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9. Sustainable development

Sopra Group is committed

In 2008, Sopra Group launched a strategic review to determine how sustainable development could be incorporated into its strategy and operations.

This review led to the creation of a dedicated organisational structure that reports directly to Sopra Group's Executive Management and works closely with the other functional divisions. Its role is to develop a three-year roadmap defining the Group's key strategic priorities in relation to sustainable development while leading an improvement process and associated action plan, which will be revised annually. In order to support this approach, one of the Group's 2010 objectives is to put in place indicators designed to track progress in relation to specific priorities identified in the roadmap.

The concern for long-term viability and social responsibility that lies at the heart of sustainable development is a natural extension of the Group's values. The desire to manage its business rigorously and to turn these values into action has led the Group to adopt "virtuous" environmental and social behaviours.

Sopra Group's sustainable development policy covers all actions contributing to the Group's economic development:

- **respecting employees** through appropriate working conditions, developing employees' skills and employability, non-discrimination and adherence to principles of fairness;
- **caring for the environment** by limiting pollution and the depletion of natural resources;

- **facilitating sustainable development initiatives by clients** through an innovative service offering in this area;
- **treating suppliers transparently and fairly** through the Group's relationships and working methods;
- **benefiting the communities** with which the Group interacts through action in favour of those in difficulty, while protecting employment pools in areas where the Group has a presence.

The approach adopted by Sopra Group aims to reconcile economic efficiency with social fairness and respect for the environment. It is a continuous improvement process.



Sopra Group signed the United Nations Global Compact in 2004, and renewed its commitment to the Compact in 2009. With this commitment, the Group undertakes to comply with this document's ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour standards, protection of the environment and anti-corruption. These principles are fully compatible with the values and fundamentals espoused by Sopra Group since its creation. As a signatory, Sopra Group undertakes to promote the principles of the Global Compact within its sphere of influence.

9.1. A business model viable for the long term

Further information in relation to this issue is provided elsewhere in Part 1 of this document, under Chapter 3, "Sopra Group's businesses and strategy" and Chapter 7, "Group organisation".

In the context of an unprecedented crisis that has hit our business sector hard, Sopra Group's business model has proven resilient, confirming the relevance of the Group's selection of core businesses, its offerings and its production methods. This model is characterised by a simple three-tier organisation and a rigorous internal control system with monitoring and decision-making sessions held on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis.

To support its development and respond to changing market needs, Sopra Group launched a huge transformation programme in 2009 aimed at providing a genuine continuum of services, developing high added value services, stepping up industrialisation and putting in place a human resources policy suited to these new challenges.

For many years, Sopra Group has succeeded in building lasting relationships with its clients, whom it supports in their major transformation programmes. In order to achieve this, the Group has developed a set of values backed by a code of professional ethics and relies on established fundamentals that govern the Group's operations and service activities on an ongoing basis. The values that have shaped the Group's development since its formation – placing the priority on client service, choosing quality and professional excellence – have led it to constantly improve the relevance and quality of its services for the benefit of its clients.

Accordingly, Sopra Group has deliberately chosen to concentrate and build upon its know-how while adapting its production methods to meet both its own and its clients' efficiency and profitability requirements.

This approach to managing client relationships and responsibilities has enabled Sopra Group to become a long-term, preferred partner to major organisations that continue to trust the Group to help them grow.

9.2. A responsible corporate citizen

Further information in relation to this issue is provided elsewhere in Part 1 of this document, under Chapter 8, "Human resources".

Sustainable development is a concern that unites all those employees who want to work in a business with a long-term future, where "life is good", solidarity is valued and there is genuine concern for the environment.

Sopra Group, after more than four decades of existence, is a well-established player in its field, offering its 12,450 employees a stable working environment with stimulating career prospects. These opportunities are made possible within a Group whose businesses involve a wide variety of professions, with operations in France and abroad, and a strong company culture. Ever since it was formed, the Group has always sought to retain its employees, even during major crisis periods like the one that faced all companies in 2009.

Moreover, Sopra Group's company culture and its Enterprise Project are grounded in a firm value system that binds together the entire Group.

