



BALANCE
green and stable

GREEN PRACTICES INTEGRATED IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS

NATIONAL REPORT

CYPRUS

Emphasys
CENTRE



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of the European Union

CONTEXT

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About the Project

The need for climate action and sustainable resources management is more important than ever. The Green Deal presented by the European Commission on 11th of December 2019, sets the goal, Europe to be a climate-neutral continent by 2050. The Green Deal addresses the immediate need for specific actions that support Circular Economy, helping to reduce CO2 emissions, transform the energy industry, move the production to a more environmental-friendly stage and many more.

The way to becoming Climate-Neutral continent will put in front of us new types of challenges. One of them lay in front of small and midsized enterprises (SMEs) which have an essential role in achieving a greener economy as it is indicated by the Green Action Plan.

The upcoming regulations based on the Green Deal are extremely needed, but also they put many of the traditional business models in a transitional situation. The small business struggled in the past decay to recover from a financial crisis and now is facing new challenges operating in COVID-19 world. This business finds it hard to adapt quickly to the needed.

The most sensitive are the SMEs, where change management is challenged by the lack of present financial or human resources, sustainability and knowledge, especially for micro-SMEs.

BALANCE is a project that steps on the key learning points from the Green Action Plan for SMEs, to combine best practices around EU and back them up with financial knowledge in order to create a valuable and training program which curriculum is based on ECVET for the transformation of the small business into greener ones without having to sacrifice the financial sustainability of the enterprises and allow them to keep their employees.



The Balance project aims to develop and provide SMEs decision makers with an innovative program that will help them transform into greener operations while improving their financial literacy and enhancing their environmental awareness. The project addresses a key priority of the EU related to environmental and climate goals. Supporting individuals in acquiring and developing basic skills and key competencies is the horizontal priority underpinning this project.



Objectives and Conduct of the research

The main objective of this research is to examine the current situation for SMEs in Cyprus and the implementation of green practises in their operations. The purpose is to identify already successful examples of green and environmental practises of companies in Cyprus in order to increase awareness on the benefits of transitioning into greener operations and influence other SMEs.

The first phase of the research included an Internet search in order to identify companies that are already implementing green policies and have transitioned to greener operations in Cyprus. Once the five companies were identified attempts were made via email and phone in order to arrange interviews to solicit the required information. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and the Covid-19 situation we experienced difficulties in arranging online interviews with the staff of the companies. Out of the five case studies included in this report, three were conducted via phone interviews. For the remaining two case studies a thorough internet research was carried out and the information was extracted from the companies' official reports and websites.

The information presented on the national context for SMEs in Cyprus and national initiatives concerning environmental practices in Cyprus was also retrieved via the Internet.

National Context for SMEs

The economy of Cyprus relies heavily on small and medium-sized enterprises. A staggering number of enterprises in Cyprus (99.9%) have fewer than 250 employees and 95% of these SMEs are employed by less than 10 people¹. According to Statista, the total number of SMEs in Cyprus, in 2018, was 55,172.² Therefore, it is not surprising that SMEs provide more than 75% of the total value of the island's economy, excluding finance³.

Information retrieved from the Cyprus-SBA Fact Sheet (2019), suggests that in relation to the environment Cyprus performs substantially below the EU average. More specifically, the proportion of SMEs that benefited from public support in terms of resource efficiency has decreased by 54% since 2016. The report states that the number of SMEs in Cyprus that receive public support to produce green products is one of the lowest in the EU. On the other hand, it is reported that Cyprus has one of the highest percentages of SMEs that have more than 50% of their turnover generated by green products or services.

Contact was established with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Cyprus Centre for Environmental Research and Education and the Federation of Employers & Industries in Cyprus in order to find out whether there are any environmental/sustainability laws or any type of national legislation for SMEs. The information retrieved indicates that the only national legislation established for SMEs in Cyprus is related to waste management. The Packaging and Waste Packaging Law (L.32(1)/2002) was established in April 2002. According to this national law any manufacturer or importer of products who places packaging into the market is obliged to recover and recycle a percentage of this packaging⁴.

