require, as well as to consider the ways in which culture patterns facilitate the realization of these objectives.

The first substantive point considered was what we meant by "sustainable development" and its relation to the concept of sustainability. First it was underlined that both concepts do not mean the same thing, the latter being more of a meta-objective than an operational tool to guide action in specific contexts, which is an implicit aim that prevails in the notion of sustainable development. But at the same time, if everything is included in these concepts, it will not be possible to talk about them as distinct from something else – like equity, freedom, or solidarity – and it will be almost impossible to adequately implement or communicate their contents. For this reason it is necessary to mark the boundaries of these concepts, although it also clear that it is necessary to specify what social realms it affects. Within the group there were two contrasting points of view on this matter. On the one hand, there were those who argued that the concept should focus on the use of natural resources and the negative impacts of social and economic activities in the global and local environments



both for present and future generations. On the other hand, another group argued that the Brundtland Commission (and subsequent international policy documents) introduces a broader and socially-laden concept of sustainable development. Indeed, it was pointed out, the Brundtland Commission starts with the notion of intergenerational equity or justice (in terms of guaranteeing the generations to come the opportunity to fulfill their needs as we, of the present generation, satisfy ours). It then proceeds to consider the relationships between economic development and environmental protection. In fact, the development of the idea of sustainable development emerges from the search for a political compromise between the North and the South: permitting a commitment to both protection of environmental quality and the socio-economic development demanded by less developed countries to enable them to achieve the material standard of living enjoyed by the advanced countries. At the same time, it was pointed out that it was possible and necessary to go beyond the Brundtland definition of sustainability, which at that time was more a result of political compromises than of a substantive intellectual discussion about the meaning of the real needs at the global level on which it is based. Thus, and as a result of this debate, it was agreed that there were at least two sources of concern for sustainability and sustainable development: one departing from a concern with environmental quality, and another from a concern with guaranteeing the preconditions for continued, i.e. sustainable, socio-economic development. At the present time, these concepts, as all acknowledged, tend to focus policy discussion on the integration of the three pillars of economic development, environmental quality and social progress. However, on the one hand, the group also talked at length about what should be the appropriate focus when discussing sustainable development and agreed to disagree as to the relative weight to be given to the different elements. And on the other hand, all agreed that it was necessary to stipulate what was being included in or ruled out of the term before we can proceed to discuss the cultural prerequisites for achieving a transition toward a path of sustainable development.



A second question that occupied the group was – assuming that we could make progress toward defining the notion of culture and what the cultural underpinning of sustainable development would look like – how to define a general "culture for sustainable development in (and for) a world characterized by a high degree of cultural, ideological and social diversity. For example, if we were to include gender equality in our definition of a sustainable development, some societies with their particular cultural traditions would have great difficulties in accepting this idea. The group discussed at some length whether it was possible to distil a common core of cultural aspects regarding the kinds changes that will be required in the manner in which persons related to and behaved with regard



to the environment and the use of natural resources. This "core culture" could then be propagated among the different countries while at the same time respecting - even defending - the diversity characterizing the world.

Assuming that this would be, in principle, possible, how is this to occur? With this question the discussion broached the issue of governance and the role of the different governmental and non-governmental actors. How are we to organize, who is to be responsible for the collective process of reflection through which these common elements of a culture for sustainable development are to be distilled? Although the group did not go into great detail with respect to this question, it was agreed that this process might need to be organized as a continuing dialogue taking place at - and in the interplay between - different levels (international, national, regional and local). It is obvious that such a culture cannot be imposed from above or by any one country towards others. By means of dialogue and the exchange of ideas and experiences, the benefits of certain sets of attitudes and beliefs can be demonstrated, information can be provided regarding the potential negative impacts of traditional patterns of actions on valued objectives. In this way people could be made aware that there is a better way of doing things in order to achieve a more desirable way of life. At the same time, it should also be possible to demonstrate how elements of existing cultures can support sustainable development. It is not necessarily true that all present cultures are antagonistic to or at odds with the goals of sustainable development. It may, on the other hand, be concluded that these "supportive" elements have been pushed aside or overlaid by other, less compatible aspects of the culture or by power considerations. In such cases, the question would be how to move these supportive elements more into the foreground. In this sense, it was also remarked that needs are socially constructed through culture, although current global cultural trends do not help in propagating a very sustainable definition of needs at all. Emphasis on the crucial role played by individual and collective responsibility was also understood as a prerequisite to learning the necessary values and capacities to exercise the culture for sustainability.

The fourth point covered led the discussion back to the question of patterns of governance (and the role of government) in connection with bringing about a shift toward new patterns of culture. Again, there was general agreement that such patterns could not be imposed by government decisions from above. What is at issue here is a process of "self-realization" on the part of individuals and societies. This involves the redefinition or reinvention of both individual and collective identities in terms of a culture of sustainable development. Still there are a number of measures that could be taken by governmental and non-governmental actors (e.g. education or information programs) as well as by the



communication media (e.g. new leitbilder) to encourage positive identification with alternative life styles supportive of sustainable development. In many different ways governmental, social and other non-governmental organizations like churches or businesses can participate in a process of reflexive learning over time. There will be, in the course of such a continuing process, different points at which different actors can intervene with new information and new alternatives to be discussed, absorbed and integrated into new patterns of behavior.

There was general agreement on one further point: a culture for sustainable development is a two-sided phenomenon. Like any form of culture, it plays an enabling role by creating new opportunities and new alternatives by providing information, values, knowledge and skills. At the same time, however, culture functions as a constraining force. It also limits possible actions by excluding certain patterns of behavior as being inappropriate, given our commitment to sustainable development. At this point, the discussion came full circle, returning to the question of what is "in" or "out" of our definition of sustainable development. For once we know what such a commitment "covers" it is possible to examine the behavioral implications of pursuing these objectives and to development criteria for evaluating the "appropriateness" of different behavioral options. From this perspective, the group briefly considered the contemporary relevance of a Kantian categorical imperative for judging the extent to which a given action or behavior can be "generalized" or not in support of sustainable development.

A final point that warrants follow-up was the observation that discussions regarding sustainability culture and/or a culture for sustainable development often tend to strongly reflect the values and beliefs of the industrialized "western" world (actually occupying more the Northern Hemisphere). To the extent that this is so, the "common core" may leave out much that is relevant from cultures in other parts of the world. This possibility underscores the need to develop a truly worldwide, fair and competent dialogue among different countries and cultures in the search for a shared cultural frame of reference within which a plurality of different ways to the realization of sustainable development can be pursued.





Working Groups Conclusions

Report from the environmental conflicts axis discussion

Rapporteur: **Kenneth Hanf**

Although the discussion in other groups shows that general agreement on the "meaning" of sustainable development can not always be assumed, the paper presented on environmental conflicts took as its point of departure the gap between the overall consensus on what sustainable development implies at the abstract level and the lack of consensus on its implications for actors in the concrete situations in which this policy commitment is to be applied or "realized." On the one hand, there appears to be agreement that sustainable development is "a good thing" and "should be pursued." On the other hand, however, serious conflicts can emerge when we try to translate it into concrete measures in specific social contexts, where different patterns of actions and different sets of measures will become visible as the general concept takes on a particular form. It is in connection with such a specification of what sustainable development "means" for a community or society, in practice, that disagreements and conflicts emerge.

An attempt to understand the source of such conflicts and the ways in which they can be mitigated or managed (if not completely avoided), focuses attention on the process through which collective decisions are made regarding this "meaning" of sustainable development and the measures to be taken to move toward this set of objectives. That is, since it is difficult - if not impossible - to define sustainable development in terms of an "end state", it is more useful to consider it as a continuing journey toward something that can be generally recognized as falling within the parameters set by a sustainable development - one that links economic development, environmental protection and social progress. Therefore, conflicts (and their management) have to be seen as part of the process by which social collectivities jointly construct and reconstruct their visions of sustainable development and the strategy for achieving it. This focus on process draws our attention to the range of options available for shaping the institutional context within which different patterns of governance will emerge (or can be organized) for managing the transition toward sustainable development.





In the discussion of the use of consensus-forming techniques for dealing with the conflicts that emerge in connection with this search for pathways to sustainable development, participants focused primarily on the problematic aspects of a strategy that emphasizes extensive participation by stakeholder groups and stresses too strongly the importance of achieving consensus.

If we are in the "talking process" - through which a society, at different levels and with regard to different "projects" reflects upon and continually redefines the concrete implications of its commitment to sustainable development - then it is important to consider the way in which this process can best be institutionalized to serve as such a vehicle for collective deliberation, decision making and learning. One important aspect of this will be the arrangements and procedures established or available for dealing with different kinds of social conflict that will inevitably be part of the decisions regarding the transition toward sustainable paths of societal development. In responding to the information presented in the key-note presentation on conflict and sustainable development - with its focus on the potential benefits of alternative methods for resolving disputes (especially those procedures associated with consensus forming) - there was wide agreement that an all-too-simplistic faith in or reliance on different forms of extensive participation by representatives of different stakeholder groups could result in neglecting the problematic aspects of focusing heavily upon the possibility and value of achieving consensus on issues at conflict.

In particular, it was stressed that an appreciation of the value of different forms of participatory decision making should not lead to an underestimation of the difficulties that have been encountered in trying to pursue participatory strategies of one kind or another. Various members of the discussion group gave examples of some of the questionable aspects of a "race to salvation through participation" in the form of one or the other form of multi-stakeholders participation and the search for consensus among contending parties. A warning was voiced that insistence upon consensus, as the basic decision rule, can lead to impasse or to decisions that have been watered down to the lowest common denominator.



Furthermore, it was pointed out that the different and often contradictory "discourse cultures" of the groups that are brought to the table often preclude any real dialogue or possibility of mutual understanding. In any case, it is not enough solely to bring people to the table to talk; once the different stakeholders have taken their seats, a number of problems can arise that defeat the purpose of opening the decision process to a wide range of participants.



While acknowledging the need to learn from the problems that have been encountered in practice with consensus formation processes and forms of extensive participation, it was pointed out that when considering the utility of consensus forming techniques in any specific situation it was necessary collectively (i.e. with the participation of those who are to participate in the process) to design institutional arrangements that are appropriate to the purpose which the process is intended to serve. Alternative dispute resolution methods must be selected and designed with an eye to what it is we wish to achieve and in relation to the phase in the overall decision process in which they are to be used. It makes a difference whether we are trying to develop some collective vision of what sustainable developments is going to "mean" in the community or whether we are dealing with conflicts related to a dispute regarding the location of a concrete infra-structure project. It is assumed that the design of institutional arrangements for the application of these techniques will be "case specific" and that these arrangements will vary from case to case. Indeed, it is the "tailor-made" character of such methods that is a source of their effectiveness.

Likewise, and this was a second point stressed in response to the criticism made at the beginning of the discussion, consensus forming processes - on one kind or another - do not form or run by themselves. The active management of such processes is extremely crucial. It is not only a question of asking the participants what they want and then trying to arrive at some consensus on the joint interests of the group. Again, depending on the phase of the problem solving or decision process in which we find ourselves, the government, representing the broader interests of the community as a whole, may make an active attempt to move the process toward a broader set of policy goals or normative considerations. (This suggests an important point, needing more research: the interface between institutions and processes of representative democracy and those associated with forms of participatory democracy - and the role that government actors play in linking these two.) The challenge - when organizing and managing consensus forming process - is to combine effectively "top-down" and "bottom-up" aspects of the process. What is important is that when using "top-down" direction, options are not excluded prior to discussion and evaluation by all the members of the group. Management of an open but structured process of participatory decision making does not necessarily exclude the functions of leadership and guidance.

Furthermore, there are self-imposed time limits built into the design of these processes. It is not true that discussions continue interminably until a consensus has been reached. When designing and managing an interactive process to deal with conflicts emanating from the need to make decisions on "concretizing"



the implications of sustainable development, it is assumed that the participants have come together because of a commonly shared desire to resolve the problem. They are motivated by this commitment and agree to accept the process and the conditions under which a mutually acceptable solution is to be sought. In addition, consensus does not mean agreement of all points; it only requires that the participants are willing and able to accept the total package of measures that are ultimately decided on as a way of dealing with the problem confronted. The consensus forming process is accepted as a way to search for this solution by expressly confronting the conflicts and searching for new possibilities for satisfying the real interests of the participants. The emphasis is on problem solving - or integrative bargaining - as contrasted with more traditional forms of strategic bargaining in pursuit of one's own objectives.

Equally important, it was stressed, is the voluntary nature of participation. In contrast, for example, to binding arbitration, participants are not required or forced to accept the group decision. If, at the end of the day, a participant cannot accept the package of measures proposed, he/she is free to drop out of the process and to pursue a more adequate solution by alternative means of conflict resolution, e.g. legislation, a court decision or the mobilization of support.

A final point was made emphasizing the need to take active measures to "empower" participants in fact and not only in formal terms. It may be necessary to ensure that less experienced or socially disadvantaged participants possess the skills and resources needed for effective participation. In designing and managing such processes it may be necessary to take steps to level the playing field and create the conditions under which participants from different backgrounds and "discourse cultures" can interact fruitfully.

All in all, the discussion in this group made clear that it is important to confront more simplistic views of the advantages of participation and the search for consensus with the kinds of problems that have been signaled in practice. By confronting the model with real practice it will be possible to sharpen the way in which we think about consensus forming and strategies for multi-stakeholder participation and to improve the design of such processes. At the same time, it will be possible to gain valuable experience as to where and under what conditions different forms of participatory decision making are appropriate and can be effective. However, it is also necessary to confront reality with the more differentiated and subtle contingent model that has been developed in the literature and extensively applied in practice.



Working Groups Conclusions

Information on Governance for Sustainable Development axis discussion

Rapporteur: **Agustí Cerrillo**

The discussions of the working group were mainly focused on two main aspects: the rôle of information given by companies and on their relationships to the society which refers to corporate social responsibility. and the rôle of information in Public Administration, that is to say the democratic principle, transparency, public administration control and accountability.

The discussion led to the following conclusions divided into three groups:



1. The information of governance for sustainable development

Information improves governance for sustainable development. An excess of information could be a problem but there are other problems related with information, such as the degree of complexity of information or the lack of information. In this sense, it is necessary to establish some criteria or standards to be followed by the information given (i.e. clear and available for everybody).

There are already some mechanisms established in different countries to assure that these standards are respected (i.e. ombudsman, certification of good practices, select committees). Verification is probably one area that needs improvement .

2. The users of the information

There are different audiences for information and also different uses of information. That is why different ways to access information should be established, taking into account the interests of different users.



Education is also important and a pedagogical treatment of information can be useful in providing information to its users.

Finally, the media still has an important role to play in disseminating information.

3. Information and enterprises

From the business point of view of, information can be seen as an investment, that is to say that companies could see information as a advantage.

Some companies have adopted participatory processes to define their communication strategies.



Working Groups Conclusions



Report on institutional indicators of sustainable development axis discussion

Rapporteur: **Kenneth Hanf**

The discussion focused on four main themes in an attempt to clarify and better understand this important yet complex topic.

First of all, the presenter of the keynote paper described in some detail how his approach came to be developed as it now is. This had to do with the link between this project and the CSD program on the development of institutional indicators. He also explained again how the Agenda 21 document was used to derive the institutional purposes and functions, the performance of which the indicators are intended to measure. This information made clear the assumptions on which the project has been based and why the set of indicators proposed looks the way it does. This explained also why, at least initially, the emphasis has been on indicators related to the national level.

In the first round of discussion, members of the group continually returned to the point already raised in the plenary session regarding the neglect of the institutions themselves in favor of their "product". The explanation of the background and development of the project shed light on why the focus of the indicators was on the product of the institutions rather than on the structure or internal process of the institutions. The underlying logic of the choice of indicators related to the performance of the institutions - their product - was that the important relationship to be indicated was that of the purpose of the institution with its outcome. These purposes, along with the core aspects of the institutional dimensions to be measured, were derived from the literature, primarily from the Agenda 21 document. Indicators were sought that would provide information on how a society or country is doing with respect to fulfilling these purposes. The point is, however, that these purposes or functions can be fulfilled by many different institutional arrangements. There is no one-to-one correlation between a particular function and a specific singular institutional arrangement. For example, a greater degree of transparency can be achieved in different ways. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult to develop indicators by starting with





an assumed relationship between organizational arrangements and process, purpose, performance and product. On the contrary, the logic of the project on institutional indicators is the reverse: if the indicator shows that there has been a low level of performance with regard to a particular purpose, the second step would be to examine the institutional arrangements and the context within which these operate in order to account for the amount of purpose actually achieved.

Therefore, it is not so much a neglect of institutions, and their internal organization and processes through which the product is produced (a certain level of performance achieved), as it is an analytical sequence based on the assumption of multiple structures for the performance of any given function.

A third point raised dealt with the possibility of developing indicators for measuring performance at different levels of action. The approach described above may be fine if we are interested in what is happening at the national level, but how do we go about desegregating these national indicators into indicators for the regional or local level? Or, if we wish to start from the other end, how can we aggregate information and data on local situations into some kind of composite indicator of regional or national performance?

The answer is that we cannot simply desegregate or aggregate the indicator from one level into a composite or component measure. When selecting an indicator for whatever function at the different levels we have to choose one that is appropriate to or relevant for the experience of actors at the different levels and contexts. Indicators need to have a point of reference to something that is both meaningful to the responsibilities and competencies of that level of action. It makes no sense to attempt to desegregate a measure of national performance with regard to transportation, which refers to the management of air travel to the local level where it would be more appropriate to talk of the management of bike paths or pedestrian zones. Consequently, indicators have to be based on the relationship between what is being measured and the citizens' experiential world. As noted, they have to be related to the competence and ability of a given level to act.

This means that we cannot think in traditional terms of aggregating or desegregating the same data up to or down to different scales. What we need are different indicators related to the scale at which we are examining a particular purpose and the product through which this purpose is fulfilled.



