

IT based environmental program and hindrances of its international diffusion - Case: Green Office -program developed by WWF Finland

Information Systems Science

Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT

Objectives of the Study

The study has two objectives and the first objective is to define and clarify the corporate social responsibility concept emphasizing the environmental responsibility. The concept of environmental responsibility is emphasized since the second object of the study is to explain the hindrances to international diffusion of the IT based environmental program, Green Office (GO). The need to research the hindrances to diffusion can be understood against the background of increasing consciousness of the importance of environmentally responsible behavior from companies and organizations. By clearly defining and exploring the hindrances to license take-up, WWF Finland will be able to improve their marketing strategy and the features of GO to be more attractive to WWF local offices in different countries.

Academic background and methodology

Based on previous literature and studies, an initial framework for studying the possible hindrances to diffusion is developed. The initial framework is based on the literature about the collaboration between agencies, partnership, strategy for interaction and stakeholder dialogue. The study is a case study, which is based on the survey. The questionnaire content of the survey and analyzing the results of the survey are based strongly on the initial framework. The previous literature about the different dimensions of corporate social responsibility and some papers on information systems (IS) and environmental management systems (EMS) are covered for providing the background to the study.

Findings and conclusions

It was found that delivering and marketing the information technology based concept to various countries is challenging, notwithstanding the fact that the product/service/concept is good. There are many factors that cause hindrances to diffusion of the concept. These factors relate to the agencies (both the "seller" and the "buyer" parties), the co-operation between the parties and the environmental and circumstantial factors affecting each party.

Keywords

Corporate social responsibility, environmental responsibility, environmental management systems, information systems, Green Office, WWF

ABSTRAKTI

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet

Tutkimuksella on kaksi tavoitetta, ensimmäinen tavoite on määritellä ja selventää yritysten yhteiskuntavastuun käsitettä painottaen ympäristövastuuta. Ympäristövastuuta painotetaan tässä tutkimuksessa sillä tutkimuksen toisena tavoitteena on selittää tietojärjestelmäpohjaisen ympäristöjärjestelmän, Green Officen (GO) kansainvälisen leviämisen esteitä. Kasvava tietoisuus yritysten ja organisaatioiden ympäristövastuullisen käyttäytymisen tärkeydestä luo ymmärryksen tutkia leviämisen esteitä. Selkeästi määrittelemällä ja tutkimalla lisensoinnin esteitä, WWF Suomen on mahdollista kehittää markkinointistrategiaansa sekä GO:n ominaisuuksia entistä houkuttelevammaksi WWF:n eri maiden paikallisille toimistoille.

Kirjallisuuskatsaus ja metodologia

Alkuperäinen viitekehys leviämisen mahdollisten esteiden tutkimukselle kehitettiin perustuen aiempaan kirjallisuuteen ja tutkimukseen. Alkuperäinen viitekehys perustuu kirjallisuuteen eri toimijoiden yhteistyöstä, kumppanuudesta, vuorovaikutuksen strategiasta sekä yrityksen vaikutuspiirissä olevien osallisten välisestä dialogista. Tutkimus on tapaustutkimus perustuen kyselytutkimukseen. Kyselylomakkeen sisältö ja tutkimustulosten analysointi perustuu vahvasti alkuperäiseen viitekehykseen. Tutkimuksessa käsitellään yritysten yhteiskuntavastuun eri ulottuvuudet sekä artikkeleita tietojärjestelmistä sekä ympäristöjohtamisjärjestelmistä mahdollistaen tutkimukselle taustatietoa.

Tulokset ja päätelmät

Merkittävimmät tulokset olivat tieto siitä, että tietojärjestelmäpohjaisen konseptin siirtäminen ja markkinointi eri maihin on haastavaa huolimatta siitä, että tuote/palvelu/konsepti on hyvä. Useat tekijät aiheuttavat konseptin siirtämisen esteitä. Nämä tekijät liittyvät toimijoihin, sekä myyjä-että ostajapuoleen), toimijoiden väliseen yhteistyöhön sekä toimijoihin vaikuttaviin ympäristö- ja olosuhdetekijöihin.

Avainsanat

Yritysten yhteiskuntavastuu, ympäristövastuu, ympäristöjohtamisjärjestelmä, tietojärjestelmät, Green Office, WWF

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1 INTRODUCTION

This research project is an empirical qualitative study that examines the international diffusion of an environmental program called Green Office (GO) and the hindrances to that diffusion. The GO Program is developed by a Finnish non-governmental organization, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Finland, and the program helps the offices to reduce their burden on the environment, achieve savings and slow down climate change.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an integral and important part of business. Globalization and issues arising from it have had an influence upon growth of CSR behavior and upon the demands societies impose upon businesses. CSR is a wide-ranging subject and every business needs to focus on developing those operations more responsibly that have the most influential effect on people, society and the local and global environment.

We all know the resources of the planet are limited and global warming is a reality. The human race is exploiting limited resources with its growing demand for material. This is in addition to population growth that will have an increasing demand for food and other resources of the earth. These all cause environmental problems that both business and people need to retard by their actions.

The research topic of this study has been outlined as the environmental dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility. The non-governmental organization, WWF, has been included in this research since it has expertise in environmental issues and cooperation between NGOs and companies is an emerging role in the responsible behavior of business.

Information systems enable users to collect and manage data in a way that is useful in aiming at a particular purpose. Information systems can be developed for general use by many types of users or systems can be customized for a specific use for certain types of users. Environmental

management systems (EMS) are customized systems that aim to enable and facilitate users to improve their environmental behavior. It should be remembered that EMS comprises different parts and an information system (IS) is only one part of it. Successful improvement of environmental behavior requires changes in processes of organizations and companies, attitudinal changes in peoples' minds as well as meeting the requirements of EMS.

The GO Program is a product that can be categorized as Software as a Service (SaaS) –concept software. In that concept the client uses the software via the web browser in their computer. The service provider, in this case WWF Finland, maintains and updates the product and it is the same for all users. The customized technology of the GO Program helps organizations and companies to achieve and manage their goals that have been set in relation to environmental responsibility. The GO Program is based on information and communication technology (ICT) that enables users to interact with this technology, which is operating as part of their environmental responsibility processes. The users are also able to communicate with WWF Finland through that technology.

The motivation to do this study is concern about the environmental situation and how a specific information system might contribute to making business behave in an environmentally responsible manner. The need to examine the GO Program arose from the Head of the GO Program, Helka Julkunen, who works at WWF Finland and is responsible for the program development.

1.1 Research objectives and questions

The research objectives of this study are

- *to define and clarify the concept of corporate social responsibility, emphasizing the environmental dimension*
- *to explain the hindrances to international diffusion of the environmental program, Green Office (GO)*

Corporate social responsibility is a wide and complex subject. One aim of this study is to define and clarify that concept. The concept of environmental responsibility is naturally emphasized because it is the main reason why environmental management systems are developed.

WWF Finland has licensed GO to the other local WWF offices around the world but by not as much as it would wish or has expected. By clearly defining and exploring the hindrances to license take-up, WWF Finland will be able to improve their marketing strategy and the features of GO to be more attractive to WWF local offices in different countries.

The successful diffusion of GO would facilitate environmentally responsible behavior within the recipient organizations and companies where the program would be applied. The GO Program is also an important fund-raising instrument for WWF Finland so it is obvious that successful diffusion would yield a return.

The research questions of this study are

1. *What are the hindrances to the international diffusion of the environmental program called Green Office (GO)?*
2. *How can WWF Finland improve the marketing strategy of the Green Office Program?*
3. *How can WWF Finland improve the features of GO to be more attractive to WWF local offices in other countries?*

Research question number one tries to identify the issues that may explain why WWF Finland does not succeed in selling the GO Program to WWF local offices in other countries. The GO Program is IT-based and can be used over the Internet. The technology parts of the GO Program are similar to the Software as a service (SaaS) –concept. The GO Program is easy to use and valuable if the desire is to increase the office’s environmentally responsible behavior.

Research question number two tries to produce suggestions as to how WWF Finland could improve the marketing strategy of GO so that the local offices around the world would wish to license the Program for their own use and to sell it to offices, companies and organizations in their own country.

Research question number three tries to produce suggestions as to how WWF Finland could improve the features of GO such that the local offices will be more interested in it and realize that the GO Program could be useful for them.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The review of literature chapter follows the introduction to this thesis. The review of literature begins by presenting the different dimensions of corporate social responsibility and the environmental dimension is emphasized because of the nature of this study.

Next, some papers on information systems (IS) and environmental management systems (EMS) are covered. Two major EMSs are introduced, first the ISO 14001 standard and then the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). The GO Program and the current situation concerning its diffusion are also introduced in this chapter.

An initial framework of analyzing the possible hindrances to the GO Program's diffusion concludes the review of literature chapter.

The data and methods part follows the review of literature and the methods of this study are described. The research questionnaire of the survey is presented as well as how the data gathered is analyzed. Trustworthiness and the need for the study are expressed in this chapter.

This research project is a qualitative study and is based on a survey. Data from the survey and the answers to three research questions are expressed in the findings and discussion chapter. This study ends with a conclusion chapter.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

This chapter reviews the relevant literature of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the object is to clarify and define this wide subject. An organization operates in an environment where it has different stakeholders and it has to take all of them into account so that its business is profitable, legal and within its rights. The activity of the organization has an impact on customers, employees, shareholders, the environment and society as a whole.

Why should companies act in a socially responsible way? Since the companies use natural and human resources in their production processes and business operations, which lead companies to obtain power status within society. Social responsibility can be seen as a contractual obligation to society to balance that power status.

Jones (1980) describes that CSR is a notion that the corporations should be responsible for their actions not only to the owners but also to the other groups in the community, such as customers, employees, suppliers, and nearby communities. He points out that the obligations to broader stakeholders have to be adopted without being prescribed by law or union contract. Paliwal (2006) similarly states that to be socially responsible, decision makers need to act such that they protect and improve the welfare of society as a whole in addition to looking after their own interests. Nazari, Parvizi and Emami (2012) defined broadly, based on the CSR literature, that companies are socially responsible and good citizens when their activities contribute more to society's welfare than to themselves. According to Epstein

(1987) business ethics refer to the issues that concern the morality issues of the company's decision-making and actions whereas corporate social responsibility refers more to the consequences of those actions.

Cetindamar and Husoy (2007) elaborated on three aspects that they regard as important in CSR behavior and these are voluntarism, stakeholder management and networking. In this context, the voluntarism means that the companies are able to perform their social responsibility behavior in a more efficient and productive manner if the behavior is based upon voluntariness as opposed to of regulations. Stakeholder management means that the shareholders are not the only party to whom the company is responsible but also other parties that are influenced by the company's operation should be taken into account. Those parties are for example, employees, the surrounding community, customers and suppliers. Cetindamar and Husoy (2007) point out the importance of the network effect that Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives generate. CSR initiatives are organizations that operate as a companies' communication channel related to CSR issues. These CSR initiatives may for example, organize meetings and seminars and the participating companies are able to cooperate with other companies, share information and learn from each other. The CSR initiative organizations also disseminate the information and principles about responsibility issues, which the companies are able to follow and use to improve their responsible behavior. The United Nations Global Compact is one example of CSR initiatives.

Corporate Social Responsibility can be divided into different dimensions depending on the area of business where the corporation operates. In general, socially responsible corporations obey the codes of CSR but they focus and emphasize different responsibility areas. In the literature, the common dimensions of CSR are in accordance with Carroll's (1991) four-dimensional CSR pyramid that is composed of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities. The concepts of social and environmental responsibilities are also common but often these include in some of the former dimensions.

Carrol (1991) has formulated a pyramid illustrating the four different fields of responsibility that a socially responsible organization must simultaneously consider.

The first level of Carrol's Corporate Social Responsibility pyramid is economic responsibility. Economic responsibility is the basis for the following: it fulfills the essence of the company's business activity and the company needs to function properly as an economic unit in order to stay in business. Economic responsibility effectively means that the company's shareholders demand a return on their investment; employees are entitled to safe and fairly paid jobs and customers demand good quality products at a reasonable price.

