

## CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *Sustainable development in public administration in Romania prioritizes on temporal level the general interest by satisfying the needs but without harming the chances of future generations. The concept of sustainability is the symbiosis between the natural environment and rational use of natural resources which increase efficiency on medium and long term perspective based on three fundamental pillars : economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability. By implementing reform measures at the level of central and local public administration, sustainable development in public administration in Romania will exceed the abstract conceptualization. Thus, sustainable development in public administration pursues the optimization of the social system as a whole by focusing on public interest and ensure quality public services for citizens. Currently, the theory and practice of public administration in Romania must also consider the systemic risk caused by scarcity of natural resources that is required to ensure a balance between the needs of natural systems and social systems, and between the needs of present and future generations. Unequal distribution of natural resources at the global level is a reality so that it is fundamentally necessary to develop sustainable public administration as intrinsic resort which can lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness in promoting public interests.*

**Keywords:** *economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, public administration, natural resources, social system.*

**JEL Classification:** *Q01, Q5, M1, M38, O1, O38.*

### 1. Introduction

The concept of sustainable development is a challenge for the present considering both local and global prospects for humanity. In literature, there is no universally agreed definition on sustainable development. Sustainability requires integrated management of economic, social and environmental aspects. Natural resources are finite and exhaustible while human demands are infinite and inexhaustible. Practically, the major challenge for all countries, both developed and developing is to achieve a sustainable development level in accordance with the rigors of the present reality. Sustainable development is a priority interest especially in the context of globalization. Sustainability can be achieved based on a focused effort and well-documented strategies. In any case, the implications for the environment should not be ignored because side effects could attain dramatic effects. However, the negative implications of not prioritizing environmental issues, especially the limited and exhaustible natural resources requires urgent identification of potential solutions. Moreover, in order to protect the natural environment it is essential to provide proper environmental laws.

Sustainability is a profound challenge for low-and middle-income countries given their prevailing characteristics, such as population growth, poverty, migration, environmental degradation, poor quality education or social inequality. An overview of the possible implications, both positive and negative, of global environmental changes leads inevitably to the great necessity of implementing sustainable strategies.

A better understanding of sustainable development is based on an exhaustive analysis of particular areas. Thus, public administration represents an area in which sustainable development has gained increasing importance in recent past. Consequently, sustainable development in public administration in Romania highlights an aspect of great current interest. The reform of public administration is an essential condition for the progress of Romania. Public administration is a very important area so that the implementation of sustainable strategies is essential for present and future generations.

## 2. Literature review

The Brundtland Commission “Our Common Future” was convened by the United States in 1987 to establish the level of global environmental degradation, used for the first time the concept of sustainability. The term sustainability or sustainable development has been defined by the The Brundtland Commission “Our Common Future” such as “a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Leuenberger (2016) investigated the issue of sustainable development in public administration and suggested that : “In considering long-run planning, intergenerational equity, reduction of risk, and conservation of resources in administrative planning, sustainability may have a significant contributory role.” Hopwood, Mellor and O’Brien (2005) investigated the issue of sustainable development and concluded that “it needs more clarity of meaning, concentrating on sustainable livelihoods and well-being rather than well-being, and long term environmental sustainability”. Fiorino (2010) discussed the subject of sustainability as a conceptual focus for public administration based on three fundamental systems ie environmental, economic and political/social systems and concluded that : “the challenge of governance, and thus of public administration, is to sustain each of these systems on its own while maintaining an appropriate balance among them”. On the other hand, Martin and Steele (2010) argued that “government, employees, investors, customers and the general public increasingly demand improved corporate sustainability and transparency.”

## 3. Framework of sustainability in public administration in Romania

Administrative law is a fundamental embranchment of public law and thus the concept of public administration occupies an essential place with profound social implications. Public administration is a very important area in the proper implementation of sustainable development in Romania especially with regard to the relationship with the taxpayer. Public administration is the bond between the state and the taxpayer, between government and the citizen. Implicitly, sustainable development in public administration in Romania aims to prioritize the public interest by providing quality public services in accordance with European standards. A better understanding of sustainability in public administration in Romania can lead to considerable administrative performance.

