Strategies for Sustainability

Rodrigo Lozano

Toward Sustainable Organisations

A Holistic Perspective on Implementation Efforts

Strategies for Sustainability

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The series focuses on "implementation strategies and responses" to sustainability problems – at the organizational, local, national, and global levels.

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- Prescribe how to do better at incorporating concerns about sustainability into organisations, private action, and public policy;
- Focus on trans-disciplinary analyses grounded in careful, comparative studies of practice or policy reform; and
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Sustainability strategies
Lifestyle changes
Regional approaches
Organisational changes for sustainability
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Pollution prevention
Clean technologies
Multilateral treaty-making
Sustainability guidelines and standards
Sustainability assessment and reporting
The role of scientific analysis in decision-making
Implementation of public-private partnerships for resource management
Governance and regulatory enforcement
Approaches to meeting inter-generational obligations regarding the management of common resources

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To our future change agents, may this book serve as a stepping stone to great changes.

To Dave: This book would not have been possible without your input. You were a great teacher and mentor. We will miss your great knowledge, experience, elegance, kindness, and wit.

Foreword

Two essential prerequisites for all types of organisations to be successful are the need of orientation and a long-term perspective.

Among all the paradigms composing this fundamental set of principles, "sustainability" holds a pivotal position. In essence, it has become virtually impossible to oppose or criticise any concept or resolution that claims to be based on sustainability. On the other hand, considerable efforts have been made to establish an agreed and elaborate understanding of sustainability as a (in Rodrigo Lozano's words) "broad, complex, controversial, open-ended and challenging notion".

Scientific research digested, evaluated, and displayed the plethora of experiences organisations have made in their attempts to integrate "sustainability" into their structure, culture, and, of course, their business models. What we see as an outcome of this process is sustainability finding its way into the established set of fundamental pillars of economic and societal evolution. Based on this wealth of documentation, on this treasure chest of reliable data and findings, we are now in a position to pose a set of key questions to be considered if the implementation of "sustainability" in an organisation should become a true success story:

- Is there an established common understanding on the various dimensions of "sustainability" as well as "sustainable development"?
- Is the implementation of "sustainability" understood as a process of transformation embedded in a holistic strategy of "change management"?
- Is there a best practice for applying "tools, initiatives, and approaches" in the framework of implementing strategies?
- To what extent have specific types of organisations (representing civil society, public service, or corporations) contributed to the development of a common and robust understanding of "sustainable development"?
- As to the criteria for successful implementation: Is there a common understanding on the relevance of external stimuli, internal drivers and hurdles, and the role of partnerships?

This book makes active use of Rodrigo's unique academic skill and experience to offer not only elements for answers and approaches to each of these key

questions—he also manages to elaborate and display the very essence in each of these clusters. Against the background of 30 years of my experience in environmental policy at national, European (I had the honour of leading the EU Presidency Team in 1998, 2006, and 2016 and chaired the Management Board of EU's Chemical Agency ECHA for 4 years) as well as international level, I fully associate myself with Rodrigo's approach and key findings. It was a pleasure for me to dig into his analysis, a true milestone in scientific interpretation and guidance for implementing this key paradigm.

Austrian Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism Thomas Jakl
Wien, Austria

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Contents

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Introduction 1

2 Sustainable Development and Sustainability 5
2.1 Introduction 5
2.2 A Timeline of Sustainable Development 7
2.3 Sustainability Perspectives 11
2.4 SD and Sustainability Discussion 13
References 14

3 Organisations and Their Contribution to Sustainability 19
3.1 Introduction 19
3.2 Organisational System Elements 20
3.3 Organisation Stakeholders 23
3.4 Organisational System Interactions 26
3.5 Organisations' Sustainability Efforts 30
References 33

4 Tools, Initiatives, and Approaches Used for Implementing Sustainability 39
4.1 Introduction 39
4.2 Operations and Production-Oriented TIAs 39
4.2.1 Circular Economy 40
4.2.2 Cleaner Production (CP) 41
4.2.3 Design for the Environment (DfE) 42
4.2.4 Factor X 44
4.2.5 Green Chemistry (GC) 45
4.2.6 Industrial Ecology (IE) 46
4.2.7 Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Life Cycle Management (LCM) 47
4.3 Management and Strategy-Oriented TIAs 48
4.3.1 Corporate Citizenship (CC) 48

4.3.2 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) . . . 48
4.3.3 Corporate Sustainability (CS) . . . 51
4.3.4 Sustainable/Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) . . . 52
4.3.5 (More) Sustainable Business Models . . . 52
4.3.6 The Natural Step (TNS) . . . 54
4.3.7 The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) . . . 54
4.4 Supply Chain-Oriented TIAs . . . 55
4.4.1 Eco-Labelling . . . 55
4.4.2 Sustainable Marketing (SM) . . . 56
4.4.3 Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) . . . 56
4.4.4 Sustainable Supply Chains (SSC) . . . 57
4.5 Assessment- and Reporting-Oriented TIAs . . . 58
4.5.1 Environmental and Social Accounting (ESA) . . . 58
4.5.2 Environmental Management Systems (EMS) . . . 58
4.5.3 Integrated Management Systems . . . 60
4.5.4 Sustainability Reporting (SR) . . . 60
4.6 TIA 'Discussion' . . . 62
References . . . 63