The fourth point dealt with a more general discussion of governance, and the relation between good or effective governance and the movement towards the objective(s) of sustainable development. Of particular interest here was the contribution that indicators measuring where we are with regard to the core institutional purposes and functions could lead to understanding what an effective system of governance for sustainable development would involve. Although the project on institutional indicators was not developed from an explicit governance perspective, it was pointed out that the definition of institution used in the project as a focus for the indicators was quite consistent with the conceptualization of governance as a social institution - a set of norms, values and decision rules used in dealing with social conflict, mobilizing resources for cooperative action and dealing with the collective action problem of the free rider. More particularly, the notion of governance is used increasingly to conceptualize and analyze patterns of interaction among different types of actors who perform or contribute to the performance of these functions. These actors could be governmental as well as non-governmental. The concept leaves the role and centrality of government in these patterns of governance open to the empirical analysis of a particular case. Whereas at the international level governance, for example, in the form of international regimes, can exist without government, in the sense of a form of authority above the individual nation states, at the domestic level this is not possible. In one way or another, government will be involved - but not necessarily as the central actor, the source of co-ordination and authoritative decision making.

Against the background of this general understanding of "governance," the group considered the extent to which the Sustainable Development Prism, on which the set of institutional indicators presented has been based, can accommodate the analytical concern of those interested in developing indicators of the institutional capacity of a given system of governance to perform the functions necessary to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. Here the underlying assumption is that if a society is to make the transition toward sustainable paths of development it will have to have the institutional capacity to perform certain kinds of functions. These will include, among other things, the capacity for developing and implementing integrated policies, the capacity for developing participatory strategies for dealing with social conflict, and the capacity for coordinating activities undertaken on different scales of action. It was concluded that different kinds of analytical logic are at work in the institutional indicators of sustainable development based on the SD Prism and with regard to the interest in the institutional prerequisites for the successful transition to sustainable development. While related, one approach is not directly translatable into the other.



Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Governança Global per al Desenvolupament Sostenible

Relator: **Peider Könz**

Partint de la premissa que el desenvolupament sostenible és el concepte holístic universalment reconegut en el qual han d'estar reconciliats en temps i espai el medi ambient, l'economia i la cultura, les seves bases institucionals a nivell global han de ser:

- Estar integrat horitzontalment amb una perspectiva interdisciplinària.
- Fer ús d'institucions tant formals com informals, incloent-hi tant governs com societat civil.
- Formar part d'una estructura institucional integrada en la qual cada nivell (global, regional, nacional i local) està entrelaçat i ha d'interactuar, intercomunicar i recolzar de manera sinèrgica.

Des d'aquesta perspectiva, les funcions específiques de la governança global tenen uns objectius molt amplis i són de rellevància a nivell global la formulació de polítiques en els temes que afecten el DS. Tanmateix el seguiment, la informació i l'educació, alimenten a nivell bàsic – i sovint també a llarg termini, processos incrementals d'aprenentatge social i d'emergència d'una cultura de desenvolupament sostenible; la política de la governança global i les institucions també tenen un rol a jugar en la promoció de la recerca científica, transmetent informació i coneixement, i proveint assistència tècnica i financera.

D'altra banda l'aplicació, és a dir, l'adopció i la implantació de les regles de caràcter executori, els esquemes reguladors i les polítiques subjacents generalment es donarà a nivell nacional, regional (o eco-regional) i local. De fet, els únics instruments globals per a fer complir els preceptes són actualment de caràcter indirecte – en relació a la política de sostenibilitat ambiental i els MEAs, els incentius (i les potencials sancions) derivats de les condicionalitats dels préstecs IFI, i les restriccions comercials compatibles amb les excepcionalitats del *GATT/WTO Article XX*.

Contrastadament a aquest rera fons, els següents comentaris generals van ser fets en relació a l'actual infraestructura institucional per a la governança del desenvolupament sostenible a escala global:

· El PNUMA continua jugant un paper important en el procés de reflexió, formulació i seguiment de les polítiques; la seva receptivitat envers les dimensions no ambientals del desenvolupament sostenible, així com la participació d' ONGs, i el seu funcionament descentralitzat, integrant institucions a nivell regional o eco-regional, resulten especialment rellevants. La proposta de convertir-ho en una agència especialitzada pot presentar determinats avantatges, tot i que no va ser discutit en profunditat. Tanmateix, fou àmpliament acordat que el PNUMA – sigui quin sigui el seu status- hauria de ser reforçat i caldria atorgar-li fons pressupostaris adequats, i potser també assumir la secretaria de tots o la majoria de MEAs.

· A part del decenni de Cimeres Mundials, incloent totes aquelles trobades prèvies a les cimeres i crides a consultes àmpliament participatives (i les contribucions fetes per les ONGs), la infraestructura institucional a coordinar i l'orquestració central de la política de desenvolupament sostenible en el sí de les Nacions Unides –principalment el CDS, informant a l' ECOSOC (on alguns actors importants, com el Banc Mundial i la OMC no estan presents en tant que membres), i seguit per un debat bi-anual a nivell de Nacions Unides/GA – no ha demostrat una efectivitat completa a nivell de fòrum per dur a terme una política conjunta de reflexió i una planificació estratègica.

- Mentre que la proposta més radical de transformar el *Trustee Council* de les Nacions Unides a un *Sustainable Development Council* hauria, per descomptat, d'incrementar el nivell de representació i discussió, alhora comportaria una transformació molt importat a la Carta de Nacions Unides la qual no seria políticament factible en aquests moments.

- Pel que fa als esforços de coordinació interna en el sí de la família Nacions Unides - IACSD i les *Task Forces* temàtiques, i l'ACC- no s'han convertit un unes veritables forces sinèrgiques de caràcter sistèmic.

- En ambdós nivells - intergovernamental i intern - són necessaris esforços addicionals; també pel que fa als estats membres, són clarament necessaris per tal de reforçar la imbricació del desenvolupament sostenible global, garantint una coherència sistèmica, una transparència i una efectiva participació per part de la societat civil (i ONGS).

· La gestió de conflictes a nivell global també resulta important. Tanmateix, donada la seva naturalesa, molts conflictes relatius al desenvolupament sostenible serien probablement millor resolts mitjançant negociacions participatives i formant consens en el sí dels organismes deliberatius o bé a través d'una base *ad hoc*, on l'essència seria la transparència, la participació i l'accés de totes les parts al coneixement i a la informació científica imparcial. Conseqüentment, un Tribunal Ambiental Internacional, un defensor del poble ambiental, o un ús més actiu de la Cambra Ambiental d' ICJ, poden jugar un rol en determinats conflictes, però



no serien els mecanismes més efectius per a la gestió de conflictes relatius al desenvolupament sostenible. Altres aproximacions de caràcter encara més “tòu” poden ser considerades per tal de desactivar o resoldre conflictes on cal que els imperatius ambientals, socials i econòmics siguin reconciliats : equips del tipus *GATT/OMC*, equips imparcials d'experts científics per reflexionar determinats temes, etc.



Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

El paper de les regions en l'eix local-global de la GDS

Relator: **F. Morata**

Recomanacions de la discussió

- La sostenibilitat és un tema complex que requereix i porta associada una nova perspectiva que implica canvis fonamentals en l'organització de les activitats socials, econòmiques i governamentals (a les diferents escales territorials).
- Qualsevol societat que escull dur a terme una política de desenvolupament sostenible ha de crear les institucions adequades per tractar de manera efectiva les implicacions que suposa aquest compromís amb la sostenibilitat. L'habilitat d'una determinada regió per formular i implementar les respostes adequades dependrà de la manera en què les institucions existents facilitin o dificultin la recerca de l'entesa necessària per formular i implementar respostes adequades.
- L'*Estratègia de la Unió Europea pel al desenvolupament sostenible* està basada en la idea que una governança efectiva és una condició prèvia per desenvolupar i implementar les mesures necessàries per aconseguir la sostenibilitat. No obstant això, el debat actual sobre "L'Europa del Futur" no està formulat des del punt de vista dels canvis institucionals/constitucionals necessaris per realitzar aquest canvi fonamental. Això hauria de ser un tema d'especial preocupació, tant per als acadèmics com per als que es dediquen a dissenyar les polítiques.
- La manera com treballa actualment la Unió Europea no permet la interacció adequada per propiciar una associació multinivell. Els Estats Membres haurien de preveure mecanismes adequats per tal de consultar els grups implicats a l'hora de prendre decisions sobre la UE o implementar polítiques a escala territorial. Els processos de creació de polítiques de la UE hauria de permetre als Estats Membres escoltar i aprendre de les experiències regionals i locals.
- Els reglaments i els programes europeus haurien de deixar més marge de manobra a les autoritats regionals per tal de poder trobar els mecanismes més apropiats a partir del principi de subsidiarietat
- El concepte de desenvolupament sostenible requereix noves aproximacions per a gestionar les interrelacions entre les diferents dimensions del desenvolupament: la

integració horitzontal, la cooperació, la connexió, associació entre els actors públics i privats.

- La idea de sostenibilitat desafia profundament la divisió tradicional de les competències entre els diferents nivells de govern. La governança multinivell i la xarxa de governança expressen la responsabilitat compartida que és al nucli d'aquest compromís.

- En un context en que els actors polítics, socials i econòmics han de negociar en xarxes complexes, la qualitat de les relacions entre els nivells i les competències resulta un tema crucial. S'ha demostrat que els enllaços directes entre l'escala europea, regional i local són molt útils per promoure aproximacions innovadores. Tenint en compte aquesta aproximació, la Unió Europea pot contribuir de manera eficaç a capacitar els actors que operen a escala regional i local, la qual cosa resulta essencial per al desenvolupament regional sostenible.

- La subsidiarietat va més enllà de la mera distribució de competències per incloure relacions entre les autoritats a diferents nivells. Molt sovint, l'obsolet model de subsidiarietat jeràrquica s'utilitza per a separar i barrar diferents nivells de govern, mentre que en l'actual món interdependent, les diverses esferes de govern necessiten interactuar i treballar conjuntament. Atès que els problemes s'encavalquen, les funcions, les responsabilitats i els recursos no es poden ubicar en un bloc tancat sinó que han d'estar oberts a possibles negociacions i potencial coordinació, segons el tema que el sistema de governança vol enfocar.

- La *subsidiarietat multinivell* significa que els actors que estan dins la xarxa, com ara les associacions, les institucions públiques, les agències no governamentals i els mateixos ciutadans (...) són capaços de realitzar un apropament pro-actiu per fer la seva contribució al procés de política global. Com més involucrats estiguin els ciutadans i els seus representants dels nivells inferiors en el procés de creació de polítiques europees, més consciència, entesa i acceptació hi haurà per la necessitat i les modalitats de polítiques desenvolupades.

- La subsidiarietat també es pot considerar com una aproximació essencial per poder tractar la diversitat cultural i territorial. L'intent de desenvolupar enfocaments generals al desenvolupament sostenible a Europa té relació amb les variacions dels aspectes socials i territorials del desenvolupament. La diversitat cultural i el canvi econòmic en la creació de polítiques europees necessita unes capacitats de gestió flexibles. A més a més, es necessiten noves maneres d'aprenentatge mutu per fer millor ús de la rica diversitat d'experiències regionals i locals i d'enfocaments innovadors de cara a avançar vers un desenvolupament més sostenible. Es pot aconseguir una millora en l'aplicació de la normativa comunitària tot posant un major accent en els objectius que s'espera assolir i (...) permetent que les autoritats regionals trobin els instruments més apropiats d'acord

amb el principi de subsidiarietat. També cal tenir en compte, evidentment, la diversitat de cultures administratives que hi ha al conjunt de la Unió Europea.

- La sostenibilitat és una idea de caràcter general que només es pot aplicar i concretar a través de la gestió pràctica dels processos polítics en situacions determinades. Aquest enfocament necessita unes pautes generals, procediments per fixar objectius específics i instruments útils per promoure la transparència, la responsabilitat i la participació pública.

- L'Agenda 21 regional s'hauria d'interpretar com un intent per institucionalitzar un tipus de governança multinivell dirigida a uns interessos locals integrats en una perspectiva estratègica més àmplia. En qualsevol cas, encara és necessari un compromís polític més fort i més acords de, així com la disposició dels recursos humans i tècnics suficients per poder-ho fer.

- En general, hi ha una manca d'instruments eficaços i de voluntat política suficient que permetin integrar les preocupacions regionals i locals en les estratègies de desenvolupament sostenible dels governs estatals. Per aconseguir més influència, les regions han de fer coalicions i aliances que incloguin els grups d'interès i les ONG.

- La cooperació interregional i transregional proporciona més oportunitats per poder definir estratègies comunes i promoure aprenentatges mutus. No obstant això, els beneficis potencials es veuen afeblits pels diferents tipus de "regions" existents a la UE (regions constitucionals, regions administratives, regions econòmiques i àrees urbanes). A més a més, sorgeixen tensions quan hi ha una manca de correspondència entre àrees territorials ambientals i fronteres administratives. El concepte de "regions ecològiques" (regions basades en reptes bàsics, com ara el turisme), poden ajudar a superar el problema.

- Finalment, els lligams entre la governança global i la subestatal per a assolir la sostenibilitat encara mereixen un major grau de recerca.



Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Cultura de Sostenibilitat i Cultura per al Desenvolupament Sostenible

Relator: **Kenneth Hanf**

El debat va iniciar-se amb una breu presentació del motiu pel qual es va decidir incloure aquest tema en el programa de la conferència. La idea dels organitzadors era que un component important de la capacitat d'un país per avançar vers un model de desenvolupament socioeconòmic amb un grau més alt de sostenibilitat, a més dels acords institucionals, és el context més general en el qual el compromís del desenvolupament sostenible es tradueix en canvis de comportament individuals i socials. En concret, la quantitat (i els tipus) de capital social d'una comunitat és important.

La cultura és un dels aspectes d'aquest capital social que faran que la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible sigui tot un èxit. És clar que s'hauria d'intentar modificar les normes socials, els valors, les creences i els models del comportament col·lectiu actuals per tal de preparar la gent perquè actuï en la línia que demana un estil de vida més sostenible. Per tot això, es va decidir incloure aquest eix en el programa amb l'objectiu d'examinar els tipus de canvis culturals necessaris per a la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible, així com de considerar la manera en què els models culturals faciliten l'assoliment d'aquest objectius.

El primer punt important a tractar va ser el concepte de "desenvolupament sostenible" i la seva relació amb la sostenibilitat. En primer lloc, cal subratllar que els dos conceptes no volen dir el mateix, essent l'últim un objectiu-meta més que no pas un per guiar l'acció en contextos específics (la qual cosa és un objectiu implícit que preval en la noció de desenvolupament sostenible). Al mateix temps, hi ha el perill de fer deficiències massa àmplies d'aquests dos conceptes, que s'hi incloguin tot un ventall d'altres conceptes connexes (com igualtat, la llibertat o la solidaritat) i que, al final, sigui impossible implementar o expressar-ne adequadament el seu contingut. Per tot això, és necessari establir la frontera entre aquests dos termes i, també, especificar a quins camps de la societat afecta.

En el grup de debat hi va haver dos punts de vista diferents en relació a aquest tema. D'una banda, hi havia persones que defensaven que el concepte havia de focalitzar l'ús dels recursos naturals i els impactes negatius de les activitats socials i econòmiques en els medis locals i globals i tant per a les generacions actuals com les futures. D'altra banda, un altre grup defensava que l'*Informe Brundtland* (i els documents de política internacional posteriors) introdueixen un concepte més ampli i socialment més consistent



sobre el desenvolupament sostenible. De fet, es va posar de manifest que la definició de sostenibilitat que fa l'*Informe Bruntland* comença amb la noció d'igualtat o justícia intergeneracional (referida al fet de garantir que les generacions futures tinguin l'oportunitat de satisfer les seves necessitats com nosaltres satisfem les nostres).

A partir d'aquesta premissa, es va considerar la relació que hi ha entre desenvolupament econòmic i protecció ambiental. De fet, el concepte de desenvolupament sostenible sorgeix dels esforços per arribar a un compromís polític entre el nord i el sud per tal de fer compatible, d'una banda, la protecció de la qualitat ambiental, amb el desenvolupament socioeconòmic que necessiten els països menys desenvolupats per aconseguir la mateixa qualitat de vida de la qual gaudeixen els països més avançats.

Al mateix temps, al llarg del debat es va manifestar la idea que ara és possible i necessari anar més enllà de la definició de sostenibilitat feta per l'*Informe Bruntland*. La formulació d'aquesta definició va ser més el resultat d'uns compromisos polítics que no pas d'una discussió intel·lectual sobre el significat de les necessitats reals que hi ha a escala global (en les quals, d'altra banda, es basa la mateixa definició). Per això mateix, i com a resultat d'aquest debat, es va acordar que com a mínim hi ha dues fonts de preocupació en relació a la sostenibilitat i el desenvolupament sostenible: una referent a la preocupació sobre la qualitat del medi ambient i, l'altra, a la preocupació per garantir les condicions necessàries per a un desenvolupament socioeconòmic sostenible.

Tal i com van reconèixer tots els membres d'aquest grup de treball, actualment el debat sobre aquests conceptes està focalitzat a l'entorn de la integració dels tres pilars del desenvolupament sostenible: desenvolupament econòmic, manteniment i/o millora de la qualitat ambiental i el progrés social. No obstant això, el grup també va debatre sobre quin seria el punt de vista més adequat en la discussió sobre el concepte de desenvolupament sostenible i, d'altra banda, tots els participants van acordar que, en primer lloc, és necessari estipular què s'està incloent i excloent del terme abans d'entrar a discutir els requisits culturals previs que són necessaris per avançar cap al desenvolupament sostenible.

Un segon tema que va ser tractat pel grup de treball va ser com es pot definir una cultura general per al desenvolupament sostenible en un món caracteritzat per un alt nivell de diversitat cultural, ideològica i social. Per exemple, si incloguéssim la igualtat de gènere en la definició de desenvolupament sostenible algunes societats, per les seves tradicions culturals particulars, tindrien greus dificultats en acceptar aquesta idea. El grup va discutir, també, si és possible sintetitzar un grup d'elements culturals comuns referits als tipus de canvis que són necessaris que es produixin en la relació de les persones amb el medi ambient i l'ús dels recursos naturals. Aquesta cultura nucli podria ser difosa entre els diferents estats tot respectant i defensant, al mateix temps, la diversitat cultural mundial.





