

Sustainable Development Communications Network
(SDCN)

Le Réseau Communications pour le Développement
Durable (RCDD)

Red de Comunicaciones sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible
(RCDS)

NETWORK AGREEMENT

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SDCN / RCDD / RCDS
Network Co-ordination Unit
c/o International Institute for Sustainable Development
161 Portage Ave. East, 6th Floor
Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0Y4
Canada

Tel: +1 (204) 958-7700
Fax: +1 (204) 958-7710
E-mail: sdcn@iisd.ca
rcdd@iisd.ca
rcds@iisd.ca
WWW: <http://sdgateway.net/>

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1 Purpose

The Sustainable Development Communications Network (SDCN) is a global network of leading sustainable development organizations, seeking to accelerate the implementation of sustainable development through broader, integrated information and communications about what we know.

2 Objectives

- To undertake joint communication activities to inform broader audiences about sustainable development.
- To build capacity among Members to communicate sustainable development through new communications technologies, and broadly share the knowledge about how to use ICTs efficiently and effectively.
- To experiment with new communications technologies and to develop methods for their seamless integration with existing communications technologies.
- To provide a forum for Network Members to share experiences in the management of sustainable development communications.
- To inform each other about SD research and action underway within each organization.

3 Framework

The Sustainable Development Communications Network behaves as a knowledge network (or learning network) in many ways. It is a virtual organization with limited membership and formal governance structure, which functions in an open, collaborative manner. It maintains a focused mission and action agenda in order to improve its efficiency, but interacts with other networks and initiatives to ensure its effectiveness. It strives to add value to information to make it more relevant to decision-makers who convert it into knowledge (information in action). The Network acknowledges the need for a clear communications strategy for the Network that raises public awareness, influences decision-makers, and produces positive change in the world.

We affirm that:

- Each organization represented in the Sustainable Development Communications Network is independent with its own research, action, and communications agenda;
- Each organization brings to the Network a richness of sustainable development knowledge and communications expertise;
- Communications involves supporting decision-making processes, awareness-raising activities, field projects and related research activities at the global, regional, national,

sub-national and local levels, through the provision of timely, appropriate information in innovative ways; and

- Each organization has recognized that communications is essential to the achievement of its own objectives, but that it cannot be done in isolation from its other activities. Furthermore, working in partnership with other like-minded organizations on communications projects is likely to leverage the value of each Network Member's communications, both at the internal and external levels.

The Network is based on the principles of equity and mutual learning. Members are encouraged to develop collaborative Internet efforts where partnering can make the activity more effective. Such efforts will include bridging Internet communications with other communications channels.

4 Structure

The SDCN is structured to facilitate the development and implementation of collaborative projects that meet one or more of the objectives of the network.

4.1 Founding Members

This is an international knowledge network: Founding Members ensure that our knowledge about communicating SD includes the experience of developing and transitional countries, and is shared more broadly, for use beyond the network members.

There are seven Founding Members of the Sustainable Development Communications Network: Development Alternatives, the Earth Council, ENDA-TM, Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe and Stockholm Environment Institute.

In addition to fulfilling the responsibilities of members of the network, founding members also are tasked with maintaining the continuity of vision for the SDCN through:

- Review of project ideas - Founding members review and comment on individual project ideas brought forward by the broader membership of the SDCN;
- Annual review of membership - Founding members will strive to ensure that at least 50% of the network membership includes representation from organizations in developing and transitional countries and that members are actively working on projects.

4.2 Members

We learn by doing: this is a working network and these are working members.

Members include civil society organizations that are active in two or more network projects. In order to participate effectively in these projects, members of the SDCN should possess most of the following characteristics:

- They have substantial experience on issues of sustainable development and have published and/or disseminated research on a regional or international level about sustainable development issues;
- They are committed to a multi-sectoral approach to problem-solving and conflict resolution;
- They are operationally well established, with some level of stability in terms of funding and long-term viability;
- They have a clear commitment to communications, knowledge dissemination, and sharing of experiences as an integral part of their work;
- They possess or have access to information technology infrastructure, preferably with some expertise in advanced Internet applications, and have a Web site;
- They employ respected staff with skills and interests appropriate for advanced activities in electronic networking who can commit time to the Network;
- They are committed to help fundraise for Network projects in which they are involved;
- They are prepared to be active participants and commit time and energy to the evolution and development of the Network

All members are expected to:

- Work together with the SDCN network co-ordinating unit and other members to develop and implement joint project proposals.
- Actively participate in raising funds and/or contributing in kind resources for network projects in which the member is participating.
- Promote the results of SDCN projects as such
- Share lessons learned in executing their projects with other members and through the SD Webworks
- Promote the Sustainable Development Communications Network and other members' knowledge bases through its other networks
- Maintain and update information in the shared directories on the SD Gateway

SDCN members are able to participate in the closed SDCN discussion list and may officially represent the Network at conferences/meetings in their region.

