Sustainable development

Better World – Our Commitment to Society

Sustainable development

Although the concept of sustainable development has its roots in the environmental movement, it has increasingly come to represent a new kind of world – a world in which economic growth delivers a more just and inclusive society, at the same time as protecting our natural heritage.

The successful realisation of such a world requires a degree of international consensus and a lot of multi-institutional support.

No individual country, business or any other organisation can become sustainable on its own, although it can become more sustainable than it was, and it can make a valuable contribution to making the world a more sustainable place.

At BT, we believe that the term "corporate social responsibility" should embrace all the activities a company can take towards this wider goal of sustainability

That's easy to say, but what does it mean in practice?

We have spent a lot of time thinking about what our answer to that question should be. And you can find many of our ideas in our publication *Changing Values*.

Of course, it's about managing the company in ways that minimise adverse environmental impacts and maximise social benefits – and much of this site describes our activities in these arenas.

But it's also about taking part in the wider debate, and we do this through an active engagement with our suppliers, local, national and international government institutions, with NGOs and even with our competitors. We have for example:

- Supported the UN Global Compact (www.unglobalcompact.org)
- Commented on the UK government sustainability strategy Opportunities for Change
- Analysed our products and services in A Question of Balance
- Actively engaged local and regional UK authorities in their Agenda 21 activities –
- Hosted a CEO forum that led to the signing of a communiqué on sustainable development amongst our biggest suppliers
- Led Global e-Sustainability Initiative (www.gesi.org)
- Supported the Digital Futures project (www.digitalfutures.org.uk)
- Led the Impact on Society Task Force that produced Winning with Integrity (www.business-impact.org)
- Published a review of globalisation and its linked effects on cultural and bio-diversity loss Variety and Values
- Hosted the 2000 ETNO environmental conference (http://www.etno.belbone.be/site/IPSWICH/Ipswich.htm)

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