¹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326566637_Internal_CSR_practices_within_the_SME_sector_in_Cyprus_from_the_employee_s_perspective_-_challenges_and_prospects

²<https://www.statista.com/statistics/878752/number-of-smes-in-cyprus/>

³<https://www.cyprusprofile.com/articles/cyprus-smes-provide-75-2-of-total-value-added-generated>

⁴[http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/environment/environmentnew.nsf/All/F2DD126BB44553B6C225802F003AB309/\\$file/N32\(I\)-2002.pdf](http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/environment/environmentnew.nsf/All/F2DD126BB44553B6C225802F003AB309/$file/N32(I)-2002.pdf)

There are no official regulations for SMEs, hence why most businesses in Cyprus pay to get certified with ISO 14000. ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organization which provides businesses with an environmental management system. Being certified with ISO 14001 means that a business has an official Environmental Management System which allows it to be successful without neglecting its environmental responsibilities and its impact on the environment ⁵.

According to the Eco-Innovation Observatory report for 2018-2019, policy and funding measures and mechanisms for promoting eco-innovation in Cyprus highly depend on co-financing through the EU structural funds. SMEs in Cyprus are not supported in ensuring energy and environmental regulatory compliance as there is no green public procurement as part of the procurement policy in Cyprus (Cyprus - SBA Fact Sheet, 2019).

Nevertheless, the government has encouraged SMEs to voluntarily become certified by the Commission's eco-management and audit (EMAS) scheme. **The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** is a European commission management instrument for companies and other organisations which aims to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance. During 2007-2017, 582.600 euros were provided to SMEs in Cyprus to implement EMAS⁶. Funding for consultancy services are also included under the EMAS system. In addition, the Cypriot government promotes the ecological scheme ECOLABEL which aims in the promotion of products with reduced environmental impact and in informing consumers with accurate and scientific information about products that they choose to use.

Other initiatives taken by the Cypriot Government:

- The Scheme for **“Promoting Saving and Upgrading in Business”** is co-financed by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Regional and Development Fund in the framework of the operational program “Competitiveness and Sustainable Development” 2014-2020. The objective of the scheme is the energy upgrade of large-scale building installations which are owned by SMEs by insulating the shell of the buildings, installing renewable energy systems for heating / cooling and electricity saving systems. The total funding is €15,3 mil and the maximum amount of funding per SME is 200,000 ⁷.
- In January 2018, an **Action Plan to strengthen the social enterprise ecosystem** (Σχέδιο Δράσης για την ενίσχυση του οικοσυστήματος των Κοινωνικών Επιχειρήσεων) was announced by the Cypriot Ministry of the Interior. The action plan is in line with the national policy statement for enriching the Cypriot entrepreneurial ecosystem, agreed in 2015, and sets goals to develop the entrepreneurial environment in Cyprus. The main aims of the plan are to create a social entrepreneurship culture, support SMEs access to finance and to overall create an ideal business environment (Cyprus - SBA Fact Sheet, 2019).
- The **“Scheme for the Enhancement of Youth Entrepreneurship 2nd Call”** was introduced by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism of the Republic of Cyprus in order to support and encourage entrepreneurship for young people between the ages of 20- 40, who wish to develop an enterprise in the sectors of manufacturing, services, tourist activities and e-commerce. Emphasis is given in the development of new technologies, in the use of innovative

⁵ <https://www.iso.org/standard/60857.html>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/sites/ecoap_stayconnected/files/field/field-country-files/eio_country_profile_2018-2019_cyprus.pdf

⁷ <http://www.mcit.gov.cy/mcit/sit/sit.nsf/32177ee11d0d6003c225816f001d4b05/ab7a6b03df68044bc225819200419072?OpenDocument>

methods of production and promotion of products and services, and in companies that prioritize environmental protection⁸.

- The Cyprus Entrepreneurship Fund (CYPEF). CYPEF is a fund created by the Republic of Cyprus to support and reinforce entrepreneurship by providing SMEs in Cyprus with access to funding. The financing is made available to the Cypriot government by the European Investment Bank (EIB). Almost all enterprises and self-employed entrepreneurs under the Cyprus social insurance scheme can have access to this fund⁹.

⁸ <http://www.gov.cy/mcit/sit/sit.nsf/32177ee11d0d6003c225816f001d4b05/993590539bd6cdc0c22581f300316f3e?OpenDocument>

⁹ https://www.eif.org/what_we_do/resources/cypef/index.htm

National and other initiatives

Organisations and Businesses Awards for the Environment: <http://kykpee.org/en/envawards/>

The Cyprus Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CYCERE) is the first independent environmental centre of Cyprus. CYCERE contributes to environmental conservation by adopting and promoting strategies in environmental education, environmental research and information. Recognising that SMEs and organizations can have a detrimental effect on the environment, CYCERE, supports and promotes businesses that implement environmentally friendly policies and practises by providing them with environmental awards and recognition.

