

BRITISH STANDARD

Guidance for managing sustainable development

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI. It was prepared by Technical Committee SDS/1, *Sustainable development*, who will be responsible for future revisions made both as a result of developments in the field and experience in the use of the standard. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

This British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. Therefore, it should not be quoted as if it were a specification to which compliance could be claimed.

Information about this document

There have been growing calls from organizations in the UK and elsewhere for clear, practical guidance to support the cost-efficient and effective integration of sustainable development principles into business as usual, both for commercial and non-commercial private and public organizations. BSI's decision to develop and launch BS 8900 marks both a recognition of, and response to, this demand.

It is a considerable challenge to embed a systematic approach to sustainable development into an organization's practices, given the breadth and complexity of the vision it represents, and the evolving understanding of what it really means and implies for planning and daily behaviour. Standardizing an approach is doubly challenging given the diversity of contexts and possible applications.

This standard starts by identifying the possible benefits and desirable outcomes of managing sustainable development. The approach throughout is to provide a framework for embedding sustainable development management in everyday decision-making and is necessarily challenging, provoking and continually evolving.

A key element in this standard is effective and continuing stakeholder engagement, essential in pin-pointing real issues and broadening buy-in. It is recognized that building confidence in processes and sustainable outcomes is an important part of this and that some organizations may wish to use some forms of verification, although this standard does not point users in any particular direction.

A development or maturity matrix is provided as a way of assessing progress, clarifying next steps and combining the principles underpinning sustainability with practical implementation.

The standard should not be viewed in isolation as there are many helpful and relevant texts, conventions, codes and case studies available; it acts as a guide to make sense of these many and varied sources and offers an approach to sustainable development that readily fits an organization's situation and circumstances.

Presentational conventions

The provisions in this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

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