



USSD Position – Principles of Sustainability for Dam, Reservoir, and Levee Systems

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Sustainability seeks to balance environmental, economic, and social benefits and impacts of a project for present and future generations. USSD encourages dam and levee owners, engineers, and regulators in the US and around the world to incorporate basic principles of sustainability into the planning (both industry-wide and for individual projects), design, construction, operation, rehabilitation, and decommissioning of dam, reservoir and levee systems.

Basic Principles

Sustainability principles encouraged by USSD, adapted in part from the International Hydropower Association's (IHA) "Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol" (HSAP):

1. Project development, operation, and maintenance should seek to meet current needs related to water quality, water scarcity, protection from natural hazards, and energy security without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
2. The preparation, implementation, operation, and decommissioning of Projects should seek to protect and promote the rights and welfare of workers and project-affected communities in long-term economic viability, and responsible environmental management.
3. Decisions should consider potential synergies and trade-offs amongst economic, technical, social, environmental, and constructability values.
4. Projects should deliver net positive benefits at local, and where possible, national and regional scales.
5. Projects should contribute to the achievement of other broader sustainable development goals.

Prepared by the USSD Environment and Sustainability Committee.