Sustainability Matters: Why—and how—business is widening its focus to consider the needs of all stakeholders
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Executive Overview

Companies of all sizes and across many industries have realized that traditional ways of measuring business performance do not account for the needs of all stakeholders. In order to ensure sustainability over the long term, management teams must do more than maximize shareholder profits. They must consider the needs of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, and community members. There are three ways in which companies can embrace sustainability: through philanthropy, as part of a risk management strategy, or by integrating sustainable practices into the business model itself.

This white paper demonstrates how running a responsible business and high levels of performance do not have to work against each other. And it makes a case for why sustainability issues should simply be part of a company’s overall performance management practices. It is not always easy to integrate sustainability initiatives in daily business processes. Challenges include dealing with increased transparency, measuring results in an efficient, systematic manner, incorporating sustainability into decision-making and business processes, maintaining momentum and simply determining who owns each piece of the sustainability footprint.

Yet, organizations can derive strategic advantage by embracing sustainability as part of the business. The benefits include cost savings by limiting waste and consumption of natural resources, new business opportunities through environmentally-friendly product innovations, enhanced brand value and reputation with customers and partners, better risk management, the ability to attract capital from “green” investors, and the opportunity to attract better staff by offering a great place to work.
Introduction

For an integrated energy company like DONG Energy in Denmark, sustainability management is an integrated part of its business. With over US$8.4 billion in revenue, DONG Energy has leading market positions in Denmark and other key regions in Northern Europe. The company is active throughout the energy value chain, as a gas and oil producer, a wholesaler, and a prospector.

DONG Energy is using a sustainability reporting and management solution provided by Oracle, which helps them monitor environmental sustainability initiatives more accurately across all areas of operations from heat and electricity production methods, to storage and distribution. By having a single platform for financial and sustainability reporting, DONG Energy is able to eliminate redundant systems for similar data collection processes, ensure the accuracy of sustainability metrics and seamlessly integrate key sustainability information with financial information.

“With Oracle Hyperion Financial Management, we can now identify the hot spots in our work with sustainability, where we can obtain maximum change and results – and we can track progress in our work to achieve our goals. We can also publish our results in line with our financial results because our reporting is transparent and valid”.

Niels Strange Peulicke-Andersen, Project Manager, Quality, Health, Safety and Environment Group, (QHSE) DONG Energy A/S

Companies of all sizes would do well to follow DONG Energy’s example. It’s no longer enough to maximize profits the old fashioned way—by focusing only on creating shareholder value. To thrive in the long-term, management teams need to take an outside-in approach that considers the needs of all stakeholders, from employees and customers to community members. They need to be able to measure their efforts to achieve sustainability and optimize the performance of the entire organization.

This is where business intelligence and performance management come in. Well designed and implemented enterprise performance management processes and systems help companies recognize and balance stakeholder requirements, while making the most of their contributions, leading to greater business value and more sustainable success.
The Many Sides of Sustainability

Regardless of how large or how profitable they are, businesses today do not stand alone. They are inextricably linked with the societies in which they operate. Every decision they make—whether it’s to close a plant, move operations to a different country or set a price for a new product—affects the surrounding community and the natural environment, for better or for worse.

Regulations resulting from corporate scandals, the rising influence of non-governmental organizations, environmental concerns and the fact that nearly one-third of the world’s top 100 economic entities are corporations, not countries, have prompted the emergence of a new trend: Sustainability. How successfully companies embrace these concepts may well determine their ability to develop new markets, negotiate partnerships and compete for talent.

Consider these telling statistics:

- 76 percent of executives surveyed in 2010 say sustainability contributes positively to shareholder value in the long term, and 50 percent see short-term value creation (McKinsey & Company).
- $1 out of every $9 under professional management in the United States now involves an element of “socially responsible investment” (Geoffrey Heal, Columbia Business School).
- Over 2,600 organizations registered sustainability reports with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) through 2010
- Over 3,000 organizations voluntarily submitted data regarding greenhouse gas emissions to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) in 2010

Broadly speaking, sustainability is a hot-button topic that’s grabbing headlines from The Wall Street Journal to The Economist; yet it still means many things to many people. Some equate it with philanthropy, while others expand the definition to focus on regulatory compliance, business ethics and the environment. Even the terminology is diffuse, with Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Responsibility, Corporate Citizenship, Triple P (People, Planet, Profit), Triple Bottom Line and “Being Green” often used interchangeably. In this paper, we refer to “sustainability” as the umbrella term.