The Bronze Environment Protector Award is awarded to an organisation/business that has drawn up an environmental policy, on its own or in cooperation with CYCERE, and has as a permanent goal to respect the environment.



The Silver Environment Protector Award is awarded to the organization/business, whose main purpose is the protection and rational management of the natural environment, by taking actions that contribute to the environmental consciousness of its visitors/customers.

The Gold Environment Protector Award is awarded to the organization/business which manages environmental issues as an integral part of its operational policy, by establishing practices and actions that preserve the natural environment. In addition, it reduces the consumption of natural resources through the adoption of appropriate best techniques, thus contributing to sustainable development.



The awards are organized by CYCERE and the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment and are sponsored by the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), the Association of Employers and Industrialists (OEB), the Cyprus Tourism Businesses Association (STEK), the Organization of Professional Women Entrepreneurs of Limassol.

The Green Cluster <http://www.greencluster.org/>

The Green Cluster is an initiative established by AKTI Project and Research Centre in Nicosia Cyprus. The aim behind the initiative was to bring together companies as well as individuals working in the environment and green sector in Cyprus and build a community of small businesses and producers. The main aims of the Cluster are to achieve gender equality, foster collaboration across various economic sectors and develop an inclusive growth concept. The Green Cluster has more than 300 members and its main activities involve identifying opportunities and market needs in the green sector in Cyprus, hosting networking events, and providing online tools such as the Green Cluster e-platform and the web-database of green best practises.



Green dot Cyprus <http://greendot.com.cy/en>

Green dot Cyprus is a non-profit organisation which was established with the initiative of the local industry and of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) as an umbrella organization and is the only Collective Compliance System for Packaging Waste in Cyprus. The Organisation was set up on the basis of European legislation under which companies which import or package products in

Cyprus, are obligated to collect and recycle a percentage of their packaging. Green Dot Cyprus undertakes the obligation on behalf of its company-members and its members undertake the funding of these procedures. The organisation currently provides legal cover to more than 900 companies in Cyprus by collecting and recycling their waste.



Green office certification: <https://www.togethercyprus.org/en/green-offices/>

Green Offices is an innovative environmental quality certification for buildings and offices. The Green office certification promotes, supports and recognises offices that implement and enforce principles related to energy and water consumption, waste management, environmentally friendly cleaning products and environmental education. Green Offices is part of the Foundation for Environmental Education, an international non-governmental organisation that promotes sustainable development and environmental education worldwide. In Cyprus the national operator of the Green Offices Program is the Environmental Organization CYMEPA. The program is executed in collaboration with the Network of Volunteers Together Cyprus and is sponsored by the Environmental Commissioner.



«Small Business Support Programme in Cyprus» by EBRD

<https://www.ubaconsultants.com/en/funding-schemes/subsidy-schemes-archive/386-programme-%C2%ABsmall-business-support-programme-in-cyprus%C2%BB-by-ebrd>

The Ministry of Energy, Trade, Industry and Tourism of the Republic of Cyprus and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) signed an agreement for the implementation of the “Small Business Support (SBS) Programme in Cyprus”. The program is achieved through the provision of grants from the bank to the businesses. It is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and aims to help SMEs gain access to know-how, enhance their competitiveness and grow by bringing them in contact with local and international consultants. It was expected that, between 2017 and 2020, the Programme would provide assistance to 120 companies in Cyprus and around 100 consultants would receive training. Moreover, 200 entrepreneurs would be involved in mentoring and networking activities and 100 jobs would be created in SMEs. The training provided covers subjects such as marketing, technology, financial management, energy efficiency and the environment.

IdeaCY <https://ideacy.net/>

IdeaCY (NGO), founded by the Bank of Cyprus and the Cyprus International Institute of Management (CIIM), is the first integrated accelerator/incubator programme in Cyprus which aims to develop and support innovative and sustainable start-ups with a global outlook and ultimately create employment opportunities to boost the competitiveness of the Cyprus economy. The programme targets teams of up to 5 people that want to implement a creative and innovative idea. The Programme comprises of 2 stages, the accelerator phase (3 months) and the incubator stage (6-9 months).