The next level of the CSR pyramid is legal responsibility. In addition to economic responsibilities, the business is expected to act in accordance with laws and regulations. For the free enterprise system to work, it is very important that everyone operates according to the law.

The third level of the CSR pyramid is ethical responsibility. Companies who act in an ethically responsible manner expand on their legal responsibilities. Not all social expectations are covered in laws and regulations, and ethical responsibilities encompass the more general understanding of what is right and acceptable in practice, and what is not. According to Carroll (1991) ethical responsible companies act what is generally expected by society over and above economic and legal expectations.'

Finally, companies have philanthropic responsibility. The philanthropic responsibility encompasses voluntary or discretionary behavior by the companies aiming to promote human welfare or goodwill for employees, local communities, and ultimately society in general.

The International Labour Organization defines CSR as follows:

CSR is about how companies integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations. It involves voluntary measures by companies to contribute to sustainable development. The concept embraces how businesses relate to employees, suppliers, sub-contractors, consumers, communities and others who are affected by their decisions, including those about restructuring.

See: <http://www.itcilo.org/en/expertise-services/socially-responsible-enterprise?searchterm=Corporate+>

In other words, it can be said that because a business has a significant impact on people, the environment and the broader society where it operates, the business has to take responsibility for that impact.

2.1.1 Economic Responsibility - dimension

Defining economic responsibility is controversial since in the literature there can be seen three groups of researchers and each group has their own point of view on economic responsibility. The viewpoints of groups differ regarding the relationship between the companies' CSR activities and financial profitability. Friedman (1970) argued, "the Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profit", which means that the decision makers of the company have been chosen to increase the shareholders' profit so their action should always improve the financial performance above the other performance aspects. The opinion of this group is that CSR activities are irrelevant to the company's performance since they disturb the optimal allocation of resources.

According to Nazarri et al. (2012) the second group asserts the claim that other stakeholders beside shareholders should be included in the company's sphere of influence which enable CSR activities to improve the company's

value by cost savings, strengthening the reputation of the company and reducing the negative effects or impacts of regulatory bodies towards the company as Bird et al (2007) argued.

The assertion of the third group is that there is no relationship between CSR actions and financial performance of the company since too many confounding factors impede the ability to research that relationship as Nazarri et al. (2012) stated.

Overall, the companies that produce services and goods profitability as well as pay taxes, salaries and other obligatory payments, operate in an economically responsible way since they create financial welfare for society.

2.1.2 Legal Responsibility - dimension

Legally responsible companies obey the law. Companies have incentives to obey the law and regulations since rules protect business transactions, resource allocation and agreements between different stakeholders. According to Carroll (1999), governments have imposed legal and regulatory requirements minimizing the negative impacts on society that may be caused by companies that pursue their economic responsibility at the expense of legal responsibility. Governments in different continents and countries emphasize their laws and regulations variously.

2.1.3 Ethical Responsibility - dimension

Carroll (1991) described in his four-dimensional CSR pyramid that being ethically responsible means accepting the obligation to do what is right, just and fair as well as avoid harm. Ethically responsible companies adjust their actions and do more than is required by laws and regulations. The term, ethics, can be interchangeable with the word "morality" as Payne and Joyner stated (2009). They define ethics as "a system of value principles or practices and the ability to determine right from wrong". They continue that decision-

makers are worried if their decisions are morally or ethically right or wrong over and above the legality of that decision.

2.1.4 Social Responsibility - dimension

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a confusing term since it embraces a wide range of responsibility issues. In this subsection, the social responsibility term is detached from the concept of CSR. Plessis (2012) regarded Carroll's (1991) ethical and discretionary responsibilities as social responsibility behavior. In his article, Plessis (2012) expresses a flawed argument that Hunger and Wheelan (2004) have divided social responsibilities into four categories and presents exactly Carroll's four-dimensional CSR pyramid. Krstovik et al. (2012) have divided social responsibility into the following dimensions:

- market – meaning that the products and services of the company are safe and harmless, they are provided at suitable prices and consumer rights are taken into account.
- human resources – meaning that the employer respects the human rights issues, provides the employee with a safe workplace, development possibilities and decent benefits.
- social community – meaning that the company should contribute to the local community by taking care that it does not damage the community, developing the community's condition, investing in the area and its residents and engaging with philanthropy and humanitarianism.
- environment – meaning that in the business operation the company does not exploit the environmental resources, preserves the biodiversity of the soil and contributes to reducing global warming.

Environmental responsibility will be further elaborated in the next paragraph since many researchers have covered it as a separate dimension.

2.1.5 Environmental Responsibility - dimension

Environmental Responsibility, or Environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) as is stated in an article of Rahman and Post (2012), is a separate part of the corporate social responsibility concept. Mazurkiewich (2004) has comprehensively stated that the environmental aspect of CSR is

“the duty to cover the environmental implications of the company’s operations, products and facilities; eliminate waste and emissions; maximize the efficiency and productivity of its resources; and minimize practices that might adversely affect the enjoyment of the country’s resources by future generations”

Environmental issues depend upon the company’s processes, products and services they provide as Mazurkiewich (2004) argues. In some industries, waste and emissions are enormous compared to service oriented businesses where waste and emissions are usually not a problem. It is profitable for the company if it uses resources effectively as long as it is environmentally sustainable. Environmentally responsible companies do not exploit the resources of soil and country since they recognize that future generations also have the right to utilize and enjoy them.

The United Nations considers the environment in its Global Compact and has formulated three environmental principles, which are based on the Declaration of Principles and an International Action Plan (Agenda 21). Agenda 21 emerged from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. Human activity has caused environmental degradation and damage to the planet’s life support systems, so these principles direct activity to impact positively on those areas through research, innovation, co-operation, education and self-regulation.

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Businesses can use these environmental principles as a starting point when addressing the key environmental challenges. According to the Global Compact, the key environmental challenges are:

- the loss of biodiversity and long-term damage to ecosystems
- pollution of the atmosphere and the consequences of climate change
- damage to aquatic ecosystems
- land degradation
- the impacts of chemical use and disposal
- waste production
- depletion of non-renewable resources

The precautionary approach is important for businesses because it is more cost-effective to prevent environmental damage than to try to remedy environmental harm after it has occurred. If a company causes environmental damage it also damages its own image. It is, therefore, profitable for a company to develop environmentally sustainable production methods and to research and develop environmentally friendly products, as it increases long-term benefits. An important precautionary approach to environmental protection is set out in the Rio Declaration:

In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by the States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for

postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Chapter 30 of Agenda 21 presents an outline of environmental responsibility and what it means to business:

Business and industry, including transnational corporations, should ensure responsible and ethical management of the product and processes from the point of view of health, safety and environmental aspects. Towards this end, business and industry should increase self-regulation, guided by appropriate codes, charters and initiatives integrated into all elements of business planning and decision-making, and fostering openness and dialogue with employees and the public. (30.26)

See:<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=52&ArticleID=78&l=en>

Today's society increasingly expresses its need and desire for more environmentally sustainable business practices. By meeting those needs of society, a business gains credibility with the public. The business has to demonstrate that their practices are working towards greater environmental responsibility. Changing the traditional *modus operandi* to more environmentally responsible approaches is one way to satisfy the needs of society whilst improving a company image.

The environmentally friendly technologies in Principle 9 of the Global Compact are described in Chapter 34 of Agenda 21 as environmentally sound technologies (ESTs), which:

...protect the environment, are less polluting, use all resources in a more sustainable manner, recycle more of their wastes and products, and handle residual wastes in a more acceptable manner than the

technologies for which they were substitutes. ESTs are not just individual technologies, but total systems, which include knowhow, procedures, goods and services, and equipment as well as organizational and managerial processes.

By using environmentally sound technologies, it is possible to reduce the use of finite resources and existing resources can be used more efficiently so the company increases its operating efficiencies whilst reducing the emissions of environmental contaminants. Lower emissions of hazardous materials benefit the workers who work with them every day, as they are exposed to lower levels of those materials. Lower emissions of environmental contaminants also reduce the risk of accidents and technological disasters.

The use of environmentally sound technologies is profitable for companies because it generates less waste and residues, and waste storage, treatment and disposal are financially, environmentally and socially expensive. Companies that contribute to the environment by preventing pollution and designing more ecological products also increase their efficiency and the overall competitiveness of the business.

2.2 Information Systems

Information technology (IT) has changed working methods and business processes in organizations a lot and fast. The role of information technology will continuously grow and organizations have to take it into consideration when planning their businesses. Information technology enables cost efficient data processing in companies' different sections or business functions. Specific or general information systems then integrate that information so that it is useful for management decision-making processes. According to Bruns and McFarlan (1987) faster and flexible management systems enable managers to know how to use resources more effectively, align the company's goal across the whole organization and collect data for operating and strategic decision-making. Investment in IT should be

profitable and create value for the company since information systems are a supportive function for the management. To ensure that the information systems are valuable and that the organization's goals and activities are supported at every level, coordination of IS plans with business plans is required as Lederer and Mendelow (1989) presented.

2.3 Environmental Management Systems

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a framework that enables a company to plan, formulate, execute, monitor and document its environmentally responsible behavior and action. Processes and practices created in the EMS help managers and employees to make decisions that reduce the company's environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency. The EMS is customized according to the company's business and environmental goals, and after achieving the requirements, continuous control of operations is needed. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the basic elements of an EMS are:

- Reviewing the company's environmental goals
- Analyzing its environmental impacts and legal requirements
- Setting environmental objectives and targets to reduce environmental impacts and comply with legal requirements
- Establishing programs to meet these objectives and targets
- Monitoring and measuring progress in achieving the objectives
- Ensuring employees' environmental awareness and competence
- Reviewing progress of the EMS and making improvements

See: <http://www.epa.gov/ems/>

Various environmental laws concerning protection of the natural environment from human activity impose requirements for environmental behavior and reporting. The legal requirements increase the demand for environmental management and reporting systems in organizations and companies of various kinds so that they are able to meet obligatory and voluntary environmental requirements.

Environmental laws might be based on international treaties, regulations or common laws or they might be based on national legislation. Environmental laws have an influence on every continent but the legal force and compliance with the laws and regulations vary considerably depending on the country in question. Emphasis of environmental issues varies much between countries. For example, in some countries the emphasis might be to control pollution whereas elsewhere the focus might be upon the exhaustion of natural resources.

2.3.1 ISO 14001 standard

The International Organization for Standardization has created a globally applicable EMS framework for organizations to use, which is called the ISO 14001 standard. According to ISO 14001, the improvement of a company's environmental performance is a continuous process as can be seen from the following cycle

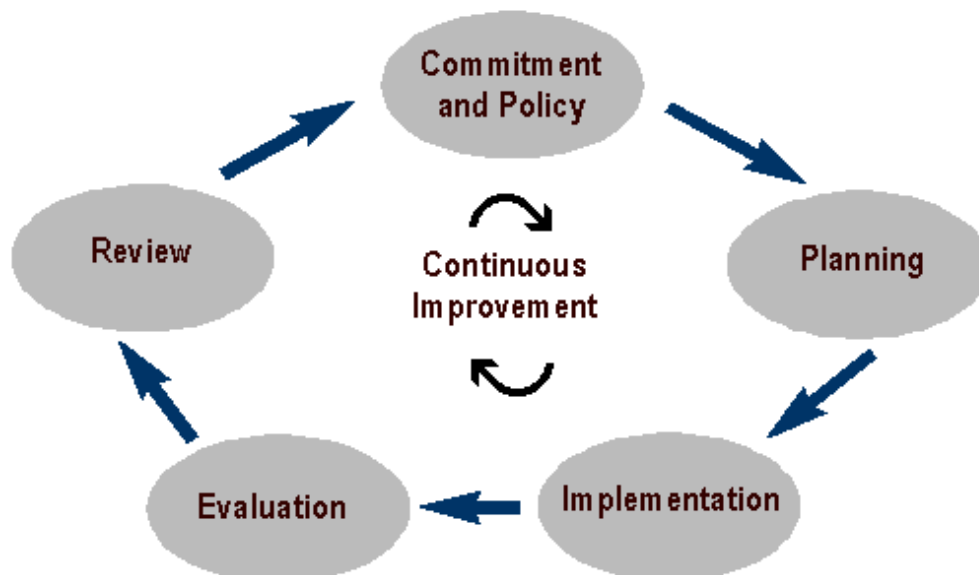


Figure 1: The continuous improvement cycle

See: <http://www.epa.gov/ems/#basic>

The cycle begins from the point where the company's top management commits itself to environmental improvement and creates the policy where it is stated.