Tenint en compte que en principi tot això és possible que pugui passar, cal plantejar-se què s'hauria de fer perquè realment succeeixi. A partir del plantejament d'aquesta qüestió, el debat va abordar el tema de la governança i el paper dels diferents actors, tant governamentals com no governamentals. Com s'organitza, aquesta governança? Quin actor és responsable del procés col·lectiu de reflexió a través del qual es destil·len aquests elements comuns de la cultura per al desenvolupament sostenible? Encara que el grup no va tractar aquesta qüestió de forma detallada, es va arribar a la conclusió que aquest procés s'havia d'organitzar com un diàleg continu a diferents escales (internacional, nacional, regional i local).

És obvi que aquesta cultura no pot ser imposada a escala internacional per part d'un determinat grup de països. Mitjançant el diàleg i l'intercanvi d'idees i experiències, es pot demostrar tots els beneficis que poden comportar certs grups d'actituds i creences. La informació es pot proporcionar tenint en compte els possibles impactes negatius dels models d'accions tradicionals en els objectius. D'aquesta manera la gent pot ser conscient que es poden canviar els procediments i les formes d'actuació per aconseguir un estil de vida més desitjable.

Alhora, també seria possible demostrar com els elements de les cultures existents poden donar suport al desenvolupament sostenible. No és necessàriament cert que totes les cultures tinguin un efecte negatiu per al desenvolupament sostenible. No obstant això, podria passar que alguns elements culturals fossin superats per altres que són menys compatibles amb el desenvolupament sostenible. En aquest sentit, també es va puntualitzar el fet que les necessitats es configuren socialment a través de la cultura, encara que la tendència cultural actual no ajuda a difondre una redefinició d'aquestes necessitats en clau de sostenibilitat. Finalment, el fet d'emfasitzar el paper crucial que juga la responsabilitat col·lectiva i individual, també va ser entès com un pre-requisit per a aprendre els valors i les capacitats necessàries per a exercir la cultura de la sostenibilitat.

El quart punt que es va tractar en el debat va ser la qüestió dels models de governança (i el paper del Govern) en relació a un canvi cap a nous models de cultura. Una vegada més, hi va haver consens en relació a que aquests models no poden ser imposats per decisions governamentals. El que és objecte de discussió, en definitiva, és l'existència (i les característiques) d'un procés d'auto-conscienciació per part dels individus i de les societats. Això inclou la redefinició o la reinvençió de les identitats col·lectives i individuals en termes d'una cultura de desenvolupament sostenible. Encara hi ha un nombre de mesures que podrien prendre tant els actors governamentals com els no governamentals, com són ara l'educació o els programes d'informació i també els mitjans de comunicació nous patrons per aconseguir que s'identifiquin positivament uns estils de vida alternatius que tinguin en compte el desenvolupament sostenible. Les organitzacions governamentals i no governamentals, com ara les esglésies o les empreses, podran participar en un procés gradual d'aprenentatge basat en l'autoreflexió. En el transcurs d'aquest procés, hi hauria d'haver diferents moments en els quals els actors poguessin



intervenir i oferir nova informació i noves alternatives per tal d'adaptar-les i integrar-les en els nous models de comportament.

Finalment, es va arribar a un acord general pel que fa a la idea que una cultura per al desenvolupament sostenible és un fenomen de dues cares. Com qualsevol altra forma de cultura, juga un paper que permet crear noves oportunitats i donar noves alternatives tot proporcionant informació, valors, coneixement i habilitats. No obstant això, la cultura funciona com una força limitadora: redueix el ventall d'accions que es poden dur terme, excloent-hi determinats models de comportament que considera inadequats en pro del desenvolupament sostenible. En aquest punt, la discussió va donar un gir radical, tornant a la qüestió de què s'inclou i/o s'exclou en la definició de desenvolupament sostenible. D'altra banda, es va considerar que és possible examinar les implicacions que té perseguir aquests objectius a nivell del comportament humà i que també és possible desenvolupar criteris per avaluar fins a quin punt són adients les diferents opcions de comportament. Des d'aquesta perspectiva, el grup va considerar breument la rellevància contemporània de la imperativa categòrica kantiana per jutjar fins a quin punt una determinada acció o comportament es pot o no generalitzar a favor del desenvolupament sostenible.

Un últim punt que mereix una atenció especial és l'observació que els debats entorn de la cultura sostenible i/o cultura per a la sostenibilitat sovint tendeixen a reflectir els valors i les creences del món occidental industrialitzat. En aquest sentit, el nucli comú del qual s'ha parlat abans pot deixar fora molts aspectes que són rellevants per a altres cultures en altres parts del món. Aquesta possibilitat subratlla la necessitat de desenvolupar un diàleg mundial just i competent entre els diferents països i cultures que busquen un marc de referència cultural compartit en el qual es pot anhelar la pluralitat dels diferents camins per a la realització del desenvolupament sostenible.



Conclusions dels Grups de Treball



Conflictes Ambientals

Relator: **Kenneth Hanf**

Encara que el debat existent en altres grups de discussió mostra un acord general pel que fa al significat de desenvolupament sostenible, aquest no sempre és acceptat. La ponència presentada sobre conflictes ambientals pren com a punt de partida el buit que existeix entre el consens general sobre allò que implica el desenvolupament sostenible a nivell abstracte i la manca de consens en les seves implicacions per als actors en situacions concretes, en les quals s'ha d'aplicar o dur a terme el compromís polític. D'una banda, sembla haver-hi consens en el fet que el desenvolupament sostenible és positiu i que cal fer esforços per assolir-lo. D'altra banda, però, poden sorgir conflictes greus quan intentem traduir-lo en mesures concretes en determinats contextos socials, on es van visualitzant els diferents models i mecanismes d'acció proposats a nivell més teòric. És per això que el significat de desenvolupament sostenible en una comunitat o societat pot conduir a seriosos conflictes i desacords.

Intentar comprendre l'origen d'aquests conflictes i els mètodes per a mitigar-los o afrontar-los (si no hi ha possibilitat d'evitar-los), és el centre d'atenció en un procés en que es prenen les decisions col·lectives tenint en compte, d'una banda, el concepte de desenvolupament sostenible i, de l'altra, les mesures que cal prendre per a aconseguir el objectius proposats. Per tant, atès que és difícil (si no impossible), considerar que el desenvolupament sostenible és un "procés acabat", és més útil entendre'l com un viatge continu cap a quelcom que, generalment, es pot incloure dins els paràmetres del que considerem com a desenvolupament sostenible (on s'uneixen el desenvolupament econòmic, la protecció ambiental i el progrés social). Per això mateix, els conflictes (i la seva gestió) s'han d'analitzar com una part més del procés per mitjà del qual els col·lectius socials construeixen i reconstrueixen les seves visions del desenvolupament sostenible i l'estratègia per a aconseguir-ho. Aquest enfocament (...) focalitza la nostra atenció cap a les opcions disponibles per configurar el context institucional en el qual han de sorgir (o organitzar) els diversos models de governança que són necessaris per fer la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible.

En el debat sobre l'ús de tècniques per a l'assoliment del consens, dirigides a tractar els conflictes que sorgeixen a l'hora de trobar les vies per avançar cap al desenvolupament sostenible, els participants van centrar-se en els problemes d'una estratègia que emfasitza la necessitat d'una participació àmplia dels diversos grups d'interès i accentua -amb massa fermesa- la importància d'arribar al consens.





Si ens trobem en un procés de discussió ("talking process") a través del qual una societat, a diferents nivells i pel que fa a diferents projectes, redefineix les implicacions concretes del seu compromís amb el desenvolupament sostenible, és important considerar la millor manera com es pot institucionalitzar aquest procés i, al seu torn, quin pot ser el seu paper com a vehicle per a la deliberació col·lectiva, la presa de decisions i l'aprenentatge. Seran importants, doncs, els acords i procediments que estiguin disponibles per tractar els diversos tipus de conflictes que seran, inevitablement, part de les decisions relatives a la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible de les societats.

En resposta a les informacions presentades en la ponència sobre conflicte i desenvolupament sostenible (centrant-se en els possibles beneficis dels mètodes alternatius per a resoldre disputes, especialment els procediments relacionats amb la formació d'un consens), hi va haver un ampli acord pel que fa al fet que la confiança, o dependència, en les diferents formes de participació dels representants dels diversos grups d'interès, pot produir un incompliment dels aspectes més problemàtics centrant-se en la possibilitat d'aconseguir un consens per a resoldre el conflicte.

En el mateix debat es va ressaltar especialment la idea que l'apreciació del valor de les diferents formes de participació en els processos de presa de decisions, no ha de comportar una infravaloració de les dificultats trobades a l'hora de buscar estratègies de participació d'un tipus o d'un altre. Alguns membres del grup (...) van donar exemples d'alguns aspectes qüestionables d'un fenomen que es pot descriure com una "carrera cap a la salvació a través de la participació", de forma individual o bé en forma de grups múltiples, per a aconseguir el consens entre les diverses parts en conflicte. Es va advertir que la insistència en el consens, com a norma de decisió bàsica, pot portar a un punt mort o a decisions diluïdes al més baix denominador comú. A més, es van destacar les diverses (i sovint contradictòries) "cultures del discurs" dels grups que, sovint, fan pensar que no hi ha possibilitat d'un enteniment comú. De qualsevol manera, no n'hi ha prou amb reunir la gent per parlar; una vegada els diversos grups d'acció (*stakeholders*) s'han posicionat, poden sorgir un gran nombre de problemes que frustrin el propòsit d'obrir el procés de decisions a un nombre més ampli de participants.

Un cop expressada la necessitat d'aprendre dels problemes que s'han trobat en la pràctica amb els processos de creació de consensos i formes de participació extensiva, es va apuntar que, quan es considera la utilitat de les tècniques de formació de consensos en una situació determinada, és necessari dissenyar col·lectivament (amb la col·laboració dels que participen en el procés) acords institucionals adequats per als objectius que pretén assolir el procés. Els mètodes alternatius de resolució de disputes s'han d'escollir i dissenyar segons el nostre objectiu i en relació a la fase del procés de decisió en el qual s'utilitzaran. No és el mateix si intentem desenvolupar la visió col·lectiva del concepte de desenvolupament sostenible en la comunitat, que si estem parlant de conflictes relacionats amb una disputa sobre la situació d'un projecte d'infraestructura concret. És una cosa coneguda que dissenyar acords institucionals per a l'aplicació





d'aquestes tècniques és un cas específic i que aquests acords variaran segons els casos. De fet, aquests mètodes només podran garantir una certa efectivitat si estan fets a mida.

Així mateix, i aquest és un segon punt que es va ressaltar en resposta a les crítiques fetes al començament del debat, els processos de formació de consens (d'un tipus o d'un altre) no funcionen per ells mateixos. La gestió activa d'aquests processos és crucial. No només és qüestió de preguntar als participants allò que volen i aleshores intentar arribar a un consens on s'uneixin els interessos de tot el grup. Tanmateix, depenent de la fase del problema que cal resoldre o el procés de decisió en què ens trobem nosaltres mateixos, el govern, representant els interessos de la comunitat com un tot, podria fer un intent de moure el procés cap a una sèrie d'objectius polítics o consideracions normatives més àmplies. (això condueix a un punt, important, que necessita més investigació: d'una banda, la interfície entre les institucions i els processos de democràcia representativa i els associats a formes de democràcia participativa i, de l'altra, el paper que juguen els actors del govern en la unió entre aquests.

A l'hora d'organitzar i gestionar processos de formació de consens, el repte és saber combinar de manera efectiva tots els aspectes del procés, de dalt cap a baix i de baix cap a dalt. Allò que és important és que quan s'utilitza la direcció de dalt cap a baix, els membres del grup no exclouen les opcions de forma prèvia, abans de discutir-les i avaluar-les. La gestió d'un procés obert però estructurat de presa de decisions participatives no necessàriament exclou les funcions de líder i de guia. A més, hi ha límits de temps establerts en el disseny d'aquests processos. No és cert que el debat s'hagi d'intentar allargar fins que s'arribi a un acord. Quan s'elabora (i es gestiona) un procés interactiu per intentar resoldre els conflictes sorgits en la concreció del concepte de desenvolupament sostenible en accions, s'assumeix el fet que els participants s'han reunit per un desig comú de resoldre un determinat problema. Estan motivats per aquest compromís i accepten el procés i les condicions sota les quals s'ha d'arribar a una solució acceptable.

A més a més, un consens no vol dir un acord en tots els aspectes, sinó que només demana que els participants acceptin tot el conjunt de mesures que s'ultimen per tractar de resoldre el problema. El procés de formació de consens s'accepta com una manera de buscar solucions confrontant els conflictes i buscant noves possibilitats per a satisfer els interessos reals dels participants. Cal posar èmfasi en la solució del problema (o negociació integradora), contrastat amb altres formes més tradicionals de negociació estratègica en la persecució dels objectius propis.

És igualment important el caràcter voluntari que té la participació. En contrast, per exemple, amb l'arbitratge obligatori, no s'obliga els participants a acceptar les decisions del grup. Si, al final del període de negociació, un dels participants no accepta el grup de mesures proposades, és lliure de sortir del procés i buscar una solució més adequada



mitjançant altres mitjans de resolució de conflictes, com ara la legislació, la decisió d'un tribunal o la mobilització de suport.

Finalment, en la discussió es va incidir en la necessitat de prendre mesures actives per tal de "donar poder" real als participants, no només fer-ho en termes formals. Podria (...) ser necessari garantir que els participants amb menys experiència o els socialment desavantatjats tinguessin la capacitat i els recursos necessaris per a una participació efectiva. En el procés de disseny i de gestió d'aquests processos pot ser necessari prendre mesures per tal d'anivellar el terreny de joc i crear les condicions òptimes per tal que els participants de les diferents "cultures del discurs" puguin interactuar i en treguin els seus fruits.

Com a conclusió, el debat d'aquest grup deixa clar que és important contrastar diferents punts de vista pel que fa als avantatges de la participació i la lluita per a aconseguir un consens amb els problemes que han sorgit en la pràctica. Confrontant el model amb la pràctica real, serà possible afinar la manera de pensar que tenim sobre la formació de consensos i les estratègies per a la participació múltiple dels grups d'interès (*stakeholder*), de la mateixa manera que ens permetrà millorar el disseny d'aquest processos. Alhora, serà possible adquirir una experiència molt valuosa sobre quines són les millors condicions i formes de presa de decisions participatives. No obstant això, també és necessari comparar la realitat amb el model més diferenciat que s'ha desenvolupat en la bibliografia i que s'ha posat en pràctica.

Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Informació de la Governança per al Desenvolupament Sostenible

Relator: **Agustí Cerrillo**

Les discussions del grup de treball van enfocar-se principalment a dos aspectes clau: el paper de la informació que donen les empreses i la seva relació amb la societat (en referència a la responsabilitat social corporativa i al paper de la informació en l'Administració Pública). És a dir: el principi democràtic, la transparència, el control de l'administració pública i la responsabilitat.

El debat va conduir a les següents conclusions, dividides en tres grups:

1. La informació de la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible



La informació millora la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible. No obstant això, un excés d'informació pot ser un problema; tanmateix existeixen altres problemes relacionats amb la informació com ara el seu grau de complexitat o, també, la manca de la mateixa informació. En aquest sentit, és necessari establir més criteris o patrons pel que fa a la informació donada (ha de ser clara i ha d'estar disponible per a tothom).

En diversos estats ja existeixen alguns mecanismes per tal de garantir que es respectin aquests patrons (defensor del poble, certificació de bones pràctiques, comitès selectius). Probablement un aspecte que caldria millorar seria la verificació de la informació que es proporciona.

2. Els usuaris de la informació

Hi ha diferents públics per a la informació i també diferents usos de la informació. Per això s'han d'establir diferents maneres per accedir a la informació, tenint en compte els interessos dels usuaris.

L'educació també és important i un tractament pedagògic de la informació pot ser útil per acostar la informació als seus usuaris.



Finalment, els mitjans de comunicació encara tenen un paper important a desenvolupar en la difusió de la informació.

3. Informació i empreses

Des del punt de vista dels negocis, la informació pot ser considerada una inversió, és a dir, que les empreses poden entendre la informació com un avantatge comparatiu.

Algunes empreses han adoptat processos de participació per definir les seves estratègies de comunicació.

Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Indicadors institucionals del desenvolupament sostenible

Relator: **Kenneth Hanf**

El debat sobre els indicadors institucionals de desenvolupament sostenible es va centrar en quatre punts essencials, en un intent d'aclarir i comprendre millor aquest tema tan rellevant però, alhora, tan complex.

En primer lloc el Sr. Spangenberg, que havia presentat la ponència inicial, va descriure en detall com va arribar a aquesta aproximació a l'ànàlisi de l'actual estat de desenvolupament dels indicadors institucionals.

En la primera ronda de debats, els membres del grup retornaven contínuament al punt que havia sorgit a la sessió plenària: l'incompliment de les mateixes institucions a favor del seu "producte". L'explicació del rerafons i el desenvolupament del projecte es centra en per què el focus dels indicadors es troba en el producte en comptes de l'estructura o el procés intern de les institucions. La lògica subjacent de l'elecció dels indicadors relacionats amb el producte de les institucions era que la relació important que calia destacar era la que hi ha entre el propòsit de la institució i els seus resultats. Aquests propòsits, conjuntament amb els aspectes clau de les dimensions institucionals que cal mesurar, s'extreien principalment del document de l'Agenda 21.

