



# ORGANIZING FOR THE FUTURE: ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR

**Welcome:**  
**John Ferguson and Michal Plaček**

# ORGANIZING FOR THE FUTURE...

- The workshop is supported by a joint seed funding scheme between the University of St Andrews and Charles University.
- The workshop brings together researchers working on sustainability-related issues indifferent organizational sectors

# ORGANIZING FOR THE FUTURE...

Workshop 1: Common themes- accountability, engagement, reporting

Workshop 2: Challenges in methodology

Workshop 3: Impact on practice – the challenges of explaining research to policy makers and practice.



# COMMON APPROACHES?

	NGO (n=6)	PUBLIC (n=10)	PRIVATE (n=31)	TOTAL (n=47)
Accountability	5 (83%)	4 (40%)	9 (29%)	18 (38%)
Stakeholder Engagement	4 (67%)	4 (40%)	15 (48%)	23 (49%)
Reporting	2 (33%)	4 (40%)	15 (48%)	21 (45%)
Governance	1 (17%)	1 (10%)	1 (3%)	3 (6%)
Measurement/Metrics		1 (10%)	5 (16%)	6 (13%)
Regulation			3 (10%)	3 (6%)
Decision Making			2 (6%)	2 (4%)
Audit			2 (6%)	2 (4%)

# COMMON APPROACHES?



“Yes. For instance, incorporating environmental aspects in decision-making. Context might be different, methods might vary, but core questions, assumptions and challenges are shared.”  
(Private)

“Accountability is the most important theme that should be shared cross board, especially for sustainability management, performance measurement and stakeholder engagement.”  
(Private)

“Democratic approaches, communication, accountability” (Public)

“Things like sustainable procurement, labour and human rights, community and stakeholder engagement...transparency, accountability, operating practices, governance” (NGO)

# METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES?

	NGO (n=6)	PUBLIC (n=10)	PRIVATE (n=31)	TOTAL (n=47)
Data Availability	4 (67%)	5 (50%)	17(55%)	26(55%)
Validity	3 (50%)	3 (30%)	8(26%)	14(30%)
Consent	1 (17%)			1(2%)
Non-mainstream methods		1(10%)	1(3%)	2(4%)
Definition of sustainability			2(6%)	2(4%)
Engagement with natural Sciences				

# METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES?



“yes, data availability is an issue - mostly manually collective. External validity is a problem.”(NGO)

“The accuracy of data and availability of data is an issue. Further, there is a lack of comparability, as no organization is embedding frameworks in the same way. There is inconsistency in application.” (Public)

“Yes, there is a lack of standardized measurement on sustainability performance, which leads a series of reporting problems, e.g. materiality and validity of reported data”(Private)



# ENGAGING WITH POLICY/PRACTICE



	NGO (n=6)	PUBLIC (n=10)	PRIVATE (n=31)	TOTAL (n=47)
Translate/communicate	1 (17%)		7(23%)	8(17%)
Policy/practice do not wish to engage	2(33%)	2(20%)	4(13%)	8(17%)
Lack of time			5(16%)	5(11%)
Lack of incentives			6(19%)	6(13%)
Policy/practice want 'quick solutions'			1(3%)	1(2%)
Access to policy/practice		2(20%)	1(3%)	3(6%)
Lack of desire	1(17%)		1(3%)	2(4%)
Lack of training			3(10%)	3(6%)
Lack of understanding from policy/practice		2(20%)		
Theory/practice gap	2(33%)	2(20%)		
Agreement on impact/change			2(6%)	2(4%)

# ENGAGING WITH POLICY/PRACTICE



“Researchers are unwilling to bend towards practice, we can be too theoretical. I believe what we researchers propose must be achievable - baby steps are required to achieve change. Some academics in the sustainability sphere are too quick to ridicule operational attempts and are too embedded in the theory” (NGO)

“Policy makers often do not want to hear about the complexities, they want simple answers/solutions, whereas researchers are more aware of how complex issues are and what assumptions/limitations apply when doing research” (Private)

“Journals are already hard enough to publish. Academics are not traditionally trained to write for policy and practice audience. There should be adequate institutional support that can be used to translate academic research for non-academic audience.” (Private)

# Speakers



**Prof Nicole Darnall**, “Unrealized Opportunity: Sustainability Standards & Reporting”



**Prof Jan Bebbington**, “Accounting, Disclosure & Reporting: Nature & Biodiversity”