Designed to serve the Enterprise Project, Sopra Group's human resources policy involves:

- the successful integration of new employees in a Group that has doubled the size of its workforce since end-2003;
- a recruitment policy organised in particular around long-lasting partnerships with prestigious engineering schools and a highly successful programme of internships;
- a high level of training guaranteeing the excellence and adaptability of both employees and management, with a skills development plan revised each year and implemented by a dedicated structure, Sopra Group Academy;
- regular evaluation of skills and revisions to our Core Competency Reference Guide so as to adapt to changes in the Group and in our clients' requirements.

9.2.1. An ambitious training programme delivered by Sopra Group Academy

One of Sopra Group's major objectives in the area of human resources management is increasing the expertise of its employees and anticipating their professional development. In response to this major challenge, five years ago the Group set up Sopra Group Academy, an internal training organisation offering a full range of training through a broad network of over 150 trainers: orientation seminars together with training in management, new technologies, the Group's business areas and offerings as well as personal development programmes.

Through working closely with staff in a flexible way, this approach seeks to develop the skills of each and every one of the company's employees.

These training programmes also rely on mechanisms for sharing knowledge and best practices. For example, Sopra Group Academy works with all the Group's divisions to coordinate the Group Knowledge Portal, a sharing and learning platform for all employees.

9.2.2. A continuous assessment system supporting employee development

Sopra Group's assessment system enables the Group to know its staff and regularly monitor their development. This system is mainly based on assignment reviews, annual appraisals and twice-yearly assessment and review cycles. The system is backed by a Core Competency Reference Guide, which can be used by employees to improve their understanding of the requirements of the Group's businesses and career development opportunities. For local managers, this Guide supports professional development in line with both employees' wishes and the Group's priorities.

The assessment system operates under the responsibility of over 400 local managers.

9.2.3. Non-discrimination principles and action in favour of employees with disabilities

Sopra Group observes the principles of non-discriminatory recruitment and gender equality. The proportion of female engineers recruited is higher than the percentage of women graduating from engineering schools. With regard to gender equality, Sopra Group applies a policy of fairness in relation to pay, promotion and access to training.

In order to promote the employment of people with disabilities, the Group's policy was supported by action in three areas in 2009:

- raising awareness among operational and functional managers to promote the recruitment of people with disabilities;
- developing the use of subcontracting, supply and service provision agreements with officially recognised sheltered workshops and accredited ESATs (assisted employment centres);
- partnering with associations or bodies working for the social and professional integration of people with disabilities.

9.3. Awareness of our environmental impact

Compared with heavy industry, Sopra Group's service and consultancy activities have a limited impact on the environment. Nevertheless, our businesses generate a large amount of travel, require significant infrastructure and IT equipment and produce a lot of documents.

The need to control our environmental impact has therefore become a key factor in our management and production methods, and is covered by a continuous improvement programme involving the relevant functional divisions and their staff.

As the limitation of our environmental impact is understood to be a matter of concern for all parties involved, the Group's employees play a key role in this eco-responsibility process. At Sopra Group, we encourage employee initiatives in the area of environmental protection and promote the avoidance of excess consumption of non-renewable energy resources in our working methods. A guide to eco-friendly behaviours was published and distributed in early 2009 to raise awareness and help employees in their day-to-day activities. Staff are regularly reminded of this guide, and all Group sites have champions tasked with supporting its adoption.

As regards supplier policy, Sopra Group has defined purchasing rules and procedures based on ethical principles for managing relations with suppliers and subcontractors. These rules and procedures are based on transparency and fairness, with the aim of driving the quality of products and services offered, in line with the Group's economic and operational efficiency constraints.

A Sustainable Development Procurement Charter has been drawn up in line with the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact. This Charter is provided to each supplier to promote the key principles set out in the Global Compact. Furthermore, with regard to purchases of consumables, office automation equipment and IT hardware, Sopra Group has a proactive policy of working with suppliers who offer eco-friendly products.