A business can only expect to receive stakeholder contributions, such as capital, labor, materials, infrastructure, customer business and government regulations, when it is prepared to meet stakeholder requirements, such as financial returns, a good place to work, and being a responsible citizen. A wider focus on the whole value chain ensures an efficient and effective business. At a strategic level, this approach can reconcile different—and sometimes conflicting—stakeholder objectives while building a foundation of trust in the process. So how do you get there from here?
Sustainability Defined

The most widely recognized definition of sustainability is: "Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

—Brundtland (1987)

This definition describes the balance that is needed between the short term and the long term. At the same time, a sustainable business model also focuses on the balance between your own needs and those of your environment:

“Sustainability entails a balanced approach for organizations to integrate stakeholder concerns into business operations, in a way that aims to benefit the organization as well as its internal and external stakeholders.”

—Based on definitions of ISO and the European Union

Levels of Achievement in Corporate Responsibility

Companies typically embrace sustainability in three ways, each requiring a greater commitment than the one before.

Worthy Causes

Many companies engage in philanthropic activities, investing on average about 1 percent of pre-tax profits to sponsor a non-profit organization, make charitable donations or contribute additional money to funds raised by employees for certain causes. Alternatively, companies may grant employees time to work for charitable foundations or sponsor and encourage their staff to drive in hybrid cars to preserve the environment. The list of possibilities is endless. What about the results?

Aside from the feel-good benefits of giving back to the community, philanthropy is limited in its ability to strengthen the bottom line. But although this approach will not affect a company’s performance, it may still provide intangible value, for example by improving employee satisfaction or generating positive public relations exposure.

Sustainability as Part of Risk Management

Even Friedman would agree that corporate image has an impact on business—and that management should address it if it poses a threat to the performance of the business. Companies take risks when they violate the rules and needs of the communities and environments in which they operate. Many have learned this lesson the hard way over the last few decades. If business practices lead to environmental hazards that upset citizens, they will speak out. Shareholders and other suppliers of capital, such as banks, want to be associated with a clean business. Government officials can impose
strict rules and regulations, while non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can influence consumer perception.

And it’s not only the behavior of the business itself that matters. Stakeholders will evaluate its relationships with suppliers and channel partners, and their actions will shape the brand. For instance, fashion brands are held responsible for how their contract manufacturers treat employees and the environment. And retailers must vouch for the safety of products they place on the shelf.

The answer for companies that approach sustainability from a risk management point of view is to establish clear codes of conduct and transparent operations. In this way, they can mitigate the most common kinds of business risk:

- **Financial risk:** Avoid fines or higher interest rates imposed by banks that view your business as a high-risk association.

- **Operational risk:** Prevent safety, health or environmental issues from shutting down operations.

- **Customer risk:** Limit the risk of a negative corporate image alienating current or potential customers.

- **Strategic risk:** Don’t miss the boat on what your stakeholders require.

### An Integrated Approach

Every business should consider sustainability as part of its risk management strategy. Also, with the emergence of carbon taxes in various areas of the world, it simply makes sense to adopt sustainability as a way to save costs. But is it possible to turn defense into offense and “do well by doing good?” Companies like DONG Energy think so. And they are in a prime position to get ahead of the competition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Top Five Drivers for Sustainability</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>- Cost and efficiency opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Brand and competitive differentiation, customer requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pressure from employees, shareholders, public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Government, regulatory pressures</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Innovation and growth opportunities</td>
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**Source:** Forrester Research, The Evolution of Carbon and Energy Management Software, December 2010
When sustainability becomes integrated into the business model, it can actually create shareholder value, rather than simply protecting the company from high-risk exposure. The benefits of this approach range from recruiting better talent to unlocking new markets. And the key is to focus on social issues that are closely tied to the business.

