

PRESS RELEASE

International Sustainability Management Survey: National Answers to a Global Challenge?

Lüneburg, 1. August 2013

Companies all over the world are challenged to deal with sustainability issues. Astonishingly many similarities exist in the corporate responses from different countries. However, for some aspects country-specific characteristics can be identified. This is a key result of the 'International Corporate Sustainability Barometer' study conducted by the Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM), Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany, together with ten prestigious international partner institutions.

The forerunners: Japan and the United Kingdom

The survey analyses the current state of the art as well as the progress of sustainability management and CSR in 468 companies of eleven countries from Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. With regard to many of the aspects analysed, Japanese and UK companies seem one step ahead of their international peers. Companies from these countries integrate sustainability activities into the organisation more broadly and involve more corporate functions, for instance. Furthermore, the British apply sustainability management tools to an exceptionally high degree and Japanese companies frequently follow related standards and guidelines.

Besides Japan, outstanding results can also be found for South Korea – another industry-oriented economy. Korean companies face high stakeholder demands and, accordingly, manage their stakeholder relations intensively. Furthermore, Korean, Spanish and French companies frequently measure the effects of sustainability management activities on their corporate success and competitive advantage. "In the long run, these measurements are of essential importance for the actual integration of environmental and social issues", emphasises Professor Stefan Schaltegger, Head of the CSM. Moreover, U.S. and Hungarian companies (besides the British) employ an above average number of sustainability management tools.

Are service-oriented economies lagging behind?

German companies are commonly known for their comprehensive environmental management and pronounced employees' rights. Yet, the current "International Corporate Sustainability Barometer" draws a different picture, since these companies are neither among the strongest nor among the weakest performers for any of the surveyed sustainability topics. Some economies, such as Australia, Belgium or Switzerland, are characterized by a large portion of (financial) service companies. The different sustainability challenges that companies from the service industry face compared to the first or second sector might explain why these national samples tend to be below international average with respect to a large number of issues.

Press Contact | Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM)

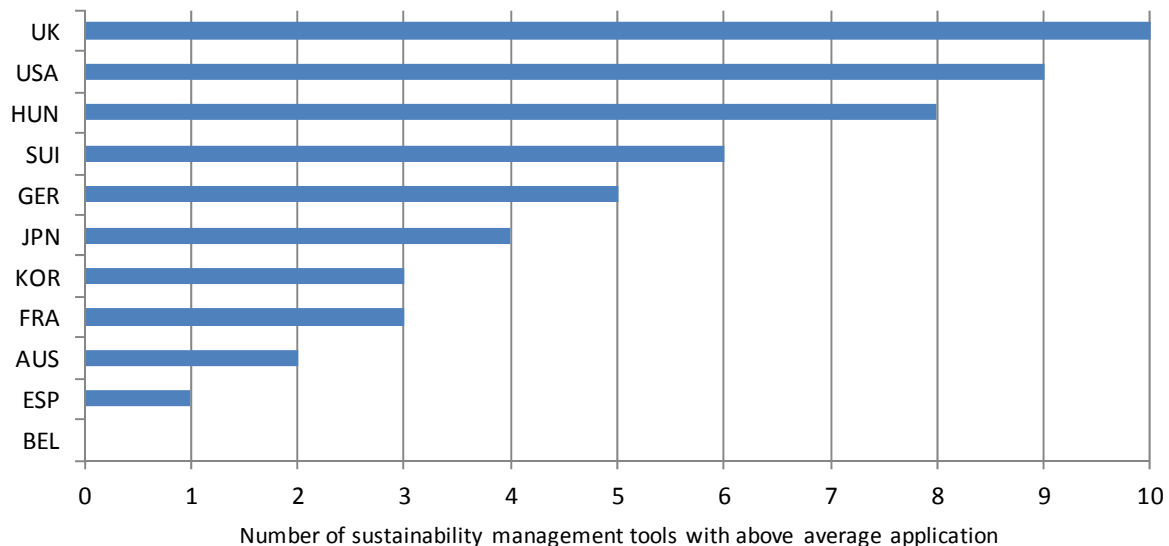
Olaf Ledderboge

Fon: +49(0) 4131.677-2235 | **E-Mail:** olaf.ledderboge@leuphana.de | **Web:** www.leuphana.de/csm

Leuphana Universität | Centre for Sustainability Management | Scharnhorststraße 1 | D-21335 Lüneburg

Public pressure the most important driver of corporate sustainability

Surprising similarities can be found, for instance, with regard to the companies' motivation for sustainability management. "It is primarily the public pressure, particularly by NGOs and media, which drives companies to deal with environmental or social issues", states Professor Schaltegger. Among the different corporate functions, corporate communication is particularly involved in sustainability management. The importance of environmental and social issues for the corporations' societal acceptance is also reflected by the fact that companies primarily take measures which safeguard their reputation. By contrast, market-oriented measures, such as sustainability-oriented innovations, are only of subordinate importance. The study thus identifies challenges and currently unrealised benefits of sustainability management that are relevant to all investigated countries.



Example: While in some countries the application of corporate sustainability management tools is above average for many of the ten most common tools, others only rarely apply these tools.

Download (PDF): „**International Corporate Sustainability Barometer**”

URL: www2.leuphana.de/csm/InternationalCorporateSustainabilityBarometer.pdf

The **Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM)** at Leuphana University Lüneburg is an internationally operating centre for research on sustainability management. The CSM conducts research, teaching and continuous education in the fields of entrepreneurial sustainability management, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social entrepreneurship. The CSM offers the worldwide first MBA in sustainability management). www.sustainment.de.

Press Contact | Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM)

Olaf Ledderboge

Fon: +49(0) 4131.677-2235 | **E-Mail:** olaf.ledgerboge@leuphana.de | **Web:** www.leuphana.de/csm

Leuphana Universität | Centre for Sustainability Management | Scharnhorststraße 1 | D-21335 Lüneburg