

**Reinhard
Mohn**
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Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.)

Winning Strategies for a Sustainable Future

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Reinhard Mohn Prize 2013

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Preface

“Those who take seriously the ethos of a global coexistence must be prepared to shoulder responsibility and strive for partnership in a form of governance that prioritizes humanity and justice.”

Reinhard Mohn

Sustainability and economic growth are compatible. Of this, 84 percent of all Germans are convinced, as shown in a survey conducted by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in 2012. These findings suggest that citizens have a clear expectation of all those who today shape our political and economic environment. But at the same time, they express an urgent concern for the viability of our economic and cultural order. Global processes of social change, worldwide economic shifts, political upheavals and economic and financial crises challenge us all. We require strategies that facilitate economic productivity and political stability, while at the same time guaranteeing the sustainability of social and ecological systems.

Just how important sustainability is, we have gleaned from the field of forestry. The concept was employed in Germany for the first time in 1713 – exactly 300 years ago – by Saxon chief mining administrator Hans Carl von Carlowitz. He described the goal of harvesting only as much wood as can subsequently be regrown. In the Europe of the 18th century, the dynamics of early capitalist expansion had brought an anxiety over a scarcity of resources into the public consciousness.

Today, we know that sustainability is the great challenge of the 21st century. The guiding principle of sustainable development implies taking economic, social and environmental concerns into account in a balanced manner. Our focus in this regard must be improving the quality of life for all people. Every individual should be able to lead a life consistent with his or her own understanding of well-being, so that his or her needs to partake fully in society are met – without endangering future generations’ corresponding opportunities or quality of life.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung has established its second Reinhard Mohn Prize under the maxim “Winning Strategies for a Sustainable Future.” In memory of the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s founder, who passed away in 2009, the Reinhard Mohn Prize is awarded every two years and searches for innovative solutions to the pressing social, societal and political challenges affecting our future as well as for people that have developed and advanced these answers.

On November 7, 2013, Kofi Annan will be distinguished with the Reinhard Mohn Prize. With this award, we honor the former United Nations Secretary-General as a sustainable development pioneer. Many global, national and local initiatives in politics, the economy and

society today profit from structures called into being by Kofi Annan as U.N. Secretary-General.

Along with the United Nations Global Compact, the Millennium Development Goals must be noted in this context. Both of these initiatives can be traced back to Kofi Annan; both initiatives have become reality as a result of his untiring work. At the core of both initiatives is the recognition that we need concrete goals in order to effect change.

The next iteration of the Millennium Development Goals is currently being discussed internationally. This still-innovative, but above all effective instrument has in recent years brought many positive changes in numerous countries around the world. Most notably, it has fundamentally changed our way of approaching the tangled set of challenges: States today undertake to achieve concrete development goals; transparency and accountability to citizens and the global public has become a matter of course; and cooperation between the political, economic and societal spheres is no longer questioned.

We are both pleased and proud to have in Kofi Annan a prizewinner for the second Reinhard Mohn Prize. His commitment demonstrates that sustainability is possible, and that we as a global society can in fact effect change in the world around us.

However, in addition to global initiatives, the way in which individual states manage change domestically will also be crucial. Political systems, the character of social life and economic models are being established and negotiated predominantly within the context of nation-states. Here, too, in order to promote discussion and mutual learning, we conducted a worldwide inquiry. Our aim in this was to identify best practices that could stimulate the German and global debate on designing successful sustainability policies.

With the help of an international working commission, we found five inspiring examples of the development and successful implementation of sustainability strategies in countries and regions as widely varied as Bhutan, Costa Rica, Finland, Ghana and Tasmania. As different as these four countries and the Australian state of Tasmania are, their many approaches and solutions are both notable and worthy of emulation. They hold the potential of providing new impetus to the development of sustainability policies in Germany and other countries. Each of the five sample cases in its own way shows that sustainability is a feasible goal.

Kofi Annan's initiatives and the successes in Bhutan, Costa Rica, Finland, Ghana and Tasmania have two core elements in common. First, they show that creative and successful sustainability policies are possible only with clear and ambitious goals. Change does not take place by itself. It is only possible when we give the change active guidance. The second shared element is that, in both the initiatives created by Kofi Annan and the featured countries, sustainability was conceived comprehensively. Successes follow precisely where things previously considered separately are brought into conjunction. Each of these factors of success is crucial.

