

# The Sustainable Development Platform Method for Community-based Sustainable Development: An Outline

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The Sustainable Development Platform Method (SDPM) is a policy framework tool for community-based sustainable development that aims to provide regional economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits to communities. Integral to the SDPM approach are Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) that provide constructed economic advantages resulting from the exploration of novel innovation trajectories based on valuable, unique and non-substitutable resource configurations. The SDPM provides incentive and coercive mechanisms for altruistic, profit seeking and vested interest community participation. Community input is a central characteristic of the approach and enables flexibility of design to accommodate a diversity of applications. The SDPM can be applied to private, public owned or community managed terrestrial, marine and/or riverine environments.

The significance of the SDPM lies within its capacity to eliminate the need for exogenous funding that is inherent within centralised approaches to Common Pool Resources (CPR) management. The SDPM does this through the creation of RIS that provide wealth through optimal, innovative and collaborative resource configurations that are nested and embedded within institutionalised network relationships. This wealth generation leads to fiscal resourcing for community-based CPR management and associated environmental management actions that are supported by a participatory and deliberative governance approach. The SDPM's core aim as an endogenous policy design tool is to enable the realisation of sustainable development outcomes that provide community-generated and supported economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits derived from CPR management.

The SDPM is comprised of nine phases, being: (1) sustainability audit; (2) comparative analysis; (3) community and network analysis; (4) institutionalised governance design; (5) futurescaping; (6) platforms identification; (7) RIS conceptualisation; (8) core process identification, and; (9) knowledge management.

The **Sustainability Audit** phase seeks to independently assess the sustainability of current resources and to conduct an audit of resource conditions. This is done to provide sustainability checks and balances and to identify resource condition indicators. This task should be independently performed by experts either annually or bi-annually to enable effective monitoring of resource providing systems. This phase also identifies environmental management actions capable of improving CPR conditions and provides a trigger for the application of environmental management actions funded through SDPM generated RIS.

The **Comparative Analysis** phase aims to provide an inter-regional comparison of natural and human resource conditions against sustainable development and RIS theories. This phase attempts to incorporate past learnings and compare what has been done in other regions to identify benchmarking qualities. The research conducted in this phase should include a detailed background study of regional assets, industries, communities, academic institutions and government. This phase utilises statistical data and intrinsic and tacit knowledge.

The **Community / Network Analysis** phase builds on the preceding phase to explore the potential network(s) that can participate in and contribute to the SDPM approach. This phase is explorative in nature and involves undertaking a detailed stakeholder analysis and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, the purpose of this phase is to begin building the network relationships that will form the key component of the SDPM approach to enable effective nesting and embedding of institutional and governance arrangements.

The **Institutionalised Governance Design** phase seeks to involve and effectively network self-identified and research identified participant stakeholders and process leaders, and to nest the resulting community-based network within local and regional community settings whilst embedding associated institutional relationships to maximise collaboration and cooperation across all governance scales. This phase involves defining the collective action-based governance structure (including specific leadership components and their defined tasks and responsibilities) and associated deliberative-democracy-based working rules, and defining rewards and penalty systems that involve socio-economic graduated sanctioning mechanisms. Importantly, this phase also defines the structural governance conditions that scale involvement and influence in decision-making processes to reflect participant stakes in the applicable resources and associated management process.

The **Futurescaping** phase begins with a grounded path dependent basis from which future megatrends are identified using statistical data. This analysis aims to reveal the success or failure chances of existing and possible trajectories based on network and regional capabilities. The Futurescaping phase should also provide a detailed and statistically supported view of possible futures and expected resource conditions.

The **Platforms Identification** phase stems from the preceding analyses and in particular the Futurescaping and Sustainability Audit to define potential development platforms that exist within the region and SDPM network. This phase attempts to identify as many platform opportunities as can be realised given the inherent regional and resource constraints and the capacity and interest of the network participants to explore individual platform opportunities. This phase aims to reveal the most 'fruitful' platforms where valuable, unique and non-substitutable resources can be sustainably developed as RIS platforms.

The **RIS Conceptualisation** phase seeks to create a common understanding of the environment within which innovation is constructed. This phase involves identifying likely network participants and associated institutional resource configurations (through invitation or self-nomination) to pursue a specific RIS platform. The RIS Conceptualisation phase also creates a shared individual platform vision that supports and guides the identification and definition of core processes associated with the particular RIS platform.

The **Core Processes Identification** phase aims to exploit the collaborative network and resource potential within a RIS platform. This phase includes participant created and defined responsibilities and tasks, how sustainability indicators will be reported against monitoring criteria, and how specific CPR property rights will be assigned and enforced (aligned with the broader working rules). Participants must own, create and define these core processes within the constraints of the larger collective SDPM network. Participants must also be willing to invest resources and financial capital to develop core process and to fund through tithed RIS profits, environmental management actions identified in the first phase.

The final phase, **Knowledge Management**, supports and develops the innovative capacity and competitive advantage of the SDPM network that is reliant on learning and knowledge creation and its dissemination. This phase of the SDPM approach aims to harness and coordinate the learning and knowledge capacity within the SDPM network to foster opportunities for new knowledge creation and sharing, and broad institutional learning. This phase feeds directly back into phases one and six to ensure that knowledge is distributed at critical phases of the SDPM process and to ensure that knowledge is not lost.

Note: The SDPM is fully explained in *Policy Design for Common Pool Resources Management: Sustainable Development Platform Methods in the Fleurieu Group of Islands, Tasmania*, available for download at [www.mattce.com](http://www.mattce.com) or by contacting the author at [mattce@gmail.com](mailto:mattce@gmail.com).