

Summary of the 2nd World Sustainability Forum Mailing List



Date: Thu, 01 Nov 2012

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce that the The Second World Sustainability Forum (WSF 2012) is now open until 30 November 2012 at the following website: <http://www.sciforum.net/conf/wsf2>

There are several ways to follow the e-conference and interact with other participants: commenting articles online on the conference website; subscribing and following the RSS feed of the conference at <http://www.sciforum.net/rss/conf/wsf2/>; subscribing and following the e-mail discussion list wsf-2012@mdpi.org (if you received this message you are already subscribed).

Please note that authors are invited to submit their extended, full articles for peer-review and possible publication in the journal Sustainability (<http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/>, ISSN 1999-4923) subsequently.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

WSF 2012 Conference Chair:

Prof. Dr. Marc A. Rosen
University of Ontario
Institute of Technology (Oshawa, Canada)
Editor-in-Chief of the Journal Sustainability

WSF 2012 Scientific Committee:

See <http://www.sciforum.net/conf/wsf2/organizers>

(Please further distribute this message among your peers to further promote participation with this e-conference)

On behalf of the Conference Chair and the Scientific Committee:

Freundliche Grüsse, Kind regards
Dietrich Rordorf

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Date: Fri, 01 Nov 2012

Dear Colleagues,

I suggest to discuss within this Forum some basic definitions: "sustainability" and "sustainable management", first of all. My acquaintance with the Forum Proceedings indicates that these definitions differ so drastically that apparently there is no place for productive discussion. Please see two examples below:

Kuosmanen et al.

Firm's sustainability performance or sustainable value (SV) – difference between firm's economic output produced by using a resource bundle $x_i = (x_{i1} \dots x_{i2})'$ and opportunity cost of these resources:
 $SV_i = y_i - OC(x_i)$

Parparov and Gal

The set of the management measures allowing the optimization of the goal function under a pre-condition of conservation of the ecosystem services in some predefined reference/desirable state defines sustainable management policy.

I think that the methodology of "sustainability" requires common understanding of the issue.

Yours sincerely

A. Parparov

In recent projects we understand sustainability as process.

My previous studies focus on political aspects of sustainability that ultimately lead to better management.

Regards,
Marianna Strzelecka

Dear Marianna,

thank you so much for your reply.

Few my comments:

1. "Objective of management" is an obligatory component of any management. And this component should be quantified as well.
2. What does it mean: "better management" in your reply? "Better" as regards to what? What does it mean in your context "Management"?
3. Any management of natural resources should aimed at conservation ("sustainability") of some user-defined state, desirable for the user. Therefore, to my opinion of course, sustainability is a "state", rather than "process".

Arkadi

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Dear Arkadi,

1. I can have only limited understanding of 'objective management'.

I am still learning (hope to be learning my all life) , however, from what I understand about various disciplines, 'objectivity' is difficult to achieve - even with quantitative methodologies. I have learned that 'truth'- as you will, is about agreement among participants in a group, society.

2. Better management - along with the definition of sustainable development would be - management of natural resources that leads to improved quality natural environments than what we have right now. So sustainability would be a process moving us forward.... This, however does not exclude change

I agree with you that 'sustainability' is difficult concept and it involves controversy.

I understand that in biology and natural sciences it is much easier to quantify temporary of desired 'state of sustainability' than

- in particular, in case of social aspects of sustainability.

I believe that you have different background than myself and I am interested what is your approach to sustainable development?

How do you understand it?

Thank you,

Marianna Strzelecka

Date: Mon, 05 Nov 2012

Dear colleagues,

my research primary focus is to specify the fundamental range of influence on the models the territorial sustainable economic development. Here, I have found the following issues that could add the started discussion:

The *sustainable European development* is being planned within four interrelated dimensions, namely economic development and environmental sustainability, infrastructure and transport, and urbanization.

Another aspect is the sustainable construction politics that especially requires the thorough analysis. In the Vanags [et.al.](#) (2011) indicates to a necessity to pay more attention to sustainable development issues on macro level, which would enable governments of different development level to develop and implement more effective measures for conformity of social-economic and ecological processes with the basic viewpoints and criteria of sustainable development, by favoring increase in efficiency of using resources at disposal of the society and by lessening the destructive impact of economic activity on the environment.

