



A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland

A submission to the Irish Government consultation document

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Education and training for sustainable development

A submission to the draft document 'A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland'

The Irish government issued a draft Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland in December 2011 and asked for public consultation on the document, inviting submissions to be made to the Environment International and Sustainable Development Unit of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. SustainEd has made a submission to the Department outlining some specific, practical initiatives that we believe should be developed by government to progress Ireland towards a more sustainable future.

To set the context, the Framework draft is a 90 page document covering many aspects of sustainability in Ireland. The key challenges faced by Ireland are outlined under 12 different headings in Section 2 of the draft. Each section is addressed as Challenges, Commitments and Targets, and Gaps. Throughout the document a

total of 66 measures are identified which need to be addressed for progress to be made. SustainEd's submission proposes three separate initiatives, addressing four of the Challenges outlined, and making suggestions that would have a direct bearing on seven of the Measures. In this submission document, the relevant Challenges and Measures are identified at the beginning and end of each proposal.

SustainEd's proposals are based on our understanding of natural advantages that Ireland has which could make a real opportunity out of moving towards sustainability. Though it is important 'to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do', SustainEd also realises the need to meet people where they are, in respect of the next steps towards sustainability. In the current economic turmoil and associated

fear of the future, it is imperative that we all focus on the good news story that sustainability can be. We need to be alive to opportunity, to believe that we can build a better future.

SustainEd is publishing its submission on the draft framework as a discussion document and would be very keen to get feedback, discuss further, and develop the suggested initiatives with interested parties.

Further writings on training and education for sustainable development can be found on our website www.sustained.ie

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SustainEd is a collaborative business venture.

Education, Communication and Behaviour Change (Section 2.9) Skills and Training (Section 2.11)

SustainEd's Submission:

Ireland has a well recognised international reputation for the quality of its education. Ireland has a valuable 'green' image abroad. Ireland has excellent ICT community and industry.

These assets could be combined and technology used to support Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) linkages abroad. This could be a two way

The development of the European Credit Transfer System within formal educational structures allows completed modules to be recognised as part of the educational framework both here and across Europe.

For the cash strapped Irish colleges, which are not in a position to develop new courses now, this could help fast-track ESD in Ireland and thus help close the gap created through not adopting the

Challenges

"Education for sustainable development plays a crucial role in strengthening the capacity of individuals, communities, businesses and governments to make judgments and decisions that favour environmental protection and a fairer society. Therefore education for sustainable development needs to be embedded at every level of the formal and informal education system." (p. 59)

Commitments and targets

"The UNECE Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development requires the preparation of national strategies in this area. In addition, the European Union Sustainable Development Strategy encourages Member States in their efforts to develop more strategic approaches to sharing knowledge and good practice in a bid to stimulate Education for Sustainable Development." (p. 59)

Measures

- 42 Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (Objective 3);
- 49 Postgraduate training;
- 54 Graduate placements



flow; using web-enabled technology courses based in Ireland to provide courses internationally with minimal 'footprint'; and also for Irish students who want to up-skill in this area, they could access courses internationally, without the disruption of moving abroad and in a timely manner, as such courses are already available.

National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.

This would form a practical step in the "European Union Sustainable Development Strategy". This suggestion could create jobs in education and ICT, bridge an immediate knowledge gap in Ireland and promote Ireland as a provider of 'green' education.

Innovation, Research and Development (Section 2.10) Skills and Training (Section 2.11)



Challenges

“The Green Economy can provide opportunities for job creation in start-up and scale-up companies, with increased public demand for “green” goods and services in both the domestic and international markets”. (Page 61)

Measures

49 Postgraduate training;
50 Develop Ireland's green economy;
52 Industry training networks for sustainability;
54 Graduate placements.

SustainEd's Submission:

Ireland has a reputation as an open, international economy with good management practices. It is also viewed abroad as being ‘green’ with a clean environment. There is an acceptance of Ireland as ‘a neutral honest broker’ in international meetings. Ireland is an English speaking country with an excellent ability in story-telling and narrative sense-making.

These assets could be combined to develop and promote a cluster of professional consultancies around sustainability, based in Ireland and working internationally. Such businesses could be part of a knowledge based, service provision with an export focus.