Organisations signify their willingness to commit to the vision and objectives of the SDCN by signing the Network Agreement. Memberships are valid for two years from the date of signature by the organization's chief executive officer.

Memberships are renewable based on continued participation in network projects.

4.3 Affiliate Members

This is an innovation network: we recognize that many other organizations may be able to contribute to our work with new approaches, and we need mechanisms in place to draw on the experience of others.

Other organizations which are approached by an SDCN member to participate in a single network project, or which approach the SDCN with a project idea of interest to at least one founding member, can be nominated as an SDCN affiliate. This nomination is only for the duration of the actual project, for purposes of securing funds for the project, and for reminding them that the project is to be branded (or co-branded) an SDCN project. Affiliates do not sign the governance agreement.

4.4 Donors

Donors are able to attend SDCN meetings, offer suggestions for projects and have access to the Network members. Donors are also asked to provide substantive input, with particular attention given to the projects they are funding, but are not asked to take the lead in SDCN projects. Donors are, however, asked to participate in individual projects, promote the activities of the SDCN, and are asked to inform the Network members of any related communications projects that they are funding outside of the SDCN. Sharing of past projects results and challenges are also greatly encouraged. Donors are expected to cover their costs of participation in network activities

4.5 Network Co-ordination Unit (NCU)

The Network Coordination Unit (NCU) housed at IISD plays a role in interconnecting the Network and facilitating knowledge brokering. It manages the SDCN's internal communications infrastructure, including the Network's Web site(s). The NCU organizes all internal meetings of the Network in consultation with members (face to face and/or electronic), including the agenda, documentation and minutes of the meeting. It also provides substantive input to projects and assistance with fundraising activities upon request. Finally, the NCU is a driving force behind network marketing and branding efforts.

5 Network Decision-Making Process

Decisions may be reached following one of four processes:

Consensus - Founding members must reach agreement before a decision is taken. The NCU will facilitate the process.

Vote – The decision will be made based on 2/3-majority vote of all founding members.

Input – Where one full member has primary decision-making responsibility in respect of a matter delegated to it by members, it must solicit input from all members prior to acting. Other members are expected to adopt a proactive response on the issue.

Received input will be considered when making the decision. If input is not received within a reasonable time, it will be assumed that the member does not wish to provide input on the issue.

These decision processes are expected to be applied to the types of issues illustrated in the following table.

Issue	Lead	Process		
		<i>Consensus</i>	<i>Vote</i>	<i>Input</i>
Establishing vision of Network	Founding Members	X		
Amendments to the Network Agreement	Founding Members	X		
Selecting new Full Members	Founding Members		X	
Selecting new Affiliate Members	Members			X
Developing specific projects	Members			X
Pursuing funding for Network and specific projects	Members			X

There may be projects that Network members have already started on their own but that could be strengthened by input from other Network members. These projects do not require a Network vote as the projects are generated solely by a single organization. However, if a single organization wishes to solicit the views and work collaboratively with the Network members then the organization should implicitly state this when circulating the proposal/project idea.

6 Amending the Network Agreement

This Network Agreement is a dynamic document that will grow and change to meet the needs of the evolving network. Any proposals to amend the Network Agreement may be considered during members' meetings and will be decided by consensus of the founding members. Suggested amendments and supporting documentation should be circulated to all founding members no less than 30 days before the meeting.

7 Leaving the Network

Over time, individual members may find that they no longer wish to maintain their membership in the Sustainable Development Communications Network. Should a member wish to withdraw from the Network, where the member has received funding from any source for the express purpose of participating in Network projects, withdrawal from the Network may only occur upon conclusion of their obligations as set out in their contracts with their funders. Members who do not have any contractual obligations related to Network projects may withdraw from the Network at any time by giving a notification of intent at least 30 days before withdrawal. Members may also choose not to renew their commitment to the network upon the expiry of their two-year membership.