9.3.1. Travel and commuting

Sopra Group has locations both in France and abroad. In France, the Group has many sites located throughout the country. Its clients are themselves located all over France and abroad. Sopra Group has also developed offshore Service Centres in Spain, Morocco and India. All of the above generates a large amount of travel, with an associated environmental impact.

In this context, and in order to limit the amount of business travel, Sopra Group has implemented a multi-themed action plan: reducing travel to internal and external meetings by installing videoconferencing equipment at most Group sites and offering incentives to promote the use, wherever possible, of the least polluting forms of transport, particularly for travel within France and daily commutes to client sites.

In late 2009, Sopra Group decided to upgrade its vehicle fleet to include hybrid vehicles with reduced energy requirements.

9.3.2. IT resources

IT resources are managed centrally. This ensures that hardware is standardised and shared, leading to energy savings.

By virtue of its activity of developing software and managing IT projects on behalf of its clients, Sopra Group has a large number of servers. These servers account for a large proportion of the company's environmental footprint (in terms of materials, energy consumption and air-conditioning requirements). With the aim of controlling economic and ecological costs, Sopra Group has for a long time tightly managed its stock of servers by pooling hardware and studying solutions for reducing the amount of energy consumed by workstations. For example, in the course of 2008 Sopra Group launched a huge server virtualisation programme. At 31 December 2009, 63% of the Group's servers had been virtualised.

In early 2009, Sopra Group decided to implement an improved energy management model, and embarked on harmonising standards applied to all equipment in France, in particular by ensuring that all workstation screens enter sleep mode after 15 minutes. In relation to workstations, several experiments have been carried out at various sites or when implementing new types of hardware (including improved energy management for laptops, the use of extended sleep mode, flat screens, etc.). These efforts are in the process of being adopted across the Group, while taking into account operating constraints specific to certain of the activities of an IT engineering company.

When acquiring new hardware, while workstation selection is guided by various criteria, priority is given to hardware with low energy consumption for the same level of performance.

With regard to photocopiers and printers, Sopra Group has developed a process for rationalising the number of devices and promoting sensible use of consumables. In this regard, networking is considered as a way of reducing the number of devices, since photocopiers can also function as both printers and scanners (scan to mail). In 2009, 75% of the Group's photocopiers were networked.

This proportion will increase in 2010. Furthermore, virtually all the Group's photocopiers support double-sided printing.

In order to ensure that electrical and electronic equipment reaching the end of its useful life is managed in an ecologically friendly manner, Sopra Group sells most of its equipment to a certified organisation employing people with disabilities. Between 5 and 10% of PCs coming to the end of their useful lives are donated to charitable associations connected to Sopra Group employees.

Finally, one of the key principles put in place over the last few years has been that of extending the life span of hardware and resisting pressure from manufacturers to constantly renew equipment. Indeed, extending the life span of IT equipment enables us to significantly reduce our environmental impact.

9.3.3. Management of business premises

At all of its sites in France and, depending on local legislation, in its subsidiaries worldwide, Sopra Group favours the application of measures for the protection of the environment:

- furnishing of premises with ergonomic workstations enhancing the quality of working conditions for its staff;
- installation of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly heating and air-conditioning systems whenever these systems require replacement;
- preventive maintenance of installations to conserve energy;
- use of non-toxic and non-hazardous products by the cleaning services;
- installation of water fountains, directly connected to the drinking water distribution network, with the aim of reducing plastic bottle use;
- commitment by site managers to observe and encourage respect for the environment and good practice on a day-to-day basis.

With respect to Sopra Group's priorities in relation to new premises, the Group's strategy is to favour buildings able to obtain the French THPE (*très haute performance énergétique* or very high energy efficiency) certification, in line with the Group's overarching objective to promote the quality of the work environment.