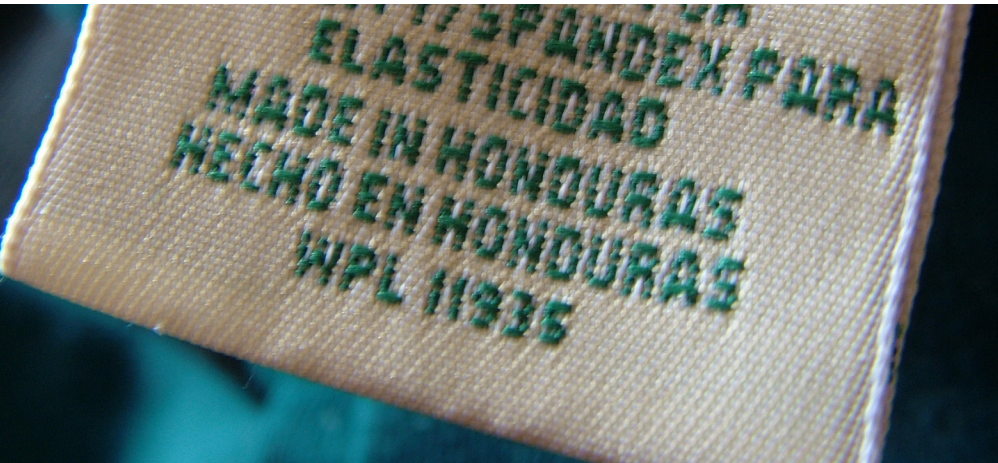
Part of the move towards a more sustainable future is ‘making sense of sustainability’ in order to understand the ‘why’ as well as the

‘how’ and this requires top-class consultancy initiatives. Ireland has the capacity within its people to produce such innovative, effective and globally recognised services.

Such a development would require an inter-disciplinary approach to consultancy and result in a net in-flow of capital to the country. This would require taking a wider view of the possible business opportunities sustainability offers than is currently the case. It would not need much research and development to bring such an idea to market as much of the required know-how already exists. It would be difficult for other countries to imitate such an offering given the natural talent advantage that Ireland has.

This proposal would create jobs in the knowledge sector, bring in foreign earned revenues and be quick and cheap to commercialise.

Global Poverty and Sustainable Development (Section 2.12)



SustainEd's Submission:

Ireland has a long and credible history of supporting less developed countries through government aid programmes, NGO's and religious societies. Ireland has well respected, innovative and effective aid and trade programmes. Irish exporters are concentrated on the more developed economies yet there is a huge global market in the least developed countries.

There is now a very well documented and academically robust business argument for supplying the 'Base of the Pyramid' markets. This means transforming the business offering into a format that makes economic sense to these markets. It requires a deep understanding of the market realities in the poorest countries and developing products and services that can supply their needs in a realistic manner, thus benefiting both producer and consumer.

Ireland's assets of linkages, understanding and empathy with these countries could be harnessed to provide business opportunities to Irish exporting companies. The Irish development agencies (both trade and aid) provide a unique opportunity to Irish exporters to gain the understanding needed to provide goods and services using a transformative business offering. The size of the potential market could reap huge benefits to Irish companies.

This would require innovative partnerships between businesses, agencies and government departments. It could create jobs across many industries, though principally in the food, pharmaceutical and technology sectors in Ireland. It would multiply the effect of the government's aid programme in a manner that would benefit both giver and receiver which would have long-term sustainable impacts.

Challenges

"...growing globalised trade merits greater global cooperation in relation to environmental protection and sustainable development. Ireland must continue to recognise the role of trade in assuring the livelihoods and well being of the majority of the world's poorest people and the need for greater environmental protection and sustainable development if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met." (p. 69)

Gaps

"To this end in April 2007 the Government established an Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD). The purpose of the committee is to strengthen coherence in the Government's approach to development; and make best use of the expertise and skills available across the public service in Ireland's development aid programme." (p. 69)

Measures

59 *Trade;*
60 *Mainstreaming environment and sustainable development.*