ChrysalisLEAP <http://chrysalisleap.com/>

ChrysalisLEAP is a Cleantech accelerator in Cyprus which supports entrepreneurs to bring their cleantech ideas to the market. The company provides training, designs, innovation networking events and support to start-ups to get funded. ChrysalisLEAP is the official organiser of EIT ClimateLaunchpad in Cyprus. **ClimateLaunchpad** is the world’s largest green business ideas competition. The competition welcomes ideas related to renewable energy, sustainable transition in the food chain, a mind shift in



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urban mobility or any other way to tackle climate change. The 3 best ideas receive a money prize and the top 16 teams gain access to the **Climate-KIC ClimateLaunchpad Accelerator**, a business school for cleantech entrepreneurs, that provides training on how to transform great ideas into successful businesses



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Service of Industry and Technology (2020) Scheme for the Enhancement of Youth Entrepreneurship 2nd Call,
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<http://www.mcit.gov.cy/mcit/sit/sit.nsf/32177ee11d0d6003c225816f001d4b05/ab7a6b03df68044bc225819200419072?OpenDocument>

Statista (2018) Number of small medium-enterprises (SMEs) in Cyprus 2018, by size,
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/878752/number-of-smes-in-cyprus/>

Green Practise 1: Food chain restaurant reduces plastic use.

Company name: TGI FRIDAYS

Size: 400 EMPLOYEES

Industry: HoReCa

Years of Existence: 24

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals
The company is trying to reduce its plastic usage used both within the restaurant (straws & packaging) but also in its delivery/take-away services (reduce the use of plastic for delivery packages or containers).
- Procedures, Activities, Phases
The company replaced its plastic straws with paper straws and also adopted a policy by which the guest has to ask for a straw in order to receive one. Where plastic could not be avoided (for example with certain suppliers packaging), the company has a strict recycling process. All the employees are informed about how to use the distinct separate recycling bins.

As for the delivery packages, the company has researched a lot in order to find appropriate carton boxes that are suitable for recycling and environmentally friendly.

The biggest change in the company, was the replacement of the brand's loyalty cards to a Mobile Rewards App. The aim was to digitalize their rewards system in order to stop the use of plastic cards and eventually to also stop all the printing of paper coupons/discounts. The loyal fans of the company now have to download the Fridays Cyprus Rewards App and the coupons are sent to them in a digital form.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs
 1. Purchasing of special recycling bins and paper straws for the restaurants.
 2. Purchase of special carton/paper materials that are usually more expensive than plastic ones, but more friendly to the environment. The design also has a distinct recyclable sign so the guest remembers to recycle their package after product consumption.
 3. The purchase and development of a new mobile app.
- Challenges
The biggest challenge the company faced was to migrate all the loyalty card owners to the new rewards app, train their staff but also their customers on how to use it, communicate the new app to the local market and convince new guests to use it. A lot of time and money was spent on this process, and also some loyal card owner guests were lost in the process.
- Role of digital technologies

Digitalization of processes to reduce the use of plastic and paper:

Replacement of the brand's loyalty cards with a Mobile Rewards App, coupons and discounts are now in digital form.

- Results of implementation
The company reports a significant reduction of of paper waste and plastic use.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)
Due to the size of the company, the company has a from-top-down hierarchy system whereby communication for new practises leaves from the support centre, leads to restaurants management and from there managers in each restaurant inform and remind regularly during shift meetings all the team members. Training sessions are also held regularly by the training department and where applicable by the marketing department. Visuals are also found within the staff areas to remind the staff of company's policies and practises.
- Externally
In the case of the rewards app, a 360-marketing campaign was executed for about 4 months, using traditional platforms (press releases, radio, billboards, magazines, press conferences) but also online ads (social media & google ads).
- Alignment with the company's CSR
This is not applicable in this case as the company does not have an official CSR policy.

Visual materials and links

Company logo:



#REFUSE THE STRAW campaign: <https://fridays.com.cy/refuse-the-straw/>

Green Practise 2: Building partnership for sustainable agriculture

Company name: ORTHODOXOS & MISOS WAREHOUSES LTD and ROHA PREMIUM POTATO LTD

Size: 10-20 EMPLOYEES

Industry: **Agriculture**

Years of Existence: ROHA PREMIUM POTATO since 2007 ORTHODOXOS & MISOS LTD since 2016

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

The company RoHa Premium Potato Ltd, deals with the production, quality sorting, packaging and sale of potatoes abroad.