Allow us now the opportunity to tell you the story of these successes. In the book you hold in your hands, we present the methods and findings of the multistage, worldwide country inquiry. In addition, we take more than a cursory glance at German sustainability policy.

Heartfelt thanks are at this point due to the members of the working commission, who provided the process with their active and critical expertise. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (Winnipeg) and Public Strategy for Sustainable Development (Brussels) both contributed significantly to the development of the study. We were provided with

additional guidance by scholars and members of the vibrant European think-tank community too numerous to name. Nevertheless, we offer them all our thanks here. Last but not least, more than 170 interviewees across five continents generously provided us with information and shared their knowledge with us. This book is dedicated to them.

With the Reinhard Mohn Prize 2013, we want to inject new energy into the debate on implementing intergenerationally just policies here in Germany and internationally. Let us – in the spirit of our founder, Reinhard Mohn – “learn from the world.”

Aart De Geus

Chairman and CEO, Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board

Strategy and Action for Sustainable Development – A Global Search for Best Practices

Andreas Esche, Armando García Schmidt, Céline Diebold, Henrik Riedel

The Reinhard Mohn Prize for 2013 has as its focus “Winning Strategies for a Sustainable Future.” This year’s prize aims to help make sustainability a top priority in politics while contributing to debates in Germany and internationally over how best to design policies driven by principles of sustainability and intergenerational justice.

The Reinhard Mohn Prize will be awarded to Kofi Annan on November 7, 2013. In awarding the former U.N. Secretary-General this year’s Reinhard Mohn Prize, the Bertelsmann Stiftung recognizes Mr. Annan as a tireless champion of sustainable development and international justice whose advocacy in these areas has made him one of the most respected voices on sustainability worldwide. Many of the global, national and local sustainability policy initiatives underway today derive in some way from the programs and institutions initiated and developed by Kofi Annan while serving as U.N. Secretary-General. During his tenure in this position, Kofi Annan succeeded in bringing together stakeholders from various sectors to act with unanimity of purpose in targeting actionable development goals.



“Three hundred years ago, the man who first formulated the concept of sustainability, the Saxon mines inspector Hans Carl von Carlowitz, wrote up a set of directions for sustainable forestry practices. Warning of the need to cut only as much timber as could be regrown in a year, von Carlowitz introduced the dimension of time into forestry management. In so doing, he questioned the prevailing mentality of short-term thinking by pointing to the medium- and long-term consequences of current behavior. Ensuring future livelihoods will happen only if policymakers, society and business decide to act in concert and stop postponing into the future the costs and problems associated with our current use of natural and other resources. Given that our planet will soon have a population of nine billion, the search for solutions and alternatives must begin today.”

Klaus Töpfer

Executive Director, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, IASS

The Millennium Development Goals and the U.N. Global Compact are two such institutions initiated by Kofi Annan. Thanks to his influence and political acumen as U.N. Secretary-General, both initiatives have come to underpin sustainable and corporate social responsibility efforts worldwide. Many of the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved by their target date of 2015. Discussions are currently underway about how to extend these goals into a post-2015 agenda. This global discussion, or process, aims to generate a universal framework of targets in human and sustainable development that governments, communities and people around the world can subscribe to.

Kofi Annan continues to demonstrate that sustainability is an achievable goal through his current activities with the Kofi Annan Foundation, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the Africa Progress Panel.

In addition to global initiatives, it will be of core importance how individual states manage and foster change on the domestic level. Indeed, political systems, the character of social life and economic models are still to a large extent established and negotiated within the context of nation-states. And this is where change must take place. Change can be inspired and strengthened by global goals, but it is concrete societies and economic systems that must direct change toward greater sustainability in the context of their specific environmental, geopolitical, demographic and cultural conditions.



“Sustainable development is a terribly complex topic to deal with because it’s constantly in motion. Governments need to change the way they design their policies, the way they think and act and organize themselves. In the past, governments have always had one objective with a single argument, which was economic growth. Now they need to bring multidimensional objectives into the picture, considering not only growth, but also well-being, quality of life, the environment and so on. They also need to bring in a serious long-term analysis because sustainability inevitably requires dealing with complexity over the long term.”

Martine Durand
Chief Statistician, OECD

There is thus no single path. However, states can learn from one another. Since the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, many countries have adopted sustainability strategies for policymaking at the national and subnational levels. The objective of these strategies is to embed environmental, economic and social sustainability as an overarching, top-priority goal within policymaking and society. In Germany, too, there has been a national sustainability strategy since 2002, with its last update in 2012.