Planning environmental processes is the next step and it begins by identifying and determining the environmental aspects that are the most important in the company's operations and upon which they are focusing. After that the company is able to set its overall environmental goals and targets. Targets are specific requirements to achieve the stated environmental goals. As the targets are stated, the company needs to design an action plan detailing how to attain the targets.

At the implementation stage, the action plan is put into operation by using all the required resources such as employees and finance, as well as meeting requirements to enable successful documentation and communication processes.

At the monitoring stage, the company observes and evaluates if the targets have been met and it makes corrective actions as required.

The review stage is the point at which the top management assesses the results of the evaluation to see if the environmental policy is in line with the values of the company. The original plan is then reviewed and modified to formulate a more effective EMS.

2.3.2 The European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

EMAS is another environmental management tool that aims to improve the environmental performance of EMAS registered organizations. EMAS is part of the European Union Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy. ISO 14001 standards are an important part of EMAS requirements and ISO 14001 constitutes the core of the EMAS.

EMAS emphasizes three of its distinctive elements

1. *Performance – carrying out the annual updates of environmental policy targets and actions to implement and evaluate these targets*
2. *Credibility –third party independent auditors guarantee the value of both actions taken and disclosed information*
3. *Transparency – environmental statements provide public information about the environmental performance of the organization*

Although EMAS and ISO 14001 include many corresponding elements, the main differences between them are an auditing process, the organization's public environmental statement, registration with the right to use an EMAS logo, legal compliance and employee empowerment and motivation. The additional elements are presented in Figure 2.

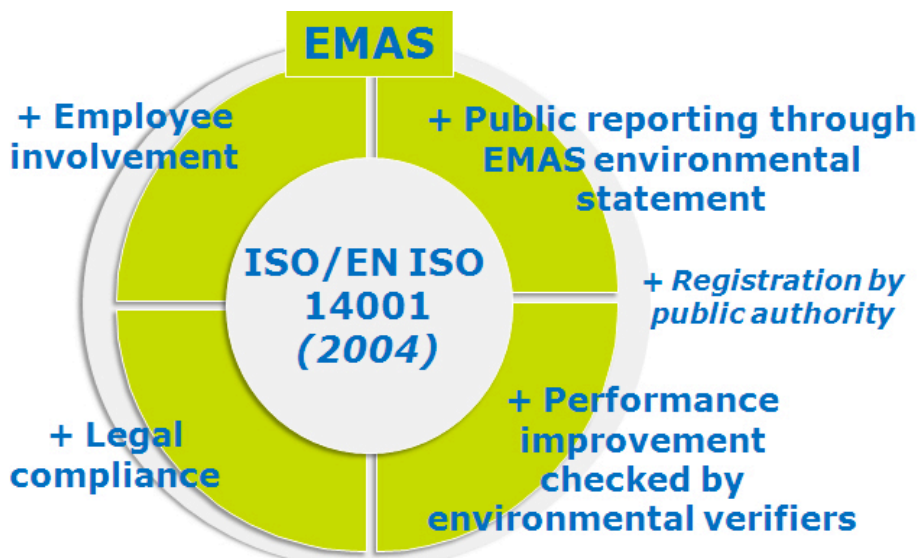


Figure 2: EMAS and ISO 14001

2.3.3 World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Finland – Green Office

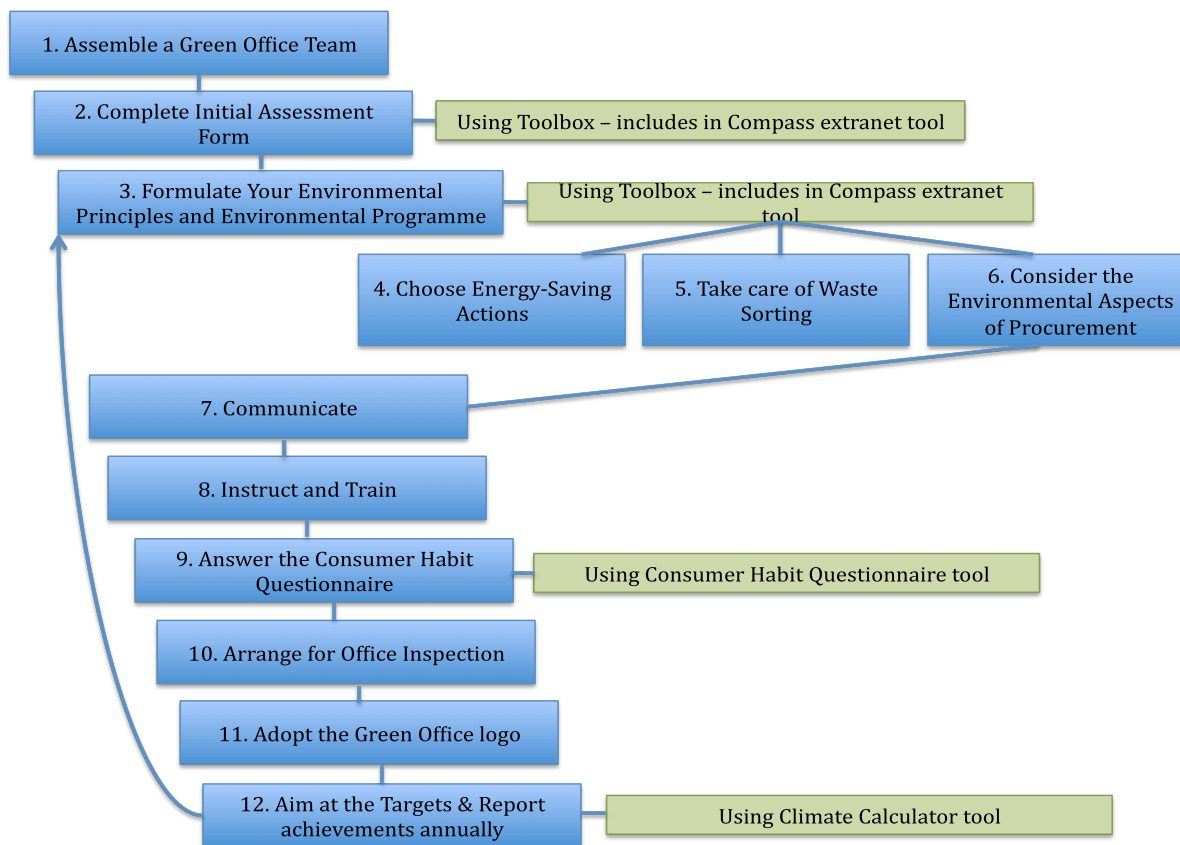
WWF Finland has developed an environmental program for offices, of which aim is to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions and ecological footprint. The program is called Green Office (GO) and it improves offices' energy efficiency and so mitigates their greenhouse gas emissions. The program includes practical advice on how to reduce waste, how to recycle and sort wastes in accordance with local requirements and how to take green issues into account in the office's procurements processes.

Every organization has a GO coordinator and a team who are in charge of the implementation and development of GO in their organization. GO includes the indicators and sets the numeric objectives that the organization has to pursue and reach if they wish to use the GO logo. The office has to report the required numbers to WWF Finland annually and GO monitors if the organization has achieved the objectives. The process of applying the GO Program is one of continuous improvement of the office's positive environmental practices.

WWF Finland provides GO offices examples and tools for developing and maintaining the user's environmental management system. GO users can use the software via the Internet by using the extranet services provided by WWF Finland. The extranet service comprises the three following parts:

1. Compass – network tool. The Compass tool enables offices to assess their environmental behavior and to design the environmental program based on that assessment. Compass exists also as a provider for relevant news, materials and the GO logo.
2. Climate calculator – network service. GO offices report annually the required follow-up figures by using the network service. With the Climate calculator estimations of carbon dioxide emissions caused by the consumption of electricity, heating and paper as well as movement and transportation are generated.

3. Consumer Habit Questionnaire - A pattern of the consumption measurement is part of the GO requirements and offices are able to upload the figures through the network.



Note: Using Toolbox - included in the Compass extranet tool

Figure 3: The Twelve Steps of Green Office

2.3.4 The current situation of Green Office diffusion

Active networks abroad

WWF has local offices worldwide in over 50 countries and they operate in about 100 countries. The local offices of WWF have two choices to apply Green Office (GO): they can use it at their own local offices or offer it for the use of companies or organizations. For the moment, the active GO networks are in Pakistan, China, Turkey and Vietnam. The networks include companies and those local offices are also using GO at their own offices. WWF local

offices in Romania, Switzerland and Indonesia have GO in use at their own offices but they are not selling it to companies.

Potential networks abroad

WWF Romania is included in the program, which is coordinated by WWF Austria, as well as local offices in Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia. If the local office in Romania was activated to sell GO to companies or organizations, then all countries in the program would be activated. So in this case there are five potential countries to join the network.

WWF England has been in contact with WWF Finland and expressed its interest in GO. WWF Finland contacted WWF France first since a company in France showed interest in GO. These local offices are now considering an application to join the GO network.

WWF Denmark has indicated that they will take GO if one interested company decides to take it. WWF Sweden is considering an application at the moment. According to the Head of the GO Program, Helka Julkunen, the potential local offices need one “thing” that will act as a trigger to make them move on and realize their need for GO.

Baltic countries are incorporated in WWF Finland and there are no local offices. So if there is interest in GO, WWF Finland will coordinate GO in companies in the region.

Countries, which are not in contact with WWF Finland concerning GO are from Latin America, Canada and the USA. However, a short discussion has been held with the local offices in Canada and the USA. Brasilia, Fiji Island, Mexico and Costa Rica have been contacted. Actually, awareness of GO is worldwide since every continent has some country or countries that have been contacted.

Local offices that have declined interest in Green Office

WWF Netherlands has decided that they will not join the GO network after their careful analysis and calculations. GO is not suitable for their selection of tools and their operation at the moment. In the Netherlands there is a corresponding system and companies are already at a good level in their environmental behavior so GO does not offer added value for them.

WWF Portugal is interested in GO, but because of the difficult economic situation in the country, they could not afford to come to the WWF training session in Finland to advance the process. WWF Indonesia is problematic since there is one employee who is not able to initiate the GO Program in the area. Helka Julkunen thinks that it is a personal hindrance since communication with that person is difficult.

Marketing of Green Office (GO)

WWF Finland decided to market the GO Program abroad after the experience of successful realization of GO diffusion in Vietnam.. The first objective of the marketing operation was to increase awareness of the existence of GO. The marketing strategy is not written but Helka Julkunen has an established practice. She has a list of local offices (in about 15 different countries), which she contacts regularly and asks how they are, what they are doing now, what is happening now and then she updates her list with notes on the current situation of the offices. The local offices are at different stages and she makes notes on the situation in those offices. She monitors the offices' different stages of actions, gives support and additional information if needed. She maintains the contact network, saying, "if local offices forget WWF Finland, WWF Finland does not forget them". In most cases the local offices contact WWF Finland concerning GO and those contacts constitute the list. They have heard of GO somewhere. For example, the Finnish Secretary General is very interested in GO so she promotes it almost everywhere in meetings. The promotional material of GO is always with her.

Resources for GO are two full-time and one half-time employee and seven freelance inspectors who are performing up to 50 inspections per year in Finland. According to Helka Julkunen resources are sufficient now but if workload increases then resources will be added. Financing for the additional resources will come mostly from additional license fees from Finland. The reason behind this is that it is very slow to get license fees from abroad since the amounts are smaller.

At the start of marketing, WWF Finland sent presentation material and a fact sheet to their networks by email. WWF Finland had three channels to approach the international WWF networks.

1. The head of GO Program contacted people in her WWF network which she has created over the years.
2. Some local offices had previously contacted WWF Finland and shown their interest in GO.
3. The Secretary General and Conservation Director contacted their own WWF networks which are at the same level as them.