In order to reduce waste (e.g second class potatoes), RoHa Premium Potato LTD decided to create another company called Orthodoxos & Misos LTD. RoHa Premium Potato Ltd supplies Orthodoxos & Misos LTD with second-class potatoes.

The company Orthodoxos & Misos, deals with washing, peeling and cutting of fresh vegetables (e.g. potatoes), in order for them to be ready for cooking or consumption. Through this process, a new opportunity was developed for the implementation of another green and sustainable practice. Since a lot of waste was produced during the peeling of the vegetables, the company decided to use it as fertilizer for their crops and as food for animals.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

In order to achieve the collection of waste during the peeling of vegetables, it was necessary to install a special bucket at a specific point on the production lines. The transformation of waste into fertilizer was achieved by anaerobic digestion. Additionally, the employees of the company were informed about the above changes and the whole process is now part of the training program for new employees in the company.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

The special anaerobic digestion bucket cost around 500 euros.

- Role of digital technologies

The whole process is automated with new technological methods – beginning from the sorting of the vegetables to the packaging of products. The method and process of the anaerobic digestion is also automatic, therefore, no human intervention is required to complete it.

- Results of implementation

By applying these practices, the company resulted in saving money both for the production (by using the fertilizer from the waste conversion) and for the supply of the raw material (received by RoHa Premium Potato Ltd).

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

The company's workforce knows and shares its goals. The employees were made aware of the reason behind the company's creation and share the same feelings towards collecting and modifying waste.

As mentioned above, this process is automatic.

- Alignment with the company's CSR

It is worth pointing out that the initial goal of founding the company has been fulfilled and that through the whole process other ideas were initiated and explored for the implementation of green and sustainable practices.

Lessons Learnt

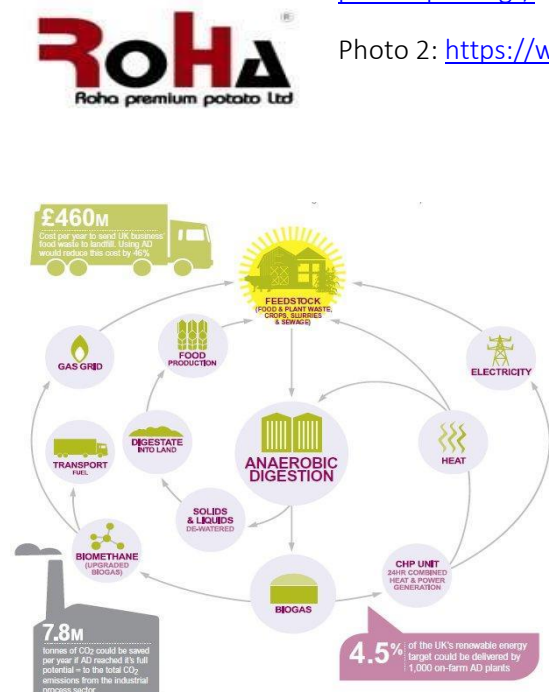
The implementation of green and sustainable practices is an important factor for the creation of sustainable businesses, the impact on the environment and the financial development of a company.

Visual materials and links

Companies' Logos:

Photo 1: <https://makersmeadow.wordpress.com/2012/09/03/mouldy-potato-peelings/>

Photo 2: <https://wasatchresourcerecovery.com/>



Green Practise 3: Green & sustainable banking

Company name: **Bank of Cyprus**

Size: **4.156**

Industry: **Corporate**

Years of Existence: **122 years**

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

The Bank of Cyprus is committed to establishing a greener planet by implementing environmental sustainability policies and procedures in order to reduce the negative effect that the company has on the environment as much as possible. The company prioritises certain key environmental impacts and is constantly trying to improve its eco-efficiency by adopting a series of measures. The measures include actions related to efficiency of energy, water and paper, green Information Technology (IT), replacing business trips with video conferences etc.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

1. Participation in the European Programme Business4Climate

The Bank of Cyprus participates in the Business4Climate programme which aims to make businesses commit themselves to a more active involvement in climate protection. In line with the programme, the bank has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 8% until 2030.

2. Energy Management:

The Bank of Cyprus is committed to continually improve its energy performance, through the implementation and maintenance of an Energy Management System based on ISO 50001:2018.

