

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The concept of sustainable development means the totality of the forms and methods of socio-economic development, whose foundation is primarily to ensure a balance between these socio-economic systems and the natural capital elements.

The most common definition of sustainable development is certainly the one given by the World Commission on environment and development (WCED) through the report named “our common Future”, also known as the Brundtland Report: “sustainable development is the development that seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The following paper seeks to analyse the of various sustainable development strategies, both at European Union level and at the level of Romania.

Key words: sustainable development, structural funds, environmental policies

1. Introduction

Sustainable development has become a political objective of the European Union since 1997, through its inclusion in the Maastricht Treaty. In 2001, the European Council in Goteborg has adopted the Sustainable development strategy of the European Union, to which was added an external dimension in Barcelona in 2002.

2. European Union Strategy on sustainable development

In 2005, the European Commission has launched a process of review for the strategy, by publishing, in February, a critique evaluation of the progress recorded after 2001, the score and a number of directions for the follow-up action. The document underlined some unsustainable trends, with some negative effects on the environment, which could affect the future development of the European Union, respectively the

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climate changes, threats to public health, poverty and social exclusion, the depletion of natural resources and the erosion of biodiversity.

As a result of the identification of these problems, in June 2005, the heads of states and governments of the European Union countries have adopted a Statement on the guidelines for sustainable development, which will incorporate the Lisbon Agenda, for economic growth and the creation of new jobs as an essential component of the objective of sustainable development.

After a wide consultation, the European Commission presented on 13 December 2005, a proposal for the revision of the strategy at Goteborg in 2001. As a result of this process, the EU Council adopted, on 9 June 2006, the strategy of sustainable development, the shield for an extended Europe. The document is designed in a coherent, strategic targeting and the overall aim of improving the continuous quality of life for present and future generations through the creation of sustainable communities able to manage and to use resources effectively and to exploit the potential of ecological and social innovation of economy with a view to ensuring the full protection of the environment.

The EU strategy on sustainable development, which represents the foundation of the National Strategy of Romania in the field, is filling in the Lisbon strategy and wants to be a catalyst for those who prepared and elaborate public policies and for the public opinion in order to change the behaviour in the European society and in the Romanian society and to the active involvement of the decision-makers, public officials and private citizens, as well as in developing, implementation and monitoring of the objectives of sustainable development.

The responsibility for the implementation of the strategy is the responsibility of the European Union and its Member States, involving all the institutional components at the community and national level.

It is also emphasized the importance of a close contact with the civil society, social partners, local communities and citizens to attain the objectives of sustainable development.

For this purpose are identified four **key objectives**:

- Environmental protection, through measures that boost economic growth by the negative environmental impact;
- Equity and social cohesion, while respecting the fundamental rights, cultural diversity, equal opportunities and combating discrimination of any kind;
- Economic prosperity by promoting knowledge, innovation and competitiveness to ensure high standards of living and plentiful and well paid of jobs;
- Fulfilment of the international responsibilities of the EU by promoting the democratic institutions in the service of peace, security and freedom, the principles and practices of sustainable development throughout the world.

In order to ensure the integration and correlation of the economic, ecological and socio-cultural components of the Sustainable Development, UE Strategy states the following **guiding principles**:

- The promotion and protection of fundamental human rights;
- Solidarity within and between the generations;
- The cultivation of an open and democratic society;
- Informing and engaging citizens in the decision-making process;
- Coherent policies and the quality of Government at the local, regional, national and global level;

3. Romania's National Strategy on Sustainable Development

Romania's National Strategy on Sustainable Development is the result of consultations within the framework of the National Council for Public Debate, the Regional Groups, The Scientific Council under the aegis of the Romanian Academy.

The defining element of the national strategy is a full connection of Romania to a new philosophy of development, the one of the European Union – that of sustainable development.

It was started from the note that, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, after a prolonged transition to democracy and market economy, Romania still has to recover considerable gaps ahead of the other Member States of the European Union, together with knowledge and implementation of the principles and practices of sustainable development in the context of globalisation.

With all the progress made in recent years, is a reality that Romania still has an economy based on intensive use of resources, a society and an administration still in search of a unitary vision and a natural capital affected by the risk of damage that may become irreversible.

The National Strategy on sustainable development established targets for moving within a reasonable and realistic time, to the development model that generates high added value, driven by the interest in knowledge and innovation, focused on improving the quality of life of the improvement of people and relations between them in harmony with the natural environment.

As a general guideline, the achievement of the following strategic objectives is targeted in the short, medium and long term:

- ***Incorporating organic practices and principles of sustainable development in all programmes and public policies of Romania as a EU Member State.***
- ***Reaching the average level of the European Union countries present at the main indicators of sustainable development.***
- ***The significant approach of Romania to the medium level from that year to EU member countries in terms of sustainable development indicators.***

The conformation to these strategic objectives will provide medium-term and long-term economic growth and, in consequence, a significant reduction of social and economic gaps between Romania and the other EU Member States.

Through the synthetic indicator which measures the real convergence process, GDP per capita, to the standard power purchase, implementing the strategy creates conditions for GDP per capita expressed in PCS exceed, in 2013, half of the EU average

at that time, to approach 80% of the average EU 2020 and be slightly higher than the average European level in the year 2030.