9.3.4. Waste management

In 2009, Sopra Group reinforced its policy of recycling its waste, in particular with respect to the following areas:

- implementation of waste separation at most of the Group's sites in France, working with specialised service providers. This decision was accompanied by an awareness campaign promoting the proper use of waste separation, in accordance with the specific characteristics of each site. Site representatives are appointed to ensure that all waste separation programmes across the Group operate smoothly, notably by suggesting corrective measures to improve efficiency;
- waste management relating to consumable computer and office supplies, batteries, beverage cans and paper, by making available special containers for this purpose, with waste collected by an accredited firm implementing procedures allowing for the monitoring of the quantity of waste processed;

- a specific waste management approach for products covered by the European Union's Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, with waste collected by accredited firms implementing procedures allowing for the traceability of this waste.

9.3.5. Paperless processes

Sopra Group continues to encourage the wider use of paperless processes by deploying tools permitting electronic document management and by frequently urging its employees to avoid printing whenever possible. Concrete measures implemented by the Group to encourage the use of paperless processes combined with its efforts to raise environmental awareness among employees have a positive impact on the environment on a number of levels since they allow for reductions both in the use of paper and in energy consumed by printing. In addition, paperless processes help to limit the physical delivery of documents and, last but not least, less paper used for printing means less waste to be processed. In 2009, these measures reduced paper use by a further 15% compared to 2008, on a like-for-like basis.

Paperless processes within the Group concern: the various internal newsletters published by Sopra Group (Group newsletter and those of the functional and operational divisions); activity reports produced on a monthly basis by each employee; the management of paid leave and absences, IT requests related to the management of the Group's installed base of IT equipment; work documents required for internal and external meetings that are increasingly distributed electronically with the admonition to print them out only if absolutely necessary.

Other projects are under way, such as the digitisation of all travel and expense account information, launched in a pilot phase at the end of 2009, with full deployment planned for 2010.

9.4. A socially responsible company

Planète Urgence

Through its consulting subsidiary, Sopra Group has been supporting the work of Planète Urgence since 2008, in favour of international solidarity and sustainable development. This solidarity initiative, prompted by a senior manager of the Group who is a member of the association Planète Urgence, offers the opportunity for consultants who wish to contribute to humanitarian missions for the delivery of development assistance by providing the benefit of their expertise where relevant. In 2009, four consultants travelled to Benin, Cameroon and Madagascar to take part in missions of this kind. Apart from the value of these missions as humanitarian actions of solidarity to assist disadvantaged populations, these Sopra Group employees all found their experiences to be rewarding from both a personal and a professional perspective.

Tadeo

In 2009, Sopra Group renewed its partnership with Tadeo, a comprehensive service facilitating the hiring and professional integration of hearing-impaired or deaf individuals. Tadeo is a shared online communications platform delivering on-demand French sign

language (LSF) video interpretation services and simultaneous subtitles. These services allow a deaf or hearing-impaired user to communicate face-to-face or over the telephone.

This partnership involves financial participation as well as assistance provided by expert consultants in the following areas: project supervision, the development of relations between institutions, partnership building, technical expertise relating to call centres and Internet-based video services.

Opération Booster

The Group honours its social commitment by working with programmes assisting young people having difficulty obtaining employment. In 2009, Sopra Group took part in Opération Booster alongside APEC. This operation sought to help young people to find jobs, whether or not they belong to the Group's target recruitment population. The assistance provided by Sopra Group ranged from help with the preparation of CVs to role-playing activities to build confidence for job interviews.

9.5. First edition of the European Corporate Responsibility Awards

In early 2009, the first European Corporate Responsibility Awards were presented in Prague, an event organised by Sopra Group's consulting subsidiary, in partnership with its European network, E-I Consulting Group. These awards aim to recognise the most exemplary and innovative companies in the area of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The competition encompasses all aspects of corporate social responsibility, namely the responsibility of a company in terms of environmental protection, its social responsibility to employees and its responsibility to local communities and the wider society.

Danone was selected as the top prize winner for 2009, receiving its trophy at the ceremony in Prague from Orga Consultants (known as Sopra Consulting since January 2010), for the entirety of its CSR measures implemented and adopted by all of its entities. Following an initial selection of 21 finalists at the national level, Danone was chosen by a jury consisting of corporate leaders, political figures and social activists, including Nicole Notat, President of Vigeo, the representative for France.