Actions taken in 2018:

- the use of a fully recycled photocopying paper was used to enhance the environmental awareness of employees.
- Completion of their premises energy audit that commenced in 2017.
- Installation and connection of 100 KW photovoltaics to cover part of the electricity needs of the Information Technology building.
- Ongoing replacement of old air conditioning equipment using R22 gas, with new more efficient ones.

Actions taken in 2019:

- replacement of mechanical equipment with new, more efficient equipment in three buildings. This replacement resulted in savings of 383,977 kWh.
- development of the Building Management System (BMS) for more efficient management of the electromechanical equipment in six large buildings

- preventive and scheduled maintenance of heating and air conditioning equipment
- recertification with ISO50001 on Energy Management System for the two Data Centres of the Bank
- replacing light bulbs with LED lamps in two buildings.

3. Waste Management:

The Bank has had a paper recycling programme installed in all their premises since 2014. The company managed to recycle 735,000 kg of paper during 2018 and 390,000 kg of paper in 2019.

4. Paperless Programme:

The bank encourages its employees through its upgraded Internet Portal to further decrease the use of paper during their daily tasks. In addition, customers are encouraged to use an innovative web portal and phone banking services which were developed to reduce paper use. Furthermore, via the “Stop Paper Statement” function, customers stop receiving statements for their accounts by mail, contributing to the protection of the environment and the conservation of natural resources. Finally, a New Fees and Commissions Schedule was introduced to motivate customers to switch to digital and other paperless services.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

Investment in energy-saving: €2,049,956

- Role of digital technologies

The Bank of Cyprus aims to modernise the Back-Office Operation with the continuous advancement of the existing systems, the automation of manual procedures as well as the streamlining of procedures. These procedures also contribute towards the environment. Current practises in process:

- Automated Teller Cash Recycling Machines (TCRs): which act as vaults safely storing cash
 - Scanners to reduce paper and increase operational efficiency
 - Electronic signature pads (ePADs) to enhance customer experience
 - New Card Management System
 - New flexible and dynamic Payment System
 - mobile APP 1bank
- Results of implementation
 - 151,336 kWh savings from photovoltaic system at Bank’s premises
 - Reduction of environmental footprint and reduction of CO2 emissions by 2%
 - Boost recycling across Bank’s operations
 - Use of recycled paper
 - Integration of environmental awareness in Bank culture. Staff have become more educated on environmental issues and run activities to enhance it.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

Via personal and/or group meetings and presentations, Internal portal and email announcements, Internal Workshops, Open Days, Staff Opinion Survey Management Practices, Survey Internal Customer Satisfaction, Survey Yammer Internal Collaboration Tool

- Externally

Shareholders:

- Via the website and email
- Through announcements
- Meetings
- Conference calls
- Roadshows

Media:

- Via email
- Through personal meetings
- Through Press Conferences

- Alignment with the company’s CSR

All the practises are aligned with the company’s CSR policy.

Visual materials and links:



Logo:

The bank’s responsibility towards the environment:

<https://www.bankofcyprus.com/en-GB/our-responsibilities/environment/>

Corporate Responsibility Report 2019:

https://www.bankofcyprus.com/globalassets/csr/boc_corporateresponsibilityreport2019_eng.pdf

EO signs the «CEOs Call to Action» for Sustainable Development in Europe:

https://www.bankofcyprus.com/en-GB/News_Archive/ceo-signs-the-ceos-call-to-action-for-sustainable-development-in-europe/

https://www.bankofcyprus.com/globalassets/csr/boc_corporateresponsibilityreport2019_eng.pdf :

COMMITMENT TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Green Practise 4 Construction company awarded with Environmental award

Company name: **Leptos Estates**

Size: **Over 1,300 employees**

Industry: **Construction**

Years of Existence: **Since 1960 (61 years)**

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

The philosophy behind the Leptos Estates Group is to create projects with sophistication, quality and excellence in design whilst remaining conscious to the environment. The company prioritizes concerns related to sustainable development and delivers construction projects that seek to enhance and compliment the natural environment of the area. Having a significant sensitivity to the environment and society, Leptos Estates seeks daily implementation of environmental and social culture to all staff and customers. The company has a commitment to the protection of the environment, including the prevention of pollution, and the reduction of environmental impacts resulting from the activities of our Group. Main practices involve energy, waste and water management.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

The Leptos Estrates group has a large number of hotels all over Cyprus. According to their CSR report (2017) all the hotels issue a Sustainability report and are certified with a System Environmental Management ISO 14001. Through the implementation of this system, the Group has developed a set of administrative, technical and economic actions aimed at saving energy and improving its energy efficiency.