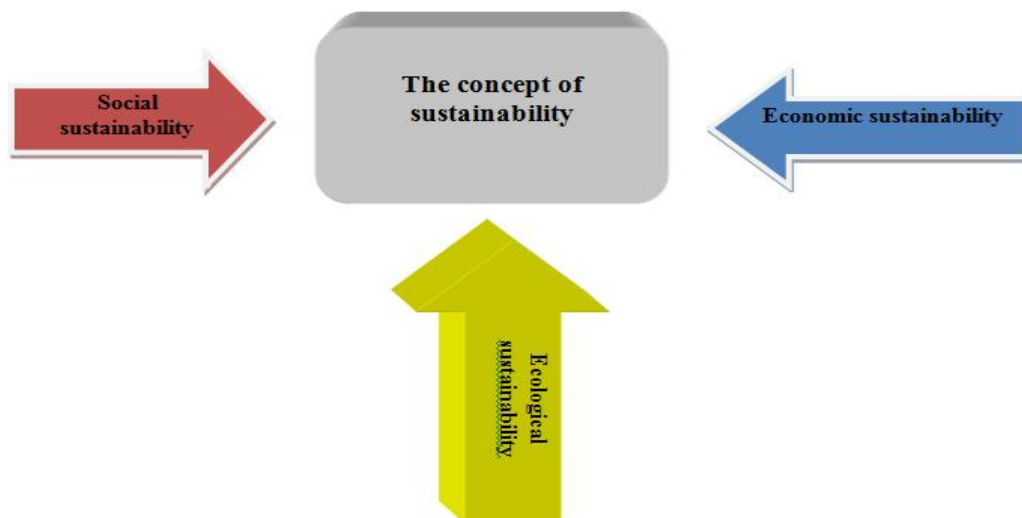


Figure no. 1 The three pillars of sustainability

In general terms, the definition of economic sustainability includes the ability of an economy to support a certain level of economic output for an indefinite period of time. An epistemological approach to the concept of economic sustainability involves a complex approach with significant implications over the medium and long term interval. Thus, with three pillars, sustainable development seeks to achieve, in a balanced way, economic development, social development and ecological sustainability. A major role is played by the economic sustainability, with multiple implications for developed or mainly for underdeveloped countries.

Social sustainability is the capacity of a social system, such as a country, family or organization, to function at a predetermined level of balance and social harmony for an indefinite period. An unsustainable social system is defined by negative aspects such as: war, endemic poverty, generalized social inequity, widespread injustice, precarious education and strong labor migration. It is relatively easy to identify which are the symptoms of a socially unsustainable system, precisely because of its extremely dramatic impact. Environmental sustainability is the ability of the environment to support a certain level of environmental quality and unreachable natural resource extraction rates. At present, environmental issues and the preservation of existing resources are a major challenge in the current context of globalization, being also a priority for the all the countries.

Public administration is an essential factor for sustainable development in all aspects of the general interest, especially in the conditions of belonging to the European Union. Despite the acknowledged importance of sustainable development, emerging countries like Romania are not characterized by very rigorous implementation strategies, including on the field of public administration. In this regard, government and public administration are very important fields for sustainable development. The efficient public administration system highlights a new dimension in the context of globalization and economic and financial integration. Moreover, in order to protect natural resources is required an exhaustive approach based on numerous complementary factors. Public administration is a key link in balanced and stability-oriented governance.

Regarding the improvement of the perspectives for the increase of the decisional transparency, respectively the expansion of the institutional capacity and visibility, sustainability focuses on achieving a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection. Technically speaking, the systemic risk generated by the shortage of natural resources needs to be seriously considered in order to minimize structural disparities and make consumption more efficient. The public administration reform should include the implementation of sustainable development strategy in order to achieve the set objectives. Future prospects of public administration include implementation of government policy in close connection with sustainable development. Despite the fact that the concept of sustainable development is widely used globally, there is still no generally accepted definition. Thus, in the literature there are many perspectives and points of view, which together form a complex conceptual structure. In addition, sustainability represents above all an attempt to harmonize growing concerns about environmental issues with social and economic-financial challenges. Also, the innovation process, as a social process itself has a significant importance for the extension of the concept of sustainability, especially in terms of economic and financial implications. In fact, economic sustainability has multiple implications for both developed and developing countries.

In fact, sustainability is a fundamental objective in the European Union's approach. However, the “needs” vary widely in different parts of the world, depending on the degree of development. Developing sustainability generates increased attention in both and

practice and theory of public administration. This triggered praiseworthy reactions by promoting growth in the welfare of the environment while improving the welfare of citizens. Inefficiencies in public administration require restructuring based on an alternative view, including competitiveness and innovative solutions that are characteristic of sustainable development. The role of public administration reform is fundamental for well-functioning societies covering essential areas. Significant challenges are indispensable for obtaining economic growth and natural environment protection.

#### 4. Conclusions

Sustainable development is the complex concept used to describe changes in modern society in order to highlight the intense need for effective management of scarce natural resources so as to avoid ruining chances to normal life opportunities for future generations. Moreover, sustainable development in public administration aimed at prioritizing the public interest by providing quality public services based on the reduction of bureaucracy and corruption. In the future, environmental circumstances will lead to the urgent need to efficiently manage and optimize limited natural resources.

Sustainable development is the modern term used to describe the perceived changes in society that bring to the forefront the acute need to efficiently manage limited natural resources so as to avoid hitting the chances of a normal life for future generations. Sustainable development aims to promote a system based on fairness in the distribution of environmental resources. Sustainability seeks to achieve ambitious goals in terms of social justice, equity between present and future generations, and poverty alleviation. Obviously, sustainable development is an increasingly used concept in the field of public administration.

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