One strategy is to always contact offices if they have shown interest. Personal contact is an important way of promoting the matter. Initial promotion is to email the specific person. The email includes the fact sheet, the international report, the basic PowerPoint presentation of GO and the link to the English web pages of GO. The promotional material is always updated and if somebody makes contact then it takes about 10 minutes for the message to be ready to send. Material is also updated if WWF Finland receives an invitation to educate somewhere or organize remote education. Preparing the material is time and resource consuming and that is why the material is the same for all countries. According to Helka Julkunen there is no need to formulate the material as country specific since the matter is universal and ubiquitous. The presentation material for the GO Program is able to be formulated and revised to some extent to suit the recipient culture, as has been done for Asia.

Another channel for marketing is the WWF international network. One example of this is the Asia-Pacific platform group, where the Secretary Generals of the area gather regularly. Secretary Generals are interested in the facts, what are the resources needed for GO, the possible incomes and some success stories. It is important that Secretary Generals understand what GO is since they are the decision makers in the matter.

Cooperation with the local offices

According to Helka Julkunen, GO continuously evolves; the achievement criteria within the program are becoming stricter, coverage is widening. For example, food and services are now included in the program. It is important to bravely, openly and actively make contact with local offices. The message is that the product is continually advancing but that it will never be completely ready and that WWF develop it according to its evolving needs and applications. WWF local offices can be involved in that development process. Adding parts to GO is possible but only if the finance is available. Clarity and openness are important when listening to the development suggestions and it is necessary to be truthful as to the viability of implementing suggestions. This adds to the credibility of the GO team.

WWF Finland informs the local offices on how they are conducting their marketing of GO to companies in Finland and then local offices are able to apply the method in their own marketing in their specific area. The local offices need ideas and thoughts. WWF Finland provides these but also advises them to make contact with other local offices in their area (for example in Asia). WWF Finland provides advice as to what kind of marketing advice the local office are able to give to companies who have the right to use the GO label. For example, companies in Asia need the advice since they would like to put the label everywhere but there are limits and requirements on how to use the GO label. Some companies are quite displeased about the restrictions that the GO label is only applicable to offices and not to factories.

WWF Finland provides the materials, the tools and arranges training in Finland or in Asia (area education), keeps the network lively and looks after the GO concept. The local offices have responsibility on site and they arrange presentations to companies independently. The local offices report annually on what is happening and pay WWF Finland specific license fees from their annual fees, which they receive from client companies.

Possible obstacles to GO diffusion according to the Head of the GO Program, Helka Julkunen

NGO-company cooperation is a challenge for NGOs. Helka Julkunen sees that the cooperation is either an extensive and strong international cooperation that includes strategies and discussions with CEOs or it is a matter of sponsorship and charitable donations from companies to NGOs. GO may be seen as a threat to extensive cooperation since it is not as expensive as other big, extensive and powerful agreements although GO demands significant resources from both parties to the agreement. Companies may want GO since it is easier to implement and is cheaper than the more extensive cooperation agreements. WWF Finland needs to convince the local offices that the target group of GO is different from the traditional NGO-company cooperation targets. This applies especially to the Occident area.

In Asia, GO has been seen as an opportunity since there is no traditional NGO-company cooperation and they are already awakened to environmental issues. GO is easy to use and a handy tool to implement and use. In Asia there are no obstacles since they can begin from scratch and so the benefits are noticed quickly and in significant volume. Reductions in emissions, electricity and waste are substantial along with savings in money.

One obstacle is the lack of environment management in WWF network offices both in developed and developing countries. People in local WWF offices do not know or understand how to use such systems. In Asia, they want to improve their environment management knowledge and understanding. They learn a lot during the process but a problem is with technical

knowledge, for example, how to correctly use the network tools. WWF Finland needs to undertake capacity building for the personnel of local offices and to clarify the concept of the environment management system.

In Europe, the strength is in communal behavior and voluntariness but, for example, in Pakistan the culture is hierarchical. If one big boss is interested in GO, then the big change and savings are possible. If the interested boss does not have to negotiate, it is enough that the boss says how things should be done. People in Pakistan have been very interested in GO and the attitude has been very positive.

According to Helka Julkunen, WWF Netherlands carefully analyzed when they could earn with GO and in their opinion it would take too long. One important reason for refusing might be that they live in a label world, in other words, that they advance the labels like the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC). GO might lead people to confuse it with those standards in their minds. Helka Julkunen emphasized that GO is not a standard and the main reason for WWF Netherlands' refusal is not known. WWF Netherlands is very popular in their country and they have a lot to do. They can focus on much bigger issues than GO and they have influence in the business world. WWF Netherlands is taking part in the operations of Unilever and the chemical industry company Axon and have decided to put their resources into those kinds of operations. The contribution of WWF Netherlands influences globally. For example, their influence on how to use chemicals or palm oil is bigger than GO. WWF Finland has fewer possibilities to do such work.

The local WWF offices in Europe do not want to pay high license fees to WWF Finland. In Europe, the local offices have the possibility to collect significant annual fees from companies, which is an important part of their fund-raising. This leads them to decide that they do not want to pay something to WWF Finland. These local offices want to develop their own systems and sell them to companies in their own country.

The Nordic countries and countries in central Europe are challenging territories. The reason behind this is that in these countries the local offices are large and wealthy. In those offices, they are running a variety of projects. For example, in Switzerland they are conducting a lot of environmental education and they have large climate change programs with big companies who may also be involved in sponsorship. In Germany, cooperation between NGOs and companies is insignificant. Cooperation is thought of as something negative so cooperation is not well developed. In the environmental world such cooperation arrangements range between bad and good, then WWF has to choose with whom they are working. The attitude of the business world is one of "do not come to my world and say how to do".

In Germany, one obstacle might be that the image of WWF might suffer if a company is not willing to comply with GO regulations and criteria and the local office cannot monitor the behavior of company enough. The criteria has to be quite strict and it has to be monitored so that companies and organizations are ensured as complying with GO, otherwise the image of WWF may suffer.

Usually, companies think that GO is a good product but the obstacle is the local office, which is not able to control/manage the overall project so WWF Finland has to educate and do capacity building. WWF Finland teaches the skills, knowledge and understanding of how to manage the overall project. WWF Finland is ready for such internal cooperation. They have the internal practices and agreements already in place so they know how the local offices operate with each other. There are some established groups, which gather together and through the meetings WWF Finland can spread the necessary information but WWF Finland needs to determine the practices of how to operate. For example, WWF has the international web and video training. These international tools contribute to the dissemination of information. WWF Finland is able to remotely educate local offices internationally through the web and the education material can be included in their extranet. In the early stages when the work is mostly about maintaining, capacity building and active marketing, personal contact is the most important communication

method. The contradiction in this is that someone has to travel to various countries, which also serves to increase carbon dioxide emissions.

2.4 Initial framework

In this chapter, the researcher has formulated an initial framework that can be used as a base for the questionnaire content. In addition to the initial framework this forms the basis for analyzing the results of the survey. Although this research is based on marketing the service from a non-governmental organization (NGO) to another non-governmental organization, previous research on co-operation between NGOs and businesses is covered. It is assumed that almost all the same principles apply to co-operation between NGOs as to between an NGO and a company. It has to be acknowledged that the main aim of WWF Finland is to sell the GO Program to the WWF local offices in various countries and the strategy is that the local offices are then willing to sell on the GO Program to companies and organizations in their country.

Since the GO network comprises WWF Finland, the WWF local offices and a variety of companies and organizations in many countries, the *previous research of a collaborative network* is studied. The participating organizations in the network comprise the agency context, which includes the factors, which affect their own behavior both in Finland and in the other country participating agencies. The agencies operate in their specific environment and in that external environment there are various factors that also affect co-operation with other agencies. Every collaboration network is unique since a wide range of factors affect the formation of the network.

Successful co-operation between agencies in the GO network requires that every agency is willing to work in partnership. If they share clearly recognized common values and aims the co-operation will be advantageous to all parties. The *previous research of a partnership* is covered here in order to achieve the scientific justification of the valuable partnership.

In the relevant literature there can be found a variety of strategies for operating the co-operation. WWF is already categorized in earlier literature as a traditional and reputable organization and as such, *the strategy for interaction* is already covered. The categorization of WWF enables WWF Finland and the WWF local offices to form partnerships between them and companies and organizations. However, the successful co-operation of such partnerships requires a suitable strategy for interaction.

The successful long-term partnership between NGOs and companies is based on a valuable stakeholder dialogue and so the earlier *research concerning the three central themes of the stakeholder dialogue* are examined.

The essential tools of the GO Program (1. Compass web tool, 2. Climate Calculator web service and 3. Consumer Habit Questionnaire) are parts of an information system. However, the GO Program is a bigger totality, in which the target is to reduce the environmental impact of companies and organizations. The potential customers (local offices, companies and organizations) need to be conscious of the GO Program and its features as well as to believe in collaboration between WWF offices and companies or organizations. The initial framework has been created so that hindrances to the diffusion of the GO Program can be identified.

Figure 4 illustrates the framework of the agencies and the network, in which the agencies and their relationships are formulated. From the framework it can be seen how the collaborative network and its component parts are linked and how the strategy for interaction and the value of stakeholder dialogue affect this research.

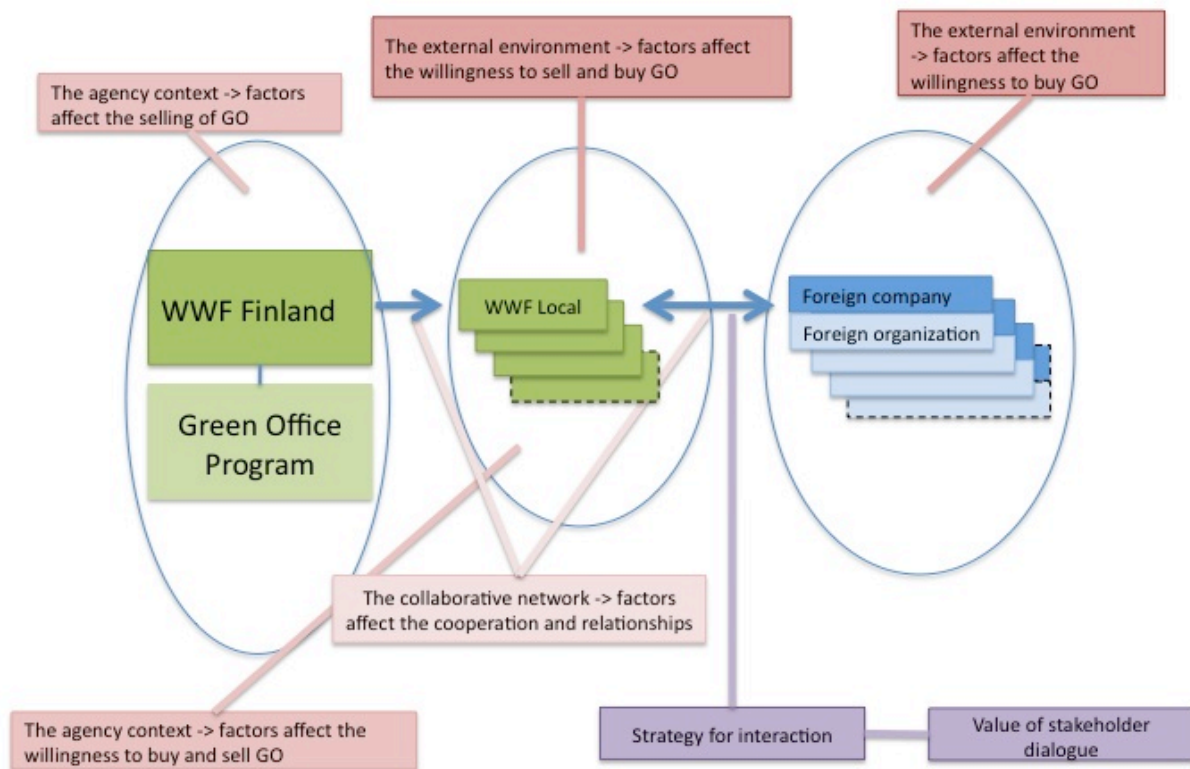


Figure 4: Initial framework

2.4.1 Factors affecting collaborative networks

Collaboration between the various agencies across borders is becoming common. Fedorowicz, Gogan and Williams (2007) argue that inter-organizational systems that support agency collaboration across borders need to accommodate various factors from the external environment as well as from participating organizations. These factors have an impact on how the agencies share information and their collaboration processes. The same factors also interact to enable or constrain the operation of the inter-organizational system.