Looking at the sheer number of so-called sustainability strategies that have emerged in recent years, the post-Rio process appears to be a success. In 2009, the United Nations identified 106 national sustainability strategies. However, the character and quality of these strategies vary considerably. Thus, many fail to do full justice to the call for a comprehensive engage-

ment with future-oriented economic, social and environmental questions, focusing rather on just one of the individual areas.

Moreover, too much is too often too narrowly conceived. In many cases, the so-called sustainability strategies leave open issues such as how much influence formulated mission statements or guiding principles are to have in the context of concrete political decisions, or how stated objectives are to be implemented. In many cases, participation by socially relevant actors or by citizens in general plays no significant role in either the creation or implementation of the strategies. The desired paradigm shift thus remains out of reach.

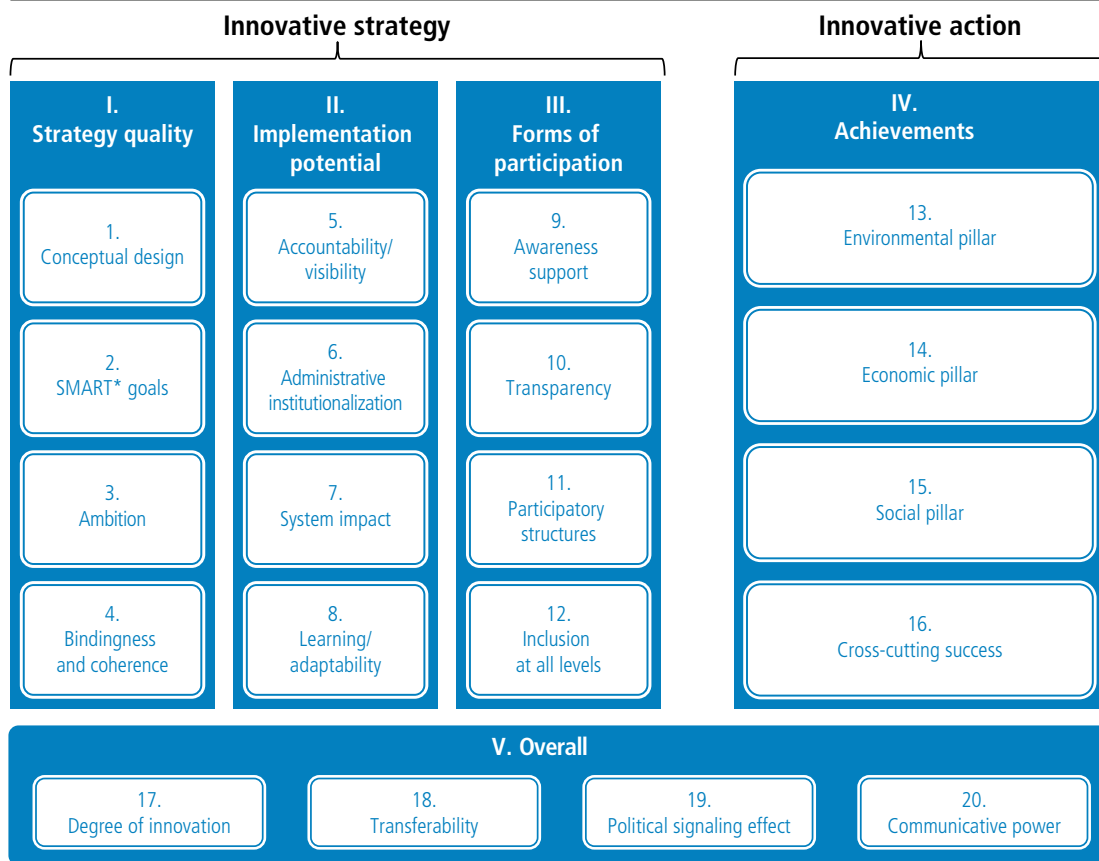
The effective translation of sustainability strategies into practice thus continues to prove difficult. How can the twin goals of sustainable and intergenerationally just development be made a guiding principle for political activity? How can political activity be rendered sustainable overall, not simply in individual policy areas? How, with the help of political strategies, can a full-society process be initiated that ultimately leads to a paradigm shift based on more sustainability and intergenerational justice? The Reinhard Mohn Prize 2013's global analysis, "Winning Strategies for a Sustainable Future," searched for exemplary approaches to this set of problems. The aim of the research was to show that sustainability strategies can be successfully developed and implemented.

