

Core principles of Sustainable Development Strategies

Reference:

OECD/UNDP (2002) *Sustainable Development Strategies. A Resource Book*. Earthscan, pps. 33-35 ('Key principles for developing sustainable development strategies').

1. Political support at the highest level
2. Co-ordinating body with authority.
3. Funding within a multi-year budgetary framework.
4. The strategy is a journey, not a destination, evolving with time.
5. Bottom-up, community-driven, process focused on people.
6. Participatory, inclusive, and engaging.
7. Integrate social, environmental, and economic objectives across communities / sectors, territories, and generations.
8. Capacity-building (education) and relationship-building are designed into the strategy.
9. Dispute-settlement mechanism (DSM).
10. Vision Statement.
11. Mission Statement. (*Methodology*)
12. *Realistic* Sustainability Strategic Goals & Objectives.
13. Sustainability Benchmarks & Indicators
14. Ongoing, proactive, public communications.
15. Independent audit with community feedback loop.

Explanations: Sustainability Visions, Sustainability Missions, Sustainability Strategic Goals & Objectives, and Sustainability Benchmarks & Indicators

Sustainability Vision

Clearly states “why” a community both exists and wants to be sustainable. As the OECD has noted, a vision is important as “Strategic planning frameworks are more likely to be successful when they have a long-term vision of sustainable development with transparent objectives, and when they include clear priorities upon which stakeholders agree.” (Reference: OECD (2001) ‘Strategies for Sustainable Development: Practical Guidance for Development Co-operation’ in OECD / UNDP *Sustainable Development Strategies. A Resource Book*, London: EARTHSCAN, p.25.)

Sustainability Mission

Clearly states the methods your community will use to achieve its sustainability vision. It answers “how” your community will go about actively pursuing sustainable development.

Sustainability Strategic Goals & Objectives

These are the heart of your sustainability strategy, for they are the specific sustainability activities that your community sets out to achieve and measure. This is your “sustainability plan of action” – what your community will “do” to achieve sustainable development. In sustainable development terminology, it is often referred to as the “roadmap” for a community’s sustainable development journey. Strategies can include things related to action in: education; employment, crime, health, water supply, housing, economic diversification, transport, social justice, garbage reduction, etc.

Sustainability Benchmarks and Indicators

These help a community and its citizens understand the progress they are making on their journey toward sustainable development as pursued through their ‘sustainability strategy’. ‘Sustainability benchmarks and indicators’ are often compared to “highway signs” that show a driver the progress being made on a car journey. These can include measurable things such as community changes in: levels of spousal abuse, recycling of plastic bottles, life expectancy; completion of secondary education; infant mortality; diversification into non-tourist business activities; amount of park land for residents; availability of safe and secure public transit; suicide rates; amount of mangrove lands; etc.