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The Challenge of Introducing Sustainability into Project Management Function:  
Multiple-Case Studies

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**Abstract**

Project management field management has neglected sustainability issues. This research investigates how companies are introducing sustainability into project management. Moreover, it aims to investigate how sustainability can impact project success. A multiple-case studies approach was conducted in four companies from Brazil and USA, from different sectors. Data were gathered from multiple sources including semi-structured interviews with project and sustainability managers, and online questionnaires were applied to project team members. The results suggest that firms are concerned about sustainability in project management; however there is a gap between the perception of importance and the actual use in practice. Finally, companies from the public sector are more concerned about the social dimension than the others.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, project management, triple-bottom line, sustainability in project management, project success

**1 Introduction**

Project management can be a means to positively influence the integration of sustainability dimensions in projects (Bocchini et al., 2014), which has aroused the interest of professionals and academics in the discussion of sustainability in the context of project management (Silvius et al., 2013). The concept of sustainability is linked to economic, environmental and social dimensions and their interrelations, forming the Triple-Bottom Line - TBL (Elkington, 1998), which should also be integrated into the project management function (Singh et al., 2012; Labuschagne et al., 2005; Carvalho and Rabechini Jr., 2011; Silvius et al., 2013).

However, according Sánchez (2015), social and environmental dimensions of sustainability are difficult to incorporate in programs and projects, obviously sustainability is a major challenge, especially in large projects (Thamhain, 2014), and much more research is needed to develop tools, techniques and

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