Es considera que els indicadors proporcionen informació sobre com actua una societat o un país per a aconseguir aquests objectius. No obstant això, el fet és que aquests propòsits o funcions es poden complir mitjançant diversos compromisos institucionals. No hi ha una correlació exacta entre una funció específica i un acord institucional simple. Per exemple, es pot aconseguir un nivell més alt de transparència de diferents maneres. És per això que seria extremadament difícil desenvolupar indicadors començant per una relació acceptada entre acords d'organitzacions i de processos, de propòsits, d'execució i de producte. D'altra banda, el projecte sobre indicadors institucionals mostra el contrari: si l'indicador apunta que hi ha un nivell baix d'execució d'un objectiu determinat, el segon pas seria examinar els acords institucionals i el context en el qual aquests operen per explicar allò que s'ha aconseguit fins aleshores.

És per això que no es tracta d'un incompliment de les institucions, de la seva organització interna i dels processos a través dels quals es duen a terme els productes (un cert nivell d'execució aconseguit), sinó que és una seqüència analítica basada en la suposició de múltiples estructures per a l'acompliment d'una determinada funció.

Un tercer punt de discussió té a veure amb la possibilitat de desenvolupar indicadors per mesurar l'execució a diferents nivells d'acció. La perspectiva descrita anteriorment seria bona si estiguéssim interessats en allò que succeeix a escala nacional, però com és possible disgregar aquests indicadors de l'escala local o regional? O bé, com podem afegir informació i dades sobre situacions locals en un tipus d'indicador combinat d'execució regional o nacional?

La resposta és que no es pot disgregar o agregar l'indicador d'un nivell a una combinació. Quan seleccionem un indicador per a la funció que sigui als diferents nivells, n'hem d'escollir un que sigui adient per a l'experiència dels actors a diferents nivells i contextos. Els indicadors han de tenir un punt de referència en alguna cosa significativa per a les responsabilitats i les competències del nivell d'acció que estan mesurant.



Això vol dir que no es pot actuar en termes tradicionals de disgregació de les mateixes dades cap amunt o cap a baix a escales diferents. Allò que necessitem són diferents indicadors relacionats amb l'escala amb la qual estem examinant un objectiu determinat i el producte a través del qual aquest s'assoleix.

El quart punt de discussió té a veure amb un debat més general sobre la governança i la relació entre una governança bona o efectiva i un apropament als objectius del desenvolupament sostenible. És interessant la contribució que poden fer els indicadors que mesuren la situació en què estem en relació als objectius institucionals i les funcions per entendre quin és el sistema més efectiu de governança per al desenvolupament sostenible.

Tot i que el projecte sobre indicadors institucionals no es va desenvolupar des d'una perspectiva de governança explícita, es va apuntar que la definició d'institució utilitzada en aquest projecte com a centre per als indicadors és força consistent amb la conceptualització de la governança com a institució social; un grup de normes, de valors i de regles de decisió utilitzades per a tractar els conflictes socials, les fonts de mobilització per a la cooperació i que tenen a veure amb el problema d'acció col·lectiva de *free rider*.

Particularment, la noció de governança s'utilitza cada vegada més per a conceptualitzar i analitzar els models d'interacció entre els diferents tipus d'actors que executen o contribueixen a dur a terme aquestes accions. Aquests actors podrien ser tant governamentals com no governamentals. El concepte deixa obert a l'anàlisi empírica d'un cas particular el rol i el centralisme del govern en aquests models de governança. Mentre que a nivell de governança internacional, per exemple, pot existir sense govern, en el sentit d'una forma d'autoritat per sobre dels estats individuals, a nivell nacional, això no és possible. D'una manera o altra, el govern s'hi implicarà, però no necessàriament com a actor principal.

D'aquí se n'extreu que, si una societat ha de fer la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible, haurà de tenir la capacitat institucional suficient per dur a terme determinats



tipus de funcions. Aquestes inclourien, entre d'altres, la capacitat per desenvolupar i aplicar polítiques integrades, la capacitat per a desenvolupar estratègies de participació per a tractar els conflictes socials i la capacitat de coordinar activitats dutes a terme en diferents escales d'acció.

Finalment, es va concloure que els diferents tipus de lògica analítica es troben en els indicadors institucionals basats en el desenvolupament sostenible (que es basa, al seu torn, en el prisma del DS) i que tenen a veure amb l'interès en els requisits institucionals per a la transició amb èxit cap al desenvolupament sostenible. Encara que estan relacionades, les perspectives no són traduïbles les unes amb les altres.

Acrònims i abreviatures

BM: Banc Mundial.

CE: Comissió Europea.

CSD (uncsd): Comissió del Desenvolupament Sostenible (NN.UU).

ECOSOC: Comissió Social i Econòmica de Nacions Unides.

FMAM (Gef): Fons per al Medi Ambient Mundial.

FMI: Fons Monetari Internacional.

HIPC: Països Pobres Altament Endeutats.

OMC: Organització Mundial del Comerç.

PNUD: Programa de Nacions Unides per al Desenvolupament.

PNUMA (unep): Programa de Nacions Unides per al Medi Ambient.

PRSP: Programa Estratègic de Reducció de la Pobresa.



Prefaci



El Consell Assessor per al Desenvolupament Sostenible (CADS) està format per reconegudes personalitats de diferents àmbits de la societat catalana. Fou creat pel Govern de Catalunya amb l'objectiu de ser un òrgan de participació i assessorament del govern sobre les polítiques, els plans i els programes que poguessin tenir una incidència sobre el desenvolupament sostenible. El nostre objectiu, tanmateix, també és contribuir a la reflexió sobre les condicions que fan possible que la cultura de la sostenibilitat impregni la societat catalana i el procés de presa de decisions, per tal que -la sostenibilitat- esdevingui un element bàsic del capital social del nostre país.

Per això, el Consell i l'IIG van elaborar un projecte conjunt per a estudiar, debatre i difondre coneixement útil referent a quin tipus de governança és necessària per decidir i assolir eficaçment un desenvolupament més sostenible. És en el marc d'aquest projecte on s'emmarca la realització del seminari de reflexió sobre la Governança per al Desenvolupament Sostenible (GDS), el qual va tenir lloc a Barcelona el 18 i 19 d'abril de 2002. El seminari va pretendre que diversos experts europeus en GDS ens ajudessin a trobar els mecanismes que ens han de permetre actuar a Catalunya, a Europa i al Món amb més eficàcia per a resoldre els grans reptes que tenim, de present i de futur.

El que sembla clar és que no podem restar indiferents davant l'evidència que ens trobem en un temps de canvis, d'oportunitats i de grans reptes; un temps d'incerteses però alhora -i sobretot- un temps de grans esperances. I l'adaptació a aquesta situació de canvi comporta l'assumpció d'un nou sistema de valors, que ha de fer compatibles els nous conceptes que apareixen en l'escenari de les idees, com la globalitat, la identitat, la governabilitat o la sostenibilitat.

La principal funció de la política avui és trobar noves idees per als nous escenaris, i aquestes idees hauran de tenir -de ben segur- la sostenibilitat com a eix vertebrador. La sostenibilitat, els valors de progrés, de conservació del patrimoni natural i cultural, de qualitat de vida, haurien de constituir la base per assolir una nova ètica compartida a escala local i global. La cultura de la sostenibilitat hauria de ser un element bàsic en el capital social dels països i hauria d'esdevenir consubstancial en el procés de presa de decisions.

En aquest nou ordre mundial que sembla configurar-se, caldrà buscar un equilibri a tres bandes. Un equilibri entre la realitat econòmica, les realitats socials i culturals diverses i unes condicions ambientals que són clau per a la supervivència del planeta. Aquest equilibri és necessari a escala mundial, però també ho és a escala local i nacional. I a Catalunya, també hem de cercar aquesta síntesi.



Per fer això, resulta necessari plantejar un nou tipus de governança que permeti avançar decididament vers un desenvolupament més sostenible. Suposo que no dic res de nou quan apunto que cal una reflexió serena i en profunditat sobre la dificultat de governar una societat com la nostra, cada cop més complexa, en la que cal que afrontem debats i conflictes que estan íntimament lligats amb el desenvolupament sostenible. Segurament, no tenim més solució que assumir la insostenibilitat si volem comprendre els conflictes socioeconòmics. I això es pot dur a terme, en definitiva, des de la formació, el pensament crític i l'assumpció d'un sistema emergent de valors.

El desenvolupament sostenible és, de fet, un concepte “revolucionari” i un procés inevitable, que comportarà canvis en molts dels plantejaments de la societat, de l'economia i de la política. D'entrada, el que queda clar és que no es pot abordar un model de desenvolupament sostenible sinó s'adopta una visió innovadora (en les idees, els processos, els estils), que ens allunyi d'alguns tòpics culturals que encara dominen la nostra percepció i capacitat d'anàlisi de la realitat. Aquesta visió ens ha de fer passar de la consciència que hi ha una necessitat d'actuar a la consciència que tenim una possibilitat d'actuar. No tant sols els governs o les institucions públiques, és clar, sinó tota la societat. La sostenibilitat, en definitiva, és cosa de tots. I n'hem de ser conscients.

Per això, l'educació o l'aprenentatge en uns determinats valors seran determinants per la configuració de la consciència sobre el desenvolupament sostenible. La sostenibilitat és també una qüestió de drets i deures, de corresponsabilitat, tant a nivell individual com col·lectiu. No es tracta d'educar només com una activitat de transmissió de coneixements sinó de capacitació dels ciutadans per entendre els problemes i per proposar solucions viables.

La sostenibilitat va lligada a l'exercici de la responsabilitat i el compromís envers el país d'avui i el de demà. Responsabilitat i compromís que han d'incrementar el nostre sentit de comunitat, i permetre construir un país –un planeta- des de la consciència que allò que fem ara no comprometrà el desenvolupament de les generacions futures.

Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual, President del Consell Assessor per al Desenvolupament Sostenible.

Introducció

Durant els mesos previs a la Conferència Mundial sobre Desenvolupament Sostenible (coneguda com a Cimera de Johannesburg o Rio +10), l'Institut Internacional de Governabilitat ha endegat un conjunt d'iniciatives centrades en l'àmbit de la Governança per al Desenvolupament Sostenible. D'entre totes elles, cal destacar especialment el seminari que va realitzar-se a Barcelona el mes d'abril de 2002, del qual avui us presentem les principals conclusions.



El seminari es fa fer conjuntament amb el Consell Assessor per al Desenvolupament Sostenible (CADS), organisme adscrit al Departament de la Presidència de la Generalitat de Catalunya, i hi van ser convidats uns 20 experts de l'àmbit català i europeu, els quals van debatre i formular propostes i recomanacions de cara a intentar millorar els sistemes de governança a escala regional i global.

L'esmentat *Seminari de Barcelona: Governança per al Desenvolupament Sostenible*, va tenir com a referent la presentació, per part de la Comissió Europea, del "Llibre Blanc de la Governança" (juliol de 2001) i la participació de l'IIG en la conferència sobre "El Llibre Blanc de la Governança per al medi ambient: què implica per al medi ambient?", organitzada per la Direcció General de Medi Ambient de la Comissió el mes de desembre de 2001.

L'objecte del seminari, la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible (GDS), fa referència a les capacitats necessàries i existents de l'acció col·lectiva (ja sigui pública, social o privada) per fer possible la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible. Aquestes capacitats institucionals no es poden garantir i no necessàriament es deriven de la democràcia: la disposició d'aquestes capacitats requereix la intervenció conscient dels ciutadans i dels actors governamentals i no governamentals. Existeixen estructures i processos de governança capaços de produir GDS, però n'hi ha d'altres que no ho són, per la qual cosa és indispensable discutir i identificar quins són els models específics de governança que poden produir sostenibilitat.

En aquest sentit, els governs que actuen en base a la seva autoritat segurament no imposaran ni duran a terme els canvis plantejats per assolir el desenvolupament sostenible de les seves societats (ja siguin canvis polítics, organitzatius o de comportament). Aquestes transformacions només s'aconseguiran de forma efectiva si s'utilitzen les capacitats creadores dels actors socials i es generen compromisos amb aquells canvis i aquelles mesures col·lectives acordades socialment.

En definitiva, el seminari de Barcelona va servir per discutir la GDS des de sis perspectives o enfocaments diferents (però estretament interrelacionats entre ells):

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1. La governança global per al desenvolupament sostenible;
 2. El paper de les regions en l'eix local-global;
 3. La gestió i prevenció dels conflictes socio-ambientals;
 4. La cultura de la sostenibilitat;
 5. La informació en la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible;
 6. Els indicadors de la capacitat institucional envers el desenvolupament sostenible.

La publicació que teniu a les mans, editada pel Consell Assessor per al Desenvolupament Sostenible de Catalunya, conté les conclusions dels sis grups de treball, així com també les diverses ponències marc que van servir per emmarcar i orientar els debats posteriors. Esperem que siguin una aportació útil a la discussió que s'està produint actualment a escala internacional sobre la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible.

Joan Prats, Director de l'Institut Internacional de Governabilitat de Catalunya.



Resums

El Procés de la Cimera. Avançant cap a la Governança per al Desenvolupament Sostenible

Rosalie Gardiner

International Policy Coordinator and Manager of the WHAT Governance Programme, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future*.

Aquest paper pretén proporcionar un breu background del procés de la cimera fins avui, centrant-se en el debat sobre la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible. El paper està enfocat principalment cap a marcs i institucions globals.

Anàlisi preliminar: el procés fins ara

Aquesta secció es centra en les propostes d'un paper sobre "Governança per al Desenvolupament Sostenible" presentat en el Tercer Comitè Preparatori (Prep Com) per a la Cimera Mundial sobre Desenvolupament Sostenible (WSSD). L'informe emfasitza alguns principis per a la Bona Governança com ara la igualtat de gènere, els drets humans i l'accés a la justícia. Requereix un procés de reforma evolutiu. S'inclouen les següents referències:

Medi Ambient

PNUMA – Una referència al grup de treball "International Environmental Governance" (IEG) del PNUMA el qual fa algunes propostes de reforma. No obstant, va establir alguns compromisos pràctics.

Desenvolupament

PNUD – fa referència a l'enfortiment de la iniciativa Capacitat 21 per construir un DS a nivell nacional. Implica una integració més forta del medi ambient a través del PNUMA unint-se al Grup de Desenvolupament de les Nacions Unides.

* Perspectiva ONG.

Banc Mundial - fa referència a la millora de la relació entre la pobresa i el medi ambient, com ara els Programes de Reducció de la Pobresa, i signes d'una millor integració institucional com són el recent informe del Banc Mundial, DfID, CE, PNUD sobre "Linking poverty reduction and environmental management: Policy challenges and opportunities".

Comerç i finances

OMC- Alguns textos fan referència a l'OMC, però el debat més important fou bloquejat pels governs dels Estats Units, del G77, del Japó i d' Austràlia – els quals van defensar el procés de Doha abans d'unde realitzar un examen més en profunditat. Tanmateix, fou identificada la necessitat d'una major coordinació a nivell institucional.

FMI- va apostar per la construcció d'associacions amb altres organismes a nivell internacional per tal de garantir que els seus programes "tinguessin en consideració les prioritats en matèria de desenvolupament sostenible".

Integració Institucional

Integració horitzontal

NN.UU- Algunes propostes més clares apareixen en relació a l'enfortiment de la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible quan es consideren les NN.UU en la seva totalitat, incloent totes les agències i els gestors de les accions arran de l'Agenda 21. La reforma de l'Assemblea General fou també considerada. Algunes de les propostes potser requereixen modificacions de la carta de les NN.UU.

CDS-ECOSOC- L'ECOSOC i les seves altres comissions hauria estat millor que s'haguessin adherit a la CSD. Un nombre de membres universal i una major representació ministerial a nivell de govern foren proposats.

Integració vertical

Comissions Econòmiques Regionals- propostes enfocades a arribar a ser comissions regionals per al desenvolupament sostenible.

Nacional- proposta per a establir més Consells Nacionals per al desenvolupament sostenible, estratègies a nivell nacional i reforma del sistema econòmic.

Medi Ambient

Molt grups discrepaven dels resultats obtinguts de la trobada del PNUMA. Una preocupació concreta fou la fallida dels governs per a comprometre's a un major nivell de finançament i un nombre de membres universal. També el Principi 10 (sobre participació) no fou abordat.

PNUMA- mentre que existeix algun tipus d'acord per "enfortir el rol del PNUMA" existeixen pocs compromisos a nivell pràctic. Els grups han estat exercint una acció de lobby tant per a l'establiment d'una Organització Mundial de Medi ambient, per a una representació en el Trusteeship Council, com per a promoure que el PNUMA esdevingui una agència de les NN.UU. El darrer punt garantiria un mandat anual de contribucions financeres per part dels governs membres. La iniciativa "d'Interrelacions" en IEG de la universitat de les NN.UU indica que aquesta és la seva opció preferida, ja que podria ser aconseguida d'una manera més gradual més que no pas introduint una nova institució i un altre nivell de burocràcia.

Els acords multi-laterals ambientals (MEAs)- els grups de MEAs podrien ser més àmpliament extensos a partir de: línies administratives (conferències), línies funcionals (GEF=finances) , línies temàtiques (convencions químiques), línies regionals (regions amb processos de desertificació), i línies comunicatives (Informe GEO).

S'haurien de dur a terme convenis amb més força mitjançant sistemes més regulats, monitorejats i reforçats, com són l'Ombudsman Ambiental i la Cort ambiental mundial; requisits d'informació a nivell nacional simplificats i un major grau de clarificació de la relació existent entre l'OMC/MEA.

Participació- els processos d'informes ambientals i d'aplicació de polítiques requereixen una involucració de millor qualitat per part dels grups d'interès. Inclouent el Principi 10, sobre l'accés a la informació pel procés de presa de decisions, participació i justícia en relació als afers ambientals (Aarhus Convention).

Desenvolupament

Banc Mundial- enllaços amb pobresa i medi ambient, passant de la retòrica a l'acció. Enfocaments top-down en els contextos de presa de decisions (PRSP matrix). Major grau d'integració estratègica (NSSD, PRSP, CAS, iniciativa OEDC DAC).

