

- Adopting best practices to minimize environmental degradation and adapting them to local conditions as necessary
- Using energy and materials that conserve resources and avoid waste and expensive cleanup
- Conducting environmental impact assessments and collecting baseline data for flora and fauna, soil, and underground and surface waters
- Determining the capacity of the land for uses other than mining
- Minimizing noise and dust during operations
- Handling hazardous materials safely
- Minimizing pollution during operations
- Developing a mine waste management plan that includes tailings dam inspections, emergency checks, and hazard prevention
- Reclaiming the land to prevent erosion and planting native species targeting the same density and diversity of plants that were there before mining
- Assessing the economic impacts of proposed and ongoing activities and developing management policies that maximize positive and minimize negative community and household impacts
- Working with local communities to develop strategies for sustaining their economies after mine closures and encouraging the establishment of other sustainable local and regional business activities
- Looking for continuing improvements in design and efficiency that will help both profitability and competitiveness while reducing wastes released into the environment
- Investing to optimize long-term returns to investment rather than immediate returns
- Investing in programs that improve the skills and thus productivity of the workforce with the goal of creating both economic and social benefits
- Encouraging suppliers to use energy efficient materials and technologies

Economic: This component relates to economic and financial actions, impacts, and policies. It is aimed at recognizing that the health of the economy has to be maintained as a principal means for achieving our quality of life. It includes concepts such as:

10. Do the previous examples for the three components of sustainable development constitute policy or regulation for the mining industry? No. They reflect current thinking about how sustainable development principles could apply to mining operations on federal land. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management

have embraced sustainable development because the concept is complementary to and consistent with each agency's mission to provide for many uses of federal lands. This includes developing natural resources and working with stakeholders to achieve a sustainable future for our lands and for our communities.

Summary. Implementation of the concept of sustainable development as envisioned at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 and as will be discussed by Heads of State in Johannesburg in 2002, requires consideration of three important components—social equity, environmental health, and economic prosperity. Decisions about exploration, extraction, and mine closure activities need to integrate these three components based on sound science. The benefits provided by mineral resources and mining operations can play a significant role in meeting the spirit and intent of sustainable development, whether at a local, regional, national, or worldwide level.

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