

IMCOM Sustainability

The purpose of this discussion is to clarify the concept of sustainability and how it applies to IMCOM operations and installation readiness. Simply put, sustainability means managing all resources -- workforce, infrastructure, funds, information, natural resources, energy, and systems -- so that we have them as needed, to best support current and future mission requirements.

Creating a sustainable installation means examining and changing the way we plan for, invest in, and operate our installations. It means identifying approaches, technologies, and systems that will best support the mission, improve the quality of life in our military communities, protect resources, and reduce our operational costs.

Why do we need to do this, now? Globally, we are living in an unsustainable state. As the population continues to grow, our use of resources like land, bandwidth, water, airspace, energy, petroleum, and timber are growing exponentially. This unsustainable state is similar to your bank account. It is simple math. If you withdraw money from your account faster than you deposit money into that account, eventually you will be overdrawn. Your bank account (in this analogy) is in an unsustainable state.

For IMCOM, sustainability is even more complex than dwindling resources. We rely on resources to run our garrisons. We need the water for human consumption and operations; land for living and training; energy to operate our installations and preserve quality of life; and construction material to maintain and build new infrastructure. In addition, our workforce is aging and we will be losing an irreplaceable amount of expertise over the next ten years. Our military communities are under stress because of the high OPTEMPO and need better and more varied services. Our surrounding communities are growing to our fence lines, making land use for training more difficult and in some cases impossible. Such encroachment is complicated further by new weapon systems that will require more land area to provide realistic training. Finally, to continue the bank account analogy, our monetary resources are not keeping pace with mission demands and getting 'a loan' for more is nearly impossible. Currently, IMCOM is in an unsustainable state.

What do we do? Sustainability crosses all functional areas or 'silos' across IMCOM – it is everyone's business. So everyone has a role, everyone has to think, plan and support creation of a sustainable Army housed at our sustainable installations. Potential roles are briefly described below:

- Garrison Commanders and other Army leaders can be sustainability advocates. Commanders are the advocates at every level who should understand and encourage their team to explore and embrace new systems, approaches to resolving problems, and technologies that will result in sustainable installations. Garrison commanders should consider using their strategic plans as a means for capturing the Garrison system-wide plan for transforming the installation into a sustainable installation.
- PAIOs orchestrate all garrison directorates to first develop strategic (25-year) sustainability goals (documented in the Strategic Plan) and monitor progress in moving towards these goals. Development of goals and monitoring progress should support Garrison ACOE efforts and submissions.
- Energy managers can acquire energy from sustainable, renewable sources (solar, wind, biomass).
- Procurement managers can purchase sustainable (green) products and use vendors with take-back programs. For example, furniture and paper from sustainable forests, non-VOC paints, locally-produced goods, fair trade products, re-manufactured product trades, 100% recycled products, organic products.

- Contracting officers can support their customers in acquiring sustainable services and products by identifying appropriate sources and integrating language in contracts that result in sustainable purchases.
- Logistics managers can lease and procure energy efficient vehicles, specify green products, plan for reuse and recycling of spares and repair parts, and maximize the use of electronic manuals.
- Master planners can design sustainable communities. For example, utilizing mass transportation, bike and walking paths, and housing within walking distance of work. The Master Plan should reflect and be an integral part of the Garrison Strategic Plan for Sustainability.
- Public works engineers can design sustainable closed loop waste water systems (e.g. use gray water for irrigation), green roofs, solar cells on roofs, permeable hard surfaces (roads, parking lots) to allow rainwater to soak through and replenish groundwater, waterless urinals, water efficient fixtures, low energy consuming appliances and lights.
- Garrisons can partner with communities to share commonalities. For example, connecting mass transit systems and sharing recycling programs for cost effectiveness and efficiencies.
- Personnel can develop succession plans that provide for the recruitment, retention, development of staff and address retirement to ensure that we continue to have a workforce with the required skills to meet current and future mission demands.
- Training land managers can ensure our ranges operate by employing emerging technologies, sustainable land management techniques identified by the sustainable range program.
- Environmental managers can plan Earth Day events with sustainability themes and support other installation functions in understanding and using sustainable technology alternatives, systems, management systems and approaches.
- Public Affairs Office can include a sustainability message in the garrison strategic communication plan and outreach efforts including participation in regional sustainability initiatives.
- Installations planners must, by Executive Order, integrate sustainability into strategic planning processes so that installations have a long-term roadmap that supports development on a sustainable installation.
- Tenant Organizations should be engaged in strategic planning to ensure their participation in Garrison strategic sustainable goal development and implementation.
- Everyone can review and file documents electronically (versus hard copies); use duplex when printing; conserve energy; recycle; carpool, use mass transit, bike or walk.

The term “Seventh Generation” is a sustainability term originated by the Iroquois Indians to refer to their thinking seven generations ahead (a couple hundred years into the future) and deciding whether the decisions they make today would benefit their children seven generations into the future. IMCOM needs to plan seven generations ahead to ensure future mission requirements are met and resources are available for our children’s children.

Human, natural, man-made, and monetary resources necessary to support the Nation, Army, and IMCOM are finite. Concurrently, requirements for those resources continue to grow with persistent conflict and the high OPEMPO associated with fulfilling the ARFORGEN cycle. The Army relies on IMCOM to provide installation capabilities and services to support expeditionary operations, and a quality of life for Soldiers, Families, and Civilians commensurate with their service, now and into the future. As such, IMCOM must play a major role in restoring balance by being a leader in sustainability and a model steward of limited resources. We must think seven generations ahead.

Sustain, Support, Defend -- ARMY STRONG!