From *an external environment* there can be found various factors that may contribute or constrain the involved agencies' willingness to share information as cited in Fedorowicz et al. (2007). Political and

socioeconomic forces as well as economic and financial imperatives and critical events in the environment have an influence on the decisions of the agencies. In their study, Valor and de Diego (2009) also describe the four forces of the environment which affect cooperation between companies and NGOs. These are political, economic, social and technological factors.

The agency context creates effects since each participant has various factors that affect collaboration with the others. Fedorowicz et al. (2007) refer to the strategy of the participating organization and its governance structure since the governance structure outlines the decisions that the members of the organization make and those decisions frame the strategy for the collaboration. Factors related to the available resources for the collaboration include the human and the technical resources in addition to the financial resources. The operational processes of the organization may constrain the cooperation and for successful integration the inter-organizational processes need to be redesigned to be more supportive of the cooperation. In addition to the previous factors, the IT infrastructure of the participants has an effect upon the collaboration. Since the organizations have various hardware and software systems as well as networks, the participating organizations need to attain the same level of the IT sophistication to enable the cooperation.

A collaborative network, as cited in Fedorowicz et al. (p. 786, 2007) “represents the joint organizational entity, infrastructure, business processes, resources and relationships which support a shared effort to provide some collective benefit, whether it is a program, service or a product”. The collaborative network may be governed informally or formally and strategy, governance structure, resources, processes and systems are owned and independent of the corresponding factors in the participating agencies. An Inter-Organizational System (IOS) is part of the collaborative network and it connects the network infrastructure with the computing and networking hardware, application software and databases. The IOS enables continuous information sharing across the organizational boundaries within the collaborative network. According to Fedorowicz et al. (2007) the leaders of the collaborative networks should manage, design and implement the IOS

system, which meets the needs of each participant including delivery of the right content and tools.

2.4.2 Partnership

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSO) has been an evolving trend among businesses over 20 years, since the 1992 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. Prior to a rapprochement between companies and NGOs, NGOs were antagonistic toward business. Stakeholders of the companies and the ambient society pressured companies to behave more responsibly. Partnership between companies and NGOs is a product of that pressure. Critical events, for example when a company causes ecocide, are also driving forces for co-operation and dialogue between companies and NGOs. In their study, LaFrance and Lehmann (2005) suggest in that especially if a company is planning to operate in contentious countries with unstable leadership and circumstances, partnering with reputable international organizations or NGOs is recommended. Through such partnerships companies are able to gain credibility, transparency, and engagement with the stakeholders for the benefit of the operation and corporate image.

In his study, Arts (2002) discusses the green alliances that mean a partnership between environmental NGOs and business. Arts points out the strengths and the weaknesses of green alliances. He says that these are flexible and non-bureaucratic coalitions, which add resources for private environmental policy making. Green alliances are innovative agents that create systems to put the concept of sustainability into operation. As weaknesses he explains that green alliances are not embedded in the core business of companies and they are not formal public policy making agents concerning the environment.

According to Heap (2000) effective partnership between NGOs and companies encompasses mutual respect and the understanding of different attitudes and values. He says that there are as many manners to partner, as

there are relationships. At the same time, the NGOs may have various aims for the company or companies; they may affect the company's behavior by creating a campaign, advocate a new policy for the business or fund-raising might be the one and only aim of the NGOs. Heap (2000) points out that business might see NGOs as a disorganized entity because of the inconsistency of the NGOs' aims and various manners of cooperation or approach to the business. Heap (2000) points out that NGOs need to decide if and when to engage with companies and decide what they want before making the approach.

According to Heap (2000) integrity is essential in all organizations, both in business and in NGOs. He sees public trust of NGOs as higher than that of companies, which leads to the partnership between business and NGOs. In his study he found that although various issues have an influence on engagement between NGOs and companies, most of the engagements have generic rules and there are no differences in this respect between the West and the developing world since the engagement appears to be issue-specific.

2.4.3 Strategy for interaction

In their study, Ählström and Sjöström (2005) examine cross-sectoral partnerships as a solution to environmental and social problems. They examine cross-sectoral partnerships from the viewpoint of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and describe two approaches on how CSOs interact with companies. Some CSOs influence the behavior of companies by using a partnership strategy. In that strategy, the companies and CSOs cooperate and they are trying to resolve problems and achieve goals together. According to Ählström and Sjöström (2005) some CSOs use an independence strategy, which does not include partnership with the companies but more radical tactics to influence the companies' behavior. Valor and de Diego (2009) discuss also the strategies of Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) on how they are achieving their objectives with businesses. In these strategies can be found two approaches, which may be cooperative or confrontational.

Ählström and Sjöström (2005) classify CSOs and their strategies for interaction with business into Preservers, Protesters, Modifiers and Scrutinizers.

Preservers include CSOs that use the partnership strategy as they collaborate with business. They use the traditional way to influence the behavior of business and they are not provocative in their behavior. According to the study of Ählström and Sjöström (2005) the WWF organization is included in the preservers as they engage in partnerships as a means to influence corporate behavior. WWF work on joint projects with business to try to solve environmental problems with corporations. Ählström and Sjöström (2005) explain that WWF demand changes and improvements in the behavior of the companies concerning environmental issues before they contract with them.

Protesters are CSOs that do not collaborate with business. Protesters use radical and publicly visible action as a method of trying to influence the behavior of companies.

Modifiers include CSOs that do not partner with business but they try to modify the behavior of business by challenging their present social and economic paradigm.

Scrutinizers are CSOs that choose not to collaborate with business. CSOs in this category try to find out the wrong-doings of companies and bring them to the attention of the public.

2.4.4 Stakeholder dialogue - interactive forms of stakeholder engagement

This research relates to cooperation between two NGOs. There has been no research on the topic but some research can be found on the relationship between companies and NGOs. Many studies about the relationship between business and NGOs have shown that there has been a shift from confrontation to cooperation. In their study about the impact of stakeholder

dialogue Burchell and Cook (2006) present a few reasonable arguments that can be applied in the initial framework of this research.

The general public has shown an interest in companies' social and environmental responsibilities. This has led to the situation that companies need to give more detailed information about their practices not only through company reports but also by engaging in dialogue with their stakeholders. Burchell and Cook (2013) describe NGOs as significant secondary stakeholders of the companies. Burchell and Cook (2013) explain that engagement between businesses and NGOs creates challenges to participating organizations but Burchell and Cook (2006) see the value of stakeholder dialogue since it creates new processes of learning and understanding. Consequently, new business practices can be found. For dialogue to be successful the following principles should be considered according to Burchell and Cook's (2006) study.

For business, environmental groups are seen as an important channel for communicating with NGOs according to Burchell and Cook (2006). In their study, they found that direct/formal dialogue and indirect/informal dialogue featured strongly but only if the stakeholder dialogue generated positive outcomes from the process. Direct unfacilitated dialogue was identified by the companies as the most common form of structure of CSR processes and the most effective form of stakeholder engagement. The facilitated form was identified as the most effective way of engagement by the NGOs. Both the companies and the NGOs emphasized the clearly stated aims and expectations of the dialogue. According to the study of Burchell and Cook (2013), the participants in the dialogue need to adjust their objectives, prepare for changing the organizational practices and for new processes of decision-making, enabling an effective outcome from the dialogue.

Effective dialogue requires recognition that the participants should not reinforce their own position since it creates problematic challenges and it prevents compromise and that is not the purpose of the dialogue according to Burchell and Cook (2006).

Burchell and Cook (2006) argue that dialogue related to Corporate Social Responsibility issues, gives companies and NGOs the opportunity to discuss and learn more than achieving direct business benefits. Through the dialogue process the participants are able to expand their understanding about the competing viewpoints and to develop the dialogue process. Burchell and Cook (2013) discuss that the dialogue enables the relationship to be cooperative and to seek mutual understanding. Burchell and Cook (2006) state that the challenge is that the engagement processes for the dialogue may be time-consuming and requires resources although the tangible outcomes are not common or are hard to measure. Burchell and Cook (2013) point out that business cannot decide the terms and conditions of the engagement alone. NGOs have an interest to manage and form the engagement strategy. The study of Burchell and Cook (2013) encourages NGOs to begin to increasingly develop their strategies and to manage stakeholder dialogue with business. As NGOs learn how the business operates and about its constraints, it is able to plan how to influence the practice of companies. According to the study of Burchell and Cook (2013) one big challenge in the stakeholder dialogue for the NGOs is inequality between the participants. Large companies have significantly more resources than civil society based organizations, which may have only one or two people in the dialogue process.

Burchell and Cook (2006) stated, “the heart of the concept of dialogue is the development of mutual understanding and trust between participants”. Trust is one of the key factors of effective dialogue. In their survey Burchell and Cook (2006) found that trust is a challenging issue since in order to create successful dialogue interpersonal trust should translate into inter-organizational trust. The dialogue should create tangible outcomes and facilitate the continuing dialogue processes if the individuals in the process change. According to the study of Burchell and Cook (2013) the development of practical solutions and changes in corporate policy are essential for NGO's willingness to commit to the dialogue. One driving force for companies to engage with stakeholders through the dialogue processes is that the dialogue reduces business risk. Burchell and Cook (2013) include also the risk to the

brand, the license to operate and the willingness to find solution-oriented perspectives for the drivers.

3 DATA AND METHODS

This research project has two main objectives. One is to *describe* the concept of corporate social responsibility, especially emphasizing the environmental dimension and the other is to *explain* the hindrances to international diffusion of the environmental program, Green Office (GO). The need to research the hindrances to diffusion can be understood against the background of increasing consciousness of the importance of environmentally responsible behavior from companies and organizations.

This research is a qualitative case study since the participants of this survey are restricted to specific organizations and every research case is unique. The answers from the survey comprise the primary data from this research. At the beginning of the project, the Head of the GO Program in WWF Finland was interviewed since she was able to provide important information about the issues and the challenges. The questions of the survey are based extensively on that interview.

3.1 Research questionnaire

The need for this study arose from the Head of the GO Program in WWF who has developed the program. The GO Program is highly customized so it was obvious that the questionnaire was based on the interviews with her and her identified needs.

The survey questionnaire is semi-structured and involves 28 questions; 15 of them are multiple-choice questions and the rest are verbal/free text based questions. These are needed since the circumstances of the respondents and their environments vary considerably. None of the questions are obligatory since the questionnaire is intended to be easy and pleasing to complete.

The survey questions chart three main issues concerning the respondents, their relationship with, and attitude toward, the GO Program. First, the survey looks at how the respondents found out about the GO Program for the first time, how much they already know about the program and their opinion of it. Second, the survey looks at the needs and conditions for the GO Program in the context of an environmental protection plan in their country. Third, the survey looks at what could be their plans to apply the GO Program in their sphere of interest.

3.2 Method

The questionnaire was chosen as the primary method of this study. The researcher generated the questionnaire and the data was collected for the research related to this particular research problem. A qualitative methodology has been used in this study since the research is based on the experiences and opinions of twelve respondents in relation to the GO Program. The researcher has tried to gain a better understanding of the issues that cause hindrances to the diffusion of the GO Program by means of the questionnaire operation. The respondents represent different nationalities so their background and culture impact greatly upon the survey.

The questionnaire was sent to 26 representatives of the WWF local offices around the world. The survey was made using the Webropol application and was sent to the representatives by email. Helka Julkunen, Head of the GO Program, provided the names of the representatives who formed the target group of interest of this study. 12 answers to the survey were obtained, five representatives could not be reached and nine left the questionnaire unanswered. Hence the percentage of answers was 57 % from the representatives who could be reached.

Through the Webropol application, the data was recorded and managed. The application formulated the reports from the gathered data, which the researcher analyzed without seeking to produce any generalized opinion but studying them in detail and aiming to identify recurrent responses. The

recurrent responses describe the issues that create the hindrances to diffusion of GO.

