

BS 8900-1:2013

Incorporating Corrigendum 1



BSI Standards Publication

Managing sustainable development of organizations

Part 1: Guide

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Foreword

Publishing information

This part of BS 8900 is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 July 2013. It was prepared by Technical Committee SDS/1, *Sustainable development*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

Together with BS 8900-2:2013, it supersedes BS 8900:2006 which is withdrawn.

Relationship with other publications

BS 8900 is published in two parts:

- Part 1: Guide;
- Part 2: Framework for assessment against BS 8900-1 – Specification.

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 in 2006 marked 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 British 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.

Effective and continuing stakeholder engagement is 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 might wish to use some forms of verification, although this British Standard does not point users in any particular direction.

A maturity matrix is provided as a way of assessing progress, clarifying next steps and combining the principles underpinning the management of sustainable development 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.

This is a full revision of the standard, and introduces the following principal changes:

- the standard has been split into two parts, Part 2 being a framework for assessment against the guidance in Part 1;
- the four principles of sustainable development (inclusivity, integrity,

stewardship and transparency) are now minimum principles rather than examples and further information is given on each one in Clause 3; and

- a blank, framework matrix and example matrices for different sizes of organization replace the original generic example matrix in the previous edition (see Clause 5 and Annex A).

The start and finish of text altered by Corrigendum No. 1 is indicated in the text by tags C1 and C1.

Use of this document

As a guide, this part of BS 8900 takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification or a code of practice and claims of compliance cannot be made to it.

Presentational conventions

The guidance in this standard is presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Any 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.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

0 Introduction

0.1 General

Stakeholders' expectations of both public and private sector organizations continue to expand and deepen. The concept of sustainable development provides a framework for responding to a significant number of these expectations. For the purpose of this British Standard sustainable development is taken to mean an enduring, balanced approach to social progress, economic activity and environmental responsibility (see 2.3).

A successful approach to managing sustainable development also helps ensure that an organization makes high quality decisions that promote continuing and lasting success. The long-term success of any organization increasingly depends on the integration of economic, environmental and social performance into all aspects of operation. A coherent and comprehensive approach is needed to weigh and address the opportunities, pressures and constraints of operating in the globalized economic system.

The guidance in this British Standard is designed to help organizations develop an approach to sustainable development that will continue to evolve and adapt to meet new and continuing challenges and demands.

0.2 Outcomes

The application of the guidance in this British Standard could be expected to continually improve performance along a path towards sustainable development. This is illustrated in Clause 5.

Progress can be achieved through:

- strengthening relationships: by demonstrating to stakeholders that the organization is operating in an economically, environmentally and socially responsible way that benefits them in the short and long term;
- enhancing internal cohesion: by deepening the level of understanding among employees of how the organization is performing and using that information to improve the organization's operations and decision-making processes;
- developing trust and confidence: through transparency and accountability;
- stimulating learning and innovation: by consideration of emerging opportunities through engagement of stakeholders; and
- understanding and managing the risks and opportunities: by systematically identifying, prioritizing and addressing relevant issues;

thereby enabling the organization to progress along a sustainable development path (example illustrated in Clause 5).

1 Scope

This British Standard provides guidance on managing sustainable development and a framework that assists organizations to enhance performance and effectiveness. It offers a coherent approach to managing social, economic and environmental aspects of an organization's activities.

This guidance is intended to be applied by organizations of any size, sector and type. In addition, it is relevant to organizations' stakeholders.

NOTE The application of this British Standard varies with an organization's progress along the sustainable development path (illustrated in Clause 5).

The guidance does not specify performance criteria or explain the specific elements of social, economic and environmental impacts.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1 principle

fundamental basis for decision making or behaviour

[SOURCE: BS ISO 26000:2010, 2.14]

2.2 stakeholder

individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization

[SOURCE: BS ISO 26000:2010, 2.20]

NOTE Throughout this British Standard "activity" is used to collectively refer to activities, products and services.

2.3 sustainable development

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

NOTE Sustainable development is about integrating the goals of a high quality of life, health and prosperity with social justice and maintaining the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. These social, economic and environmental goals are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Sustainable development can be treated as a way of expressing the broader expectations of society as a whole.

[SOURCE: BS ISO 26000:2010, 2.23]

3 Principles of sustainable development

3.1 General

An organization's management of sustainable development should be based on a set of principles informed by its values. A principle is a fundamental basis with which the organization's decision making and behaviour need to be consistent. Principles guide the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development management. The organization should adhere to, as a minimum, the following principles: inclusivity, integrity, stewardship and transparency, described in 3.2 to 3.5. Organizations should consider if further principles to these four are applicable to them.

An organization can choose to identify additional principles informed by its values, commonly held ethical norms and its management of sustainable development.