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Methodology for Sustainable Resource Management measurement at a company level - case study

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Abstract

The greatest challenge is to translate the theoretical goal of sustainable development into practical usage at different levels of application, including the company level. Sustainability should be managed, what requires appropriate measurement. Consequently, authors define in the paper a concept of the Sustainable Resource Management (SRM) as translation of the sustainability at the company level from the perspective of resources remaining at the company's disposal. The publication presents an universal methodology for measurement of SRM, which was presented in details for polish vehicle recycling company in Poland.

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1. Introduction

The resource context is present for a long time in business management as it is proofed by both - definitions of management (e.g. [1,2]) as well as The Resource-based View (RBV) theory, which examines how resources can drive a competitive advantage. Considering that, authors perceived company by its resources, that are used with the

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aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner, defined and implemented by appropriate management.

Taking into consideration the practical approach to management in the resource based context, it was claimed that one of the major contemporary challenges for the management is Sustainable Development (hereafter: SD). It was assumed that SD is a source of competitive advantage. Therefore, SD should be treated as one of the enterprise's purposes what was presented in the Fig. 1.

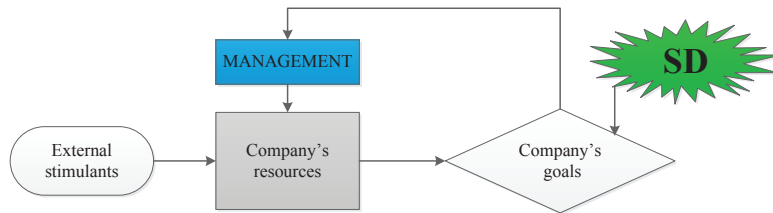


Fig. 1 SD as company's objective [1]

According to the idea presented in the Fig.1, resources are managed in order to achieve established company's goals. Resources are stimulated by some external factors (including politics, economy, competitors, etc.) but also they interact with themselves. Sustainability becomes a hot issue among academics and industry, expected to be introduced in business practice, particularly in company's objectives, as the leading one.

SD is a worldwide concept, which requires activities from bottom to the top, what, in authors opinion should be started at company level (levels of SD application were described in previous work [3]). Nowadays, implementing SD is a necessity, resulting from the law, as well as the effect of increasing people's awareness [4]. Although sustainability is perceived as a source of the competitive advantage for companies [5], authors claimed, that it is mostly considered in the category of global problems (e.g. access to water [6], poverty, quality of soil, air, climate change [7]), which are difficult to refer them to company level. Despite the fact that there is a common approval for SD, there are many problems with the SD term. The most known definition from Brundtland Report [8] is not sufficient, particularly it is worthless in the context of implementation in the business practice [9, p.59-60].

Considering mentioned discomfort associated with SD, authors have made an attempt to translate theoretical assumptions on SD policy realization into practical usage at the company level from the perspective of the owned resources. The research questions are defined as:

- Q1: How to define SD at the company level from the perspective of resources?
- Q2: How to measure SRM?
- Q3: How to improve SRM?

In order to answer the 1st research question the concept of Sustainable Resource Management (hereafter: SRM) was developed. SRM becomes representation of specific approach to all resources promoting SD at the company level (Section 2). As a result of literature review it was discovered that there is a research gap in the field of practical implementation of the SD considering company's resources framework. All works related to the *sustainable resource management* issue are about natural resources e.g. water [10], flora [11], etc., but they do not cover the problem of company's resources management. In order to answer the second and the third research questions, authors propose a methodology of SRM measurement described in Section 3. The originality of the recommended procedure relies on the practical application of sustainability at the company level from the perspective of the resources, what meets the research gap. Authors explain how to determine suitable set of indicators and how to improve obtained results of the SRM ratings.

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