At the administrative level, they have created a relevant energy policy which is communicated to the staff and have developed the establishment and operation of Energy Committees. Additionally, they have created a position for a person within the Group to deal with energy management issues in all the hotels.

At a technical and financial level, the Group has the necessary resources to achieve energy set goals, investing in best available practices and energy use more efficient products and services. They have replaced all light bulbs with LED in all their hotel units, they have installed heat recovery systems in chillers and use alternative energy sources such as pellets. Furthermore, they aim to purchase energy efficient appliances and equipment.

The energy performance of the Group is monitored on a monthly and annual basis and the results are communicated to the Group Management, which makes key decisions in order to achieve the maximum possible best result. In order to minimize the amount of waste, the company reuses and recycles as much as is economically feasible and ensures that the rest is managed properly. A recycling

system is established for paper, plastic, glass, cooking oils, batteries and ink. For example, the company uses paper or any other materials, more than once if applicable. If the materials cannot be used again, then they are recycled. Following the Group's policy, the hotels use the most environmentally friendly cleaning products and aim to use as less quantities as possible.

Neapolis Smart EcoCity project:

In 2010, Leptos Group announced the start of an Eco City project. The vision is to develop the most Innovative Smart EcoCity in the Mediterranean that will set standards of excellence in Healthcare, Education, Research, Business Parks and Planned Green Living with an integrated blend of Lifestyle Retail, Entertainment and Culture. The project is an integrated urban mixed-use scheme located on a 1.1 million square meter site in Pafos, Cyprus with an approved masterplan for 520.000 building coefficient sq. meters of development. Phase one is already underway, with over €171m of investment already committed to the development. The project will generate 8000 new jobs by the close of 2018, contributing significantly to the local economy. The Neapolis Smart EcoCity is the first project of its kind in the Mediterranean and one of the largest in Europe. The design of this city is based on eco-friendly and sustainable principles and incorporates “green” technologies and smart solutions and it aims to become the prototype of an eco-efficient and smart city on an international scale. Neapolis will use a single 'Intelligence Platform' to accommodate the use of new green technologies, the latest in digital applications and sustainable town infrastructure solutions. Some of the unique features of Neapolis include: an intelligent utilities network employing integrated Smart energy, water and waste grids with Smart meters in every home and business; a Smart web wireless search engine available in all public spaces and homes through a single Ethernet environment, and self-sustainable and eco-friendly living with 25% of energy to be generated from indigenous sources such as geothermal and solar power. One of the key objectives of this project is to provide quality life services by creating a sustainable green environment.

Characteristics & values of the city:

- Ecocity Green Design & Architecture – Balanced with nature, tradition and culture; intelligent city planning; sustainable strategies.
- EcoCity Intelligent Utilities Network – Includes Smart Energy, Water, Waste Grids (integrated smart Energy grids with smart meters in every home and business).
- EcoCity Green, Clean Technologies - Recycling; Water Purification; Sewage Treatment; Solid Waste Management; Renewable Energy.
- EcoCity Smart & Green Building – Green Building Technologies (Materials & Resources, Indoor Environment etc), Energy Efficiency (BMS, Integrated Photovoltaic Systems etc).
- Ecocity Intelligent Platform & Internet - Smart Web Search Engine, knowledge resources and online public services with a single Ethernet environment.
EcoCity Knowledge Grid Environment - Intelligent Information Ecosystem.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs
Investments for Neapolis Smart EcoCity: 2 billion euros.
- Results of implementation
The implementation of green and sustainable practises, policies and actions has resulted in the company receiving their first Environmental Award in October 2020. More specifically, Armonia Estates LTD, which is a member of the Leptos Group of Companies, was awarded as the best contactor by the Cyprus Recycling Organisation (OAK) in recognition for the company's efforts

to improving the quality of the human and natural environment. The company received the “Class A” Gold Environmental Award for using its resources in sustainable and ecological ways.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)
The company ensures that all the staff as well as other external partners working on projects of the company are properly trained so that we all understand the important environmental aspects of their work and the environmental policies of the workplace. In this way all the staff are educated and motivated to effectively contribute to the company’s vision.
- Externally
By encouraging the involvement of local actors in environmental management. The company also publishes articles, brochures, and events to encourage investors to participate in their projects such as Neapolis Smart EcoCity.
- Possible alignment with the company’s CSR
Yes, most of the information was taken from the company’s 2017 CSR report. The Group has established criteria for evaluating the significance of its environmental activities, products and services to identify which ones have significant environmental effects by also taking into account community law. The policies are in terms with current laws and through the establishment of specific environmental goals and objectives the company pursues continuous improvement of its environmental performance through the Environmental and Social System Management.