Sometimes socially aware companies discover viable new markets by targeting underserved populations. For example, a consumer packaged goods company introduced an affordable detergent in small packages with a formula that allows poor people to get clean laundry while washing it in the river. Banks offering microcredits in Bangladesh have experienced a 95 percent repayment rate, higher than the industry average. And one apparel company sells ready-to-make jeans kits of components, and distributes them through local tailors, for around $6.

Opening these types of markets often requires radically different business models with different cost structures. But this type of CSR agenda can also drive innovation that becomes applicable—and highly profitable—higher in the customer pyramid.

Sustainable Performance Management

Running a responsible business and high levels of performance do not have to work against each other. Sustainability issues should simply be part of your overall performance management practices. This means:

- Including all stakeholder requirements and sustainability in your goal setting process
- Driving sustainability initiatives into financial and operating plans
- Monitoring and analyzing sustainability metrics and adjusting goals and initiatives to ensure achievement of short-term and long-term goals
- Reporting progress on sustainability initiatives to internal and external stakeholders

When sustainability issues are factored into the business at all levels, it can become a source of competitive advantage, rather than an obstacle to it. There are infinite ways to get the job done. One example is to integrate sustainability into a balanced scorecard; another is to embrace Sustainability Reporting.

Sustainability and the Balanced Scorecard

As the most widely recognized performance management methodology, the balanced scorecard manages and tracks performance across four perspectives of the business. The process perspective tracks how efficient you are; the customer perspective indicates how you are perceived by customers;
the financial perspective manages the bottom line; and the growth or learning perspective makes sure the other perspectives function equally well or even better in the future.

Sustainability indicators can be integrated into a balanced scorecard framework to help you capture a complete picture of how the business is performing:

- Traditional balanced scorecards could contain a few indicators aimed at social and environmental factors, typically in the balanced scorecard process perspective.
- A stakeholder perspective, such as a social and environmental perspective, could be added.
- A sustainability scorecard, specifically and only aimed at a company’s sustainability program, could serve as a special report that derives from the organization’s overall balanced scorecard.
- Companies could choose to integrate sustainability in all other perspectives of a balanced scorecard. When sustainability is part of the business model itself, it serves as a catalyst for improving performance in all areas of the business.

The sustainability scorecard is a set of objectives and relationships between those objectives that show how the stewardship of the company and the management of the resources it consume are commensurate with profit objectives and beyond profit objectives the survival of the enterprise.¹

Organizations can also opt for integrating sustainability matters into all areas of their overall balanced scorecard. See the table below which depicts this.

| Sustainability Plays a Role in All Four Balanced Scorecard Perspectives |
|---|---|
| **Customer Perspective** | **Processes Perspective** |
| • Adds to the Customer Value Proposition, competitive differentiation | • Supports internalized control, compliance and transparency |
| • Serves as a source for watching trends | • Serves as a process optimization tool |
| • Should be treated carefully as PR | |
| **Growth/Learning Perspective** | **Financial Perspective** |
| • Adds to employee satisfaction | • Feeds sustainability-weighted indexes |
| • Can be a soft investment | • Helps attract long-term investors |
| • Enables organizational learning | |

Table 1: Impact of sustainability on the business model
Sustainability Reporting

Businesses today are required to track their performance in a variety of ways. Not only do they have increasing fiscal responsibilities to shareholders and investors, but they also face mounting pressure—and in some countries, government requirements—to disclose non-financial metrics as well. For instance, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom require environmental reporting, while France and Germany require environmental and social reporting. Certainly, corporate scandals have resulted in statutory requirements for greater accountability. But the trend is also the result of a more environmentally and socially aware culture. A global community of stakeholders and citizens now demands to know the impact a company has on the environment and the regions in which it operates. Fortunately, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), an independent non-governmental organization that was previously part of the United Nations, provides an effective way to meet their demands.

