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## Implementation of sustainable development opportunities in the Lithuanian higher education institution

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### Abstract

This paper presents an overview of the progress of implementation sustainable development philosophy in the strategy of one of the Lithuanian higher education institution. Purpose of this paper is to identify instruments and methods revealing sustainable development expansion opportunities in higher education institution of Lithuania. The methodology in paper is used logical and systemic analyze of scientific studies, situational analysis based on the comparative method and analyzes the results of an empirical study, based on a specific case. The paper contributes to a better understanding of the key elements of sustainable organization which implemented sustainable development strategy in its organization management processes.

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### 1. Introduction

In recent years, sustainable development, organizational sustainability is becoming one of the most popular and most ambitious modern management concepts in the world. Sustainable development philosophy is aimed to the global objectives, that is to say global society and the natural relationships of harmony, thus ensuring the future of society and its well-being. However, all the global objectives can be achieved only through the pursuit of every continent, country and even the organization.

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Today the business and organizational environment is changing fast. The current global changes today in order to create and maintain a successful and secure organization's image is very important to strike a balance between the financial benefits of an organization, public welfare and environmental sustainability. Sustainable development philosophy and its implementation in an organization can be attributed to fundamental organizational management development. Organizations which manage to successfully implement and performing a coherent action across all three spheres of sustainable development (economy, social, environmental) assuring long-term benefits, business continuity, public support and recognition.

In most cases in the science literatures describe the three main levels of sustainable development: environmental, economic and social. About the importance of the three components of sustainable development in the context suggests many authors (Becker, 2010; Hopwood, et al. 2005; Jabareen, 2009). Principal often mentioned problem - how to reconcile the concept of sustainable development groups and use them as overall sustainable development of the instrument, which would help to ensure the coherence of development. Sustainable development as methodology and its understanding has become important instrument for change and development in organizations management.

## **2. Sustainable Development in the world and in the Lithuania**

51 years ago (in 1962) Rachel Carson published a book called *Silent Spring*. The fact of publishing this book means the turning point in our understanding of the connection between the environment, economy and social well-being. It is believed that it was the moment when a successful journey to sustainable development began (International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD], 2012).

In 1983 the United Nations General Assembly created the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) which in 1987 promoted the term of sustainable development in the report *Our Common Future* (United Nations, 2012). The paper presented a progressive approach to global independence and the connection between the economy and environment. The report discussed social, economic, cultural and environmental issues as well as global solutions. It was again confirmed that the environment exists not as an individual segment – it depends on the human actions, goals and needs. In order to develop his future existence, the human must realize that the environment is an inherent part thereof.

The first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Its agenda included issues on the environment and development in the 21st century. The essence and main direction of the conference was “the harmony with nature” which brought to the fore the first principle of the Rio Declaration: “Human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature” (United Nations, 1992). Meanwhile, after a decade, in 2002 the Johannesburg Conference evaluated the achievements of sustainable development and it was decided to continue improving the mechanism of sustainable development through creation of sustainable development strategies and submission of reports on their implementation.

In 2003 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. It includes goals and principles for sustainable development taking into account the local interests and peculiarities (the Ministry of Environment RoL, 2011). To align with the Western European countries Lithuania set a long term goal: to achieve the EU average level according to economic, social indicators, including population health and efficient consumption of natural resources and ensure clean and healthy environment by 2020.

On 15–16 June, 2006 the European Council adopted a renewed Sustainable Development Strategy and obliged the Member States to review their national strategies for sustainable development in order to ensure compatibility and consistency taking into account the circumstances of a specific country (EU Council, 2006). The renewed version of the Lithuanian National Strategy for Sustainable Development maintained the same main goal; however it focused more on the scientific progress, know-how, social responsibility of private enterprises and getting the society involved into the process of sustainable development to a wider extent. The strategic priorities and goals were formulated in accordance with the national interests, existing strategic documents, and strategic provisions of the United Nations and the above-mentioned EU Strategy for Sustainable Development (2006).

On 15 May 2012 the Parliament RoL approved the Lithuanian Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030” (“Lietuva 2030”, 2013). This strategy reflects a national vision and priorities for development as well as guidelines for their implementation by 2030. This is a roadmap to be followed in decision making and in drawing –up national plans or

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