I like the following explanation what I find within CEMAT glossary (<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/cemat/versionglossaire/Bilingue-en-fr.pdf>) under Sustainable spatial development: While numerous processes are challenging the sustainability of our

common European future, policies aiming at sustainable spatial development have to achieve a variety of tasks such as reducing disparities, supporting balanced polycentric development, providing measures for the revitalisation of declining settlements, increasing the efficiency of transport and energy networks, preventing and reducing the potential damages of natural hazards, protecting and improving the natural and the built environment, promoting environmentally-friendly practices in agriculture and forestry, achieving a balance between preserving the existing cultural heritage, attracting new investments and supporting existing living and working communities in urban and rural areas and increasing public participation in spatial development approaches.

Date: Tue, 06 Nov 2012

Dear all,

I would like to take the opportunity to open up the discussion further. I was triggered by the remark of Arkadi that sustainability is a state rather than a process as Marianna suggested.

I actually feel that both aspects are two sides of the same coin. On the one hand we need to understand where we are and where we want to go to. It is useful in that regard to discuss what we mean by sustainability and develop indicators that can help us monitor our sustainability performance so to say. On the other hand, we also need to understand how we are going to get there, and how we can steer how societies towards a sustainable development. I also think sustainability is not something that one can reach and maintain, it is something that always needs to be pursued.

I feel that the research community often considers one or the other side of this coin and that we need to find ways to bring the two closer together.

In my own PhD research I have been studying cities that are trying to create local cycles of material and energy. With a colleague, we have submitted a paper for this conference where we are proposing a concept that can better grasp the various elements (social, technical and institutional) that play a role in the creation of these local cycles. We call this concept "circular urban systems". I would be very curious to read what you think of it. I would also be very interested to read more about other researchers that try to analyse the processes underlying projects or processes aiming at sustainability.

Best,
Anne Lorène Vernay

Date: Wed, 07 Nov 2012

Dear all

I am following your arguments in this discussion and thank you for clarifying the historical origins of the term sustainability, and the identification that sustainability is many things at the same time: a process, a concept and a state of being, and I would add that obtaining sustainability is a driver, a goal, an aspiration, too, or sadly a smokescreen

This debate about defining sustainability reminds me of the debate around what feminism meant in the 80's as it seems that the term sustainability similar to feminism can best be understood within the context in which it is used or applied.

The debate around the usefulness of sustainability as a generic term emerged as it seemed to describe opposites, sustainable growth of a business could well mean unsustainable use of resources, exploitation of Human capital, a.s.o. What could be a minimal consensus of the meaning of the term sustainability? I view this term as a trendsetting tool or pointer which needs to be defined each single time and at that explicitly within the context in which it is used.

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Thank u for your attention:)

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Date: Thu, 08 Nov 2012

Dear all,

Below is a paragraph from one of my papers where I addressed a definition for sustainability:

Sustainability and sustainable development are, on purpose, vaguely defined terms (Blowers 1993; Beall et al. 2002). Sustainability has been related to the physical and biological systems upon which humans completely depend, to the economic and social policies needed to maintain those systems, and, above all, to decisions made regarding what objectives should be achieved and during what period of time (O'Riordan 1998). Perhaps easier than reaching consensus on what sustainability is and implies is reaching agreements on what is not sustainable.

Sustainable development, as popularized by the Brundtland Report, is another widely accepted notion, namely that it is 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1987, 43). There are core concepts within this idea: the concept of needs, in particular, of people who essentially rely on ecosystems for their survival and sustainability; the concept of intergenerational justice; the notion of growth and carrying capacity limits and the extent to which those limits can be moved through technology.

As for sustainable development I would stick to the Brundtland definition because it is a normative one. I would find more fruitful to discuss the different understandings of sustainability based on ontological, disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches.

Best wishes,

Leonith Hinojosa

Research Fellow
OpenSpace Research Centre
The Open University
Milton Keynes – UK

Date: Thu, 08 Nov 2012

Good Afternoon,

I find it very interesting to discuss difference in understanding sustainability based on ontological approach. I like to ally myself with social constructivism. It is very difficult to argue this perspective in tourism development studies.