With more than 2,000 organizations using it, the GRI’s leading framework for sustainability reporting (SR) derives from the input of members representing businesses, accounting and investment firms, and environmental, human rights, research and labor organizations from around the world.

The GRI framework provides definitions, controls and many best practices for implementing Sustainability Reporting. The organization highlights the following benefits of using its framework for SR:

- In today’s “always-on” world where information is everywhere, companies must take a proactive approach to reporting.
- In order to satisfy a wide range of stakeholders, companies need to foster a continuous dialogue.
- Transparency builds trust.
- Sustainability Reporting links all the parts of the business and challenges an insular approach.
- Reporting helps management in evaluating potential risks and act preventively.
- Sustainability Reporting helps managers to create a more complete long-term overall picture of the business.
- Fuller and more regular disclosure of non-financial information can add stability to a company’s financial condition by avoiding major swings in investors’ behavior.

How Sustainability Reporting Works

The GRI’s Sustainability Reporting Framework describes a number of standardized performance indicators that help companies understand the benefits of their sustainability activities. Following these
standards, not only allows organizations to claim that they are compliant with the framework, but also enables them to benchmark their results against other companies as they attempt to achieve best-in-class status.

**GRI G3 Sustainability Reporting Framework**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Economic Performance</td>
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<td>Market Presence</td>
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<td>Indirect Economic Impacts</td>
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<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Materials</td>
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<td>Water</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
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<td>Emissions, effluents, and waste</td>
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<td>Products and services</td>
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<td>Compliance</td>
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<td>Transport</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
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<td>Labor Practices</td>
<td>Employment</td>
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<td>Labor/management Relations</td>
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<td>Occupational Health and Safety</td>
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<td>Training and Education</td>
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<td>Diversity and Equal Opportunity</td>
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<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>Investment and Procurement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Non-Discrimination</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining</td>
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<td>Child Labor</td>
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<td>Forced and Compulsory Labor</td>
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<td>Security Practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indigenous Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<td>Corruption</td>
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<td>Public Policy</td>
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<td>Anti-Competitive Behavior</td>
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<td>Compliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product Responsibility</td>
<td>Customer Health and Safety</td>
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<td>Product and Service Labeling</td>
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<td>Marketing Communications</td>
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<td>Customer Privacy</td>
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<td>Compliance</td>
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Table 2: Sustainable Reporting Framework
Companies that embrace the GRI—or any other—framework view sustainability practices as part of their “license to operate”—meaning, these practices are crucial for survival of the business in the long term. Only companies that add value to the equation—instead of extracting it—can claim a sustainable business model.

Beyond the published, annual sustainability reports many organizations post on their web sites, some organizations are going further and updating and publishing sustainability goals and metrics on a more frequent basis. One example is SABMiller, who has something called the SAM Reporting Portal (Sustainability Assessment Matrix) available to external stakeholders. According to SABMiller “The SAM reporting portal lets you see how the group and its subsidiaries have performed against our 10 sustainable development priorities.” The site includes interactive reports and charts that allow stakeholders to view sustainability performance by region, and subsidiary.

http://www.sabmiller.com/index.asp?pageid=1709

Lastly, although sustainability reporting is mostly external in nature, this is not necessarily the end goal. The triple bottom line (people, planet, profit) also has merit for internal purposes, such as saving costs or creating awareness about sustainability matters. For instance, tracking water or energy usage, or translating the use of company resources into an associated carbon footprint on a daily basis, helps in many ways. It allows organizations to address sustainability issues proactively, instead of waiting until an annual report is published. Moreover, in any organization, measurement drives behavior. Even a few simple sustainability metrics can lead to company-wide awareness and sustainable management decisions based on explicit discussion, rather than implicit assumption or lack of awareness.

A good example here is Fitness First, a chain of fitness centers in Australia. They are using an application from Oracle partner Knowledge Global, to automatically collect and report energy data from sensors and meters across 95 gyms in Australia into a consolidated analytics dashboards. They use this data to establish accurate baselines, create benchmarks across facilities, measure the improvements and help forecast savings into the future. This consolidation of energy data also supports Fitness First’s mandatory greenhouse gas reporting to the Australian Government for the coming financial year.