Since the data of this survey is qualitative, responses to the questions have been analyzed one by one across all the questionnaires from question 1 to question 28. A summary of each question is presented in chapter four - Findings and Discussion.

After the summary of responses to each question, the researcher has produced conclusions in response to the three research questions of this study. The various parts of the initial framework have been conjoined in the conclusions of responses to each research question.

First, the researcher has tried to identify the hindrances to international diffusion of GO Program by dividing research question one responses into three themes and producing a conclusion relevant to each theme; 1) the knowledge and opinion of the GO Program, 2) the demand, attitude toward and conditions for the GO Program and environmental protection, and 3) plans to apply the GO Program in the respondent's sphere of interest.

Second, the researcher has tried to answer research question two by producing suggestions on how to improve the marketing strategy of GO by comparing the current situation with the answers to the survey.

Third, the researcher has tried to answer research question three by suggesting how to improve the features of GO to be more attractive to WWF local offices in other countries.

3.3 Trustworthiness of the study

The case study in this research is very restricted and unique. The group of potential study participants is not large. Helka Julkunen, The Head of the GO Program, has the best knowledge of the subject as well as assumptions as to what are the hindrances to diffusion of the GO Program. The findings of this

research have been presented to Helka Julkunen and she has provided comments that the researcher's findings are trustworthy and credible since the answers from the respondents are in line with reality and do not conflict with each other.

The researcher has relied upon the honesty and accuracy of the respondents' answers and the opinion of the researcher is that the answers are in line with each other, taking into account the various backgrounds of the participants.

Since the research is a qualitative study, the outcome of this study is solely verbal and the conclusions drawn from the responses to the research questions are based on the researcher's interpretation of the research problem.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the received answers are covered by dividing them into the next three themes; 1) knowledge and opinion of the GO Program, 2) the demand, attitude to and conditions for the GO Program and environmental protection, and 3) plans to apply the GO Program in the respondent's sphere of interest.

4.1 The knowledge and opinion about GO Program

First, at the beginning of the questionnaire, a general view was sought about how the respondents found out about the GO Program for the first time, how much they already knew and their opinion about it. Most respondents, six in all, have heard about the GO Program direct from Helka Julkunen. Two respondents have read about it from the WWF Finland website and four have heard of it from somewhere else. Two of the six respondents received the information from a colleague, one from an internal contact and one respondent received the information from the WWF Growth Strategy/Team.

4.1.1 Availability and quality of the GO material

Seven respondents have searched for information about GO themselves, whereas five respondents have not. Seven out of 11 respondents found that the information about GO is easily available and four thought that information availability was moderate. Most respondents, seven out of 11, thought that the GO material available in the website was good and four thought that it was moderately good. When asked what the respondents thought were the *objectives* of GO, five respondents out of 12 and another five respondents thought that the objectives of GO were clear or very clear. Two respondents expressed that the objectives were moderately clear.

Respondents were asked to choose as many features as they liked to describe GO. Seven respondents chose “useful” and six chose that the “implementation might be time consuming”. Three mentioned that GO is “easy to use”. Two respondents thought GO “easy to implement”, “too light a system because it is designed for office use” and “the license fee to be paid to WWF Finland is too costly”. One respondent stated that GO is “complicated” and one thought, “the admission fee charged to the organization or company is too costly”. One respondent expressed that GO “does not seem to take into account existing mechanisms, ratings, tools etc.”

4.1.2 Familiarity with Green Office (GO)

Ten respondents were not familiar with the Compass web tool and the remaining two respondents were familiar. Five respondents were not familiar with the Climate Calculator web service and seven respondents were familiar. Seven respondents were not familiar with the Habit Questionnaire, four respondents were familiar and one question was unanswered.

Asked how much, enough or little the respondents knew about GO, one thought that he/she knew much and six knew enough. Four respondents thought that they knew little and one knew too little.

Seven respondents out of twelve did not want to get more information about GO whereas five respondents would like to have further information. When asked what kind of information the respondents would like to receive about GO, the following points were made; success cases, update information about GO, companies that were joining the program, new WWF countries which were activating GO and the results of the program and the schedule and process of GO certification. One respondent said they would like to know how their office could be supported as a Program Office in a developing world as they service the needs of companies in their area.

4.1.3 Strengths of the Green Office (GO) Program

Respondents thought that GO has the following strengths; it is convenient for companies and organizations of different kinds in a wide range of sectors, it is easy, understandable, well structured and practical. The tools of GO are considered good.

Respondents described the strengths of GO in that it provides companies and organizations with an opportunity to be active and meaningful as an entity to reduce their impact on the environment and where people are able to see the immediate effects of their action. It was also seen as good that people are able to behave in an environmentally friendly way in their offices. One respondent thought that GO would be valuable in their country, since they do not have any conservation projects. Respondents thought that staff engagement with GO would build corporate identity on environmental issues and joining to GO would raise motivation to reduce ecological footprint. One respondent thought that GO would provide a standardized approach to designing, implementing and measuring a “green office” and it could be very useful for those WWF offices that are yet to embark on environmental issues.

Respondents expressed that GO could help the WWF to live up to the same high standards as those being expected of industry and government. It was seen that environmental issues are popular and some respondents thought that the number of companies taking part in GO is a strength of GO

4.1.4 Weaknesses of Green Office (GO)

Respondents thought that GO had the following weaknesses; it included too many steps and was on too low a level for many companies and organizations. Some respondents thought that GO depended upon staff ability that would be in charge of it and there would be a need for dedicated resources to monitor progress that would be labor intensive and high volume. In some countries there is no demand for GO at this stage. That GO has not reached developing countries was seen as a weakness as well as that quite many company offices and WWF itself do not use GO as a global tool.

One respondent thought that the communication of what GO actually is, and specifically what value it can add, could be improved and clarified. In some countries, GO would add another layer to an already available complex system of sustainability ratings, tools and calculators.

4.2 Demand, attitude to and conditions for the Green Office (GO) Program and environmental protection in the countries of the respondents

The second aim of the questionnaire was to gather information about the demand for the GO Program by asking if companies and organizations have contacted the WWF local offices to show interest in GO. Also, what were the prevailing attitudes concerning cooperation between environmental organizations and companies or other organizations and the current atmosphere around environmental protection in the respondent's country? These were charted by means of the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Companies' and organizations' interest in the Green Office (GO) Program

Half of the respondents, six, revealed that some organizations or companies have contacted them concerning GO and the other half revealed that organizations or companies have not contacted them. When asked how many organizations or companies have contacted the local WWF office concerning

GO, answers varied from one to three and the contact came mostly from companies. Asked what kind of information they were looking for, one respondent told that the company was interested in GO and three respondents told that the companies wanted to join the program. Two respondents said that the companies were looking for information about Green Auditing or another kind of possibility to undertake environmental activity with WWF.

4.2.2 Attitudes concerning cooperation between environmental organizations and companies or organizations

When asked whether it would be easy or difficult to cooperate with organizations and companies related to GO in their country, one respondent thought that it would be easy. Four respondents thought that it would be moderate and seven respondents said that it would be difficult.

Respondents were asked to clarify why cooperation with organizations and companies was as they answered. The respondent who thought that the cooperation would be *easy* explained that the product is well developed and attractive to SMEs. Respondents who described the potential cooperation as *moderate*, said that GO would be an opportunity to make their environment more green. Such activities and offices and related issues were already quite familiar to them. GO was seen as a light investment that could provide immediate benefits. Some hindrances were seen and those were that there were too many steps to follow before obtaining the final approval and receiving the GO logo. The information being in English was felt to be a hindrance. One respondent thought that GO would not be able to be the sole activity with WWF if the company made high emissions or they had relevant impact on their environment.

Most respondents, seven out of twelve, thought that cooperation with companies would be *difficult*. Limited capacity and resources, staff turnover and lack of right expertise or skill level were seen as reasons for that as well as the fact that the tools were in English and local offices should translate

them into the native language. Three respondents referred to other environmental management systems, which dominated in certain countries for example, ISO14001, EMAS and some national green accreditation systems. It was seen that in some countries there was no demand for GO, no widespread demand for sustainable offices or that the organization mentality was not ready for this kind of corporate and business engagement. It was revealed that in three countries GO could not be rolled out to other companies or partners. Reasons behind that included that this kind of work is not aligned with the conservation strategy of the local offices or they have a different key focus or strategic priorities. It was also revealed that GO was seen more as an entry-level tool for companies as most major companies were quite advanced in designing and implementing sustainability policies and initiatives.

When asked the opinion of the respondent as to what kind of attitude was prevailing in their country concerning cooperation between environmental organizations and companies or other organizations, the following answers were given. In some countries the attitude was thought to be extremely good, very good or positive. In one country, there was generally positive cooperation between environmental NGOs and major companies. The cooperation was seen as moving away from traditional philanthropy, or CSR-based engagement, towards engagement that is based on shifting the core business towards more sustainable production and consumption. But, successful shifting requires an economic argument not only an environmental argument, and so the environmental NGOs need to improve their ability to demonstrate tangible, economic benefits for companies.

In one country, the attitude varied from good to difficult and in another the attitude was thought to be improving. Economic growth and profits were described as the most important issues and environmental sustainability was seen to be a low priority. Also, in some countries, "green washing" was a prevailing attitude.

One respondent revealed that cooperation was a new area for engagement for their organization and companies. Companies wanted to implement their CSR strategies and were willing to work with WWF but the local office was described as often not ready for this kind of service. In some countries, the business attitude was described as good but some companies were experiencing sustainability budget cuts. It was anticipated that cooperation would add value for companies.

4.2.3 Attitude towards environmental protection

When respondents were asked about the prevailing attitude toward environmental protection in their country, the following answers were given. Many respondents said that in their country the need for environmental protection was understood and people cared about the environment. In some countries, the realization of the impact of unsustainable behavior was profoundly understood. In a few countries, the financial crisis was seen as a reason for reducing environmental protection since it was seen as too costly. In one country, there was a trend to roll back advancements that had previously been made in policy and public awareness around environmental protection since such protection was seen to be bad for business. Environmental protection should therefore be linked with economic benefits.

In some countries, the attitude was that the economic growth, employment, health and insurance were more important than the environment. However, the environmental laws were getting better and interest towards the environment was slowly changing in a few countries. One respondent revealed that environmental protection was struggling and that the legislation is constantly under threat of being repealed at state level and one thought that in their country there was not a good enough attitude towards environmental protection.

4.3 Planning to apply the GO Program in the respondent's sphere of interest

Third, in the questionnaire two kinds of plans were asked to be considered. One was if the respondents would consider applying the GO Program in their own WWF local office and the other was if respondents would consider offering GO for the use of organizations and companies in their country.

4.3.1 Planning to use Green Office in the WWF local offices

Asked if respondents were considering using GO in their own local office, one informed that it is not interested and four did not know yet. Two respondents said they might be interested, two slightly interested and three respondents were very interested.

Asked why the respondents were *not interested* in using GO in their own local office, three mentioned other sustainability programs, certifications or projects as being an obstacle. One respondent said that GO is not in line with the objectives of their board and one reason was the lack of capacity. The English language and translation of the program into another language were also seen to be a challenge as well as the prior need for a feasibility study and measurement of the potential redemption rate of the program.

When asked why respondents were *interested* in using GO in their own local office, two respondents said that as they would first learn how to use GO, it would be easier to sell it to companies in their country. Two respondents said that GO was useful and an easy program, which would complement their work. One respondent thought that many companies appreciated GO. Two local offices were moving and they wanted to use GO in their new offices.

Two respondents, who were interested in using GO in their own local office, knew the potential schedule already although they did not reveal it. Three respondents did not know their schedule for implementation and one was not sure but perhaps during the year 2014.

4.3.2 Planning to offer Green Office (GO) for the use of organizations and companies

Asked if respondents were considering offering GO for the use of organizations and companies in their country, three stated that they were not interested and five did not yet know. Two respondents said that they might be interested and two were very interested.

When asked why the respondents were *not interested* in offering GO for the use of organizations and companies, three mentioned other sustainability programs, certifications or projects as being an obstacle, as in response to the previous question. One respondent said that GO was not aligned with their conservation strategy and that most major companies in their country were more advanced than GO. One respondent gave the lack of capacity as a reason.