I tend to view criteria for sustainability from 'community members perspective', which I discussed with my colleagues in the past. From the 'social constructivism' perspective people/community members act according to what they believe is truth, they construct their own realities which they negotiate during interactions with other community members. Community members define processes of social/political sustainability that they agree upon.

Very interesting question Mr. Leonith Hinojosa.

Thank you so much for all the posts, they are great.

Marianna Strzelecka

Date: Thu, 08 Nov 2012

Dear colleagues,

What I have experienced before: it is rather hard to hold a dialogue with an auditorium within an ordinary presentation at the conference and even more it is not that easy to attract the third parties' (professional and practical, local authorities) interest in Latvia to the academical work (I heard of the same practice in the other European countries: Italy, Austria).

SCI Forum is a good platform not only to present the results, but also share the ideas: we have plenty of time – one month to get a feedback, but time runs quickly and it is rather hard to read through every paper.

I would like to encourage to follow the started direction: the scientist needs to outline the main issues in the presented work and put concrete questions to get the answer.

Please have a look at our video presentation "Industry location assessment for multinational enterprises in Latvia" here: <http://www.sciforum.net/conf/wsf2/videos>

and give your critical view on the proposed "Sustainable development model for the modern industrial real estate property" and questionnaire to the planned online survey.

We have the following questions:

- a. Do you agree to call the shown scheme a model?
- b. Please share the information if you have heard of any similar approach. Please give the links.
- c. Please give your comments on any of the two mentioned discussion issues or any part that you consider important for us to hear.
- d. Please give your suggestions, how to raise the response rate for the online survey and concrete questionnaire?

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e. Have you heard of any similar survey (our survey is “Latvia as a host country offering industry locations for multinational companies”)? Please give the links

Keep in touch,

--

Sincerely yours,
Tatjana Štaube

Date: Sun, 11 Nov 2012

Dear All,

The Brundtland definition was fine for its time but it failed to recognize hard ecological limits. In the two decades since, we really should have come up with a better definition of at least equal popularity. The fact that we have not says a lot, I think.

Why are people so reluctant to recognize or discuss systemic limits, even while the well-being of their kids depends on that recognition?

Good conference!

Alex Lautensach
UNBC Canada

Date: Sun, 11 Nov 2012

Dear All,

I absolutely agree with Alex Lautensach's remarks. Ecological limits of the globe and the biosphere, and limits of natural resources are the critical points with regard to sustainability. The other side of the sustainability issue, which has not received in The Brundtland definitions the weight it deserves, is human (individuals and society) change in behavior. In context of the latter – education plays a central role.

Wishing you a fruitful discussion,
Benjamin Steinitz

Benjamin Steinitz, Ph.D.
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Date: Mon, 12 Nov 2012

Dear All;

Another very important issue is conservation and waste reduction, can you imagine that up to 40% of the food produced end up in the waste baskets before it reaches our tables. After it reach out table can we monitor how much of that end up again in the waste basket. So, when it comes to the natural resources, I would argue that there is enough for everybody. What we need is technology to save the wasted food, and most important we need human behavior model. More to come.

Regards

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Walid Saleh, Ph.D.PEng
Head, MENA Regional Programme
The United Nations University
Institute for Water, Environment, & Health (UNU-INWEH)
International Humanitarian City
Dubai-UAE

Date: Mon, 12 Nov 2012

Dear colleagues,

I think the most part of our carbon footprint, food and energy problems are caused by our technologies and any sustainable solution should be consequently technological. Any non-technological measure could help and be welcome, but the problems will remain as long as the whole system that generated them does' not changes. Technological resources still exist!

I was invited and accepted to take part to WSF 2012 with the annexed paper, but in the very last minute one of the editors decided to reject it, for good reasons I'm sure. However, graciously, he/she didn't erase my name from the participants list, so I feel free to send you my approach, a possible technological solution able to address most of these issues. This is my personal choice to send you this draft, nobody else (person or institution) is taking part in this action. I really think these matters are crucial for our future and everybody that has something to say should say it. Perhaps my paper is not sufficiently good, still the passive greenhouses are emerging and they are coming to stay. If interested, please send me your feedback, it helps me a lot.

My best regards,
Marius M. Balas, "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania.

