



PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING – STUDENT ACTIVITIES

UNIT 11: How should we measure social and environmental costs?

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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to accompany the textbook and can be shared with students as a form of worksheet. <https://accounting-streams.org/principles-of-accounting/11.html>

Student Activity #1 (Section 11.4)

Using the template in **Appendix 1**, complete SDG business impact checklists for the following: a supermarket, a budget airline and an electric vehicle manufacturer.

- Which of these impacts did you find relatively easy to determine?
- Which of these impacts did you find relatively difficult to determine?
- Think about why you may have found this difficult and what you learned about your understanding of the relationship between an organisation and sustainability.

Student Activity #2 (Section 11.4)

Undertake a pre-study of external opinions for one company from these sectors: supermarkets, budget airline, and Electric Vehicle Manufacturer.

Find up to 5 major risks to the social acceptability of their business model.

Student Activity #3 (Section 11.4)

Using the same company as in activity # 2, read their sustainability report (noting that this might be called different things – ESG Report, Social Responsibility Report, Environmental Report, Social and Environmental Report, Integrated Report.).


Find up to 5 major risks to their business model included in the report.

Find 5 positive actions described in the report.

Identify any negative impacts (from your SDG analysis and pre-study) that are not included in the report.

Student Activity #4 (Section 11.4)

For the company report that formed basis of Activity #3 and your initial findings in activities #1,2 & 3). Identify the following indicators (if present).



| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| GREEN HUSHING | MISLEADING SYMBOLS | JARGON |
| NO PROOF | GREEN LIGHTING | SELECTIVE DISCLOSURE |
| GREEN CROWDING | INCONSISTENT PRACTICES | DUBIOUS CERTIFICATIONS |
| LIES AND IRRELEVANCIES | GREEN SHIFTING | EMPTY STATEMENTS |
| POLITICAL SPIN | VAGUENESS | GREEN RINSING |

Student Activity #4a – Greenhushing and selective disclosure

Example

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student Activity #4b – Inconsistent practices and green-lighting

Example

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student Activity #4c – Misleading symbols and dubious certifications

Example

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student Activity #4d – No proof, empty statements and green-shifting

Example

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student Activity #4e – Political spin, green-crowding and green-rinsing

Examples

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student Activity #4f – Vagueness, jargon, lies and irrelevancies

Examples

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student Activity #4g

Summarise findings from #1, #2#3, #4a-f into the following greenwashing checklist summary to judge the extent of the greenwashing in this case.

Greenwashing Checklist Summary

| | None | Some | Most | All |
|---|------|------|------|-----|
| % of Negative impacts on SDGs reported | | | | |
| % of Positive Impacts on SDGs reported | | | | |
| % of Negative Impacts named by external groups reported | | | | |
| % of externally recognised risks reported | | | | |
| % of report assured | | | | |
| Were there examples of | | | | |
| <i>GREEN HUSHING</i> | | | | |
| <i>SELECTIVE DISCLOSURE</i> | | | | |
| <i>INCONSISTENT PRACTICES</i> | | | | |
| <i>GREEN LIGHTING</i> | | | | |
| <i>MISLEADING SYMBOLS</i> | | | | |
| <i>DUBIOUS CERTIFICATIONS</i> | | | | |
| <i>CLAIMS WITH NO PROOF</i> | | | | |
| <i>EMPTY STATEMENTS</i> | | | | |
| <i>GREENSHIFTING</i> | | | | |
| <i>POLITICAL SPIN</i> | | | | |
| <i>GREEN CROWDING</i> | | | | |
| <i>GREEN RINSING</i> | | | | |
| <i>VAGUENESS</i> | | | | |
| <i>JARGON</i> | | | | |
| <i>LIES & IRRELEVANCIES</i> | | | | |

| | Unreliable | Partial Greenwashed | Light greenwashed | Totally Reliable |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Overall Assessment of report | | | | |



Reflection

Think about how your initial assumptions of the truthfulness of business social and environmental accounts have changed as a result of this exercise?

What three steps would you take before you would feel confident to rely on information presented in business accounts?

Which three greenwashing practices would you not undertake in your future career? Explain your choice.

Appendix 1 - SDG Business Impact Checklist

| | | Positive | Negative | Not sure |
|-----|---|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. | End poverty in all its forms | | | |
| 2. | End hunger, achieve food security & improved nutrition & promote sustainable agriculture | | | |
| 3. | Ensure healthy lives & promote wellbeing for all at all ages | | | |
| 4. | Ensure inclusive & equitable quality education & promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | | | |
| 5. | Achieve gender equality & empower all women & girls | | | |
| 6. | Ensure availability & sustainable management of water & sanitation for all | | | |
| 7. | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable & modern energy for all | | | |
| 8. | Promote sustained, inclusive, sustainable economic growth, full & productive employment & decent work for all | | | |
| 9. | Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive & sustainable industrialization & foster innovation | | | |
| 10. | Reduce inequality within & among countries | | | |
| 11. | Make cities & human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient & sustainable | | | |
| 12. | Ensure sustainable consumption & production patterns | | | |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--|--|
| 13. | Take urgent action to combat climate change & its impacts | | | |
| 14. | Conserve & sustainably use the oceans, seas & marine resources for sustainable development | | | |
| 15. | Conserve & promote sustainable use of ecosystems, forests, combat desertification, land degradation, biodiversity loss | | | |
| 16. | Promote peaceful, inclusive societies, access to justice for all, build effective, accountable, inclusive institutions | | | |
| 17. | Strengthen Partnerships with organisations committed to sustainable development | | | |