



BRIEFING NOTE

FOR INFORMATION

SUBJECT: Examples of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

There are a variety of different Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that companies can implement to improve profits, image, and industry reputation. One of the most successful at generating positive results is environmental initiatives, which seeks to decrease operating costs while at the same time garnering positive public sentiment concerning the company's operations. Below are examples of environmental CSR initiatives that can have positive effects for a company:

1. **Emission Reduction:** Reducing energy and greenhouse gas emissions can not only have beneficial effects on the environment, but can also greatly decrease operating costs, in many cases being more efficient than conventional energy systems. Companies that moved away from a reliance on conventional energy such as gas, propane, diesel, and coal, towards renewable systems such as solar, wind, and hydropower, experienced a significant decrease in energy costs and emissions over time. While the initial cost of transitioning from conventional energy can be high, long-term benefits oftentimes outweigh the start-up costs. Furthermore, companies can implement a gradual introduction of emission reduction initiatives to their operations, adopting a balanced approach that relies on conventional and renewable energy depending on the company's needs.
2. **Energy Efficient Products:** This initiative seeks to integrate systems and products that are energy efficient into a company's operations, improving the lifecycle of products to reduce company and consumer emissions. Energy efficiency can decrease a company's operating costs, build consumer confidence and loyalty, and improve the effectiveness of other CSR initiatives.
3. **Waste Reduction:** Companies can improve their waste management practices to improve operational efficiency and create sustainable product chains, leading to positive effects on profits and consumer relations both in the short and long-term. This initiative can be implemented to control waste practices during operations, such as water runoff, waste disposal, and contamination control, as well as adopt strategies to deal with waste following a products lifecycle, such as recycling, refurbishing, or ecological disposal of electronics.
4. **Environmental Remediation:** Companies that focus on extractive practices or that contaminate sites during their operations can implement a strategy to remediate the land, both during and following operations to reduce negative costs in the future. This strategy can help create a positive image for the company, especially if the company intends to operate in the future, whether it be in the same area or another. Governments will be

more likely to allow for extractive activities in an area if a company presents a remediation plan.

Companies can adopt a variety of different environmental CSR initiatives to improve both the productivity and image of their operations that generate tangible results both in the short and long-term. Many states and communities are becoming increasingly aware of the negative environmental effects of company practices. Thus, introducing environmentally friendly CSR practices early can decrease the chances of ramifications in the future, as well as create lines of communication and cooperation with governments and communities. This is especially true in developing areas, where states and community organizations are adopting stronger policies in regards to environmentally damaging practices.

For more information concerning this brief please contact;

David Walsh-Pickering

Researcher | Centre for International and Defence Policy (CIDP)

Queen's University

138 Union Street, Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 3N6

Tel: (514) 980-0999

Email: d.walsh-pickering@queensu.ca

Website: www.queensu.ca/cidp