CSR/SD Coordination

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Fact Sheet - Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

Introduction

At Holcim, we use a variety of systems and tools for environmental management, both at corporate and Group company level. Our aim is to carefully manage our impacts at all stages of production, from raw material input to distribution and use of the final product.

Our systems extend from individual site environmental assessment tools - the plant environmental profile (PEP) - to the industry-wide standard methodology for reporting CO_2 emissions - the WBCSD/WRI Carbon Dioxide Protocol. To ensure a systematic approach, we apply these various environmental management standards worldwide and monitor our performance. The purpose of such systems is to identify and assess the level of the company's environmental impacts; set objectives and targets to reduce such impacts; and commit to continuous improvement as part of our organizational policy-making.

Why this issue is important

Cement production can have major impacts on the environment - it consumes large quantities of raw materials and energy, and leads to atmospheric emissions, including CO_2. Further, plants, quarries and transport operations can impact local ecology. Robust, auditable systems are therefore essential for cement companies to effectively manage their environmental impacts and measure their performance - in order to continuously improve.

Stakeholders are also becoming increasingly aware of our industry's environmental impacts. The Cement Sustainability Initiative (CSI) stakeholder dialogues called for more consistent and rigorous attention to be paid to the environmental performance of cement companies worldwide, and our own dialogue processes provide Holcim with valuable inputs to the process of issue identification and prioritization.

The internationally recognized environmental management standard, ISO 14001, provides assurance to stakeholders - with the certification process confirming that a company is prepared to manage its impacts responsibly. Further, for the company that embraces the ISO standard, the ongoing cycle of planning, implementation, auditing and correction provide for continuous improvement of environmental performance.

Challenges for Holcim

Environmental management, including monitoring of performance, was a decentralized management responsibility within the Group until 2000. As a result, many of our companies had environmental management systems (EMS) in place for many years but the scope of these systems varied. Corporate standards started to be implemented in 1997 and corporate data collection began in 2001. Our challenge is, therefore, two-fold: to ensure that all Group company systems apply the rigor that is required of an EMS process, and that collected data is of consistent quality. An important step in this direction was the alignment of all Group company environmental policies with the global statement, consistency of approach being a key indicator of our ability to manage impacts.

A further challenge relates to our geographically and culturally diverse Group with the potential for different environmental management approaches across 70 countries. Encouraging our many employees with diverse cultural and behavioral perspectives to embed environmental responsibility into their daily lives is an ongoing challenge which we are managing through training and integration of environmental parameters into business processes.

Our commitment

The Holcim environmental policy commits us to apply environmental management standards worldwide and monitor our performance. Further, we promote our commitment through training, educating staff at a number of levels to ensure our policies and procedures are implemented effectively. We also integrate selected environmental parameters into business management processes. Performance against these parameters is then included in monthly reports to management, as well as business plans and investment decisions.

- We implement ISO 14001 compatible management systems at all Group company cement plants, including grinding stations and waste pre-treatment platforms. We also implement a Group-wide Emissions Monitoring and Reporting (EMR) standard to ensure that performance is scrutinized on an on-going basis. Finally, we monitor and evaluate our performance on a regular basis via our Plant Environmental Profile (PEP) reporting standard at all business units.

Our engagement with the CSI has also led to the development of the following tools:

- Global guidelines on the responsible use of raw materials and fuels in cement kilns
- An agreed global protocol for measuring and reporting atmospheric emissions
- Development of key performance indicators on these issues.

Related publicly available information

Holcim publishes Corporate Sustainable Development Reports (CSDRs) each second year, with performance information and data updated annually on our website. Together with additional fact sheets and other SD-related information, this can be found at: www.holcim.com/sustainable/

More information on the CSI is available at: www.wbcsdcement.org/