

Case study on sustainable development

[Education](#), [Sustainability](#)



Executive summary

Sustainable development has been defined by the World Commission on Environment as development that meets the needs of a generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

(OECD, 1987)

In this age and era, the world is faced with many challenges including economic crises, global warming, poor health and loss of diversity.

Sustainable development is thus employed to reconcile human developments and the earth's ecological systems. Public policy all over the world and especially in Canada has been centered on sustainable development and environmentally centered decision making. Sustainable development is thus centered on ensuring that future quality of life is improved in Canada.

Sustainable development emphasizes on the importance of quality of life and ensures that today's decisions are taking into consideration the economic, social and environmental issues without affecting the ability of future generations to sustain itself.

The concept of sustainable development is built on three pillars that are equal and mutually reinforcing. These three pillars are environmental, social and economic factors that must be considered in the development of a long term plan to meet the goals and objectives of sustainable development.

Critical success factor in the federal sustainable development strategies in Canada

This refers to those issues that have to be addressed for the sustainable development initiative in Canada to be successful. According to the Canadian minister for environment Jim Prentice, the countries sustainability shall be centered on the emphasis on climate change and clean water, water availability and quality, protection of the countries nature and heritage, wild life conservation, protection of ecosystem and biological resources.

Climate change has been a major headache to the world in general. It's associated with green house emissions and Canada intends to take the following steps to check climate change in its jurisdiction to reduce greenhouse emissions.

Through developing a low carbon economy and making Canada a global leader in clean electricity generation.

Working with the international community to implement the Copenhagen accord where Canada committed to invest 400million USD for the international climate change efforts and to reduce its carbon emissions by 17% in the year 2020.

Publishing draft regulations to reduce carbon emission in vehicles and working with the United States to reduce emissions through the Canada United States Clean Energy Dialogue. (CED)

Minimize the threats to air quality to make air in Canada to be clean and useful to both humans and the general ecosystem- this will reduce air

related disease of the respiratory system and thus reducing the amount of money that is spent on health care treatment of these diseases.

Water availability and quality- statistically, Canada has about 7% of the whole world's renewable fresh water supply and the Canadians are the highest users of water per capita globally. Access to clean water is important and the government of Canada is committed to ensuring that every Canadian can access clean water and also that the Canadian water resources are utilized sparingly both economically and ecologically (Environment Canada, 2002)

Protection of nature and world life conservation- Canada is a beautiful country. Its home for about 30% of the world's boreal forests and thus the sustainable use of natural resources is the basis for healthy, prosperous, communities and sustainable livelihoods. Most communities in the country depend on fisheries, forestry and agriculture for employment (government of Canada, 2009) and this means that for sustainable development, these resources must be safeguarded.

Characteristics of sustainable development

Any strategies geared towards attaining sustainable development should have several of the following characteristics.

Sustainable development policies take a long term perspective that includes present and future generations-the sustainable development strategy that is being implemented by the government of Canada. The efforts towards the sustainability of clean water, climate change, environmental conservation

and quality of air are obviously implemented with the present and future generation in mind. These strategies will assist the present and future generations to live healthy lives and to be socially and economically sustainable.

Sustainable development takes a systematic approach in the handling of issues. This means that for sustainable development, social, economic and environmental goals are interdependent. It would not be possible to attain long-term sustainable development without putting all the three pillars into consideration. On the other hand, these pillars should not be seen to compete with one another but should reinforce one another. Environmental sustainability requires funds, thus the governments should ensure that such funds are availed in good time to implement these policies, care should also be taken to ensure that these policies do not negatively impact on the sociopolitical landscape of the country.