PNUD- major integració i seguiment (informes nacionals i informes sobre el desenvolupament humà) garantint la viabilitat a llarg termini de la iniciativa sobre Capacitat 21.

Economia

FMI- S'han fet alguns progressos pel que fa als canvis proposats en els casos de crisi financera - accés a SDR i a la llei de bancarrota (basada en la Llei de Bancarrota Ch. 11 dels EUA). Tanmateix, encara estan pendents de ser utilitzats. Les propostes més significatives es concentren en un major grau de participació i de transparència de la societat civil, en promoure els informes a nivell financer (International Corruption Convention) i en fer front a la corrupció. Igualment, destaquen la necessitat d'enfocar de manera top-down la presa de decisions en contextos (HIPC millorat).

OMC- major grau de consideració, de participació i d'accés a la informació, recontextualitzant els objectius centrals. La relació NN.UU/OMC. Acord de marc per a les corporacions transnacionals (OECD Guidelines, ILO standards).

A Johannesburg

MEAs- major capacitat, poder de ratificació i d'implementació en relació a l'existent.

Finances- Major nivell de finançament per a l' PNUMA, GEF (FMAM) i PNUD Capacity 21.

Enfortiment regional - establiment de fora suau en el DS a nivells regionals.

UNCSD- cronograma a 10 anys vista per a aquells temes nous o emergents - especialment tenint en compte als objectius de desenvolupament del mil·lenni.

Més enllà de la cimera de Johannesburg

Establiment d'un procés continu de governança, per exemple, introduint un grup de treball a nivell inter-governamental i/o de diversos grups d'interès per tal de dur a terme el seguiment de la discussió sobre governança a nivell global.

Aplicació d'una reforma més àmplia a nivell institucional i organitzatiu, especialment en relació a les NN.UU, a l' IFIs i a l'OMC.



Principis posats a la pràctica - aplicació pràctica dels principis de bona governança, per exemple: convencions contra la corrupció, enllaços amb les convencions sobre drets humans, etc.

Participació- clarificació de les regles d'implicació de la societat civil o de grups majors. Recolzament als processos bottom-up.





Resums

El paper de les regions en l'eix local-global de la GDS

Francesc Morata

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Institut Internacional de Governabilitat de Catalunya



L'objectiu del desenvolupament sostenible requereix una acció a totes les escales de govern, des de la global fins a la local. El lema "pensa globalment, actua localment" encara evidencia la necessitat de posar en pràctica els acords internacionals en les accions diàries dels individus en el si de les comunitats on viuen. Deixant de banda que molts dels reptes de la sostenibilitat requereixen acords i accions globals per tal de dur-los a terme, n'hi ha d'altres que només poden dur-se a terme amb èxit a escala de la Unió Europea i, finalment, hi ha altres casos on l'acció més apropiada és la que haurien de dur a terme els governs nacionals, regionals o locals.

La governança i el desenvolupament sostenible comparteixen moltes característiques. Es tracta, sense cap mena de dubte, de conceptes compartits que impliquen tensions i conflictes.

El concepte de sostenibilitat desafia profundament la divisió tradicional de competències entre els diferents nivells de govern. El sistema de governança en el qual es prenen i s'executen les decisions relatives al desenvolupament sostenible és de caràcter "multinivell". La governança multinivell i la governança de xarxa expressen la responsabilitat compartida que es troba en el nucli d'aquest compromís. És per això que les institucions i els processos que treballen a qualsevol nivell de governança només poden ser entesos completament com a part d'un sistema de governança més extens del qual qualsevol nivell forma part.

A la Unió Europea s'ha demostrat que la cooperació entre els diferents nivells de govern, des del local al comunitari, és essencial per a l'èxit de les polítiques públiques. Igualment, les interrelacions a escala local/regional i a escales més grans juguen un paper crucial. El debat, de vegades virulent, sobre el canvi de competències des de l'àmbit nacional a l'europeu o regional perd importància quan es replanteja la qüestió en termes de com cada un d'aquests nivells hauria de contribuir a aconseguir el desenvolupament sostenible en un sistema de responsabilitats compartides.

Segons la seva posició intermèdia en l'eix local/global, la seva legitimitat popular i les accions que duen a terme, les regions europees haurien de jugar un paper estratègic



a l'hora de promoure el desenvolupament sostenible, tot participant més activament en el procés de presa de decisions (tant a escala nacional com comunitària).

Les dues primeres parts de la ponència revisen el debat actual sobre la Unió Europea com a sistema emergent de la governança multinivell i les seves aplicacions en la governança regional, tenint en compte el paper actual o potencial de les regions en tant que enllaços entre els programes de política europea i l'establiment de compromisos per al desenvolupament sostenible a escala local. La tercera part emfasitza la necessitat d'augmentar les capacitats internes de les regions per tal de dur a terme la transició cap a la sostenibilitat. Finalment, la quarta part està enfocada a alguns dels principals reptes polítics relacionats amb la diversitat territorial i social dins del sistema multinivell de la Unió Europea.

Resums

Cultura Sostenible

J. David Tàbara

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En aquesta ponència s'explora el significat de la cultura sostenible i les seves implicacions per a la governança. En primer lloc, es defensa que la cultura sostenible implica una nova manera de percebre, racionalitzar moralitzar i prescriure la realitat, de manera que tant el pensament com l'acció sorgeixen d'un marc cognitiu i moral més ampli en què es tenen en compte els drets de les generacions futures, de les espècies humanes i dels recursos mundials comuns. Així doncs, la cultura de la sostenibilitat hauria d'augmentar l'habilitat social per superar els límits de les percepcions, valors i racionalitats actuals sense caure en noves formes d'irracionalitat.

En segon lloc, s'argüeix que la cultura de la sostenibilitat hauria d'ajudar la gent a adonar-se de les errades del present i del passat, evitar els abusos sobre els sistemes social i natural, així com a modificar la visió i les conductes individuals i col·lectives segons correspongui. De fet la sostenibilitat es pot entendre com un procés d'aprenentatge reflexiu continu, que consisteix en anar qüestionant-se, rebutjant i/o reconduint alguns dels pressupòsits fonamentals, creats socialment, sobre la noció del temps, de l'espai, la natura i la felicitat. Això hauria de permetre finalment assolir un nivell de vida elevat i anar reduint a la vegada l'impacte negatiu en els sistemes socioambientals que causa el creixement i la major complexitat de les societats humanes.

I en tercer lloc, es proposa que la representació àmplia i genuïna i/o la protecció de la diversitat -tant cultural com natural- s'hauria de considerar com un dels principis més importants alhora d'incloure la cultura de la sostenibilitat en les decisions relacionades amb la governança. Això és així ja que la cultura sostenible cerca integrar i protegir coneixements, creences, lògiques, experiències, valors i maneres de viure de diversa índole: local i universal, vells i joves, tradicionals i moderns, masculins i femenins, experts i no experts, qualitatiu i quantitatiu, dominants i reprimits, sagrats i profans, així com de diferents disciplines naturals, socials, tècniques i humanes.



Resums

Conflictes ambientals, desenvolupament sostenible i ús de consensos que constitueixen tècniques de decisió

Kenneth Hanf

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L'existència de diferents valors, interessos i punts de vista és una característica habitual de la societat. Allà on interactuï la gent "compromesa", amb diferents objectius o visions, els conflictes seran inevitables. "Els diferents interessos, els desequilibris en el poder, així com la insuficient informació i la poca predisposició a parlar juguen un paper essencial en l'aparició de conflictes" És a dir, que una de les causes freqüents dels conflictes és la manca d'informació o el subministrament tardà o inexistent d'aquesta. Quan la gent percep que està mal informada i que les seves necessitats i anhels no es tenen prou en compte o, fins i tot, que les decisions es prenen sense donar-los una oportunitat per expressar-se, es pot generar un sentiment d'insatisfacció.

Aquest podria ser el cas particular d'alguns projectes d'especial rellevància ambiental on trobem, a primer cop d'ull, molts conflictes d'interessos: conservació de la qualitat de vida, preocupacions econòmiques, manteniment dels llocs de treball, garantia de la pau social, utilització del camp i de la natura, etc. De fet, pel que fa a les polítiques ambientals és ben cert que, des del principi, aquestes s'han caracteritzat per l'aparició de nombrosos conflictes (i no pas per l'actitud dels grups ambientalistes, que amb freqüència, ha estat molt vehement).

Això no resulta sorprenent, atès que aquesta qüestió sempre està relacionada amb una societat que gestiona els seus recursos naturals. L'aigua potable, l'aire que respirem, el sòl que produeix el menjar són de vital importància per a nosaltres. Potser més important que la diferència d'opinions sobre l'essència d'aquestes decisions ho són els corresponents impactes sobre els diversos interessos en joc. Conseqüentment, les situacions sovint sorgeixen quan resulta difícil, si no impossible, trobar solucions acceptables per a tothom qui hi estigui implicat. Els conflictes no resolts poden intensificar i exacerbar, fins i tot, les relacions entre els diferents actors.

Així doncs, no és del tot sorprenent que des dels anys setanta, en tot el món occidental hi hagi hagut un increment notable en el nombre i intensitat dels conflictes ambientals. A nivell de les decisions bàsiques relatives als usos alternatius del medi ambient o a la



introducció de noves tecnologies, el debat públic s'ha caracteritzat per un fonamentalisme creixent, que sovint ha desembocat en violentes confrontacions.

La planificació i el desenvolupament territorial – que tenen un impacte sobre el medi ambient - han esdevingut cada vegada més sovint objecte de conflictes llargs, tediosos i cada cop més costosos. Alguns àmbits de la protecció ambiental han resultat especialment resistents (...) a qualsevol intent d'exercir-ne el control per part dels responsables de les polítiques ambientals. Així, trobem importants projectes industrials i en països industrialitzats on la gent té por de les conseqüències negatives per a la salut i el medi ambient. Generalment, però, han estat projectes d'infraestructures que han resultat crucials per al funcionament de la societat industrialitzada (com ara abocadors, plantes d'incineració de deixalles, aeroports, autopistes, preses, centrals elèctriques).

Conseqüentment hi ha disturbis que, tot i semblar que la causa que els ha originat és de caire ambiental, provoquen greus conflictes polítics i socials, on els interessos econòmics i les institucions públiques hi estan involucrats de forma molt activa. Els projectes no només són rebutjats per les persones que en podrien resultar afectades negativament, sinó també les organitzacions ambientalistes i, cada vegada més, les administracions públiques i els polítics. Al final, això condueix a la imposició de les decisions per part dels estats, que utilitzen instruments convencionals que resulten més complexes que si es tractés “només” amb representants socials i les seves organitzacions. En aquests casos, cada vegada més cal tenir en compte l'oposició dels partits que entenen la complexitat del sistema legal i polític. (Weidner, 1998).

En els casos en que el projecte en qüestió no genera aquests conflictes, la seva posada en marxa esdevé una despesa elevada de temps i de diners. Els objectius originals es desnaturalitzen i els conflictes no resolts es canvien en la fase d'aplicació. Això, alhora, sovint condueix a dèficits imposats. Els grups involucrats es troben sotmesos als efectes destructius en les relacions socials a la ciutat o a la regió afectada. (Weidner, 1998: 13).

Els problemes ambientals són el resultat inevitable de les accions preses per cobrir les necessitats de la vida diària. Aquesta afirmació tan senzilla, tal i com ha assenyalat Glasbergen, “és de difícil accessibilitat per la forma en que es tracten els problemes ambientals” (Glasbergen, 1993). Si estem preparats per plantejar-nos els problemes ambientals en tant que disturbis del món material que ens envolta - que prové de la forma de viure –, hem de ser conscients que la recerca de les solucions efectives provocarà cada cop més un canvi radical dels models tradicionals de l'organització i del comportament social. A tall d'exemple, aquests canvis suposen una definició diferent de les “necessitats de la vida quotidiana”. És molt probable que els interessos creats s'alterin, que les llibertats adquirides es limitin i que els drets de propietat tradicional es qüestionin. Això, a la llarga, afectarà profundament la societat.





El terme “conflicte d’interessos” s’associa ràpidament tan a interessos clarament definits com a materials. En aquest cas, els conflictes que envolten els problemes ambientals varien una mica del que s’entén normalment amb aquest concepte. Això és el resultat del canvi que han patit els problemes ambientals i la manera com aquests són percebuts per la societat. Per exemple, en les últimes dècades hi ha hagut un canvi molt significatiu en la naturalesa de la pol·lució ambiental. El motiu és la nova legislació i el control més eficaç que s’ha realitzat sobre les fonts de contaminació. Avui el problema va més enllà de la manera com es controlen els diferents tipus de fonts mòbils de contaminació.

Un segon canvi és l’increment que hi ha hagut en l’escala dels problemes ambientals, tant en l’àmbit local com regional, i fins i tot a escala mundial. En tercer lloc, com a resultat d’aquests canvis en la natura i en els problemes del medi ambient, el lapse de temps entre la causa, l’efecte i la recuperació s’ha estès àmpliament, tot incrementant el grau d’incertesa científica (tant a l’hora de definir el problema com de seleccionar la resposta apropiada per resoldre’l).

Com a resultat d’aquesta tendència també hi ha hagut un canvi en el model d’interessos relacionats amb els temes de medi ambient. Primerament, s’ha ampliat: hi ha molts més interessos velats que demanen ser escoltats. A més, els mateixos interessos s’han fet encara més difosos. Cada vegada és més difícil decidir quins interessos es beneficien i quins es veuen perjudicats per les mesures derivades dels problemes ambientals. Finalment, també cal esmentar que els interessos no-materials tenen un paper més important. El valor intrínsec de la natura i de l’exclusivitat de determinats ecosistemes són, per ells mateixos, motius suficients per protegir-los.

Com a resultat d’aquesta evolució, la política ambiental ha experimentat un profund canvi, tot passant de tenir una enfocament eminentment higienista a un altre basat en la necessitat de garantir la supervivència dels ecosistemes. Actualment, hi ha la idea que s’ha de confiar menys que les noves tecnologies, per elles mateixes, resolguin els problemes ambientals. El tema central que ara s’està plantejant és la necessitat d’un canvi d’actituds i de costums dels productors i dels consumidors.

Sovint estem capficats en traduir la relació causa-efecte que converteix els problemes ambientals en conflictes d’interessos que impliquen, d’una banda, un culpable, i de l’altra, una víctima. En aquesta situació, els culpables són els responsables del problema en qüestió i els que, en conseqüència, han de canviar el seu comportament. No obstant això, en molts casos la situació no resulta tan senzilla com aparentment sembla: el motiu principal és que, en certs aspectes, els conflictes ambientals són formes específiques de conflictes socials. Comporten situacions en què hi ha una àmplia acceptació dels objectius de la política ambiental a nivell abstracte, i, fins i tot, un elevat grau de dificultat en seguir-la per tal d’aconseguir el canvi de comportament social desitjat.



Des del punt de vista de l'administració pública, des de sempre la política ambiental s'ha preocupat per qüestions de distribució dels recursos escassos; posar límits a la utilització de l'espai físic. Això, a la vegada, limita l'espai de maniobra per tal de desenvolupar determinats interessos. Per exemple, el desenvolupament industrial només es pot dur a terme en unes condicions específiques. En alguns llocs, la intensificació de la producció agrícola s'haurà de reduir proporcionalment; mentre que en altres, l'oportunitat d'explotar recursos miners s'haurà de retirar pausadament. A la vegada, en compensació, les accions que imposen aquest tipus de límits en certes activitats socials també obren algunes oportunitats, com ara gaudir d'una forma de vida més saludable, una diversitat d'espècies més elevada, més possibilitats de gaudir de la natura i del paisatge. A més a més, les futures generacions tindran més oportunitats per a utilitzar tot el que conforma el seu medi físic.

Totes aquestes decisions que comporten tant restriccions com noves oportunitats afecten de manera diferent les activitats i els interessos dels diferents grups de la societat. Conseqüentment, aquestes accions són jutjades de manera diferent pels diversos actors implicats, depenent de la manera com fomenten o dificulten la realització dels seus objectius. La distribució dels costos i dels beneficis de les mesures ambientals servirà per mobilitzar i mantenir intervencions en la presa de decisions a nivells diferents o variables.



Resums

Mecanismes d'informació del sector públic i privat per a la governança i el partenariat per al desenvolupament sostenible

Dr. Julia Walton



Centre for Environmental Informatics (CEI)
Universitat de Sunderland, Regne Unit

En termes d'informació i de modalitats participatives d'avaluació integrada per a la governança del desenvolupament sostenible, aquesta ponència explora tres àrees que estan altament interrelacionades:

1. Els marcs regionals per al desenvolupament sostenible
2. Els acords entre administració i empresa
3. L'accés a la informació per a la participació del públic en la presa de decisions: la comunitat empresarial

En la nova estratègia nacional per al desenvolupament sostenible, titulada "A better Quality of Life", el govern del Regne Unit va expressar el seu desig de veure estratègies de desenvolupament sostenible implementades a totes les regions britàniques. El Govern va preveure que aquestes accions serien d'alt nivell estratègic i que projectarien una visió del desenvolupament sostenible a cadascuna de les regions, i alhora, suposaria una contribució al desenvolupament sostenible a escala nacional. D'aquesta manera, les estratègies haurien d'aportar una perspectiva general de l'activitat de les regions i de l'impacte de la política del Govern en aquest àmbit subnacional.

L'estratègia corresponent al nord-est d'Anglaterra pot ser interessant d'estudiar, com un cas a destacar, atès que disposa d'una perspectiva sobre la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible a escala regional, on intervenen una diversitat de grups d'interès. Es basa en estratègies econòmiques i directrius d'ordenació territorial en l'àmbit regional prèvies, i ha de proporcionar una eina útil a l'hora d'orientar les avaluacions de les estratègies, polítiques i decisions concretes en clau de sostenibilitat. El document marc s'estructura al voltant de fites, objectius mesurables i indicadors. Finalment, d'entre una diversitat d'organitzacions d'àmbit regional i local es recomana que les patronals (business decision makers) utilitzin aquest marc per tal d'assolir un seguit d'objectius,



incloent-hi el seguiment i la comparació dels progressos assolits en l'àmbit del desenvolupament sostenible.