Phase I: Establish criteria, conduct global search

In a first step, a set of criteria were established in summer 2012 to be used in identifying countries featuring sustainability policies that stand out for their strategic quality and effectiveness, and which can shape German and international debates alike. The criteria targeted the innovative potential of strategies and formulated policies (i.e., strategy quality, implementation potential, forms of participation) as well as the impact of actual sustainability measures taken, that is, the gains made in each sustainability area (i.e., environment, economic and social) and in cross-cutting efforts. A total of 20 criteria were established (see Figure 1). Targets and quality benchmarks were defined for each criterion in the set.

Ideas for the RMP criteria drew upon existing catalogues of criteria, such as the OECD's "DAC Guidelines – Strategies for Sustainable Development" (2001), the United Nations' "Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy" (2002), the "Bellagio Sustainability in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy" (2009), and the "Indicators of Sustainable Development and Well-being" (2009) in the report issued by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress chaired by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi. Once the set of criteria for the RMP were established, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Winnipeg, Canada, was commissioned by the Bertelsmann Stiftung to carry out a global search from July 2012 through September of the same year. The IISD research team was headed by Darren Swanson. Christopher Beaton, Livia Bizikova, Daniella Echeverría, Marius Keller, Leslie Paas, Dimple Roy, Christa Rust, Charles Thrift, Stephen Tyler, Vivek Voora and Karla Zubrycki conducted research on each individual case examined. The findings of this global study, an analysis and evaluation of 35 sustainability strategies (24 national, 8 subnational and 3 supranational

Figure 1: Reinhard Mohn Prize 2013 global search criteria



*S (specific), M (measurable), A (attainable), R (relevant), T (time-bound)

strategies) around the world were discussed with a panel of experts in Berlin in October 2012. Drawing on these findings, the experts were able to identify trends currently underway across the globe in the development of sustainability policies. These trends are discussed in the “Global Trends in Sustainable Development – A View from the RMP 2013 Global Search Process” contribution.

Phase 2: Identify and examine best practices

As the initial discussion process came to a close, a high-level working committee tasked with monitoring the global search met in Berlin in November 2012. Political representatives active on the committee included Kerstin Andreae (German Bundestag), Rita Süßmuth (former President of the German Bundestag) and Klaus Töpfer (former German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme). Experts from the business and economic sectors

included Peter Blom (CEO, Triodos Bank), Björn Stigson (former President, World Business Council on Sustainable Development, and Chair, Peer Review on Sustainable Development Policies in Germany) and Werner Bauer (Executive Vice President, Nestlé S.A.). The committee also included Martine Durand (Chief Statistician and Director of Statistics at the OECD), Petra Pinzler (Editor, *Die Zeit*), Maja Göpel and Uwe Schneidewind (both at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy).

The working committee selected four nation-states – Bhutan, Costa Rica, Finland and Ghana – as well as the Australian state of Tasmania to be subjected to a second, in-depth review. From December 2012 to March 2013, research trips were conducted on-site in each of the five countries. During the course of these trips, the Bertelsmann Stiftung was supported by IISD experts and the expertise of Ingeborg Niestroy from the Brussels-based think tank PublicStrategy for Sustainable Development. In order to establish a comprehensive view of the design, implementation and impact of sustainability strategies and policies in each country, interviews were conducted with the broadest possible spectrum of individuals from the political and economic sectors as well as with representatives from academia and the media. A total of 170 individuals were interviewed. The country reports provided in this publication represent the findings of this research.

Phase 3: Country report findings

Formulating and implementing effective sustainability policies represents a challenge for all of humanity to face. The five cases identified in the course of the RMP research for their best practices – Bhutan, Costa Rica, Finland, Ghana and Tasmania, each of which are found on a different continent – represent the global scope of this challenge. Whereas all candidates face the same challenge of addressing economic, social and environmental issues as interrelated in the form of a strategic, comprehensive and effective sustainability policy approach, they each face challenges specific to their individual geographical, economic and sociopolitical contexts.

Each country is marked as well by the design of their strategic approach to sustainability policies. If we look at them as a group, we see certain factors contributing to the success of a policy and its capacity to affect genuine change. Each of the five case studies show that strategic sustainability policies require guiding principles. Notably, particularly successful countries, such as Bhutan, Costa Rica and Finland, have consistently drawn on the principles of well-being in defining the tenets of sustainability for their societies. At the same time, all five case studies show that sustainability can be achieved only if and when it is embedded consistently across all institutions and mechanisms. Costa Rica and Bhutan demonstrate that innovation and a pioneering spirit are key to formulating a successful sustainability policy.