Asked why the respondents were *interested* in offering GO for the use of organizations and companies, one respondent said that it would build the value and reputation of their local office. One respondent did not want to clarify the reasons at the time. One said that they were very interested.

Two respondents who were interested in offering GO for the use of organizations and companies, did not know the schedule and the other was not sure but not earlier than late 2014.

In the next section, the key findings of this survey are presented. The findings will be covered by the responses to the three research questions.

4.4 What are the hindrances to international diffusion of the environmental program called Green Office (GO)?

In this subchapter, the researcher answers research question one by identifying the possible hindrances to diffusion, which are covered in the order of the themes of the questionnaire. The first theme, knowledge and opinion of the GO Program, is addressed next and the findings from how

much respondents already knew about GO and their opinion of it are presented.

4.4.1 Knowledge and opinion of the Green Office (GO) Program

The knowledge and opinions of the respondents about GO have had an influence upon plans and decisions that the respondents will make in considering applications of the GO Program. Present knowledge might be incorrect and that may lead to the opinions, which cause the hindrances to diffusion of GO. Present knowledge and opinions are important to know so that the obstacles they may cause are able to be eliminated.

Many respondents thought that GO was a useful tool but still six believed that its implementation might be time consuming. Two respondents believed that the system was too light because it has been design for office use and one thought it was complicated. One respondent felt that GO did not take into account existing mechanisms, ratings and tools. These all reflect the kind of knowledge about the qualities of GO which might prevent the respondents from considering use of GO in their local offices or to offer it to companies and organizations in their country. Three respondents felt that the pricing of the license or admission fee was too high. Pricing issues are complicated since high price might be a hindrance and prevent reference to WWF Finland about applying GO although a lower price might be negotiable.

The GO Program includes examples and tools for developing and maintaining the environmental management system in offices. Users are able to use the tools over the Internet and that extranet service comprises three parts; the Compass web tool, the Climate Calculator web service and the Habit Questionnaire. In response to asking if the respondents were familiar with those three different tools, ten were not familiar with the Compass web tool, five were not familiar with the Climate Calculator web service and seven were not familiar with the Habit Questionnaire. These three parts comprised the core of GO and it is therefore of the essence that the respondents become familiar with all three parts before considering the implementation of GO.

Five respondents thought their overall knowledge about GO was little or too little and seven thought their knowledge was high or enough. Asked if respondents wanted to get more information about GO, five respondents out of twelve said they would like to have further information. By providing accurate information to the interested respondents, the knowledge and the possible demand for GO could increase.

Respondents were asked their opinion about the weaknesses of GO and the answers can be seen directly in the hindrances to international diffusion of the program. Some hindrances arose from *the qualities of GO*, such that the program included too many steps to follow before obtaining final approval and receiving the GO logo. Hindrances are also that the program was seen to be too low level for many companies and organizations as well as the fact that all information about the GO Program is in English. *Demands for implementing and monitoring GO* caused obstacles as in the requirement for dedicated labor resources and staff ability. *Specific country factors* have had an effect upon demand for GO since in some countries there is no demand for the GO Program or confidence in GO is not high since WWF or international companies do not use it as a global tool. Some countries are already at a high level with environmental tools and complex systems so GO would not add value to users. The GO program is not sufficient for companies with high emissions and related impact upon their environment.

4.4.2 Demand, attitude and conditions for the Green Office (GO) Program and environmental protection in the country of the respondent

The prevailing attitude in the countries concerning cooperation between environmental organizations and companies or other organizations influences the desire of the WWF local office's representatives to apply and offer GO in their sphere of influence. Over half of the respondents thought that cooperation would be difficult and that it does not create an encouraging atmosphere for possible cooperation. Cooperation with companies was thought to be difficult for many reasons. Some reasons are a result of the

qualities of GO, such as the required resources, the right expertise and skill level.

The other environmental management systems used in the countries have created obstacles for the diffusion of GO since the systems employed decrease the demand for new systems. Often those systems that have been in use have been intended to change the processes of the company and thus the impact upon the environment is bigger. The GO Program is an entry-level tool for companies and many companies are already at higher level with their sustainability policies and initiatives. In some countries, there is no demand for sustainable offices and the reason might be that companies are already at a good level of such activity or the environmental issues are not appreciated enough.

The attitude towards cooperation between environmental organizations and business affects the diffusion of GO to companies considerably. The respondents from three countries expressed the view that the atmosphere was not favorable to such cooperation and the GO Program could not be offered to companies. In some countries, the conservation strategy of WWF excludes cooperation or the local offices have a different key focus and set of priorities than the GO Program. An increasing number of companies and organizations are considering corporate social responsibility in their business. They are beginning to incorporate environmental issues in their operation and cooperation with NGOs supports this but the NGOs need to be ready for such cooperation. Business still needs an economic argument for this progress, so the environmental NGOs should demonstrate tangible economic benefits for companies if they are experiencing sustainability budget cuts.

In the countries where economic growth and profits are the most important issues and environmental issues are equivalent to "green washing", the hindrances to GO diffusion are substantial. The prevailing attitude is slow to change.

The attitude towards environmental protection influences the demand for GO. In a few countries, during the financial crisis, economic growth, employment, health and insurances are emphasized at the expense of environmental protection or environmental legislation, which is constantly under threat of being repealed. In such a situation, environmental protection should be linked with economic benefits.

4.4.3 Planning to apply the GO program in the respondent's sphere of interest

The local offices of WWF have two options to apply the GO Program; it can be used in their own local offices or it can be offered for the use of companies and organizations in the country in question. Obstacles to apply GO are similar in either case. The other sustainability programs, certifications and projects are obstacles to the diffusion of GO and in some countries the program is not in line with the conservation strategy and the objectives of the WWF offices. The use of English language and translation of the program into other languages is seen as a challenge. The local offices have limited resources and since they experience a lack of capacity, they are not able to translate English language into their own language that would be easier to understand. The program should be cost-effective and limited resources do not enable measurement of the return on investment or other economic aspects.

4.5 How to improve the marketing strategy of the Green Office (GO) program?

This subchapter answers research question two and gives suggestions to improve the marketing strategy of GO. These are produced by comparing the current situation with the answers from the survey. The suggestions are practical, reasonable to conduct and cost-effective, taking account of the labor and financial resources of WWF Finland.

Information about the GO Program is available on the website of WWF Finland and many representatives from the WWF local offices have used that

possibility. Nevertheless, many respondents are not familiar with the relevant tools of GO; the Compass web tool, the Climate Calculator web service and the Habit Questionnaire. One suggestion is to include access to the trial version of the GO program in the presentation material available on the website of WWF Finland. That would enable the interested representatives to become acquainted with the tools at their convenience.

Grounding in the information systems and specific environmental systems naturally affect impressions about how time consuming the respondents thought the implementation of GO is and how complicated the GO program is. WWF Finland is not able to educate the personnel of local offices in the fundamentals of IT systems but this can be taken into account in the planning of the presentation material of GO. Case examples of the implementation processes demonstrate the process in detail and present the duration of the processes in countries where GO has been implemented. This helps local offices to plan their schedule and compare it with the case examples.

The case examples of the successful usage of GO show the specific phases of the GO program. This helps the local offices to consider if they have the necessary resources and skills for each of the phases and use of the GO program. As the local offices know the requirements and the possible achievements of the GO program, it is easier to determine whether the GO is applicable to their country.

The skill base of the local offices vary and this leads to the situation that some offices need more support during the implementation process of GO, applying GO or when offering it to companies in their country. In the presentation material, WWF Finland is able to show examples of the measures of support they can provide so the local offices are able to consider if those measures are sufficient for them and if joining the GO program is possible.

The economic situation of countries differ in each case and that impacts on the possibilities of joining the GO program since the local offices need to pay

a license fee to WWF Finland and the local offices must collect the admission fee from the organization or company that is using the GO program. The fee levels might be hindrances in some countries, so it can be recommended that WWF Finland express their willingness to negotiate on pricing issues with the local offices so that the pricing hindrances are eliminated. For example, if the local office applies to have GO for free for one year, they might have the possibility to join the GO program.

In the presentation material the example facts given about the environmental and economic benefits of GO are recommended to be retained. If local offices see the facts about the environmental benefits, e.g. the examples of the achieved energy savings and the reduced ecological footprint, they gain important reasons for consideration. It is important to present the facts about the economic benefits since cost saving is a strong argument for joining the GO program.

The English skills of the representatives in the local offices vary between countries. The available material of GO is in English and that causes hindrances in those countries where use of English is at a low level. To eliminate the language hindrances, the local offices need support to translate the material into the local language. The support might be participation in the translation costs or WWF Finland might translate the material themselves and publish it on the website of WWF Finland in addition to the English material of GO.

The GO program is designed for office use and although it has arisen under the name of the GO program, misunderstandings occur. In some countries, local offices are not interested in the GO Program since there are other environmental systems, which are intended to improve processes of operation in companies to a more environmentally friendly level. These systems are heavier than the GO program and their implementation processes and costs differ from the GO program. WWF Finland needs to emphasize the aim of GO in order to avoid misunderstandings and being confused with the other environmental programs.

In some countries, the GO Program is not aligned with a conservation strategy or there is no demand for such a program. In the presentation material of GO it might be stated that GO does not conflict with conservation strategy since the main aim of GO is to improve the environmental behavior in every company and organization where the office tasks can be improved to be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Since WWF Finland is a non-governmental organization and the resources for marketing the GO program are limited, WWF Finland is obliged to consider the marketing strategy and its focus carefully. The local offices that are not interested in GO and where their opinion would be difficult to reverse, it is recommended not to include them in the marketing planning and focus only on the potential local offices who have stated their interest. The limited resources need to be used as efficiently as possible. Since the first objective of the marketing operation is to increase awareness of the existence of GO, it is recommended that an informal marketing campaign is created and that the marketing material is sent to representatives regularly, for example, two times per year. The marketing material could be also sent to the representatives of local offices that have not been contacted and asked about GO.

The Finnish Secretary General is very interested in GO and she promotes the GO Program in meetings where she participates. Since she has the promotion material always with her, it might be effective to add the guidelines on how to run the test version so that interested parties are able to explore the GO Program more deeply. The Finnish Secretary General is an important promoter of the program since she has the regular possibility to discuss the GO Program with interested parties face to face.

Some local offices are interested in developing their own systems and selling them to companies in their country. Through selling their own systems, they are able to avoid paying the license fee to WWF Finland. It is recommended that WWF Finland tries to convince these local offices that providing the resources to develop their own system is costly. WWF Finland has already

created the practical GO program and they are willing to share their knowledge to achieve the objectives that satisfy both parties.

Some inconsistencies arose between the answers of the respondents and the actual means of marketing that WWF Finland has conducted. For example one respondent thinks that the communication of what GO actually is, and specifically what value it can add, could be improved and clarified. That information can be found in the presentation material of GO. A few respondents thought that GO does not seem to take into account existing mechanisms, ratings or tools. GO is intended for office use only, as against other systems, which are wider and are also targeted to change the processes and operations of companies. One reason behind the lack of awareness of the GO might be the language barrier. The available presentation material of GO is only available in English (and Finnish) and it may cause misunderstandings if English is not a native language. The presentation material of GO is available on the website of WWF Finland or Helka Julkunen sends the material via email. It might be difficult to conceive the unity of GO since the material is only in digital form. Also, the general knowledge of environmental responsibility and IT-based services has an influence how the information about GO will be understood.

4.6 How to improve the features of Green Office (GO) to be more attractive to WWF local offices in other countries?

This subchapter answers research question three. The best understanding of the tools and other elements of the GO program could be achieved by *implementing and using it in the local offices*. As the GO program would be known in its entirety and its effects on the environment observed, offering the GO program to companies and organizations might be easier and more conclusive than offering it based on the knowledge that is read in the current presentation material.

It might be profitable for WWF Finland to create incentives for the local offices to help them decide to join the GO program. To *provide a support* for

the implementation process is important since many representatives from the local offices think the process is time consuming and they lack the necessary resources.