Actualment existeix la necessitat d'establir acords d'associació entre els governs i el món empresarial en el context del desenvolupament sostenible. Tot i que les polítiques públiques poden crear el marc per a la internalització dels costos ambientals i socials, és l'estratègia corporativa la que pot establir la diferència entre una pràctica empresarial responsable i una d'irresponsable.

Tal com es va acordar a la Declaració de Dublín, els organismes privats que formen part d'un consorci, poden ajudar a aconseguir un sistema d'informació interactiu sostenible a través de la millora dels mecanismes d'enllaç i coordinació. Actualment, al voltant de 2000 empreses difonen informació i dades sobre sostenibilitat (ambiental, social i econòmica) a través d'informes sobre medi ambient i sostenibilitat que es troben disponibles en format paper i/o penjats a la xarxa. La Global Reporting Initiative té com a objectiu millorar la disponibilitat d'informació i de dades sobre sostenibilitat i és un indicador de les forces motrius que impulsen la presa de decisions més sostenibles en el marc de la comunitat empresarial global, a través de la declaració i difusió de la informació relativa a les activitats de es empreses.



Resums

*Una aproximació sistemàtica a la sostenibilitat institucional.
Vers uns indicadors de sostenibilitat institucional*

Joachim H. Spangenberg

Vicepresident Sustainable Europe Research Information -SERI-.

En el decurs de l'avaluació dels progressos assolits en l'aplicació de l'Agenda 21 (Nacions Unides, 1992) la Comissió per al Desenvolupament Sostenible va començar a desenvolupar una sèrie d'indicadors de desenvolupament sostenible. La primera versió, que proposava un total de 134 indicadors (UNDPCSD 1996), fou finalitzada el 1996 i, després d'un període de prova, l'any 2001 va publicar-se'n una versió definitiva (UNDESA 2001). En ambdós casos, els indicadors estan classificats en àrees temàtiques que corresponen a les quatre dimensions del desenvolupament sostenible: l'econòmica, l'ambiental, la social i la institucional. La separació conceptual entre indicadors de força motriu (*driving force*), d'estat i de resposta es produeix en la versió final. Generalment, les organitzacions (inter-) governamentals apareixen com aquelles institucions que, en el transcurs dels processos de presa de decisions, han de tenir en compte els aspectes relacionats amb el desenvolupament sostenible.

Els objectius de desenvolupament sostenible estan definits principalment per les dimensions econòmica, social i ambiental. No obstant això, tant per garantir que s'assoleixen d'una forma efectiva com per algunes característiques de la sostenibilitat, com la justícia o la participació, s'han de completar amb un nucli central d'objectius institucionals. El grup d'indicadors de sostenibilitat de la Comissió per al Desenvolupament Sostenible (CDS) va ser el primer que explícitament va tenir en compte la dimensió institucional de la sostenibilitat i, ben aviat, altres institucions van seguir aquesta primera iniciativa, com és el cas del Banc Mundial i l'OCDE. Com és habitual en la majoria de projectes amb un caràcter pioners, (...) els indicadors proposats deixen tot un marge per a la seva millora.

Per tal de mesurar l'efectivitat de les institucions reconegudes oficialment per la seva importància en l'àmbit de desenvolupament sostenible, l'Agenda 21, en tant que document global acceptat per unanimitat, ha estat analitzat pel que fa al seu contingut institucional (organitzacions, mecanismes, orientacions). Partint d'aquesta base, s'han definit els objectius de les institucions en un apropament progressiu [què vol dir apropament progressiu? En anglès és *stepwise approach* i s'han desenvolupat indicadors que permeten mesurar el progrés assolit en relació als objectius de les respectives institucions.

La utilització, a l'Agenda 21, de termes relacionats amb contextos institucionals implica una concepció àmplia del que són institucions, atès que no només fa referència a les organitzacions, sinó també als mecanismes institucionals com els procediments i les normes legals (sistemes normatius formals o informals, explícits o implícits). Si apliquem la definició encara més oberta de les ciències socials, que inclou orientacions institucionals com normes i patrons socials, es posa de manifest una riquesa encara més gran pel que al tractament dels aspectes institucionals dins de l'Agenda 21, la qual òbviament no ha estat considerada com a institució per part dels autors –contràriament a les organitzacions i als mecanismes –.

Això es demostra a partir d'una exhaustiva revisió de tots els capítols de l'Agenda 21 considerant les tres classes d'institucions. L'anàlisi revela diversos aspectes institucionals importants del desenvolupament sostenible que encara no es reflecteixen en els sistemes d'indicadors dels quals disposem actualment; aquests estan tractats a través d'una llista bastant completa d'institucions a l'Agenda 21 (Spangenberg et al. 2000) alguns exemples s'inclouen en aquest document.

D'altra banda, s'han de generar nous indicadors a partir de l'Agenda 21, bastats tant en estàndards científics com en aspectes operatius que sorgeixen en el dia a dia. Per a les organitzacions, per exemple, és obvi que la seva existència (sí/no) pot ser la base per al desenvolupament d'indicadors, però la seva efectivitat ha de ser el punt de referència. En lloc d'adoptar el sistema DSR com a marc d'anàlisi, es poden extreure indicadors d'acció per a certes institucions i també per a totes les dimensions de la sostenibilitat a partir d'avaluar fins a quin punt la creació d'una institució i la seva adscripció a una determinada funció permet que es puguin acomplir les tasques o funcions que li han estat encomanades. D'això en diem capacitat de càrrega del sistema institucional.

Començant per les quatre dimensions del desenvolupament sostenible, els indicadors s'han generat per cada una de les dimensions i les seves interaccions, a partir d'un treball sistemàtic que es descriu al document. Com a resultat d'això, s'ha proposat una sèrie d'indicadors institucionals molt rica, a partir de la qual es pot fer una selecció a l'hora d'analitzar processos concrets de desenvolupament.



Conclusions Generals

Relator: **Peider Könz**

S'esperava que els temes que es van abordar en el Taller (*workshop*) serien rellevants tant pels esforços reals fets per a reforçar la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible en el context de la Unió Europea, com per a la preparació de la propera Cimera a Johannesburg.

El debat va iniciar-se a partir de la premissa que , tal i com postula *Bruntland* i es reflecteix en el Consens de Rio, el desenvolupament sostenible era un concepte multifacètic i dinàmic en el qual s'interseccionen i a vegades competeixen i entren en conflicte imperatius –ambientals, socials, econòmics i culturals - els quals havien d'equilibrar-se o reconciliar-se en l'espai o el temps. L'enfortiment institucional pel qual això caldria que fos garantit va des de les normes de caire global, valors, construccions organitzacionals i procedimentals, fins a institucions a nivell nacional, regional i local; mentre que aquests diferents nivells cal que siguin interactius i veritablement interdependents, és a dir, ambdós compatibles i complementaris, cada un té assignades les seves funcions específiques i els seus instruments distintius.

Governança Global

El rol central de la governança global fou, a més, enfocat com un objectiu en sentit ampli i de construcció de consens pels temes de desenvolupament sostenible de preocupació a nivell global . Tal i com va succeir a les Cimeres d'Estocolm i de Rio, -i pot esperar-se el mateix de la Cimera de Johannesburg- fins i tot si la política del consens i la normativa que sorgeix arran de les trobades de la cimera són generalment sota la forma de l'anomenada “soft law”, els compromisos i processos més fermes, incloent-hi els esquemes reguladors i les normes de caràcter legal que es poden fer complir són més efectives a nivell nacional i regional – o eco-regional -, on poden ser impulsades mitjançant instruments adequats d'aplicació i normes executòries. D'altra banda, s'obre un major ventall per a les polítiques i les institucions globals en relació al seguiment i informes d'avaluació, en el sentit de promoció de la recerca científica, l'educació i la informació, i en la provisió d'assistència tècnica i financera per tal de donar recolzament, alhora, a les polítiques de desenvolupament sostenible. Avaluant l'actual infraestructura de les Nacions Unides, existeix una clara necessitat d'una major coherència en allò que necessàriament és complex, intersectorial, cobrint tasques –posant especial atenció en el fet que el desenvolupament sostenible significa més que únicament protecció ambiental; mentre que el *PNUMA* hauria de ser enfortit en relació als temes ambientals,

incloent un adequat finançament multi-anual i l'administració dels nombrosos *MEAs* actualment existents, fou especialment rellevant que el debat polític sobre el desenvolupament sostenible, i l'equilibri amb imperatius especialment conflictius que implica aquest concepte, hauria de situar-se per sobre el nivell de l'*ECOSOC*, *CSD* i un debat bianual; aquest debat sobre les polítiques hauria d'incloure les institucions de *Bretton Woods* i la seva ajuda multilateral; l'*IAEA*, en relació al rol, garanteix i protegeix l'àmbit de l'energia nuclear; i l'*OMC*, amb la utilització de les excepcionalitats del *GATT* en relació a l'observació de les normes ambientals.

Governança Regional (en tant que nivell sub-nacional)

A l'altra banda de l'eix el desenvolupament sostenible aposta per l'acció a nivell de base – a nivell local i regional (o eco-regional) - no només amb l'objectiu de l'acompliment, el qual implica un acord comú i uns valors compartits i uns mecanismes en la implementació, sinó també en termes de poder tenir una participació activa a nivell de la comunitat en el procés d'elaboració de les polítiques (*policy making*) i en el procés de fixar les normes a nivell nacional, supra-nacional i global.

En el Taller (*workshop*) es va reconèixer el significatiu grau de rellevància que té el nivell regional: fou clarament evident que, des d'una perspectiva europea, més que constituir un problema, la diversitat cultural i les diferents tradicions administratives representen tant una realitat com una potencial font de possible enfortiment: la riquesa de les diferents experiències a nivell regional i local podrien, de fet, aportar una valuosa contribució en relació al desenvolupament sostenible a Europa, entès en sentit ampli, així com també a la gestió europea i per tal que els esquemes normatius romanguessin flexibles, fent un ús complet del principi de subsidiarietat, en tant que canals de comunicació (de les experiències) on s'estableixi i es mantingui a fi de propiciar el diàleg i la participació de les institucions locals i regionals en el procés de *policy-making* i l'aplicació de polítiques. També es va suggerir que els esforços haurien de desenvolupar Agendes 21 a nivell regional que oferissin una resposta a les condicions, necessitats i expectatives específiques de regions concretes o eco-regions.

Cultura de la Sostenibilitat

La importància dels orígens de les comunitats locals (o regionals) per a la governança del desenvolupament sostenible resulta especialment evident si hom reconeix que pot ser factible que el desenvolupament sostenible tingui no només un recolzament institucional, sinó també –i per sobre de tot - un suport cultural, resultant dels processos d'educació i aprenentatge social que es diferencien de la societat civil així com dels organismes i processos d'origen estatal. Es va donar un cert debat entre els participants del Taller (*workshop*) en relació a si el concepte de "cultura de la sostenibilitat" es referia principalment a l'ús dels recursos naturals i a l'impacte negatiu en aquests de l'activitat

humana en el medi, o, si implicava anar més enllà de la qualitat ambiental i referir-se a la correlació existent entre l'àmbit social i econòmic del desenvolupament. Tanmateix, en qualsevol dels supòsits, el concepte de sostenibilitat aposta per l'equitat intergeneracional i per l'obligació de respectar els interessos d'altres pobles – tant el sud com el nord - amb un compromís per part del nord de procurar que el sud assoleixi uns nivells de vida similars a aquells dels països desenvolupats mentre que alhora es preservi la qualitat ambiental. Tanmateix, també es va remarcar que en un món caracteritzat per l'alt nivell de diversitat cultural, social i ideològica, les normes i valors globals han de ser suficientment flexibles al voltant d'una “core culture” (o imperatiu categòric kantian) de la universalitat dels valors compartits i de les normes universalment obligatòries.

Construcció del consens i gestió del conflicte

Partint de la premissa que el desenvolupament sostenible – i la cultura de la sostenibilitat subjacent- implica un equilibri entre interessos convergents, i ocasionalment divergents, els quals no necessàriament poden remetre's a mecanismes judicials formals, o quasi-judicials, on poden aplicar-se un conjunt de normes pre-definides, el Taller (*workshop*) va dirigir la seva atenció cap als mètodes participatius de creació de consens i resolució de conflictes on es dona una multiplicitat d'actors implicats, en referència sobretot a conflictes ambientals.

Tot i que hi havia moltes formes participatives de construcció de consens i resolució de conflictes (sovint configurats des d'una determinada tradició cultural); existeix el perill que les decisions preses mitjançant un mecanisme de construcció de consens, siguin relegades al més baix nivell de comú denominador, tot i que durant el Taller (*workshop*) es va arribar al comú acord que la construcció de consens i la resolució de conflictes a partir de la implicació dels diferents grups d'interès, en tant que forma de democràcia participativa, tindrà un important rol a jugar tant en l'àmbit de la formulació de les polítiques com en la gestió del desenvolupament sostenible. No obstant això, també fou remarcat que els processos de construcció de consens –formals o informals- no es formen per si sols, sinó que cal que siguin accions estructurades i activament gestionades en allò que caldria definir com una combinació de garanties *top-down* (forma, composició, regles bàsiques del joc, obertura i transparència, duració dels mecanismes de construcció de consens) i que siguin també accions espontànies, és a dir, aspectes *bottom-up* del procés.

També resulta igualment important que la participació en els processos de construcció de consens amb diferents grups implicats sigui oberta i completament representativa dels interessos existents, i que cada esforç sigui fet –si és necessari des d'un enfocament *top-down*- per donar força als participants (especialment quan aquests provenen de diferents cultures) oferint-los accés a la informació, al coneixement i a les capacitats negociadores.

Informació

De fet, en el Taller (*workshop*) es va concebre l'accés a la informació i al coneixement – incloent-hi el coneixement científic - com un tret essencial de la “bona governança” per al desenvolupament sostenible, tant si aquesta opera a nivell formal com informal, i també en un context global, nacional, regional o bé local. Focalitzant l'atenció en les dades que provenen de les empreses, es va ressaltar durant els diferents debats del Taller (*workshop*) que la informació cal que sigui rellevant, transparent, subjecte al control i a la verificació administrativa, així com realment accessible al usuaris i grups d'interès; els mitjans de comunicació i l'educació tenen un rol especial en aquesta connexió.

Indicadors de Sostenibilitat Institucional

Mentre s'establia un consens on els indicadors mesurables de sostenibilitat institucional (sobretot -encara que no exclusivament- quantitius) ajudarien a avaluar la qualitat de la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible, fou suggerit que no seria suficient per al funcionament dels indicadors que es referissin només al “producte” d'una institució concreta; haurien de mostrar de quina manera han funcionat les institucions – el seu grau d'obertura, transparència, la seva democràcia interna -, i caldria desenvolupar indicadors per tal de mesurar funcions específiques a diferents nivells de l'acció.

Com a cloenda de les sessions, es va expressar l'esperança que afegint les opinions d'un grup de persones preocupades tant per la governança com per les especificitats de la gestió ambiental, i la veu d'una regió que, com Catalunya, estava preparada per dur a terme una important contribució a la bona governança per al desenvolupament sostenible a nivell global, europeu, nacional i local, les discussions estimularien més la reflexió i l'acció per tal d'enfortir tant la cultura com l'arrelament institucional sorgit al Consens de Rio que, sens dubte, serà definit més àmpliament en la propera Cimera de Johannesburg.



Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Governança Global per al Desenvolupament Sostenible

Relator: **Peider Könz**

Partint de la premissa que el desenvolupament sostenible és el concepte holístic universalment reconegut en el qual han d'estar reconciliats en temps i espai el medi ambient, l'economia i la cultura, les seves bases institucionals a nivell global han de ser:

- Estar integrat horitzontalment amb una perspectiva interdisciplinària.
- Fer ús d'institucions tant formals com informals, incloent-hi tant governs com societat civil.
- Formar part d'una estructura institucional integrada en la qual cada nivell (global, regional, nacional i local) està entrelaçat i ha d'interactuar, intercomunicar i recolzar de manera sinèrgica.

Des d'aquesta perspectiva, les funcions específiques de la governança global tenen uns objectius molt amplis i són de rellevància a nivell global la formulació de polítiques en els temes que afecten el DS. Tanmateix el seguiment, la informació i l'educació, alimenten a nivell bàsic – i sovint també a llarg termini, processos incrementals d'aprenentatge social i d'emergència d'una cultura de desenvolupament sostenible; la política de la governança global i les institucions també tenen un rol a jugar en la promoció de la recerca científica, transmetent informació i coneixement, i proveint assistència tècnica i financera.

D'altra banda l'aplicació, és a dir, l'adopció i la implantació de les regles de caràcter executori, els esquemes reguladors i les polítiques subjacents generalment es donarà a nivell nacional, regional (o eco-regional) i local. De fet, els únics instruments globals per a fer complir els preceptes són actualment de caràcter indirecte – en relació a la política de sostenibilitat ambiental i els MEAs, els incentius (i les potencials sancions) derivats de les condicionalitats dels préstecs IFI, i les restriccions comercials compatibles amb les excepcionalitats del *GATT/WTO Article XX*.

Contrastadament a aquest rera fons, els següents comentaris generals van ser fets en relació a l'actual infraestructura institucional per a la governança del desenvolupament sostenible a escala global:

· El PNUMA continua jugant un paper important en el procés de reflexió, formulació i seguiment de les polítiques; la seva receptivitat envers les dimensions no ambientals del desenvolupament sostenible, així com la participació d' ONGs, i el seu funcionament descentralitzat, integrant institucions a nivell regional o eco-regional, resulten especialment rellevants. La proposta de convertir-ho en una agència especialitzada pot presentar determinats avantatges, tot i que no va ser discutit en profunditat. Tanmateix, fou àmpliament acordat que el PNUMA – sigui quin sigui el seu status- hauria de ser reforçat i caldria atorgar-li fons pressupostaris adequats, i potser també assumir la secretaria de tots o la majoria de MEAs.

