

# Corporate Sustainability & Green Cities

Assignment I: Business Case Report

SUS  
TAIN

## **ASSIGNMENT I: BUSINESS CASE REPORT**

For this assignment you need to work in small groups (3/4 persons) to consider the impact of urban (un)sustainability on the strategy of a selected company. This will involve analysing the current strategy of the firm and giving consideration to how it may be enhanced. Your ultimate goal is to help the company develop an urban sustainability strategy to help the business survive and gain competitive advantage in greener cities. Your target audience is the (badly informed) boardroom of the selected company. Henceforth information needs to be well presented and in an easily palatable format where possible.

You may choose any national or multinational company. Please take time to consider your choice and the reasons behind the selection (e.g. availability of information, importance of climate change issues).

For this assignment you will be expected to go beyond the communications of the selected company and find information from a variety of sources (of which some may be rather inventive). You may indicate where you deem information may have reliability issues. Sources may include; corporate communications, industry statistics, NGOs, consumer groups, investor websites and popular literature on sustainability. Please use some academic references where suitable.

You may structure your case study however you see fit. The case must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following items:

### **Case Item #1: Business Overview and Industry Setting (approx. 20%)**

First set the scene by providing a description of the firm and its activities. Provide the industry setting and in particular its impact on urban environments (e.g. what is the industry's impacts on cities) and efforts to improve city sustainability.

### **Case Item #2: Current Strategy for Urban Sustainability (approx. 35%)**

State and give reasoning to what you believe to be the current strategy of the firm in relation to urban sustainability. Please indicate the overall strategic posture and the key components to the current strategy.

Analyse the current strategy to provide an understanding of why the firm has adopted such a position. You may wish to consider issues such as; how it fits with the firm's current competencies, resource use, competitors, perspectives of consumers and other stakeholders.

Please feel free to use any strategic analysis tools you may wish (e.g. SWOT) to understand both the current and future opportunities and risks (e.g. legal, regulatory, physical, reputational etc.), and the firm's current strategy.

### **Case Item #3: Revision and Upscaling (approx. 45%)**

Based on your analysis of the current urban sustainability strategy please draw conclusions to its effectiveness in both the present and future. Does the company need to revise the current strategy based on the current and future opportunities and threats of unsustainable cities?

You may of course deem that your selected firm does not necessarily need an entire new strategy, but instead need to work on optimising its current one, or perhaps even operating with no change at all. Proposed changes of strategy can be very small and internal to the firm or grand externally communicated posture changes - just be sure to support any propositions which you make. You may wish to consider short, medium and longer term changes to try to take into account the changing business landscape resulting from both ecology (e.g. a warming and more volatile climate), and society (e.g. changing pressures and influences of stakeholders).

#### **Specifications:**

Only desk research is expected (e.g. you are not expected to engage with the company).

*Paper length:* There is no set limit but approximately 8 pages should suffice. Please write in an executive report style attractive for the boardroom.

## LECTURER'S PROFILE

Steve Kennedy is an Assistant Professor researching corporate sustainability, climate change and sustainability-oriented innovation within the Centre of Corporate Eco-Transformation at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. Dr Kennedy's current research focuses on how corporate sustainability strategies are translated into successful innovation and the formation of future-ready sustainable business models. In recognition of its academic contribution his thesis on the challenges of operationalizing sustainability at the local-level was highly commended at the prestigious Emerald/EFMD Outstanding Doctoral Research Awards 2010. Dr Kennedy is the Academic Director of the MSc Global Business & Sustainability and teaches courses such as 'Climate Change Strategy Role-Play' and 'Sustainability Leadership and Planetary Boundaries'. His research is published in journals such as *Journal of Management Studies*, *Long Range Planning*, *Journal of Cleaner Production* and *Management Learning*. Email: [skennedy@rsm.nl](mailto:skennedy@rsm.nl)

**MODULE DEVELOPER:**



#### **ABOUT ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**

Rotterdam School of Management is one of Europe's leading and largest business schools among the 1% of schools worldwide with Triple Crown accreditation. The school is a world leader in research and teaching on sustainability ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> in Europe and 19<sup>th</sup> globally according to The Aspen Institute's Beyond Grey Pinstripes Report.

Project participation is from the Centre for Corporate Eco-Transformation which broadly aims to reach a clearer understanding of the management challenges of corporate sustainability. The Centre conducts high-level research and education on management issues related to sustainability and provides accessible and up-to-date information on cutting-edge research, ideas and works published on the subject of corporate eco-transformation.

Learn more about RSM: <http://www.rsm.nl/>

## **ABOUT SUSTAIN PROJECT**

The SUSTAIN project aims to improve the quality of tertiary education in Sustainable Urban Development in Europe and partner universities in Asia; develop standardized education modules related to SUD and furthermore enriching them with international perspectives and academic and vocational skills and competencies; promote collaboration and international cooperation between European and Asian Higher Education Institutions in SUD but also collaboration and sharing between Erasmus Mundus programmes; establish links and bridge European Higher Education and practice in SUD; increase the visibility and access to European Higher Education in Asia in the field of SUD, attracting prospective Asian and international students.

The SUSTAIN project is co-ordinated by the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) with the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions, the Netherlands, the Rotterdam School of Management, the Netherlands, Darmstadt University of Technology, Germany; National Technical University of Athens, Greece; European Academy of Bolzano, Italy; Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy; Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia; Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology, India; Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, China; and International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Germany.

**[www.sustainedu.com](http://www.sustainedu.com)**

**SUS  
TAIN**