For some local offices, the GO program might be more attractive if the representatives are able to use it in their own language. *Translating the material* of the GO Program into other languages is recommended but a thorough analysis of the required language should be performed at first. The benefits of the translation should exceed the cost of the translation. It is important to determine when the translation is valuable to perform before the decision to join is completed or during the implementation process together with the local office.

The GO program is not complicated and simplifying it is not necessary; it is relevant to convince the representatives from a range of local offices of the *usefulness* of the GO program. Providing the representatives with the possibilities to test-use the tools of the Program is one approach to become acquainted with them and the other elements of GO.

WWF offices operate in the countries where the economic, environmental and political situations vary considerably from each other. The situation of the country creates a background against which the respondents of the local offices have to consider the use of the GO Program. WWF Finland might improve GO to be more attractive to local offices in various countries by providing support to customize the GO Program to suit their specific needs. As WWF Finland would customize the GO Program in cooperation with the local offices, they would achieve important knowledge about the country specific situations and they could utilize it in the future marketing and implementation processes of GO.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter reiterates the essentials of this study. First, the research summary is presented and followed by the implications of the study. Third, the limitations of the study are covered and after that the researcher provides suggestions for further research. This research ends with the concluding remarks section.

5.1 Research summary

The purpose of this study was to identify the hindrances to international diffusion of the GO Program and to produce suggestions on how to improve its marketing strategy and features so that WWF local offices throughout the world would be interested to buy the program for their own use and that they would be willing to sell it on to companies and organizations in their country. The other purpose of this study was to define and clarify the concept of corporate social responsibility, emphasizing the environmental dimension. As the environmental responsibility concept of the companies and organizations are understood, the importance of the GO Program is easier to realize.

The study was motivated by the need to explore why WWF Finland has not managed to sell the GO Program to other countries' WWF local offices as much as they had hoped. It was naturally assumed that there are some hindrances that reduce the successful diffusion of GO Program.

The following are the research questions the current study set out to answer:

1. *What are the hindrances to international diffusion of the environmental program called Green Office?*
2. *How may WWF Finland improve the marketing strategy of the Green Office Program?*
3. *How WWF Finland could improve the features of GO to be more attractive to WWF local offices in other countries?*

The methods of the study consisted of a questionnaire survey that was based on an interview with the Head of the GO Program in WWF Finland and the initial framework of this study.

The main findings of the study show that the hindrances to international diffusion of the GO Program are twofold; some hindrances arise from the qualities of the GO Program itself and some arise from circumstantial factors and co-operation between the WWF local offices and the companies or organizations in their country. Many factors affect this co-operation and the initial framework of this study covers these factors.

The initial framework of the study includes the factors that affect the collaboration network where WWF Finland is acting. These factors arise from the agency context, the external environment and the collaborative network itself.

In analyzing the results of the survey, a few quite common factors can be identified from the agency context that cause the hindrances to diffusion of GO. The limited resources of the personnel and their knowledge and skills were common reasons why the GO Program has not advanced in local offices. Also in some local offices the GO Program was perceived as too expensive and its technical qualities and implementation phase too complicated. In a few countries, cooperation between the environmental NGOs and companies/organizations was found to be unfamiliar or needing a new approach which causes challenges to the diffusion of GO.

Factors from the external environment induce obstacles to the diffusion of GO and these factors are more country specific. The following factors directly impact upon the demand for the GO program. In some countries environmental regulations have been weakened, the budget for sustainability initiatives has been cut, the overall economic situation is poor or the country has weak technological skills and infrastructure.

In some countries, other environmental management or auditing systems have already been applied and GO was seen to be in conflict or competition with them. In some countries the environmental responsibility is at an advanced level and that creates challenges for diffusion of GO since there is no demand for the GO program.

The collaborative network means the network where cooperation between WWF Finland and local offices and/or possible companies and organizations is formed. In other words, the local offices have already licensed the GO program and apply it in their own offices and/or companies and organizations in their country. The mutual understanding and the systems and processes of collaboration need to be achieved before successful collaboration works.

One hindrance to collaboration is the language barrier since the material of the GO program is only in English and not all representatives of the local offices are fluent in English. They might also see that they are not able to offer the GO program to representatives of companies or organizations in their country due to the lack of English language skills in companies or organizations.

5.2 Implications

Successful cooperation between NGOs and companies/organizations seems to be a prerequisite for international diffusion of the GO program. In many countries, local offices are able to cooperate with companies and organizations and the relationship forms a partnership between these parties. In practice, it can be suggested that emphasizing the partnership strategy in collaboration between agencies creates value for both parties and they are able to learn from each other.

It might be effective for WWF Finland to collaborate and discuss more with WWF local offices that are considering applying GO. Although the GO Program is universal and it should be able to function without change in

various countries, understanding the local circumstances and specific needs is important. An acquaintance with foreign culture and habits should be utilized in the marketing of GO since that might contribute to positive decision-making.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Since the data for the study was relatively small, the implications made should be considered as suggestive only. The data consisted of only 12 answers from the survey and was qualitative; the generalization of the result was quite impossible to establish.

One limitation of this study is that the researcher needs to trust the answers of the respondents, considering the circumstantial factors of their countries. In other words, asking for an example of the attitudes to cooperation between environmental organizations and companies or attitude towards environmental protection in their country, the researcher relied on the respondent's answer. The researcher knows which country some answers are related to but not all answers are connected to a specific country. Since it was possible to answer the questionnaire anonymously, this study was set up so that the researcher does not examine the circumstantial factors of various countries but has relied upon the answers produced by the survey.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Three suggestions for continuing this study are put forward in this section. First, further research is needed on the topic of external environment factors of the various countries. These factors have a major impact upon the demand for the GO program both in local offices and in companies and organizations in other countries. Understanding and being acquainted with the circumstances of the relevant country, WWF Finland would be able to focus and plan their marketing strategy for the countries where they see the best potential demand for the GO Program.

Second, possible further studies could concentrate on existing collaborative networks related to non-governmental organizations and companies. These studies could provide important information and learning possibilities about successful collaboration. That will enable WWF Finland and the local offices to use the information as an aid to planning collaboration networks related to the GO Program.

Third, more research attention should be given to the marketing material of WWF Finland. The marketing material and the tools for analyzing them have not been included in this Master's thesis since this study concentrates on the demand and the qualities of the GO Program. It would be interesting to see if the marketing material causes some hindrances to diffusion of GO. At the beginning of this study, the assumption was that the marketing material is adequate.

5.5 Concluding remarks

This research is a case study related to Information and Service Management. The GO Program is a customized environmental management system based on information and communication technology. At the beginning of the research, the presumption was that the GO Program is a concept which itself induces the hindrances to its diffusion and the researcher was willing to study to identify those hindrances. As the study progressed, it became clear that GO is an adequate product and concept so the challenges to diffusion were mainly somewhere else. The emphasis of the study was revised to examine the marketing of the GO Program conducted by WWF Finland and to the circumstances affecting WWF Finland as well as WWF local offices in various countries.

It was found that delivering and marketing the information technology based concept to various countries is challenging, notwithstanding the fact that the product/service/concept is good. There are many factors that cause hindrances to diffusion of the concept. These factors relate to the agencies (both the "seller" and the "buyer" parties), the co-operation between the

parties and the environmental and circumstantial factors affecting each party.

In this study, the examined parties were Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which revealed that new challenges arise in marketing from NGOs to NGOs. The lack of resources, knowledge and various skills of NGOs were major factors that created the challenges on both the “seller” and the “buyer” sides. The marketing of the product and services from the NGOs to the other NGOs or to companies and organizations is a new and improving phenomenon, which requires more examination.

These findings may be beneficial for the future research of marketing the product or service from NGOs to other NGOs or companies and other organizations in the context of environmental responsibility. Since NGOs have limited resources, it is useful to examine important factors affecting NGOs who are marketing or collaborating with other NGOs or companies and other organizations, so that the limited resources of NGOs are used effectively and challenges are met successfully. This study will advance the research since the study of marketing the IT based concept from NGOs to other countries NGOs has been initiated. This study revealed factors that create major challenges to diffusion of the IT based concept and to the successful collaboration between the various parties involved.

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Interviews

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Dear XXXX,

I am a Finnish student from the Aalto University School of Business in Helsinki, Finland and writing my thesis about the Green Office Program of WWF Finland.

I kindly ask your help with my research by answering the questionnaire, which you can find in the link below. The answering takes only XX minutes. If you leave your contact information in the end of the questionnaire, I will send you a little thank you -gift for helping me with my project.

All the answers are very valuable, confidential and contribute to my research lot. I would like to thank you already in advance and I wish you very nice summertime.

Best regards,

Marika Parviainen

1. Where did you hear about the Green Office Program the first time?
 - I read it from the WWF Finland website
 - From Helka Julkunen, WWF Finland
 - From somewhere else. Where? _____

2. Have you searched for the information about the GO yourself?
 - Yes
 - No

3. Is information about the GO easily or hardly available, scale 1 – 5?
 - 1=information available very hardly
 - 2=information available hardly
 - 3=information available moderate
 - 4=information available easily
 - 5=information available very easily

4. What do you think about the material of GO available in the website, scale 1-5?
 - 1=very weak
 - 2=weak
 - 3=moderate
 - 4=good
 - 5=very good

5. What do you think about the objectives of the GO, scale 1-5?
 - 1=very unclear
 - 2=unclear
 - 3=moderate
 - 4=clear
 - 5=very clear

6. Familiar with Compass web tool?
 - Yes
 - No
7. Familiar with Climate Calculator web service:
 - Yes
 - No
8. Familiar with Consumer Habit Questionnaire:
 - Yes
 - No

9. Do you think that you know much, enough or little about the GO, scale 1-5?
 - 1=too little
 - 2=little
 - 3=enough
 - 4=much
 - 5=very much

10. Have some organizations or companies contacted you concerning the GO?
 - Yes
 - No

11. If you answered yes to previous question, could you please specify your answer?
 For example "How many organizations or companies contacted you?" _____
 "What kind of information they are looking for?"

12. Do you think that it would be easy or difficult to co-operate with organizations and companies related to the GO in your country, scale 1-5?
- 1=very difficult
 - 2=difficult
 - 3=moderate
 - 4=easy
 - 5=very easy
13. Could you please clarify the previous question, why the co-operation with organizations and companies is as you answered?
14. Are you considering having the Green Office Program in *your own local office's use*, scale 1-5?
- 1=We are not interested
 - 2=We might be interested
 - 3= We do not know yet
 - 4= We are slightly interested
 - 5=We are very interested
15. If you are not interested in to apply Green Office in your own office, could you please clarify why?
16. If you are interested in to apply Green Office in your own office, could you please clarify why?
17. If you are interested in to apply GO in your own office, do you already know what might be the schedule?
18. Are you considering offering the Green Office Program to *the use of organizations and companies* in your country, scale 1-5?
- 1=We are not interested
 - 2=We might be interested
 - 3=We do not know yet
 - 4=We are slightly interested
 - 5=We are very interested
19. If you are not interested in to offer Green Office Program to organizations and companies in your country, could you please clarify why?

20. If you are interested in to offer GO to organizations and companies in your country, could you please clarify why?
21. If you are interested in to offer GO to organizations and companies in your country, do you already know what might be the schedule?
22. What do you think the strength of the Green Office Program is?
23. What do you think the weakness of the Green Office Program is?
24. In your opinion, what following features describe the Green Office Program? You can choose as many features as you like.
- Useful
 - Easy to use
 - Complicated
 - Easy to implement
 - Implementation might be time-consuming
 - Too light a system because it is designed for office use
 - Licence fee what is paid for WWF Finland is too costly
 - Annual fee from the organisation or company is too costly
 - Admission fee from the organisation or company is too costly
 - Something else, what? _____
25. In your opinion, what kind of attitude is prevailing in your country concerning the cooperation between the environmental organization and organizations/companies?
26. In your opinion, what kind of atmosphere is prevailing in your country concerning the environmental protection?
27. Would you like to get more information about the Green Office Program?
- Yes
 - No
28. If you answered yes to previous question, what kind of information you would like to get and how?
29. If you like to have little thank you gift for answering this questionnaire, please leave your contact information here:
- Name:
- Address:
- Postal code & city:
- Country:
- Email:

Thank your for answering! All the information is confidential and very valuable in my study.