· A part del decenni de Cimera Mundial, incloent totes aquelles trobades prèvies a les cimera i crides a consultes àmpliament participatives (i les contribucions fetes per les ONGs), la infraestructura institucional a coordinar i l'orquestració central de la política de desenvolupament sostenible en el sí de les Nacions Unides –principalment el CDS, informant a l' ECOSOC (on alguns actors importants, com el Banc Mundial i la OMC no estan presents en tant que membres), i seguit per un debat bi-anual a nivell de Nacions Unides/GA – no ha demostrat una efectivitat completa a nivell de fòrum per dur a terme una política conjunta de reflexió i una planificació estratègica.

- Mentre que la proposta més radical de transformar el *Trustee Council* de les Nacions Unides a un *Sustainable Development Council* hauria, per descomptat, d'incrementar el nivell de representació i discussió, alhora comportaria una transformació molt importat a la Carta de Nacions Unides la qual no seria políticament factible en aquests moments.

- Pel que fa als esforços de coordinació interna en el sí de la família Nacions Unides - IACSD i les *Task Forces* temàtiques, i l'ACC- no s'han convertit un unes veritables forces sinèrgiques de caràcter sistèmic.

- En ambdós nivells - intergovernamental i intern - són necessaris esforços addicionals; també pel que fa als estats membres, són clarament necessaris per tal de reforçar la imbricació del desenvolupament sostenible global, garantint una coherència sistèmica, una transparència i una efectiva participació per part de la societat civil (i ONGS).

· La gestió de conflictes a nivell global també resulta important. Tanmateix, donada la seva naturalesa, molts conflictes relatius al desenvolupament sostenible serien probablement millor resolts mitjançant negociacions participatives i formant consens en el sí dels organismes deliberatius o bé a través d'una base *ad hoc*, on l'essència seria la transparència, la participació i l'accés de totes les parts al coneixement i a la informació científica imparcial. Conseqüentment, un Tribunal Ambiental Internacional, un defensor del poble ambiental, o un ús més actiu de la Cambra Ambiental d' ICJ, poden jugar un rol en determinats conflictes, però



no serien els mecanismes més efectius per a la gestió de conflictes relatius al desenvolupament sostenible. Altres aproximacions de caràcter encara més “tò” poden ser considerades per tal de desactivar o resoldre conflictes on cal que els imperatius ambientals, socials i econòmics siguin reconciliats : equips del tipus *GATT/OMC*, equips imparcials d'experts científics per reflexionar determinats temes, etc.



Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

El paper de les regions en l'eix local-global de la GDS

Relator: **F. Morata**

Recomanacions de la discussió

- La sostenibilitat és un tema complex que requereix i porta associada una nova perspectiva que implica canvis fonamentals en l'organització de les activitats socials, econòmiques i governamentals (a les diferents escales territorials).

- Qualsevol societat que escull dur a terme una política de desenvolupament sostenible ha de crear les institucions adequades per tractar de manera efectiva les implicacions que suposa aquest compromís amb la sostenibilitat. L'habilitat d'una determinada regió per formular i implementar les respostes adequades dependrà de la manera en què les institucions existents facilitin o dificultin la recerca de l'entesa necessària per formular i implementar respostes adequades.

- L'*Estratègia de la Unió Europea pel al desenvolupament sostenible* està basada en la idea que una governança efectiva és una condició prèvia per desenvolupar i implementar les mesures necessàries per aconseguir la sostenibilitat. No obstant això, el debat actual sobre "L'Europa del Futur" no està formulat des del punt de vista dels canvis institucionals/constitucionals necessaris per realitzar aquest canvi fonamental. Això hauria de ser un tema d'especial preocupació, tant per als acadèmics com per als que es dediquen a dissenyar les polítiques.

- La manera com treballa actualment la Unió Europea no permet la interacció adequada per propiciar una associació multinivell. Els Estats Membres haurien de preveure mecanismes adequats per tal de consultar els grups implicats a l'hora de prendre decisions sobre la UE o implementar polítiques a escala territorial. Els processos de creació de polítiques de la UE hauria de permetre als Estats Membres escoltar i aprendre de les experiències regionals i locals.

- Els reglaments i els programes europeus haurien de deixar més marge de manobra a les autoritats regionals per tal de poder trobar els mecanismes més apropiats a partir del principi de subsidiarietat

- El concepte de desenvolupament sostenible requereix noves aproximacions per a gestionar les interrelacions entre les diferents dimensions del desenvolupament: la

integració horitzontal, la cooperació, la connexió, associació entre els actors públics i privats.



- La idea de sostenibilitat desafia profundament la divisió tradicional de les competències entre els diferents nivells de govern. La governança multinivell i la xarxa de governança expressen la responsabilitat compartida que és al nucli d'aquest compromís.

- En un context en que els actors polítics, socials i econòmics han de negociar en xarxes complexes, la qualitat de les relacions entre els nivells i les competències resulta un tema crucial. S'ha demostrat que els enllaços directes entre l'escala europea, regional i local són molt útils per promoure aproximacions innovadores. Tenint en compte aquesta aproximació, la Unió Europea pot contribuir de manera eficaç a capacitar els actors que operen a escala regional i local, la qual cosa resulta essencial per al desenvolupament regional sostenible.

- La subsidiarietat va més enllà de la mera distribució de competències per incloure relacions entre les autoritats a diferents nivells. Molt sovint, l'obsolet model de subsidiarietat jeràrquica s'utilitza per a separar i barrar diferents nivells de govern, mentre que en l'actual món interdependent, les diverses esferes de govern necessiten interactuar i treballar conjuntament. Atès que els problemes s'encavalquen, les funcions, les responsabilitats i els recursos no es poden ubicar en un bloc tancat sinó que han d'estar oberts a possibles negociacions i potencial coordinació, segons el tema que el sistema de governança vol enfocar.

- La *subsidiarietat multinivell* significa que els actors que estan dins la xarxa, com ara les associacions, les institucions públiques, les agències no governamentals i els mateixos ciutadans (...) són capaços de realitzar un apropament pro-actiu per fer la seva contribució al procés de política global. Com més involucrats estiguin els ciutadans i els seus representants dels nivells inferiors en el procés de creació de polítiques europees, més consciència, entesa i acceptació hi haurà per la necessitat i les modalitats de polítiques desenvolupades.

- La subsidiarietat també es pot considerar com una aproximació essencial per poder tractar la diversitat cultural i territorial. L'intent de desenvolupar enfocaments generals al desenvolupament sostenible a Europa té relació amb les variacions dels aspectes socials i territorials del desenvolupament. La diversitat cultural i el canvi econòmic en la creació de polítiques europees necessita unes capacitats de gestió flexibles. A més a més, es necessiten noves maneres d'aprenentatge mutu per fer millor ús de la rica diversitat d'experiències regionals i locals i d'enfocaments innovadors de cara a avançar vers un desenvolupament més sostenible. Es pot aconseguir una millora en l'aplicació de la normativa comunitària tot posant un major accent en els objectius que s'espera assolir i (...) permetent que les autoritats regionals trobin els instruments més apropiats d'acord



amb el principi de subsidiarietat. També cal tenir en compte, evidentment, la diversitat de cultures administratives que hi ha al conjunt de la Unió Europea.

- La sostenibilitat és una idea de caràcter general que només es pot aplicar i concretar a través de la gestió pràctica dels processos polítics en situacions determinades. Aquest enfocament necessita unes pautes generals, procediments per fixar objectius específics i instruments útils per promoure la transparència, la responsabilitat i la participació pública.

- L'Agenda 21 regional s'hauria d'interpretar com un intent per institucionalitzar un tipus de governança multinivell dirigida a uns interessos locals integrats en una perspectiva estratègica més àmplia. En qualsevol cas, encara és necessari un compromís polític més fort i més acords de, així com la disposició dels recursos humans i tècnics suficients per poder-ho fer.

- En general, hi ha una manca d'instruments eficaços i de voluntat política suficient que permetin integrar les preocupacions regionals i locals en les estratègies de desenvolupament sostenible dels governs estatals. Per aconseguir més influència, les regions han de fer coalicions i aliances que incloguin els grups d'interès i les ONG.

- La cooperació interregional i transregional proporciona més oportunitats per poder definir estratègies comunes i promoure aprenentatges mutus. No obstant això, els beneficis potencials es veuen afeblits pels diferents tipus de "regions" existents a la UE (regions constitucionals, regions administratives, regions econòmiques i àrees urbanes). A més a més, sorgeixen tensions quan hi ha una manca de correspondència entre àrees territorials ambientals i fronteres administratives. El concepte de "regions ecològiques" (regions basades en reptes bàsics, com ara el turisme), poden ajudar a superar el problema.

- Finalment, els lligams entre la governança global i la subestatal per a assolir la sostenibilitat encara mereixen un major grau de recerca.

Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Cultura de Sostenibilitat i Cultura per al Desenvolupament Sostenible

Relator: **Kenneth Hanf**

El debat va iniciar-se amb una breu presentació del motiu pel qual es va decidir incloure aquest tema en el programa de la conferència. La idea dels organitzadors era que un component important de la capacitat d'un país per avançar vers un model de desenvolupament socioeconòmic amb un grau més alt de sostenibilitat, a més dels acords institucionals, és el context més general en el qual el compromís del desenvolupament sostenible es tradueix en canvis de comportament individuals i socials. En concret, la quantitat (i els tipus) de capital social d'una comunitat és important.

La cultura és un dels aspectes d'aquest capital social que faran que la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible sigui tot un èxit. És clar que s'hauria d'intentar modificar les normes socials, els valors, les creences i els models del comportament col·lectiu actuals per tal de preparar la gent perquè actuï en la línia que demana un estil de vida més sostenible. Per tot això, es va decidir incloure aquest eix en el programa amb l'objectiu d'examinar els tipus de canvis culturals necessaris per a la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible, així com de considerar la manera en què els models culturals faciliten l'assoliment d'aquest objectius.

El primer punt important a tractar va ser el concepte de "desenvolupament sostenible" i la seva relació amb la sostenibilitat. En primer lloc, cal subratllar que els dos conceptes no volen dir el mateix, essent l'últim un objectiu-meta més que no pas un per guiar l'acció en contextos específics (la qual cosa és un objectiu implícit que preval en la noció de desenvolupament sostenible). Al mateix temps, hi ha el perill de fer deficiències massa àmplies d'aquests dos conceptes, que s'hi incloguin tot un ventall d'altres conceptes connexes (com igualtat, la llibertat o la solidaritat) i que, al final, sigui impossible implementar o expressar-ne adequadament el seu contingut. Per tot això, és necessari establir la frontera entre aquests dos termes i, també, especificar a quins camps de la societat afecta.

En el grup de debat hi va haver dos punts de vista diferents en relació a aquest tema. D'una banda, hi havia persones que defensaven que el concepte havia de focalitzar l'ús dels recursos naturals i els impactes negatius de les activitats socials i econòmiques en els medis locals i globals i tant per a les generacions actuals com les futures. D'altra banda, un altre grup defensava que l'*Informe Brundtland* (i els documents de política internacional posteriors) introdueixen un concepte més ampli i socialment més consistent



sobre el desenvolupament sostenible. De fet, es va posar de manifest que la definició de sostenibilitat que fa l'*Informe Bruntland* comença amb la noció d'igualtat o justícia intergeneracional (referida al fet de garantir que les generacions futures tinguin l'oportunitat de satisfer les seves necessitats com nosaltres satisfem les nostres).

A partir d'aquesta premissa, es va considerar la relació que hi ha entre desenvolupament econòmic i protecció ambiental. De fet, el concepte de desenvolupament sostenible sorgeix dels esforços per arribar a un compromís polític entre el nord i el sud per tal de fer compatible, d'una banda, la protecció de la qualitat ambiental, amb el desenvolupament socioeconòmic que necessiten els països menys desenvolupats per aconseguir la mateixa qualitat de vida de la qual gaudeixen els països més avançats.

Al mateix temps, al llarg del debat es va manifestar la idea que ara és possible i necessari anar més enllà de la definició de sostenibilitat feta per l'*Informe Bruntland*. La formulació d'aquesta definició va ser més el resultat d'uns compromisos polítics que no pas d'una discussió intel·lectual sobre el significat de les necessitats reals que hi ha a escala global (en les quals, d'altra banda, es basa la mateixa definició). Per això mateix, i com a resultat d'aquest debat, es va acordar que com a mínim hi ha dues fonts de preocupació en relació a la sostenibilitat i el desenvolupament sostenible: una referent a la preocupació sobre la qualitat del medi ambient i, l'altra, a la preocupació per garantir les condicions necessàries per a un desenvolupament socioeconòmic sostenible.

Tal i com van reconèixer tots els membres d'aquest grup de treball, actualment el debat sobre aquests conceptes està focalitzat a l'entorn de la integració dels tres pilars del desenvolupament sostenible: desenvolupament econòmic, manteniment i/o millora de la qualitat ambiental i el progrés social. No obstant això, el grup també va debatre sobre quin seria el punt de vista més adequat en la discussió sobre el concepte de desenvolupament sostenible i, d'altra banda, tots els participants van acordar que, en primer lloc, és necessari estipular què s'està incloent i excloent del terme abans d'entrar a discutir els requisits culturals previs que són necessaris per avançar cap al desenvolupament sostenible.

Un segon tema que va ser tractat pel grup de treball va ser com es pot definir una cultura general per al desenvolupament sostenible en un món caracteritzat per un alt nivell de diversitat cultural, ideològica i social. Per exemple, si incloguéssim la igualtat de gènere en la definició de desenvolupament sostenible algunes societats, per les seves tradicions culturals particulars, tindrien greus dificultats en acceptar aquesta idea. El grup va discutir, també, si és possible sintetitzar un grup d'elements culturals comuns referits als tipus de canvis que són necessaris que es produixin en la relació de les persones amb el medi ambient i l'ús dels recursos naturals. Aquesta cultura nucli podria ser difosa entre els diferents estats tot respectant i defensant, al mateix temps, la diversitat cultural mundial.





Tenint en compte que en principi tot això és possible que pugui passar, cal plantejar-se què s'hauria de fer perquè realment succeeixi. A partir del plantejament d'aquesta qüestió, el debat va abordar el tema de la governança i el paper dels diferents actors, tant governamentals com no governamentals. Com s'organitza, aquesta governança? Quin actor és responsable del procés col·lectiu de reflexió a través del qual es destil·len aquests elements comuns de la cultura per al desenvolupament sostenible? Encara que el grup no va tractar aquesta qüestió de forma detallada, es va arribar a la conclusió que aquest procés s'havia d'organitzar com un diàleg continu a diferents escales (internacional, nacional, regional i local).

És obvi que aquesta cultura no pot ser imposada a escala internacional per part d'un determinat grup de països. Mitjançant el diàleg i l'intercanvi d'idees i experiències, es pot demostrar tots els beneficis que poden comportar certs grups d'actituds i creences. La informació es pot proporcionar tenint en compte els possibles impactes negatius dels models d'accions tradicionals en els objectius. D'aquesta manera la gent pot ser conscient que es poden canviar els procediments i les formes d'actuació per aconseguir un estil de vida més desitjable.

Alhora, també seria possible demostrar com els elements de les cultures existents poden donar suport al desenvolupament sostenible. No és necessàriament cert que totes les cultures tinguin un efecte negatiu per al desenvolupament sostenible. No obstant això, podria passar que alguns elements culturals fossin superats per altres que són menys compatibles amb el desenvolupament sostenible. En aquest sentit, també es va puntualitzar el fet que les necessitats es configuren socialment a través de la cultura, encara que la tendència cultural actual no ajuda a difondre una redefinició d'aquestes necessitats en clau de sostenibilitat. Finalment, el fet d'emfasitzar el paper crucial que juga la responsabilitat col·lectiva i individual, també va ser entès com un pre-requisit per a aprendre els valors i les capacitats necessàries per a exercir la cultura de la sostenibilitat.

El quart punt que es va tractar en el debat va ser la qüestió dels models de governança (i el paper del Govern) en relació a un canvi cap a nous models de cultura. Una vegada més, hi va haver consens en relació a que aquests models no poden ser imposats per decisions governamentals. El que és objecte de discussió, en definitiva, és l'existència (i les característiques) d'un procés d'auto-conscienciació per part dels individus i de les societats. Això inclou la redefinició o la reinvençió de les identitats col·lectives i individuals en termes d'una cultura de desenvolupament sostenible. Encara hi ha un nombre de mesures que podrien prendre tant els actors governamentals com els no governamentals, com són ara l'educació o els programes d'informació i també els mitjans de comunicació nous patrons per aconseguir que s'identifiquin positivament uns estils de vida alternatius que tinguin en compte el desenvolupament sostenible. Les organitzacions governamentals i no governamentals, com ara les esglésies o les empreses, podran participar en un procés gradual d'aprenentatge basat en l'autoreflexió. En el transcurs d'aquest procés, hi hauria d'haver diferents moments en els quals els actors poguessin



intervenir i oferir nova informació i noves alternatives per tal d'adaptar-les i integrar-les en els nous models de comportament.

Finalment, es va arribar a un acord general pel que fa a la idea que una cultura per al desenvolupament sostenible és un fenomen de dues cares. Com qualsevol altra forma de cultura, juga un paper que permet crear noves oportunitats i donar noves alternatives tot proporcionant informació, valors, coneixement i habilitats. No obstant això, la cultura funciona com una força limitadora: redueix el ventall d'accions que es poden dur terme, excloent-hi determinats models de comportament que considera inadequats en pro del desenvolupament sostenible. En aquest punt, la discussió va donar un gir radical, tornant a la qüestió de què s'inclou i/o s'exclou en la definició de desenvolupament sostenible. D'altra banda, es va considerar que és possible examinar les implicacions que té perseguir aquests objectius a nivell del comportament humà i que també és possible desenvolupar criteris per avaluar fins a quin punt són adients les diferents opcions de comportament. Des d'aquesta perspectiva, el grup va considerar breument la rellevància contemporània de la imperativa categòrica kantiana per jutjar fins a quin punt una determinada acció o comportament es pot o no generalitzar a favor del desenvolupament sostenible.

