

The EFFC Sustainability Charter

1. Introduction

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. ¹

Companies are part of an increasingly complex and global system, drawing on and impacting on that system. Sustainable development poses a challenge to the traditional mindsets of companies. Increasingly their performance is judged not just by the services products and profits they make but also by the impacts they have on human and social well-being and on the natural environment on which we all depend for life.

The EFFC further defines Sustainable Development as:-

Maintenance of a healthy economic environment; prudent use of natural resources; social progress which recognises the needs of all people; and effective protection of the environment.

The European construction industry²:-

- accounts for nearly 10% of total Gross Domestic Product
- with 14m workers, is Europe's biggest single employer with 7.2% of total employment
- produces one of Europe's largest waste streams, much of which can be recycled

Additionally the built environment produces approximately one third of all greenhouse gas emissions, and global construction activity uses 50% of all raw materials taken from the Earth's crust.

EFFC Members fully accept that significant change in operating practices is required in order to ensure that their businesses are truly sustainable. Such change is required both at a corporate level and a personal level. All Members are fully committed to implement the Principles contained in this Charter.

The EFFC recognises the need to assemble a reliable body of data on all aspects of foundation and ground engineering materials and construction activities so that informed decisions can be made on the environmental impact of any proposed construction process for a specific construction need.

2. The Principles

- Consider and promote sustainability in its broad social, economic and environmental context in all aspects of foundation industry related activity
- Develop opportunities to make positive contributions to the environment
- Promote the elements required for foundation industry stakeholders to engage in productive work, the creation of wealth and a good quality of life for all
- Promote good safety, health and well-being combined with personal development throughout the foundation industry
- Adopt measures and processes to prevent adverse environmental impacts

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3 EFFC Commitments

The Commitments are divided into three sections:-

- A. The Environment
- B. Stakeholders
- C. The Marketplace

A The Environment

A.1 Pollution and Emissions

- a Avoid pollution and damage to existing aquifers and ground water
- b Avoid contamination of soil and the generation of contaminated waste
- c Use biodegradable oils and fuels
- d Regular servicing of machines and equipment to reduce emissions
- e Use NOX and particle filters on all plant and machinery
- f Minimisation of dust, noise, and vibration in the working environment
- g Minimise the use of polluting forms of transport
- h Assess the environmental performance of all purchases, from 'cradle to grave'

A.2 Materials

- a Adopt energy efficient materials
- b Adopt energy efficient machines
- c Efficient use of water
- d Use, wherever possible, natural, non-toxic raw materials from renewable resources, extracted or harvested by environmentally-sound methods

A.3 Recycling and Waste

- a Maximise use of recycled materials
- b Minimisation and reuse of spoil
- c Minimise waste

A.4 Process

- a Work to an Environmental Management System in compliance with ISO 14001
- b Promote whole life costing
- c Promote the re-use of existing foundations
- d Seek innovations to reduce the use of non-renewable resources
- e Promote an understanding of sustainability in relation to foundation engineering, ground engineering and construction
- f Promote research and development into the use of foundations for heat transfer to and from the ground.
- g Evolve a timetabled strategy for the elimination of all potentially dangerous chemicals and products in the foundation construction process and from the waste products of construction
- h Evolve a timetabled strategy for the elimination of all potentially dangerous chemicals and products from the permanent works that remain from the foundation construction process.
- i Undertake development of other sustainable technologies

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A.5 Offices and Buildings

- a Turn off lights and appliances (and avoid use of 'standby')
- b Use phone or video conferencing to avoid travel
- c Use energy efficient appliances
- d Recycle cans, bottles, paper and plastic
- e Recycle mobile phone equipment, print cartridges, electronic equipment
- f Progress toward a 'paperless' environment
- g Office buildings, warehouses and temporary accommodation constructed to be heat and fuel efficient

B Stakeholders

B.1 Shareholders and Other Financial Partners

- a Produce appropriate financial returns for shareholders to ensure their continued investment
- b Be transparent about non-financial performance

B.2 Clients

- a Provide competitive quality products, free from defects
- b Develop and maintain open and honest relationships with Clients
- c Collaborate fully with all members of the project team and other stakeholders to develop and adopt best practice sustainable development

B.3 Employees

- a Provide a safe place of work for all employees
- b Actively implement best practice Health and Safety Policies for employees, visitors and suppliers
- c Operate clear and fair terms of employment and remuneration policies
- d Enhance performance of employees through ongoing training, skills and knowledge development
- e Avoid discrimination in recruitment, training, development and promotion policies
- f Nurture and encourage employee commitment
- g Educate all employees on sustainability issues
- h Ensure working methods are ergonomically sound
- i Consider appropriate flexible working arrangements
- j Eliminate unnecessary travel
- k Consider trains and buses instead of cars and planes

B.4 Suppliers

- a Require suppliers to embrace sustainability issues and work in partnership with them to promote effective and meaningful sustainability best practice
- b Implement a review system to ensure commonality of objectives
- c Commit to and respect fair contractual terms
- d Consider purchasing electricity from 'green' suppliers
- f Buy from companies that manage and reduce their emissions

C The Marketplace

- a Adopt sound business ethics by embracing and implementing the EFFC 'Standards of Behaviour'
- b Promote competitive behaviour that is socially and environmentally acceptable

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4 Sustainability Progress Reviews

The EFFC will regularly review progress by its Members in relation to sustainability.

¹ Brundtland G.H., Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987