Financial Indexes

The emergence of several sustainability-driven financial indexes, including the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, Ethibel, SERM and FTSE4GOOD, has helped investors make informed decisions by evaluating companies across a broad range of economic and environmental criteria. When evaluating companies for inclusion, these indexes may consider policies the company has in place, how it reports on environmental impact and whether it monitors its suppliers. They typically also track external and internal social aspects, such as how the organization:

- Consults various stakeholders in decision-making processes
• Ensures equal opportunities for staff
• Fosters human capital development
• Complies with health and safety regulations
• Embraces corporate philanthropy policies
• Focuses on product safety

Sustainability indexes also track corporate governance issues, such as board composition, policies around ethical behavior and processes for risk and crisis management.

To date, most of the available research finds only a weak correlation between sustainable companies and a financial return. But with $1 out of every $9 under professional management in the United States involving an element of “socially responsible investment,” the real question is, can you afford to alienate investors?

As FTSE puts it: "A broad range of stakeholders are challenging the corporate sector to take more responsibility for the ethical, environmental and social impacts of their business operations. These stakeholders range from local communities to shareholders, customers, company employees and even business partners. As companies respond to these challenges, many are finding that good corporate responsibility performance mitigates risks and brings opportunities that can have a positive impact on a range of key measures of business success: shareholder value, revenue, operational efficiency, customer attraction and retention, competitiveness, brand value and innovation."

Conclusion – Organizing for Sustainability

How do make sure your efforts to create a sustainable business are worth the investment? The same way you tell if a new billing system or supplier relationship is creating value: by setting goals, organizing to achieve them and measuring performance over time. Companies that want to embrace sustainability need to take action at both the strategic and tactical levels. Some companies are creating corporate sustainability or economic and social responsibility departments and are putting senior executives at the vice president and director levels in charge of their sustainability strategies and initiatives. Others assign responsibility for sustainability initiatives to corporate strategy and development functions.

Transparency Builds Trust

In order to derive value from a sustainability initiative, you need to devise a viable strategy—one that combines profits with intangible factors such as protecting the environment and improving quality of life. One way to do this effectively is to hold a continuous dialog with your stakeholder groups. Their requirements will often conflict with each other, but when you communicate openly about what drives
the business and its strategy, you create alignment between what people do within the organization and what people tell the outside world. And you help all of your stakeholders see the big picture and develop an understanding of the tradeoffs you face.

Performance/risk matrices help foster this essential dialogue. If some shareholders call for action when they are not satisfied with their return, management can share the results of the decision-making process. Likewise, if some shareholders push for a single-sided approach, the influence of other stakeholders may help balance public opinion.

Whose Job is Sustainability Reporting?

The finance department should play a crucial role in sustainability reporting, although in many companies this is driven by public relations or investor relations. In many ways, sustainability reporting is like financial reporting in the sense that both require data collected by entities per period, data aggregated according to rules, processes and data that may need to be audited, support for analysis and scenario planning and ways to associate documents with particular performance indicators.

In fact, a new initiative is under way that will clearly place responsibility for sustainability reporting into the CFO's office. The Prince's Accounting for Sustainability Project (A4S) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) announced on Monday 2nd August 2010 the formation of the International Integrated Reporting Committee (IIRC).

The IIRC's goal is to create a globally accepted framework for accounting for sustainability: a framework which brings together financial, environmental, social and governance information in a clear, concise, consistent and comparable format - put briefly, in an “integrated” format. The intention is to help with the development of more comprehensive and comprehensible information about an organization’s total performance, prospective as well as retrospective, to meet the needs of the emerging, more sustainable, global economic model.

