

Meeting the Challenge of Social Sustainability: governance for profound change

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Abstract: While many organisations, including business and civil society, have recognized the imperative of sustainable development, without structural changes to an organisations' governance system, sustained change is impeded. The Natural Step (TNS) Social Template is hereby expanded to guide organisations to develop systems for decision-making, information generation and distribution, and resource allocation that allows for, rather than inhibits, change capacity. A systemic approach to organisational development that does not undermine the capacity of their members to meet their needs can contribute to increased productivity, member engagement and commitment, and drive the innovation necessary for altering our complex, dynamic social-ecological systems in alignment with sustainability. Our research explores the internal factors that may create barriers to organisational change and sustainability. In addition, we synthesise basic human needs, systems' science, and organisational change research into concrete guidelines for strategic sustainable development within the TNS Social Template framework. We aim to provide an integrated approach for internal social sustainability and strategic planning for improved governance systems.

Keywords: governance, strategic sustainable development, basic human needs, living systems, organisational change.