

# Preface

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The concept of sustainable development (SD) has increasingly become a major overall goal of national governments. Strongly prodded from 'above' by international and regional organisations, and pressured from 'below' by a broad variety of non-governmental organisations, the concept has achieved more and more prominence as a programmatic goal for governing initiatives. The purpose of the present volume is to explore the challenge of implementing sustainable development when viewed as a markedly 'different' type of programme-policy task. Assuming that the nature of the task – as first formulated and subsequently developed by United Nations' organisations – requires new modes of governance, the book addresses the issue of how existing 'forms' of governance can adapt to specified 'functions' of sustainable development.

The studies presented have been developed conjointly within the SUSGOV project of the Programme for Research and Documentation for a Sustainable Society (ProSus). ProSus is a 'strategic research programme' at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo. The programme is financed by the Research Council of Norway, Division for Strategic Priorities, Section on 'Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development'.

The SUSGOV project has been organised as a series of workshops, where the authors have presented and developed their individual contributions in relation to a common dialogue on the 'form-follows-function' theme. Workshops were held at the University of Twente (CSTM) in the Netherlands (May 2001); Ronda, Spain (November 2001); Lillehammer, Norway (April 2002); and Rome, Italy (November 2002). The team members were selected on the basis of their particular expertise in different aspects of governance and policy implementation, and were encouraged to determine themselves which facet of the SD governance challenge they wished to focus. The project director (and editor) has taken the responsibility, in continuous dialogue with the project team, for coordinating and summarising the implications of the individual studies.

One aspect of the project warrants particular emphasis. While sustainable development has a specific history with respect to joining the interests and responsibilities of 'northern' and 'southern' countries, the SUSGOV project has focused only on the implementation challenge faced by high-consumption

(OECD) countries. This is primarily a reflection of the research remit of ProSus, with a mandate to concentrate on the non-sustainable production and consumption patterns of highly industrialised countries. ProSus's sister organisation in Norway, SUM, has a complementary obligation with respect to development and the environment in less-advantaged countries. The current volume thus provides a further contribution to the studies presented by Lafferty and Meadowcroft in *Democracy and the Environment* (Edward Elgar, 1996) and *Implementing Sustainable Development* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

As with all team projects, there are many people to thank for their significant contributions to the final product. The project director would particularly like to thank the other team members for their highly constructive contributions to the overall frame of the project, and for their ongoing willingness to take on the analytic perspectives developed. Special thanks are due to Hilde Annette Aakre at ProSus who had administrative responsibility for coordinating the project from the start, and then took on the tedious task, ably assisted by Mette Samsing, of shepherding the final manuscript through to the publishers. Warm thanks are also due to Aveen Henry, Ger Mullally, Jim Buckley and the entire staff of the Cleaner Production Promotion Unit (CPPU), Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University College Cork, Ireland. It was during a sabbatical semester at CPPU that the conditions were created to allow for the completion of the manuscript, and more supportive and congenial conditions are difficult to imagine. The Research Council of Norway and those left behind at ProSus, particularly Audun Ruud, made the sabbatical possible; and my partner in all endeavours, Gro Elisabeth Helgesen, provided her usual vital support, academic and otherwise, on varying home fronts. Any remaining flaws remain the responsibility of the author – and of the glorious distractions of South-West Cork!

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