

Posters

Measuring Continuous Improvement: Environmental Excellence Self-Assessment Method

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Abstract

Gaia Network Ltd, a leading Finnish environmental management think-tank and consultancy, has developed a self-assessment method called Gaia Assessment. The purpose of the method is to evaluate corporate environmental excellence and sustainability.

The Gaia Assessment measures the environmental strategies, processes and results of the target company. The method has its foundations in the quality award philosophy such as Malcom Baldrige Award and European Foundation for Quality Management Model. It supplements other more traditional environmental impact assessment methods. The method includes an analysis of the available documentation and a number of in-depth interviews within the target organization, its key customers and other stakeholders. The interviews follow a semi-structured outline.

As a main result of Gaia Assessment, the assessed company receives a radar-profile formed by the eight dimensions of the evaluation metrics. Sustainability is not a separate criterion, but is embedded in each of the dimensions. Lower percentage level of results may indicate a good level of environmental management, but reaching a high score in any dimension requires an achieved vision of sustainable development.

The results of Gaia Assessment can be utilized in several ways. A company can monitor its own performance improvement over time, or several companies can benchmark their performance against each other. The results from the companies which have applied the method indicate that the overall assessment process serves as an excellent tool to identify critical success factors - both short term environmental management issues and long-term sustainability issues.