This ensures the fulfilment of commitments made by Romania as a member of the European Union in accordance with the Treaty of accession, and also the effective implementation of the principles and objectives of the Lisbon strategy and the renewed Sustainable development strategy of the EU (2006).

4. Sustainable development in the context of the structural funds

When we talk about the concept of sustainable development in the context of the regional development policy³ in Romania, a few details will be corrected. First, we refer only to the programmes and projects financed by the Union through structural and cohesion funds. Secondly, the requirements of sustainable development should be pursued on two distinct levels:

- a) At the level of the operational programmes and the approved strategic axes. Although the principle of sustainable development regional development guides the whole development of the EU, there are still Operational Programmes which have strategic axes that target the sustainable development, with this concept in the title, or other, without using the term explicitly, subsume usually proposed objectives of sustainable development. Below are listed a few examples.

Table 1. Presentation of economic funds for social and economic cohesion

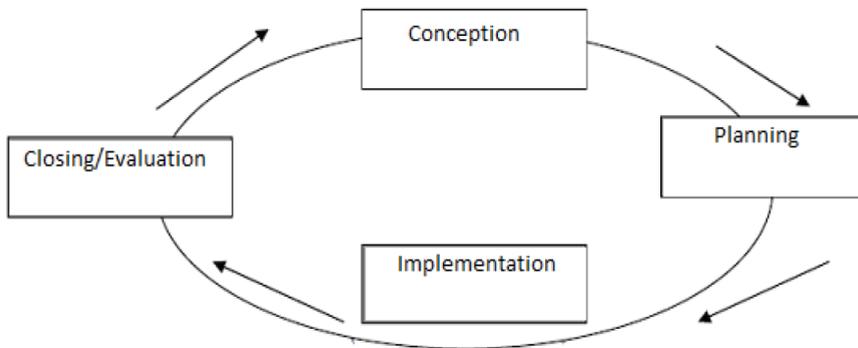
Operational Programme	Management Authority	Intermediate Authority	The allocated fund
<i>OP for the Growth of the Economic Competitivity</i>	Ministry of Economy and Finances	National Agency for Small and Medium Companies, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Ministry of Economy and Finances, National Authority for Tourism	FEDR
<i>OP for Transport</i>	Ministry of Transport		FEDR, FC
<i>OP for Environment</i>	Ministry of Environment and Waters	Regional Agencies for Environmental Protection (8)	FEDR, FC
<i>Regional Operational Programme</i>	Ministry of Development	Agențiile de Dezvoltare Regională (8), Agencies for Regional Development (8)	FEDR
<i>OP for the Development of the Human Resources</i>	Ministry of Work, Solidarity and Equity	National Agency for Employment, Ministry of Education and Research	FSE
<i>OP for Administrative Capacity Development</i>	Ministry of Interior		FSE
<i>OP for Technical Assistance</i>	Ministry of Economy and Finances		FEDR

Source: <http://www.fonduricomunitare.ro/prezentare.html>

³ <http://modernizare.mai.gov.ro>

- b) Absolutely all the projects financed from EU funds that contain as a requirement for eligibility inclusion during the life cycle of the project of subsumate elements of sustainable development. These items do not necessarily relate to the general porpouse, but the manner in which the activities are conducted within the project. Below are some of the requirements of the sustainable development contained in the Guide to the applicant on PODCA (Operational Programme for Administrative Capacity Development). We can see that all stages of the life of a project are targeted.
- Projects integrating sustainable development in the early stages of life have added value to both promoting organizations that and target groups and can become examples of good practice in this area. The importance of this theme should be recognized in development projects, among policy-makers and throughout project implementation.

Fig.1 Life cycle of the projects in 4 phases



Sursa: <http://www.apubb.ro>

- Activities proposed through the funding applications submitted in the context of applications for projects
- Open by AM PODCA will aim that the principles of sustainable development on the during all stages of implementation will be respected, through measures that will decouple the economic growth from the negative environmental impacts.
- Development projects must be addressed in all three dimensions of the concept of sustainable development and environmental, economic and social development dimension. The environmental dimension refers to sustainable consumption and production, conservation and management of natural resources, climate changes and clean energy. Economic dimension refers to the socio-economic development (economic prosperity) and sustainable transport, and the social dimension refers to social inclusion, demographic change and public health.
- We expect that after the implementation of the projects, the environmental, economic and social activities effects, that are made with support from the community to be audible/visible.

- A mandatory aspect is the inclusion in the project, depending on the specifics, of a module/course/seminar or a Conference, aimed at raising awareness of the importance of the concept of sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

There are many ways in which certain types of economic activities may protect or improve the environment.

These include measures for increasing the utilization of natural resources, energy, materials, information, technologies and improved management techniques, a better design and marketing for the products, minimizing of the damage to the environment, friendly agricultural practices, better use of the land and buildings, transport efficiency improved, etc.

One of the major challenges of sustainable development is to find ways to encourage friendly economic activities on the environment and to discourage activities that inflicts environmental protection. Since the environment and its resources are shared between different users, for extension of their protection and saving, a *collective action* is needed.

That is why the various strategies in the field of sustainable development are particularly important, both in our country and throughout the European Union.

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