

TrainERGY project

Good practice - Sustainability Interventions Identification

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1 Introduction

1.1 Good practice definition

Good practice is a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives. It has been proven to work well and produce good results¹.

1.2 Good practice criteria

The following set of criteria will help you to determine whether a practice is a 'good practice':

- **Effective and successful**
A good practice has proven its strategic relevance as the most effective way to achieve a specific objective; it has been successfully adopted and has had a positive impact on individuals and/or communities.
- **Environmentally, economically and socially sustainable**
A good practice meets current needs, in particular the essential ones of the world's poorest, without compromising the ability to address future needs.
- **Technically feasible**
Technical feasibility is the basis of a good practice. It must be easy to learn and implement.
- **Inherently participatory**
Participatory approaches are essential, as they support a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions.
- **Replicable and adaptable**
A good practice should have the potential for replication and should therefore be adaptable to similar objectives in varying situations.
- **Reducing disaster/crisis risks, if applicable**
A good practice contributes to disaster/crisis risk reduction for resilience.

¹ Nash, J. and Ehrenfeld, J., (1997), "Codes of environmental management practice: assessing their potential as a tool for change." Annual Review of Energy and the Environment 22, pp. 487-535; Bretschneider, S., Marc-Aurele, F.J., Jr., and Wu, J. (2005), "Best Practices" Research: A methodological guide for the perplexed, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, (15) 2, pp. 307-323.

2 Good practice description

GP has to be related with one of the topics covered during the training (e.g. Green marketing, Technologies for reducing the consumption of raw material, Interventions identification).

You can use different resources e.g. company websites, business reports, scientific papers, ScENAT analysis results and your business experience.

Try to answer to all below questions and to not exceed 3000 words.

2.1 Objective

The main aim of this document is to indicate and describe green practices, which were implemented by the polish company - AN-MAR. The AN-MAR company is a small, family-run business operating in textile industry. The company offers a wide portfolio of garment accessories. Primary products are: insets, shoulder pads, bra and wedding dress pads, shoulder shapers for hangers. The company produces elements from nonwoven fabrics and foams with various shapes and applications. It collaborates with numerous companies, both home and abroad. Good practices are related here to *Sustainability interventions identification*.

2.2 Introduction

Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are 3 pillars of company's sustainable development:

1. sustainable manufacturing,
2. clean technologies,
3. green products.

It can also help to achieve the following goals: reducing costs, reducing the emission of CO₂ and optimisation of the production process. The company pursues the following key values: openness to customers, professionalism, innovation and taking care of the environment (by using

recycled materials). By using a several technologies the company is helping make their product's manufacturing more green:

- making product using less energy and materials (e.g. using solar panels),
- producing less waste (e.g. minimisation of waste production),
- environmental protection (e.g. using recycled materials),
- waste management (e.g. recycling) and etc.

The company has started to implement the sustainable development policy since it was founded in order to be environmentally friendly.

2.3 Actors and Stakeholders

The main actor of this good practice is the manufacturer - AN-MAR Anna Czarnecka. Stakeholders are customers, various industries who need small-sized elements made from foam and nonwoven fabric:

- clothing industry,
- cosmetic and SPA industry,
- gardening industry.

Stakeholders also are suppliers of foam and nonwoven fabric. About 5% of the foam waste is collected and transported to the suppliers for reprocessing. A part of the non-woven fabric waste is also collected and transported to the suppliers for reprocessing. From the remaining wastes from the nonwoven fabric the company produces plant pot discs that prevent weeds from growing. They perfectly let the water and the air through, and they prevent weeds from growing. They are resistant to weather conditions, fertilisers and products used in gardening.

2.4 Methodological approach

The identification of sustainability intervention implementation consists of a following elements:

- housekeeping (improvement in work practices and maintenance),
- process optimisations (making adjustments to processes to increase efficiency),
- raw materials substitution (shifting to more environmentally sound inputs),
- new technologies (enable lower resource consumption, waste generation, emissions),
- new product design (minimize impact throughout product lifecycle).

2.5 Validation

The good practice described is validated in many ways at many different levels of the supply chain. Firstly, the implementation of improvement was preceded by the analysis of accordance it with the local and global law. Next, the company started cooperating with scientific institution to design a new technology and ensure that it is really possible to use nonwoven fabric remains to create product in the respond for customer expectations. Thanks to obtaining the certificate CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility based on the ISO 26000 standard, the process of production and its environmental influences are controlled in internal and external audits. Moreover, the company monitors not only the profits from selling the product but also their impact on the environment using some important indicators: the emission of CO₂, the quantity of wastes and recycled materials. AN-MAR investigates also customers' opinions about the new product with direct interviews conducted once a quarter. The sector of shoulder pads production is really small so, the manufacturer and clients can stay in close relationship. The multiscale validation presents the connection between business, environmental and social purposes, what makes the company responsible and innovative business partner, operating with the rule of sustainable development.

