

The Sustainable Development Commission



Although shared accountability rests upon all sectors of society, the new Programme for Government wants to grow a dynamic, innovative economy, placing the business community in a strong position to take a leading role in spearheading the drive towards sustainability.

A responsible approach to products and services can save money.

Business can play a vital part in achieving this by becoming a much-needed role model in tackling the global challenges of climate change and poverty through the products and services they sell and the Sustainable Development Commission aims to demonstrate how.

Historically, business has pursued investment, production and marketing strategies that have resulted directly in extensive waste and the degradation of natural resources. Business has been built upon increasing consumption patterns and has largely disregarded the consequent environmental and social implications. Now, many companies are changing their ways, adopting new paradigms of corporate and social responsibility.

In its report, *I Will If You Will*, the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) offers advice on how business can face up to the social and environmental impact of products throughout their lifecycle, improve businesses' competitive edge, as well as benefiting people and the planet.

Northern Ireland Commissioner Dr John Gilliland OBE, explains: "Everything we consume has a story behind it, so if we focus on the lifecycles of individual products and services using a road-mapping

approach it can help to promote positive decision-making, resolve conflicting priorities and identify solutions in areas such as reducing waste and energy. It also makes good business sense. A responsible approach to products and services can save money, attract customers and drive innovation to keep pace with a fast changing world."

He concluded: "Business in Northern Ireland is in a position to help ensure the future health of the planet. The recently published Stern review discusses the economic impacts of climate change on the economy and is hailed for putting the challenge of climate change into terms that corporate leaders will understand. The message is clear, business in Northern Ireland is in a prime position to take a leading role in spearheading the drive towards sustainability."

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