Date: Tue, 13 Nov 2012

Dear Colleagues,

The SCIForum platform represents a unique opportunity to open up to original horizons of research thanks to its high scientific level and to the possibility to carry out an interdisciplinary dialogue. The topic of 'sustainability' has not been thoroughly discussed in ontological terms in architecture and urban planning, as it is still strictly connected to technology and economics (energy, resources, constructive methods, costs). Thanks to recent multidisciplinary contributions and to the Eurozone crisis, sustainability is summarised and finds clarity in the 'social' node and in the opening to cognitive sciences.

I reckon that the majority of planetary issues are created, highlighted and summed up in the material and more and more indissolubly 'immaterial' urban space together with a vast array of solutions. Ideas are spreading through networks and a new 'holistic and hybrid' mental habitus is developing from the study of complex systems to their management in terms of different perspectives (smart city, smart innovation).

Not only are networks contributing to create civil awareness and real reforms, but also bottom-up community approach participation able to influence local and global governance, i.e. individual behavioural changes in terms of food consumption, housing and transports.

Our contribution: <http://www.sciforum.net/presentation/1152> aims to trace a possible development line of the 'connective-collective intelligence' idea as a propeller of regenerative events in the physical form but, above all, in the use of the city and public spaces: the 'daily sustainability'.

We would be pleased to open the discussion on the positive effects that the shared participation generates in urban phenomena and in the construction of public spaces as 'construction of social

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networks'. We would like to receive your opinions in view of the next International Congress "Public Space, Networks, Social Innovation" (27-29 June 2013 – Ravenna, Italy).

My best regards,

Andreina Maahsen-Milan, University of Bologna
with M. Pellegrino, M. Simonetti, L. Oliva

arch. Andreina Maahsen-Milan

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Dear All;

I am indeed enjoying this debate on sustainability by expert from different backgrounds. I would like to add also that indigenous knowledge can play important role in the transformation toward sustainable development. In our paper we examined a 1500 years old system that helped the people of Arabia survive the harsh desert environment without the tech we have today. The basics is community participation and sense of resources ownership. I invite all to read our article: <http://www.sciforum.net/presentation/909>, and would appreciate your comments. I have made presentations in Barcelona, Ottawa, and other places in presence of experts from different backgrounds so far the response I must say very encouraging.

Regards

Walid Saleh, Ph.D.Peng

Dear all,

the refocus towards 'indigenous knowledge' is also the key when looking into low energy buildings. Problems occur when the dependence on technology is so high (as f.e. in transportation) that nobody wants to imagine to rely on non-technical solutions (see what happens in China, less bicycles and massive increase in cars for individual transport). Of course our (comfort) expectations have changed and with that it becomes a sociological problem (plus that issues related to change often are coupled to sociological issues). As Dr. Steinitz pointed out, we need to get a better understanding of social sustainability and its implications in order to be able to develop the Brundtland definition further. But I am sure there are some participants in this exciting conference that are willing to share their insights on this (and indeed we have heard some already).

Would it be possible to get a common understanding and write a 'charter' that all participants can agree upon (as a far reaching outcome of this conference)? Who has a proposal?

Best wishes

Matthias Haase

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Date: Thu, 15 Nov 2012

Dear All:

I appreciate a wonderful discussion on sustainability concepts, basic definitions etc.

I am also very satisfied with the interest for my article "Geoethics and Sustainability" (ID 900) in the section I. – Related Topics: until now 106 visits recorded. I would like to emphasize that **geological factors need to be reflected and respected in any concept of environmental sustainability**. "Pure environmentalists" usually prefer ideas of something like the absolute governance of the human kind over the planet. That appeared before the Rio+20 summit in an evident lack of interest for geological factors among them. On the other hand the IUGS President representing the Earth scientists put into his statement for Rio+20 just such a need and repeated it also when opening in August 2012 the International Geological Congress in Brisbane.

