Chapter 3.4

Developing Sustainable Governance Systems for Regional Sustainability Programmes and 'Green' Business Practices:
The Case of 'Green' Timber

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ABSTRACT

Achieving sustainable consumption and sustainable living is a response to the scientific and international communities' concern that the world is living beyond its ecological systems, facing a potential crisis with regard to its environmental and other resources. All individuals, firms and communities, in relation to production of housing, transport and food consumption decisions must unite to develop sustainable change and well being. They all have a role to play in creating and promoting sustainable community development. Sustainability is an umbrella term that incorporates sustainability's environmental, social and economic dimensions and takes on such ideas as reducing environmental impact, enhancing quality of life, minimising waste, taking a life cycle approach and looking at ecological preservation for future generations. From a business perspective sustainable green practice incorporates all elements of business from inputs procurement, manufacture, packaging design and marketing. To ensure the process of sustainable business is successful and ethical the goals of sustainability and good governance need to be managed in business practice. This chapter offers an overview of current implementation of green governance systems that relate to regional sustainability programmes and green firm's practices. This

work offers credibility to the field of sustainability research and practice by identifying and discussing all actors in the business community and how they interact with sustainability. From a regional perspective innovative primary producers and resource stewards often take up green initiatives with little or no knowledge of the governance quality and legitimacy of the schemes they are seeking to implement. This chapter looks at market-based sustainability initiatives, investigates the strengths and weaknesses of two timber certification programmes, and identifies some key governance requirements to improve green practice at the global, regional and local levels

INTRODUCTION

Achieving sustainable consumption and sustainable living is a response to the scientific and international communities' concern that the world is living beyond its ecological systems, facing a potential crisis with regard to its environmental and other resources (Packard, 1960; Daub & Ergenzinger, 2005; Dolan, 2002). Placet, Anderson and Fowler (2005) argue if goals pertaining to environmental and social responsibility are met, the more likely economic prosperity will follow for the company (Placet et al, 2005; Robbins, 1999). The Stern Review (2006) concluded that all individuals, firms and communities, in relation to production of housing, transport and food consumption decisions must unite to develop sustainable change and well being. While solutions to unsustainable consumption involve a diverse stakeholder group they also extend to a diverse range of disciplines and fields including environmental, social and economic paradigms. Consequently, examination into sustainable systems requires a number of different knowledge disciplines to be involved including political science, economics, environmental science, marketing, general business, design, sociology, and consumer behaviour scientists in the design and practice of sustainable living (Tukker, Cohen, de Zoysa, Hertwich, Hofstetter, Inaba, Lorek, and Stø, 2006; 2008; Uiterkamp & Vlek, 2007).

Defining sustainable green consumption is difficult because of the multiple perspectives that surround the concept (Peattie & Collins 2009; Tukker et al, 2008; Christensen, Godskesen,

Gram-Hassen, Quitzau & Ropke, 2007). It is best viewed as an umbrella term that incorporates sustainability's environmental, social and economic dimensions and takes on such ideas as reducing environmental impact, enhancing quality of life, minimising waste, taking a life cycle approach and looking at ecological preservation for future generations (Kemp 2008; UNEP 2002). From a business perspective sustainable green practice incorporates all elements of business from inputs procurement, manufacture, packaging design, marketing and more. The goal of sustainable living is to ensure that society is able to be maintained over time and can be applied to all layers of community and business. Solutions to sustainable consumption are multidimensional and involve in most part three parties; governments (policy makers); producers (business); and consumers (Tukker et al 2008; Connolly & Prothero, 2003). The notion of consumption in this context extends beyond the initial purchase of products to include their manufacture, use and disposal; a concept that is wider than a narrow marketing ideology (Peattie & Collins 2009; McDonald & Oates 2006). Managing the interactions of these actors (stakeholders) is proving to be complex, particularly with regard to ensuring the legitimacy of the green economy. Close attention needs to be paid to ensuring that the goals of sustainability and good governance are met in business practice on the ground.

The changing social, environmental and economic conditions that have arisen as a consequence of globalisation present some major challenges as to how to structure institutional responses in ways

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