5 Organisational Change Management for Sustainability . . . 75
5.1 Introduction . . . 75
5.2 Change Typologies . . . 76
5.3 Change Drivers and Resistance to Change . . . 78
5.4 Change Incorporation and Institutionalisation . . . 79
5.5 Organisational Change Management for Sustainability . . . 79
5.5.1 Sustainability Change Drivers and Resistance to Change . . . 81
5.5.2 Sustainability Incorporation and Institutionalisation in Organisations . . . 84
5.6 Discussion . . . 85
References . . . 85

6 Civil Society Organisations' Contributions to Sustainability . . . 89
6.1 Introduction . . . 89
6.2 Sustainability Priorities and Impact . . . 90
6.3 Use of TIAs by CSOs . . . 92
6.4 Sustainability Change Management in CSOs . . . 95
6.5 Sustainability Collaboration in CSOs . . . 98
6.6 Discussion and Conclusions . . . 99
References . . . 100

7 Corporations' Contributions to Sustainability . . . 103
7.1 Introduction . . . 103
7.2 Sustainability Priorities and Impact . . . 104
7.3 Use of TIAs by Corporations . . . 106
7.4 Sustainability Change Management in Corporations . . . 109

7.5 Sustainability Collaboration in Corporations. 111
7.6 Discussion and Conclusions 112
References. 113

8 Public Sector Organisations' Contributions to Sustainability 115
8.1 Introduction 115
8.2 Sustainability Priorities and Impact. 116
8.3 Use of TIAs by PSOs. 118
8.4 Sustainability Change Management in PSOs 120
8.5 Sustainability Collaboration in PSOs. 123
8.6 Discussion and Conclusions 125
References. 126

9 Towards More Sustainable Organisations: Discussions and Conclusions 127
9.1 Introduction 127
9.2 Sustainability Priorities and Impacts 129
9.3 Use of TIAs by PSOs. 130
9.4 Sustainability Change Management 132
9.5 Sustainability Collaboration. 136
9.6 Conclusions 137
References. 138

Index. 141

Acronyms

CC	Corporate citizenship
CE	Circular economy
ChL	Chemical leasing
CP	Cleaner production
CS	Corporate sustainability
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DfE	Design for the environment
EMAS	EU Eco-management and audit scheme
EMS	Environmental management systems
ESA	Environmental and social accounting
FTSE	First tier sustainability equilibria
GC	Green chemistry
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HEIs	Higher education institutions
IE	Industrial ecology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMS	Integrated management systems
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LCA	Life cycle assessment
LCM	Life cycle management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSOS	More sustainability-orientated state
MuSIC	Multidimensional sustainability influence change
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
PSOs	Public sector organisations
SBMs	Sustainable business models
SD	Sustainable development
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
SM	Sustainable marketing
SL	Sustainable livelihoods

SQ	Status quo
SQN	Status quo novo
SR	Sustainability reporting
SRI	Sustainable/socially responsible investment
SSC	Sustainable supply chains
TBL	Triple bottom line
TIAs	Tools, initiatives, and approaches
TNS	The Natural Step
TQM	Total quality management
TTSE	Two-tiered sustainability equilibria

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This book aims to provide a complementary perspective on technocentric and managerial approaches, so that organisations can balance their sustainability priorities and align them with their impacts; use the tools, initiatives, and approaches (TIAs) more efficiently; engage with change processes; and tap into the considerable benefits of entering into collaboration with other organisations. The book is divided into nine chapters.

Chapter 2 reviews the sustainable development (SD) and sustainability concepts. It traces their history from since the first definition of sustainability in 1713 to the current state. The chapter traces this history, where a number of sustainability perspectives can be found: (1) central focus, (2) substitutability of natural capital, (3) constituency, (4) trends; and (5) scope. These perspectives show that SD is a broad, complex, controversial, open-ended, and challenging notion that is open to different and, in many cases mutually exclusive, definitions and interpretations. This has created much controversy, especially since such characteristics makes sustainability difficult to implement or be of practical value. This chapter postulates that SD encompasses four dimensions (economic, environmental, social, and time), as well as their interrelations. The chapter also highlights that SD and sustainability have been used interchangeably, but they are inherently different. SD is the process by which we achieve sustainability, and sustainability is an ideal dynamic state.

Chapter 3 provides a theoretical discussion on organisations' contributions to sustainability. Organisations (divided into civil society organisations (CSOs), corporations, and public sector organisations (PSOs)) are an integral part of modern societies and have been instrumental in driving sustainability. In the last decade, there has been an increasing interest in organisational sustainability, where several definitions have been proposed. The most complete one encompasses the four dimensions of sustainability, the organisation system elements, its stakeholders,

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