

Responsible Management in SMEs

The Research Project

In the last few years, science and economy have intensified their dealings with sustainable, yet **competitive solutions for responsible management**. Many corporations recognize the social and environmental-relevant aspects of business. The economic imperative arises due to increasing stakeholder pressure (customers, suppliers, NGOs, politics, etc.). A strategic orientation considering environmental and social indicators has the potential to lead to product and service innovations and thus to competitive advantages. Nevertheless, most measures in this area (certifications, reporting, etc.) are considered in the context of large companies and their transfer to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is limited.

The **Competence Team for Sustainable, Strategic and Opportunity-Oriented Management of SMEs (CR4SME)** addresses these challenges: Together with international partners in research and industry, we are primarily involved in application-oriented research on the development and implementation of instruments to manage **economic, social and environmental responsibility**. The research project is co-financed by the City of Vienna and focuses on the specific needs of Austrian SMEs.

Goals

- Development of business models taking into account the economic, social and ecological responsibility of companies
- Establishment of the Competence Team as a contact point for policy as well as private sector for topics concerning sustainable management
- Optimization of the education program implemented at the University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication in the field of business ethics.

The Current Study

In the first few months of the project, the research team developed a model for the diagnosis of **sustainable management in SMEs** - based on the latest scientific results and together with experts in this field.

In the current research phase, we are working on a comprehensive picture of the research area, based on **eight case studies**. The Competence Team supports the participating SMEs by identifying their strengths and development potential as well as the starting points for possible strategic measures.

Subsequently, we will present the main findings of our study and possible implications in **workshops**. In return, the participating SMEs will provide feedback on the effectiveness of the methods used. This close collaboration will bring the research results of the project into a direct application context and initialize **new perspectives**.

Our Team

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