Visual materials and links

Logo:



<https://www.leptosestates.com/news/leptos-group-news/armoniaestatesltd> :

CSR report 2017:

<https://leptoscalypso.com.cy/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CSR-Report-Leptos-Calypto-2017-V11.pdf>

Neapolis Smart Eco City brochure:

<http://www.neapolis.com/resources/downloads/Brochure.pdf>



Green Practise 5 Energy efficiency upgrade in Architecture Office

Company name: **Philitsa Panayidou, Polycarpus Sophocleous**

Size: **0-9**

Industry: **Construction-Architectural services, Specialized Experts of Energy Performance of Buildings (Houses)**

Years of Existence: **32**

Description of the green practices involved:

- **Goals**
The main goals of the green practises that the architecture office implemented were to decrease electricity costs, decrease paper use and waste in general and to reduce CO2 emissions.
- **Procedures, Activities, Phases**
 1. Improving building external U values of roof, walls and windows + gradually new equipment and appliances with low energy consumption.
 - 2a. New double face multi task machine
 - 2b. Print only if necessary
 - 2c. Gradually use e-mail instead of fax and hard copy in our communication with clients, consultants, contractors
 3. Recycling paper or re-use for notes, plastic, metal, electrical items, consumables
 4. Hybrid car for transportation

Description of the implementation:

- **Investments and running costs**
 - Covered external roof and walls with polystyrene 8cm.
 - Changed big north window with thermal insulated window with energy glass
 - Change AC with new generation type - low energy consumption
 - Change lamps with new type led
 - Change old copy machine and old printer with a new multitask machine/double face printing
- **Challenges**
The changes mentioned previously had high costs.
- **Role of digital technologies**
 - Digital technologies helped in the following ways:
 - Reduction of paper work and archiving,
 - Assisted in the accurate measure of study results

- Improved communication between customers and partners.

- Results of implementation
Lower running costs and a workplace with better comfort conditions.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)
The company only has 2 employees, however, they managed to persuade 10 of their clients to upgrade their houses via the renovation plans of the Ministry of Energy Trade and Industry.

Financial details explanation:

Overall, the changes made to implement the green and sustainability practises were costly, however, in time the expenses of the company will decrease.

Lessons Learnt

Transforming into greener operations results in working in more comfortable conditions that have a more positive effect on the environment. Buildings are responsible for the 30% of energy consumption in Cyprus. It is important to significantly decrease this percentage.

Conclusions & recommendations

To conclude, the Cypriot economy is dominated by far by SMEs. It is unfortunate that eco-innovation in Cyprus is mainly shaped by individual sectors such as research institutes and enterprises as the country still lacks in established eco-innovation sectors¹⁰. Although Cyprus has been provided with support on how to reform the civil service structure to improve and simplify environmental licensing and environmental inspections, little improvement has been accomplished in this direction. Policy and funding for promoting eco-innovation and green practises in Cypriot SMEs significantly depends on co-financing through the EU structural funds. As reported in the Eco-innovation in Cyprus report (2015), a comprehensive national strategy to promote a circular economy is still absent. The limitations of the public sector hold back the growth of businesses on the island. Cypriot public procurement procedures need to be reformed and the national waste strategy needs to be reinforced. The main reason for Cyprus' SMEs positive environmental performance is due to the large number of entrepreneurs that aspire to create a green and positive environmental profile for their business and manage to get funding and support to implement it. This support is mainly granted to them by EU funds or by the few accelerators/incubators of the island. To sum up, there is a need for national and local authorities to collaborate and provide solutions and support to SMEs in becoming more green and sustainable businesses.

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/sites/ecoap_stayconnected/files/field/field-country-files/cyprus_eco-innovation_2015.pdf



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