Sustainable development is self regulating- for instance if you look at the element of climate change and clean air, its evident that the government will spent quite a fortune in the attainment of this goal. At the same time, the benefits that will accrue from this goal are not minimal either. According to the 2009 national health statistics, asthma, lung cancer and other respiratory illnesses have been linked to poor air quality. Acute respiratory infections, asthma and pneumonia accounted for 9. 5% of the health care expenditure and this makes it the third most expensive factor in health care in Canada. In 2009, 8. 1% of Canadians that are 12 years and above have been diagnosed with asthma. Despite the huge resources that will go into

the attainment of this goal, the benefits that will accrue from the investment cannot be ignored.

Sustainable development encourages wide consultation and cooperation amongst the many diverse stake holders and their interests. For the successful implementation of sustainable development strategies, many stakeholders are involved. Non governmental organizations, human rights activists, the government, the citizens and other international partners are important stake holders and thus their interests and cooperation is critical. In the case of Canada for instance, wide consultations have been done to come up with a method of overcoming the failures of past sustainable development attempts

Sustainable development has regulatory flexibility that is based on private-public consensus and general commitment to long term goals that emphasize on sustainable outcomes, this means that sustainable development is more extensive and involving and not simply a matter of do's and don'ts.

Sustainable development rewards resource efficiency as well as financial efficiency. Well planned and implemented sustainable development will eventually yield the required results and the benefits are usually many times the initial investment since it is long term and benefits generations. For instance, Canadian future generations will enjoy clean water, quality air, a fruitful national heritage and social economic progress which are benefits of the present sustainable development efforts.

Sustainable development must promote ecological progress economically. These policies should lead to high efficiency, low waste production and consumption. All these outcomes are beneficial to the environment, business and the broader community and thus ecologically economical.

Sustainable development promotes equitable solutions and equal opportunity for all. The Canadian federal sustainable development strategy will provide solutions to most of the countries environmental, social and economic problems and benefits will accrue to all the citizens of Canada, both present and future.

Sustainable development strategy addresses the root cause of the problem rather than cosmetically trying to deal with the symptoms. For instance, instead of laying a lot of emphasis on finding medication to the myriad diseases caused by the poor quality of air, the government of Canada is actively involved in ensuring that the quality of air in the country is improved. It is doing this through reducing the amounts of green house emissions in its jurisdiction amongst other actions.

Lessons learnt

There are several lessons that the government of Canada has learnt from the failure of the previous sustainable development that was criticized from different quarters for the inability to deliver the intended results.

For sustainable development to be achieved, the government has learned that there are several issues that must be addressed. From the minister for

environment, Jim Prentice's message, sustainable development will not be achieved unless the following issues are addressed.

The sustainable development should be a whole of government approach, cooperation and commitment by all government arms and bodies is important in the attainment of all the goals and objectives of sustainable development.

For the success of sustainable development efforts, the government should link the strategy to the Canada's planning and reporting process through the expenditure management system (EMS). This means that sustainable development should not be isolated from other government projects but should be incorporated and considered in the same vein as all the other government projects so as to capture the attention of the stakeholders.

The focus of sustainable development should be on the transparency of decision making outcomes rather than the processes involved in the coming up with those decisions. Since sustainable development is a costly project, the major focus should be on the sustainability of the outcomes.

Unless the progress in the attainment of sustainable development is measured and corrective actions and improvements made in good time, the goals of sustainable development may not be expeditiously achieved. It is thus imperative that environmental indicators should be used in determining the progress of sustainable development strategy (Boulder, F. (2001)

Conclusion

The world today is experiencing many challenges ranging from environmental, economic and social political problems. Most of these problems have resulted from activities that could have been avoided or rather done in a different manner. Sustainable development is a term used to address these problems by creating a long term perspective in the mitigation measures.

According to this strategy, it's important to address the root cause of the problems and find a long-term solution that takes into consideration environmental, economic and social impacts of the governments actions.

The government of Canada through the ministry of environment has taken solid steps to this end and has put in place policies to guarantee clean water and air, address issues of climate change and conserve its environment and national heritage. As a first step to this end, it has committed 400 millions USD towards the Copenhagen accord and is in the process of reducing its green house emissions by about 15% (Environment Canada (2010e)

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