http://www.integratedreporting.org/

Introducing a Sustainability Reporting Solution

For many organizations, however, sustainability reporting poses a challenge because it has additional requirements not typically found in financial analytics and reporting systems. The process must account for many different data sources—such as operational systems, financial systems, documents, and published reports; many different kinds of indicators, including numeric, categorical, indexical, textual, different units and associated conversions; and many different nonfinancial styles of aggregation. The wide diversity of relevant structured and unstructured data further complicates matters. Even so, given its experience with the complex processes of audited external reporting, the finance department is a perfect place to bring financial reporting together with sustainability reporting.
Increasingly, Oracle customers are using Oracle's Enterprise Performance Management applications and Business Intelligence tools for their sustainability reporting, to be able to measure sustainability matters in an efficient, systematic manner. The advantages are clear:

**Efficient:** Enterprise Performance Management applications make sustainability reporting a faster process. One company reduced an 18-month fragmented process, involving over 1,300 emails to a single process aligned with its financial closing.

**Reliable, less error-prone:** Although in many countries sustainability reporting is still voluntary, an auditable process using an Enterprise Performance Management application helps build stakeholder trust and credibility, and allows organizations to be transparent with confidence.

**Effective:** all sustainability data is stored within a single system, together with the overall operational and financial management information. This allows organization to analyze correlations, results, variances and improvement opportunities, and to create a sustainable decision-making process.

How does an organization decide what sustainability reporting approach is best for them? There are a few factors to consider such as:

- What are the best practices in your industry or region? Determine what your peers are doing in response to regulations, high return opportunities.

- What IT platforms and reporting tools are currently in place? Look for opportunities to leverage existing investments, data, processes and to minimize incremental costs.

- Where is the necessary data primarily sourced from? Examine current sources (e.g. Excel, EH&S) but also identify if data capture can be achieved via A/P processes, web forms, etc.

- Who will be the audience for the environmental or sustainability data? Will the data be published internally, externally, or both? Will it need to be audited?

- What level of data granularity is required? Determine if a sensor-based approach justifiable and what data frequency makes sense for operational versus enterprise level usage.

Whatever approach you decide to take, organizations can derive strategic advantage by embracing sustainability as part of the business and disclosing the details of their sustainability efforts to external stakeholders. The benefits include cost savings by limiting waste and consumption of natural resources, new business opportunities offered through environmentally-friendly product innovations, enhanced brand value and reputation with customers and partners, better risk management, the ability to attract capital from “green” investors, and the opportunity to attract better staff by offering a great place to work.
Oracle and Sustainability

Our Commitment

Oracle is committed to using our technology and resources to advance education in innovative ways, promote diversity, enrich the life of communities, and protect the environment. Since its inception in 1977, Oracle has created innovative software programs to solve our customer and business partner needs. In a similar way, Oracle has developed innovative programs to benefit our communities, as exemplified by our programs such as Think.com, ThinkQuest, Oracle Academic Initiative, Oracle Academy, Oracle Giving, community programs, green and environment protection efforts, and Oracle’s Global Volunteer Program. Please see Oracle's Commitment website for more information on Oracle's Commitment programs, as well as to download a copy of ‘Oracle’s Commitment Report.’

Our Solutions

Oracle also provides an array of products and services that support the sustainability initiatives of our customers. Oracle database and server technologies provide a number of capabilities, such as application clustering and virtualization that enable our customers to consolidate hardware and reduce energy usage across their organizations.

Oracle applications provide support for environmental and social compliance, as well as a broad range of other sustainability initiatives. Our transportation management applications support load consolidation and route planning to drive cost savings and reduction of environmental impact. Oracle supply network design and strategic optimization design applications help optimize supply networks impact on fuel costs and carbon emissions for transport. Oracle’s governance, risk and compliance (GRC) solutions enable organizations to manage product and program compliance against standards and regulatory requirements, offering assurance of effective compliance throughout the product lifecycle.

Oracle’s enterprise performance management and business intelligence solutions enable customers to support sustainability reporting and management initiatives. With the ability to collect economic, environmental and social metrics from financial and operational data sources, Oracle’s EPM applications are being used to collect, consolidate and report this information for regulatory bodies and other external stakeholders. Oracle’s BI tools support the delivery of this information to internal management via graphical sustainability dashboards.

To learn more about Oracle’s solutions for the sustainable enterprise please visit www.oracle.com/green or contact your local Oracle account representative.