Effective sustainability policies also depend on a participating public, which the example of Tasmania demonstrates. There is much we can learn from these different approaches. Indeed, their successes and failures have broad applicability and can help drive forward international, European and German debates on how to design effective sustainability policies.

The findings of the in-depth reviews of each case study can be summarized as follows:

Bhutan stands out in global comparison not only for its success in implementing forward-looking societal change over the past 30 years, but also for its success in implementing a cross-cutting sustainability policy. By way of example, Bhutan has demonstrated that the will to reform and the power to formulate and implement such a policy must draw upon a clear institutional framework. At the heart of the country's successful sustainability strategy lies a conceptual grand design that has informed its institutional framework. Underpinned by principles of societal progress, this paradigm is distinguished by its clarity and simplicity of purpose in targeting sustainability and human well-being. The fact that this paradigm is implemented consistently across the country's institutions and policy mechanisms is also impressive. The across-the-board application of these principles has precipitated Bhutan's stable transformation in almost all areas of society and an economic and environmental performance record that surpasses that of comparable states. Bhutan demonstrates how effective, intelligent policymaking can be guided by a comprehensive sustainability strategy that is anchored in the principles of the common good and intergenerational justice.

Costa Rica is a pioneer and model of a successful strategy that is based on stable democratic development processes underpinned by principles of sustainability. Costa Rica stands out considerably in regional comparison on all economic performance and social indicators. The example of Costa Rica demonstrates that the long-term political stability of a democratic system has a direct impact on sustained economic success and social achievement. The resolute focus on a sustainable development model underway in Costa Rica since the 1970s has yielded tangible results: The impressive growth of forest cover facilitated by the innovative financing system "Payment for Ecosystem Services," as well as the investments in "green" tourism and other measures, serve as a model of how environmental protection and economic growth can mutually benefit each other. However, the example of Costa Rica also demonstrates that a strategy, strictly defined, does not always lead to a successful cross-cutting sustainability policy. The successes observed in Costa Rica derive from individual decisions made by leaders in support of flagship projects as well as the initiative exercised by civil society actors in specific contexts. Over time and considered together, these successes suggest that Costa Rica represents a sustainable country.

Finland stands out because of its early introduction – in European comparison – of a national sustainability strategy and its continued efforts aimed at improving the governance instruments required for sustainability policies. This includes, above all, mechanisms for effective horizontal and vertical coordination, broad stakeholder participation and ongoing attempts to foster institutional learning processes. At present, Finland's national sustainability strategy is undergoing revision, with the goal being to establish a comprehensive "Social Contract for Sustainability." Civil society as well as the business sector have already responded to these efforts by generating ideas and solutions. In fact, many industries in Finland are considered to be pioneers in driving forward a green economy in Europe. Like Costa Rica, Finland also demonstrates that a good strategy, strictly speaking, does not always lead to a comprehensive, strategically implemented and successful sustainability policy.

Ghana stands out in regional comparison as a country featuring stable democratic institutions and widespread respect for the rule of law in addition to a lively and engaged civil society. In the last two decades, Ghana's political leadership has above all succeeded in translating the country's economic achievements into social progress. Increasingly, environmental objectives have been incorporated into policies, in particular those within the framework of the country's national development strategy. The stated goal of integrating economic, social and environmental issues together as part of a sustainability approach within policymaking is manifest in a variety of legislative and development measures. A comprehensive sustainability concept underlies the country's current development plan. Efforts are underway, despite major challenges in each area. Nonetheless, there are ongoing problems in many cases as implemented measures lack the necessary resources and institutional capacity.

Tasmania (i.e., the "Tasmania Together" project) demonstrates the attempt to make participation and public accountability the starting point for strategic sustainability policies. In 1999, a community-driven vision for the future was drawn up that focuses on the core aspects of sustainability and was accompanied by targeted objectives and progress indicators. An autonomous Progress Board evaluated government policies targeting the objectives and published its results. The realization of objectives and widespread public participation in the process both fell short of expectations. Tensions between the autonomous Progress Board and policymakers have placed strains on the project in recent years. Structural changes made to Tasmania Together since October 2012 have resulted in the removal of its public accountability and participatory features.

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