

## El Portal de Sostenibilidad



The UNESCO Chair, with the backing of the Caixa de Terrassa savings bank, brought together 55 experts and professionals to create a major online reference work that defines and interprets sustainability. By the end of the project, 148 information files had been compiled. They include over 1,500 links to other websites; 400 reference reports; 300 agreements and treaties; 700 laws and over 900 bibliographic references.

This reference work was presented on 8 November in the conference hall of Caixa de Terrassa. The initial aim of the project was to create a leading Internet space for obtaining resources and for finding relevant, up-to-date information on sustainability.

The space is a unique portal in terms of its subject matter and the breadth of its content. This makes it an easy, accurate tool for politicians, teachers, journalists, technicians, university students, entrepreneurs, etc. There is an increasing need for quality information to make sustainability a strategic factor in the administration, innovation and competitiveness of companies. Such information is also essential in the fields of education and communication. Above all, this reference work aims to be a handbook for those who work in the field or have some knowledge of the subject. It provides easy access to topics such as waste management, water resources, Agenda 21, international cooperation, gender equality policies, reducing deprivation, etc.

Users can contact the authors to compare notes and exchange information. Thus, the portal is an interactive space that is open to communication. It will be continuously updated.

To make the information clear and accessible, the portal has been organised into four main sections: environmental, social, economic and institutional. These are the four dimensions that are currently used to consider the concept of sustainability in all its complexity.

Each of the four sections includes a list of related topics and subsections that we consider sufficiently relevant to be treated specifically. At the end of each topic is an information file including a presentation, links, reference reports,

related agreements and treaties, legislation, references and other related files. In addition, a total of 12 topics have been highlighted, including climate change, Agenda 21, risk, education, energy, R&D for sustainability, etc. These topics are cross-disciplinary and can therefore be found in each of the four dimensions. Due to their importance, these topics have been dealt with in more depth: the files about them contain more links and references than the ordinary files.

The reference work also contains a current affairs section. This contains general news about each of the dimensions, and a section in which the concept of sustainability is clearly described.

The portal has been compiled in Spanish, to reach an audience in Spain and South America, as this is the area that it deals with. However, versions in Catalan and English are planned for the future.

There were two main reasons for beginning the project. Firstly, the aims of the UNESCO Sustainability Chair of the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC) include the socialisation of knowledge and experiences related to sustainability. In turn, these aims are related to the principles of UNESCO as an international organisation committed to education. The project is within the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Secondly, this initiative ensures that the UNESCO Sustainability Chair at UPC contributes to an essential task: selecting and organising information from the increasingly disordered sea of facts available on the Internet, where reference points are needed to browse effectively.

This project was made possible by funding from Caixa de Terrassa's Social and Cultural Work Department. Students on the Chair's doctoral programme also participated in compiling some of the content and in conceptualising the project.