A general lack of knowledge about necessity to take into consideration geological factors has its expression even in **connection with the recent process with Italian seismologists in l'Aquila**. Some of its geoethical implications have been described in my article without any knowledge about the verdict (pronounced after the submission of my article). The sentence in the 1st instance (higher than asked by the prosecutor) has evoked an inappropriate reaction in the world. It is completely forgotten that already in time of the accusation (more than two years ago) a massive campaign in the world started. In the words of Dr. Alessandro Martelli, Past President of the Anti-Seismic Systems International Society: *"Somebody, by believing that the information received was correct, talked of "outrage" of the Italian Justice against Science: **in this shameful affair, the real outrage is what some persons, taking advantage of their institutional roles, made the foreign experts understand, by providing a false "translation" of the charges, in order to obtain signatures for a misleading letter against the prosecutors to the Italy's President**".* A completely different real reason for accusing the scientists has been described in my article based on information available at various websites. The international petition of more than 4000 geoscientists had probably one positive result: the court was under a strong control in the course of the whole process. The unfortunate fresh appeal of the International Council for Science (ICSU) repeating false arguments of the original petition has in many aspects contrary effects. Moreover some laic people seem to be disgusted by the fact that – in their opinion - for centuries the respective scientists have been *"unable to make any progress in any prediction of earthquakes"* and they in fact only *"take money for nothing"*. **The problem of responsibility of scientists appears in an unexpected light** - the IGSU should disclose who is really responsible for such a socially dangerous **false alarm** which may even open for further debates sustainability concepts for ethics, law, independent scientific research, use of a reciprocally understandable language between scientists and laymen etc.

Vaclav Nemeč

Date: Mon, 3 Dec 2012

Dear Colleagues,

The World Sustainability Forum 2012 has been closed last Friday. We would like to thank you for taking part in this exciting electronic conference. In this years edition more than 80 papers were

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presented at <http://www.sciforum/> during November 2012. There was also a lively discussion which developed via the WSF mailing list. For your convenience and future reference, we have posted an archive of the mailing list discussion at <http://lists.mdpi.org/pipermail/wsf-2012/>.

Please note that the journal Sustainability (ISSN 1999-4923, <http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/>) will publish a special issue with selected papers from this conference. Authors are invited to submit their extended, full articles for peer-review and possible publication in this journal. We will send you more information on this special issue, including the deadline for submissions, within two weeks.

We would also like to draw your attention to proceedings of this conference, which will be available as a CD-ROM soon. The price of the proceedings CD-ROM is of 100 CHF (Swiss Francs) per copy for participants of the conference. Orders can be placed by e-mail at billing@mdpi.com. Delivery of the proceedings CD-ROMS will be in January 2013.

Feel free to contact us in case you have any questions.

On behalf of the Conference Chair and the Scientific Committee
of the World Sustainability Forum 2012.

Kind regards,
Dietrich Rordorf

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Date: Mon, 3 Dec 2012

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to thank you for having taken part in the World Sustainability Forum 2012 during November 2012.

As announced earlier, the following Special Issue will be published in the open access journal Sustainability (ISSN 2071-1050, <http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/>), and is now open to receive submissions of full research papers and comprehensive review articles for peer-review and possible publication, which were originally presented on the e-conference:

Advances in Sustainability: Selected Papers from the Second World Sustainability Forum (2012)
http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/special_issues/wsf2

Guest Editor: Prof. Dr. Marc A. Rosen
Deadline for manuscript submissions: 30 April 2013

You may send your manuscript now or up until the deadline. Note that the submitted papers should not have been published previously, nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere, apart from the conference proceedings.

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This special issue will be fully open access. The Article Processing Charge (APC) is CHF 800 per accepted paper. To participants of the World Sustainability Forum we offer a 25% discount, which reduces the APC to CHF 600 per paper. More information can be found at <http://www.mdpi.com/about/apc/>.

Please check the Instructions for Authors before submitting a manuscript: <http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/instructions/> Manuscripts should be submitted through the online manuscript submission and editorial system at <http://susy.mdpi.com/>.

Sustainability (ISSN 2071-1050) is an international, peer-reviewed open access journal of environmental, cultural, economic and social sustainability. It provides an advanced forum for studies related to sustainability and sustainable development. Sustainability is published by MDPI online monthly. The journal Sustainability is indexed and abstracted, among others, by Chemical Abstracts, CAB Abstracts, RePEc (including EconPapers and IDEAS) and Google Scholar.

In case of questions, please contact the Editorial Office at:
sustainability@mdpi.com

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Dietrich Rordorf

On behalf of the Guest Editor

Prof. Dr. Marc A. Rosen
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