Sustainable Development Guide

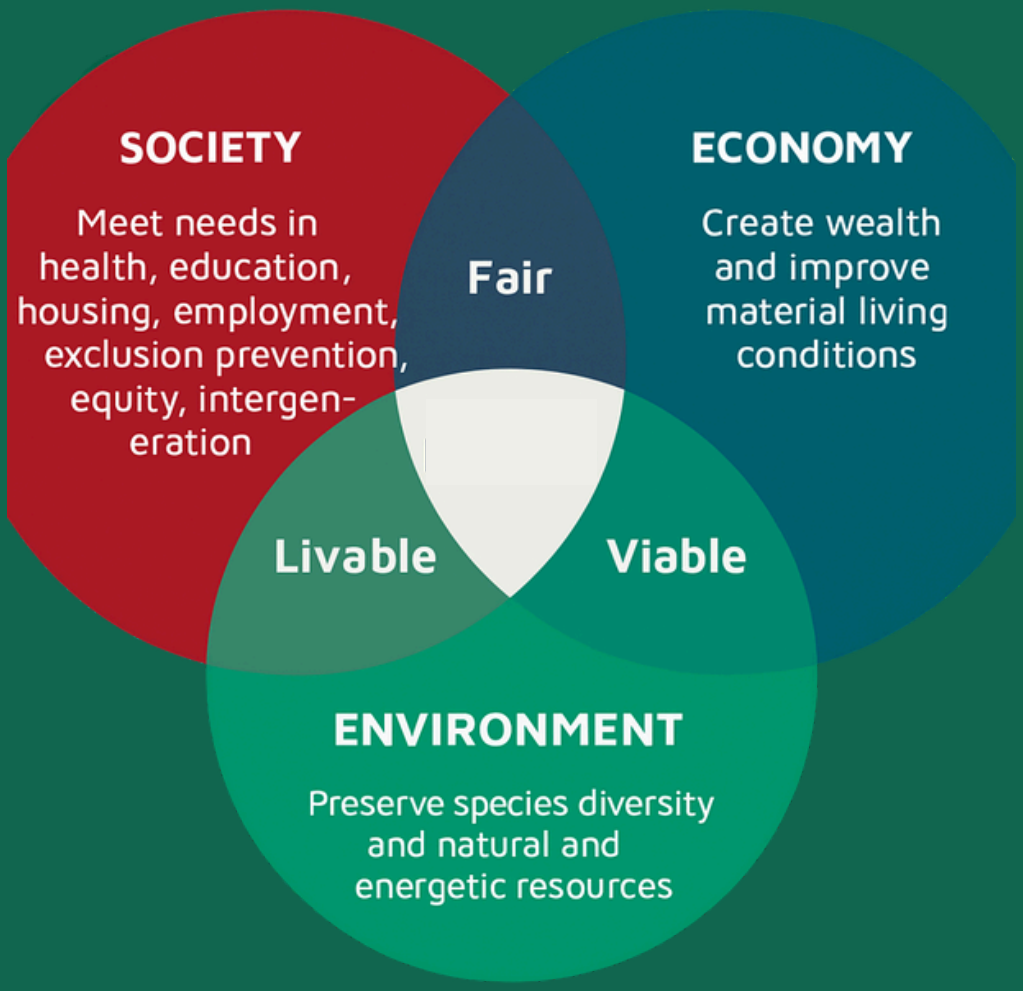
SYMPO.

GRH

2025

INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the 1980s and gained prominence with the Brundtland Report published in 1987. It is defined by Quebec's Ministry of the Environment as the ability to meet present needs without compromising those of future generations. It is based on a long-term vision that integrates the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of development. This approach involves individual choices, responsible organizational practices, and regulatory frameworks supported by governments.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THEMES

SOCIAL PILLAR

This pillar focuses on equity, social justice, and improving quality of life. It includes access to education, health, safety, decent employment, civic participation, and diversity.

ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR

This pillar concerns environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources. It includes waste reduction, biodiversity preservation, the fight against climate change, and more.

ECONOMIC PILLAR

This pillar aims for long-term economic prosperity while integrating sustainability principles. It includes responsible resource management, innovation, the creation of sustainable jobs, and consideration of stakeholders.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The SDGs are 17 goals adopted by the UN as part of the 2030 Agenda. They aim to address global challenges in an integrated manner, including poverty, inequality, climate, peace, and justice. They serve as a global roadmap to promote sustainable development by balancing social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy offers an alternative model to the traditional linear system. It promotes:

- Waste reduction;
- Reuse, repair, and recycling;
- The design of durable products;
- Local and resource-efficient production;
- Collaboration among stakeholders;
- Innovation aimed at resource efficiency.

Its goal is to reduce environmental pressure, decrease reliance on non-renewable resources, and generate positive economic and social outcomes.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CSR refers to the voluntary commitment of companies to integrate social, environmental, and ethical concerns into their operations. It goes beyond the sole pursuit of profit by considering the impact on stakeholders. CSR helps to:

- Strengthen reputation;
- Build customer and employee loyalty;
- Contribute to sustainable value creation;
- Proactively address social and environmental challenges.

CERTIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS

Several tools help integrate sustainable development into business practices:

- BNQ 21000 – Guide for integrating sustainable development principles: https://www.bnq.qc.ca/fr/normalisation/developpement-durable/bnq-21000.html
- ISO 26000 – Guidelines for social responsibility: https://www.iso.org/fr/iso-26000-social-responsibility.html
- B Corp Certification – Measures a company's overall social and environmental impact: https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/certification

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