2.6 Results/outputs

Thanks to the good practice described, the AN-MAR became more efficient, environmentally friendly and competitive on the market. The company found the method to minimize the quantity of nonwoven fabric wastes, used them as a raw material for plant pot discs

against weeds. The production of the product is quite simple, but the company obtained a new source of benefits, and started operating on the new gardening market. The product is an ideal solution in such businesses as forest nurseries, fruit plant nurseries and ornamental plant nurseries. In relation to diversification of the production, the company uses many alternatives and became more resistant to the industrial trends' fluctuations. Through improvement implementation, AN-MAR has the opportunity to enter at other foreign markets (outside East Europe).

2.7 Impact

Long-term development improvement (close production cycle and recycling of raw materials) can contribute to the decrease of the emission of CO₂ globally, according to the rule "Each small step for man is a great step for mankind." From the company's perspective, plant pot rings made of 100% recycled secondary fibres strengthen the company's eco-friendly image what can have an influence for the increase of the number of clients who also pay the attention to eco-solutions. It involves higher benefits. The impact of the good practice can be measured using indicators, such as:

- The quantity of wastes,
- The quantity of recycled materials,
- Emissions of CO₂,
- Energy consumption,
- Profits and loss,
- Customers' satisfaction.

2.8 Success factors

The final products are made from 100% recycled secondary fibres. Any additional ingredients not have to be added. The production is easy to implement, costs are low.

Manufacturing is realized using the same infrastructure and technology. Moreover, it does not require more employees and obtaining any additional permissions.

2.9 Constraints

Good practices are often both creative and profitable ideas. More and more companies become aware of the harmful impact of their actions on the environment. Because of this fact, the producers develop ecologically-friendly approach. However, there are obstacles they face while developing such practices and there are fields for improvement to make them effective. This section discusses all traps and tips concerning the good practice of producing plant pot disks from the nonwoven fabric left from the manufacturing of the main product – stitched shoulder pads.

When it comes to introducing such product to the market, the customers might be sceptical towards any innovations and goods they are not familiar with. The need for the plant pot disks is also unknown. These are the typical constraints each company face while designing and developing new products.

In terms of possible improvements, the company ought to be focused on advertising the very positive aspects of the disks. Ability to minimise waste from the given material is crucial since it provides two benefits. First of all, obviously the manufacturer can save more money after selling the disks. When the waste is minimal, almost all material obtained after making the stitched shoulder pads could be feasibly used to create the disks. Secondly, effective, eco-friendly approach make many companies recognisable among both customers and organisations and institutions connected with ecology in general. These two factors – effectiveness in terms of recycling and manufacturing and popularising the product should be prioritised. Modern society appreciates “green” companies and such good practices and, according to many researches, is willing to pay more for the product or at least chose instead of other possible options on the market.

2.10 Lessons learned

From the good practice described, we can learn how improvements of the manufacturing process turn the company to be more efficient and profitable. Connections between being friendly to the environment and empowering position on the market are clearly visible in this situation. It is a very complex process that has to be evaluated at various level of production process. The most important is to be able to adapt the company to the market's needs, to use business opportunities in a sustainable way and deliver to the customer not only the product, but also its value.

2.11 Sustainability

Sustainability is the study of how natural systems function, remain diverse and produce everything it needs for the ecology to remain in balance. It consists of three main factors, which are: environmental protection, economic and social development. Considering implementation of the good practice from the social point of view, this action was a response to customer needs and demand for the ecological products. The manufacturer carried out an initiative cooperating with an Academic Institution. They started to utilize production waste in order to create different merchandises which their customers wanted to possess. As a result, the final amount of garbage was significantly militated. Ecological factor is also influenced by other types of waste recycling, the AN-MAR company has a close cycle of their production operation and does not generate any useless materials. The last aspect is the economical one. Optimization of manufacturing process and exploitation of every fabricated material leads to higher efficiency. What is more, the company not only decreases expenditures for the materials, but also gains additional revenues from the waste disposal.

The total costs of plant pot discs business implementation are related mainly to evaluation of products, processes and personal training of the employees. The nonwoven fabric needed is already provided so does not generate further expenses.

2.12 Demonstration



Here are the plant pot discs for plant protection against weeds, designed by AN-MAR company. Although the project was created and implemented in one small company and especially to one kind of material, the good practice, understood as a usage of waste to create a new final product, what increase company sustainability, can be implemented in any company all over the world.

2.13 Related website(s) / resources

<http://www.iisd.org>

<http://www.fiberi.pl/>

<https://www.environmentalscience.org/sustainability>