Un últim punt que mereix una atenció especial és l'observació que els debats entorn de la cultura sostenible i/o cultura per a la sostenibilitat sovint tendeixen a reflectir els valors i les creences del món occidental industrialitzat. En aquest sentit, el nucli comú del qual s'ha parlat abans pot deixar fora molts aspectes que són rellevants per a altres cultures en altres parts del món. Aquesta possibilitat subratlla la necessitat de desenvolupar un diàleg mundial just i competent entre els diferents països i cultures que busquen un marc de referència cultural compartit en el qual es pot anhelar la pluralitat dels diferents camins per a la realització del desenvolupament sostenible.



Conclusions dels Grups de Treball



Conflictes Ambientals

Relator: **Kenneth Hanf**

Encara que el debat existent en altres grups de discussió mostra un acord general pel que fa al significat de desenvolupament sostenible, aquest no sempre és acceptat. La ponència presentada sobre conflictes ambientals pren com a punt de partida el buit que existeix entre el consens general sobre allò que implica el desenvolupament sostenible a nivell abstracte i la manca de consens en les seves implicacions per als actors en situacions concretes, en les quals s'ha d'aplicar o dur a terme el compromís polític. D'una banda, sembla haver-hi consens en el fet que el desenvolupament sostenible és positiu i que cal fer esforços per assolir-lo. D'altra banda, però, poden sorgir conflictes greus quan intentem traduir-lo en mesures concretes en determinats contextos socials, on es van visualitzant els diferents models i mecanismes d'acció proposats a nivell més teòric. És per això que el significat de desenvolupament sostenible en una comunitat o societat pot conduir a seriosos conflictes i desacords.

Intentar comprendre l'origen d'aquests conflictes i els mètodes per a mitigar-los o afrontar-los (si no hi ha possibilitat d'evitar-los), és el centre d'atenció en un procés en que es prenen les decisions col·lectives tenint en compte, d'una banda, el concepte de desenvolupament sostenible i, de l'altra, les mesures que cal prendre per a aconseguir el objectius proposats. Per tant, atès que és difícil (si no impossible), considerar que el desenvolupament sostenible és un "procés acabat", és més útil entendre'l com un viatge continu cap a quelcom que, generalment, es pot incloure dins els paràmetres del que considerem com a desenvolupament sostenible (on s'uneixen el desenvolupament econòmic, la protecció ambiental i el progrés social). Per això mateix, els conflictes (i la seva gestió) s'han d'analitzar com una part més del procés per mitjà del qual els col·lectius socials construeixen i reconstrueixen les seves visions del desenvolupament sostenible i l'estratègia per a aconseguir-ho. Aquest enfocament (...) focalitza la nostra atenció cap a les opcions disponibles per configurar el context institucional en el qual han de sorgir (o organitzar) els diversos models de governança que són necessaris per fer la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible.

En el debat sobre l'ús de tècniques per a l'assoliment del consens, dirigides a tractar els conflictes que sorgeixen a l'hora de trobar les vies per avançar cap al desenvolupament sostenible, els participants van centrar-se en els problemes d'una estratègia que emfasitza la necessitat d'una participació àmplia dels diversos grups d'interès i accentua -amb massa fermesa- la importància d'arribar al consens.





Si ens trobem en un procés de discussió ("talking process") a través del qual una societat, a diferents nivells i pel que fa a diferents projectes, redefineix les implicacions concretes del seu compromís amb el desenvolupament sostenible, és important considerar la millor manera com es pot institucionalitzar aquest procés i, al seu torn, quin pot ser el seu paper com a vehicle per a la deliberació col·lectiva, la presa de decisions i l'aprenentatge. Seran importants, doncs, els acords i procediments que estiguin disponibles per tractar els diversos tipus de conflictes que seran, inevitablement, part de les decisions relatives a la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible de les societats.

En resposta a les informacions presentades en la ponència sobre conflicte i desenvolupament sostenible (centrant-se en els possibles beneficis dels mètodes alternatius per a resoldre disputes, especialment els procediments relacionats amb la formació d'un consens), hi va haver un ampli acord pel que fa al fet que la confiança, o dependència, en les diferents formes de participació dels representants dels diversos grups d'interès, pot produir un incompliment dels aspectes més problemàtics centrant-se en la possibilitat d'aconseguir un consens per a resoldre el conflicte.

En el mateix debat es va ressaltar especialment la idea que l'apreciació del valor de les diferents formes de participació en els processos de presa de decisions, no ha de comportar una infravaloració de les dificultats trobades a l'hora de buscar estratègies de participació d'un tipus o d'un altre. Alguns membres del grup (...) van donar exemples d'alguns aspectes qüestionables d'un fenomen que es pot descriure com una "carrera cap a la salvació a través de la participació", de forma individual o bé en forma de grups múltiples, per a aconseguir el consens entre les diverses parts en conflicte. Es va advertir que la insistència en el consens, com a norma de decisió bàsica, pot portar a un punt mort o a decisions diluïdes al més baix denominador comú. A més, es van destacar les diverses (i sovint contradictòries) "cultures del discurs" dels grups que, sovint, fan pensar que no hi ha possibilitat d'un enteniment comú. De qualsevol manera, no n'hi ha prou amb reunir la gent per parlar; una vegada els diversos grups d'acció (*stakeholders*) s'han posicionat, poden sorgir un gran nombre de problemes que frustrin el propòsit d'obrir el procés de decisions a un nombre més ampli de participants.

Un cop expressada la necessitat d'aprendre dels problemes que s'han trobat en la pràctica amb els processos de creació de consensos i formes de participació extensiva, es va apuntar que, quan es considera la utilitat de les tècniques de formació de consensos en una situació determinada, és necessari dissenyar col·lectivament (amb la col·laboració dels que participen en el procés) acords institucionals adequats per als objectius que pretén assolir el procés. Els mètodes alternatius de resolució de disputes s'han d'escollir i dissenyar segons el nostre objectiu i en relació a la fase del procés de decisió en el qual s'utilitzaran. No és el mateix si intentem desenvolupar la visió col·lectiva del concepte de desenvolupament sostenible en la comunitat, que si estem parlant de conflictes relacionats amb una disputa sobre la situació d'un projecte d'infraestructura concret. És una cosa coneguda que dissenyar acords institucionals per a l'aplicació





d'aquestes tècniques és un cas específic i que aquests acords variaran segons els casos. De fet, aquests mètodes només podran garantir una certa efectivitat si estan fets a mida.

Així mateix, i aquest és un segon punt que es va ressaltar en resposta a les crítiques fetes al començament del debat, els processos de formació de consens (d'un tipus o d'un altre) no funcionen per ells mateixos. La gestió activa d'aquests processos és crucial. No només és qüestió de preguntar als participants allò que volen i aleshores intentar arribar a un consens on s'uneixin els interessos de tot el grup. Tanmateix, depenent de la fase del problema que cal resoldre o el procés de decisió en què ens trobem nosaltres mateixos, el govern, representant els interessos de la comunitat com un tot, podria fer un intent de moure el procés cap a una sèrie d'objectius polítics o consideracions normatives més àmplies. (això condueix a un punt, important, que necessita més investigació: d'una banda, la interfície entre les institucions i els processos de democràcia representativa i els associats a formes de democràcia participativa i, de l'altra, el paper que juguen els actors del govern en la unió entre aquests.

A l'hora d'organitzar i gestionar processos de formació de consens, el repte és saber combinar de manera efectiva tots els aspectes del procés, de dalt cap a baix i de baix cap a dalt. Allò que és important és que quan s'utilitza la direcció de dalt cap a baix, els membres del grup no exclouen les opcions de forma prèvia, abans de discutir-les i avaluar-les. La gestió d'un procés obert però estructurat de presa de decisions participatives no necessàriament exclou les funcions de líder i de guia. A més, hi ha límits de temps establerts en el disseny d'aquests processos. No és cert que el debat s'hagi d'intentar allargar fins que s'arribi a un acord. Quan s'elabora (i es gestiona) un procés interactiu per intentar resoldre els conflictes sorgits en la concreció del concepte de desenvolupament sostenible en accions, s'assumeix el fet que els participants s'han reunit per un desig comú de resoldre un determinat problema. Estan motivats per aquest compromís i accepten el procés i les condicions sota les quals s'ha d'arribar a una solució acceptable.

A més a més, un consens no vol dir un acord en tots els aspectes, sinó que només demana que els participants acceptin tot el conjunt de mesures que s'ultimen per tractar de resoldre el problema. El procés de formació de consens s'accepta com una manera de buscar solucions confrontant els conflictes i buscant noves possibilitats per a satisfer els interessos reals dels participants. Cal posar èmfasi en la solució del problema (o negociació integradora), contrastat amb altres formes més tradicionals de negociació estratègica en la persecució dels objectius propis.

És igualment important el caràcter voluntari que té la participació. En contrast, per exemple, amb l'arbitratge obligatori, no s'obliga els participants a acceptar les decisions del grup. Si, al final del període de negociació, un dels participants no accepta el grup de mesures proposades, és lliure de sortir del procés i buscar una solució més adequada



mitjançant altres mitjans de resolució de conflictes, com ara la legislació, la decisió d'un tribunal o la mobilització de suport.

Finalment, en la discussió es va incidir en la necessitat de prendre mesures actives per tal de "donar poder" real als participants, no només fer-ho en termes formals. Podria (...) ser necessari garantir que els participants amb menys experiència o els socialment desavantatjats tinguessin la capacitat i els recursos necessaris per a una participació efectiva. En el procés de disseny i de gestió d'aquests processos pot ser necessari prendre mesures per tal d'anivellar el terreny de joc i crear les condicions òptimes per tal que els participants de les diferents "cultures del discurs" puguin interactuar i en treguin els seus fruits.

Com a conclusió, el debat d'aquest grup deixa clar que és important contrastar diferents punts de vista pel que fa als avantatges de la participació i la lluita per a aconseguir un consens amb els problemes que han sorgit en la pràctica. Confrontant el model amb la pràctica real, serà possible afinar la manera de pensar que tenim sobre la formació de consensos i les estratègies per a la participació múltiple dels grups d'interès (*stakeholder*), de la mateixa manera que ens permetrà millorar el disseny d'aquest processos. Alhora, serà possible adquirir una experiència molt valuosa sobre quines són les millors condicions i formes de presa de decisions participatives. No obstant això, també és necessari comparar la realitat amb el model més diferenciat que s'ha desenvolupat en la bibliografia i que s'ha posat en pràctica.

Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Informació de la Governança per al Desenvolupament Sostenible

Relator: **Agustí Cerrillo**

Les discussions del grup de treball van enfocar-se principalment a dos aspectes clau: el paper de la informació que donen les empreses i la seva relació amb la societat (en referència a la responsabilitat social corporativa i al paper de la informació en l'Administració Pública). És a dir: el principi democràtic, la transparència, el control de l'administració pública i la responsabilitat.

El debat va conduir a les següents conclusions, dividides en tres grups:

1. La informació de la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible



La informació millora la governança per al desenvolupament sostenible. No obstant això, un excés d'informació pot ser un problema; tanmateix existeixen altres problemes relacionats amb la informació com ara el seu grau de complexitat o, també, la manca de la mateixa informació. En aquest sentit, és necessari establir més criteris o patrons pel que fa a la informació donada (ha de ser clara i ha d'estar disponible per a tothom).

En diversos estats ja existeixen alguns mecanismes per tal de garantir que es respectin aquests patrons (defensor del poble, certificació de bones pràctiques, comitès selectius). Probablement un aspecte que caldria millorar seria la verificació de la informació que es proporciona.

2. Els usuaris de la informació

Hi ha diferents públics per a la informació i també diferents usos de la informació. Per això s'han d'establir diferents maneres per accedir a la informació, tenint en compte els interessos dels usuaris.

L'educació també és important i un tractament pedagògic de la informació pot ser útil per acostar la informació als seus usuaris.



Finalment, els mitjans de comunicació encara tenen un paper important a desenvolupar en la difusió de la informació.

3. Informació i empreses

Des del punt de vista dels negocis, la informació pot ser considerada una inversió, és a dir, que les empreses poden entendre la informació com un avantatge comparatiu.

Algunes empreses han adoptat processos de participació per definir les seves estratègies de comunicació.

Conclusions dels Grups de Treball

Indicadors institucionals del desenvolupament sostenible

Relator: **Kenneth Hanf**

El debat sobre els indicadors institucionals de desenvolupament sostenible es va centrar en quatre punts essencials, en un intent d'aclarir i comprendre millor aquest tema tan rellevant però, alhora, tan complex.

En primer lloc el Sr. Spangenberg, que havia presentat la ponència inicial, va descriure en detall com va arribar a aquesta aproximació a l'ànàlisi de l'actual estat de desenvolupament dels indicadors institucionals.

En la primera ronda de debats, els membres del grup retornaven contínuament al punt que havia sorgit a la sessió plenària: l'incompliment de les mateixes institucions a favor del seu "producte". L'explicació del rerafons i el desenvolupament del projecte es centra en per què el focus dels indicadors es troba en el producte en comptes de l'estructura o el procés intern de les institucions. La lògica subjacent de l'elecció dels indicadors relacionats amb el producte de les institucions era que la relació important que calia destacar era la que hi ha entre el propòsit de la institució i els seus resultats. Aquests propòsits, conjuntament amb els aspectes clau de les dimensions institucionals que cal mesurar, s'extreien principalment del document de l'Agenda 21.

Es considera que els indicadors proporcionen informació sobre com actua una societat o un país per a aconseguir aquests objectius. No obstant això, el fet és que aquests propòsits o funcions es poden complir mitjançant diversos compromisos institucionals. No hi ha una correlació exacta entre una funció específica i un acord institucional simple. Per exemple, es pot aconseguir un nivell més alt de transparència de diferents maneres. És per això que seria extremadament difícil desenvolupar indicadors començant per una relació acceptada entre acords d'organitzacions i de processos, de propòsits, d'execució i de producte. D'altra banda, el projecte sobre indicadors institucionals mostra el contrari: si l'indicador apunta que hi ha un nivell baix d'execució d'un objectiu determinat, el segon pas seria examinar els acords institucionals i el context en el qual aquests operen per explicar allò que s'ha aconseguit fins aleshores.

És per això que no es tracta d'un incompliment de les institucions, de la seva organització interna i dels processos a través dels quals es duen a terme els productes (un cert nivell d'execució aconseguit), sinó que és una seqüència analítica basada en la suposició de múltiples estructures per a l'acompliment d'una determinada funció.

Un tercer punt de discussió té a veure amb la possibilitat de desenvolupar indicadors per mesurar l'execució a diferents nivells d'acció. La perspectiva descrita anteriorment seria bona si estiguéssim interessats en allò que succeeix a escala nacional, però com és possible disgregar aquests indicadors de l'escala local o regional? O bé, com podem afegir informació i dades sobre situacions locals en un tipus d'indicador combinat d'execució regional o nacional?

La resposta és que no es pot disgregar o agregar l'indicador d'un nivell a una combinació. Quan seleccionem un indicador per a la funció que sigui als diferents nivells, n'hem d'escollir un que sigui adient per a l'experiència dels actors a diferents nivells i contextos. Els indicadors han de tenir un punt de referència en alguna cosa significativa per a les responsabilitats i les competències del nivell d'acció que estan mesurant.

Això vol dir que no es pot actuar en termes tradicionals de disgregació de les mateixes dades cap amunt o cap a baix a escales diferents. Allò que necessitem són diferents indicadors relacionats amb l'escala amb la qual estem examinant un objectiu determinat i el producte a través del qual aquest s'assoleix.

El quart punt de discussió té a veure amb un debat més general sobre la governança i la relació entre una governança bona o efectiva i un apropament als objectius del desenvolupament sostenible. És interessant la contribució que poden fer els indicadors que mesuren la situació en què estem en relació als objectius institucionals i les funcions per entendre quin és el sistema més efectiu de governança per al desenvolupament sostenible.

Tot i que el projecte sobre indicadors institucionals no es va desenvolupar des d'una perspectiva de governança explícita, es va apuntar que la definició d'institució utilitzada en aquest projecte com a centre per als indicadors és força consistent amb la conceptualització de la governança com a institució social; un grup de normes, de valors i de regles de decisió utilitzades per a tractar els conflictes socials, les fonts de mobilització per a la cooperació i que tenen a veure amb el problema d'acció col·lectiva de *free rider*.

Particularment, la noció de governança s'utilitza cada vegada més per a conceptualitzar i analitzar els models d'interacció entre els diferents tipus d'actors que executen o contribueixen a dur a terme aquestes accions. Aquests actors podrien ser tant governamentals com no governamentals. El concepte deixa obert a l'anàlisi empírica d'un cas particular el rol i el centralisme del govern en aquests models de governança. Mentre que a nivell de governança internacional, per exemple, pot existir sense govern, en el sentit d'una forma d'autoritat per sobre dels estats individuals, a nivell nacional, això no és possible. D'una manera o altra, el govern s'hi implicarà, però no necessàriament com a actor principal.

D'aquí se n'extreu que, si una societat ha de fer la transició cap al desenvolupament sostenible, haurà de tenir la capacitat institucional suficient per dur a terme determinats



tipus de funcions. Aquestes inclourien, entre d'altres, la capacitat per desenvolupar i aplicar polítiques integrades, la capacitat per a desenvolupar estratègies de participació per a tractar els conflictes socials i la capacitat de coordinar activitats dutes a terme en diferents escales d'acció.

Finalment, es va concloure que els diferents tipus de lògica analítica es troben en els indicadors institucionals basats en el desenvolupament sostenible (que es basa, al seu torn, en el prisma del DS) i que tenen a veure amb l'interès en els requisits institucionals per a la transició amb èxit cap al desenvolupament sostenible. Encara que estan relacionades, les perspectives no són traduïbles les unes amb les altres.

