
Preface and acknowledgements

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in December 2009 in Copenhagen, Mr Baan Ki-moon, secretary general of the United Nations, delivered a passionate speech on climate change. In his speech he spoke of ‘a new era of clean development and green growth for all’. It is clear that the two most important stakeholders who can bring about the successful implementation of Baan Ki-moon’s dream are (i) the governments of various countries, and (ii) the corporations of the world (both developed and developing countries).

The role of corporations in sustainable development and its positive impact on climate change is undeniable. This is reinforced by the UN Global Compact, a world body which provides ‘both a policy platform and a practical framework for companies that are committed to sustainability and responsible business practices’. By the time this book goes to press, the UN Global Compact Leaders’ Summit 2010 will have been held in New York, on the theme of ‘Building a New Era of Sustainability’. This summit will highlight the need for ‘organizations to convene, collaborate and commit to building a new era of sustainability – an era where environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are deeply integrated into business based on both material and ethical rationales’. This is what, in this book, we promote as ‘corporate sustainability’ which, in our opinion, is ‘a generic representation of the means and processes of businesses becoming more responsible and more accountable to satisfy changing customer demands in a sustainable, yet still profitable, manner’.

Thus the primary purpose of this book is to examine the current status and future directions of model-based applications in corporate sustainability (CS) and related planning processes. As noted earlier the three significant dimensions of CS include environmental, social and economic. Within each of these dimensions however there are enormous variations in understanding, interpretations and approaches. With the gradual extension of the complexities of CS over the years, corporate planners and policy-makers have increasingly faced problems when seeking an appropriate approach to planning for the corporate sustainability of their organizations. This book thus presents various frameworks, models and practices of CS dimensions in a number of real world corporations. The book also emphasizes the measurement and reporting of CS. Invitations to contribute to this book were sent via special-interest electronic list

servers around the globe. Several renowned authors were also specially invited to contribute. Each prospective contributor was initially asked to prepare a two- to three-page proposal on his/her contribution. These proposals were reviewed by the editors and suggestions were made to prepare the full chapters. The submitted chapters were then reviewed by independent reviewers and the final acceptance/rejection decisions were made by the editors based on the revised chapters submitted by the contributors.

The book contains three parts. Chapter 1 starts with an introduction to corporate sustainability and presents the plan of the book. Part I, Conceptual Frameworks and Case Studies, has eight chapters. It presents some conceptual frameworks of corporate sustainability and presents applications ranging from the Indian coal sector and Australian grain industry, to Bahrain's service industry and New Zealand's SKYCITY Corporation. Part II, Corporate Sustainability with Single Bottom Line, contains two chapters. While all definitions of CS deal with triple bottom line, this part of the book emphasizes the single most important bottom line of economic viability. The argument here is that corporations must be economically viable and all their environmental and social programs must eventually add more revenues than costs. We hope the two chapters in this part of the book will generate some debates. Part III, Social Communication of Corporate Sustainability, has four chapters. Communication of CS plays an important role in society. Stakeholders and the community in general must be aware of the various sustainability practices of corporations. The four chapters in this part present some conceptual frameworks and practices of communicating CS by various corporations. The use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are highlighted in the communication of CS. The book concludes by presenting future directions for CS in Chapter 16. This chapter highlights the need for corporations to achieve sustainability competencies and performance measurements. To this end some popular schema to measure sustainability performance and their outcomes are presented, leading into some future research and application directions.

We are grateful to the authors of the various chapters for their contributions. It has been a long process from the initial outlines to developing the full chapters and then revising them in the light of reviewers' comments. We sincerely acknowledge the authors' willingness to go through this long process. We also acknowledge the work and knowledge of various reviewers of the chapters, many of which had to be reviewed at short notice.

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