



Chief Editor: Mohammad Safa

Corporate Organizational Change in a Carbon- Constrained World: The Case of the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project in the Tropical Savannas of Australia

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Abstract : This article explores how carbon constraints can impact on sustainable development by examining the case study of the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project in the tropical savannas of northern Australia. The West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project is an interesting case study of how carbon-constraints can influence organizational management because the project evolved under the premise that government policy instruments would eventually create a cost for greenhouse gas emissions. The case study highlights how individuals with a strategic vision of sustainable development in northern Australia collaborated to become powerful change agents in local organizations (including indigenous organizations and not-for-profit land conservation advocates). Their creation of a ‘sustainable development conscience’ led to investment from a firm seeking to benefit from an improved reputation as a good corporate citizen and proactive manager of greenhouse gas emissions.

Key words: emissions trading, offsets, business sustainability

INTRODUCTION

A carbon-constrained world means different things to different people. It means a new market and opportunity to the finance sector, potential financial ruin to fossil-fuel energy industries, policy minefields for politicians attempting to meet the divergent views of their electorates, and the possibility of changed living standards for all. Within this new world view, carbon constraints present opportunities and threats for business and management. Concurrently, reputation

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