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Are you green enough?

By Geta Diaconu
Director, Advisory Environmental Services
KPMG

Do you know how many environmental pressures there are on a business?



There is a long list of stakeholders who put pressure on companies in relation to environmental protection: clients, consumers, suppliers, authorities, financial institutions, employees, ecologists, politicians, shareholders, industry associations, scientists, etc.

The Environment is not a private business anymore

In addition, civil society expects to be consulted by the commercial world, and organizations are increasingly being asked to show transparency in their ethics in the same way that they make public their financial statements or market values. In particular, most of today's companies are extremely sensitive to public opinion in a world where attitudes are communicated globally and instantly.

Most of the largest companies are now aware that they cannot focus solely on profit making, but must also assume responsibility for the continuity of the planet and be accountable for the consequences of their actions. Leading companies invest in building up the trust of their stakeholders, while simultaneously improving their business performance. This allows them to position themselves as 'companies of choice' among customers, investors, suppliers, business partners and local communities. These organizations accept that they must win and retain the confidence of the general public by 'winning hearts and minds' as well as delivering on the bottom line. They respond to a new set of societal values based around the evolving role of corporations in society, defined as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Good companies also realise that failure to take environmental issues seriously can lead to negative media coverage which can have a disastrous effect on a company's reputation, and hence affect its bottom line.

In the past only a few Romanian companies were faced with high investment costs for improving environmental standards. Nowadays however, there are new environmental requirements that may have an impact upon a company's operations or its position in the market. A company that functions poorly due to the absence of internal environmental standards risks a temporary shut-down or even closure, damage claims, liability suits, and negative market effects, problems with shareholders and problems in receiving coverage from insurance companies. On the other hand, companies with a good environmental compliance

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record will have a competitive advantage. Increasingly, business pressures have led to an improvement in companies' environmental performance, resulting in financial benefits. Coming back to the key question "are you green enough?", we see achievable solutions for the businesses to become so without engaging unreasonable budgets.

From our experience in the market, we believe that it is a competitive plus to choose to implement a higher level of transparency on CSR by issuing a public report on this topic, generating major benefits for the business, such as: more favorable financing conditions, increased positive reputation, stakeholders' appreciation, advanced positioning on the market, effective risk management, awareness and personnel motivation. If a company also requests assurance on the integrated reported data from an independent and recognized expert, as KPMG is, the confirmation on the reliability and consistency of the reported data can only add value. In this case, the confidence of stakeholders in the non-financial data and management information will increase and this will trigger financial benefits even in a crisis period.

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Contaminated land management

By Cristina Angheluta
Environmental consultant
Royal Haskoning



Land may be affected by contamination as a result of industrial processes, historical use, waste disposal, accidents, and so on. Contaminated land poses risks to human health and to the environment. In Romania, the subject has been largely neglected in terms of a legal and technical framework to deal with this issue.

The risk

The risk of contaminated land generally implies the environmental risk and the human health risk, which for landowners and operators of such sites leads to the risk of becoming legally liable for the contamination.

Contaminated land has environmental liabilities that are of the greatest concern to landowners due to their legal and financial implications. These environmental liabilities are ultimately financial liabilities, which can include reduced land values or the obligation to fund remediation.



Upcoming requirements

Royal Haskoning from the Netherlands recently prepared a National Strategy for Management of Contaminated Sites in Romania. Within this project, the data base for national inventory of contaminated sites and a national management strategy were developed, including technical guidelines and norms for managing contaminated sites in line with international practices. A new legislative framework, the national strategy and technical guidelines are due to be issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in Romania.

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Environment and relief – an NGO's experience

By Magda Camanaru
Communications Manager
World Vision

Currently, World Vision International is involved in more than twenty important relief interventions all over the globe, following small scale to large complex humanitarian disasters, with a rapid and slow on-set, many of which are related to climate change and have a medium to long-term impact on the environment and affected people. These include floods, drought, earthquakes, food crisis, conflicts, etc.

An analysis done by Oxfam International in 2009, of the 6, 500 climate – related disasters, recorded since 1980, show that the numbers of people affected by extreme weather events, many of which are related to climate change, has doubled in just 30 years and is expected to rise by 54% to more than 375 million people a year on average by 2015. The figures do not include people hit by other disasters such as wars, earthquakes and volcanoes. The report, called "The right to survive" also underlines that, implicitly, the relief aid will have to double - \$25bn - in order to cope and be able to answer the needs of the disaster – affected persons.

According to the data provided by The General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, in Romania there are over **420 sources** of disasters in the country, monitored by the Civil Protection. Data provided by the Romanian Environment Department says that more than 930, 000 people live in households built in areas at risk of flooding!

In the past years many and various types of disaster affected the country regions, including repeated floods, flash floods, drought, due to the global warming process. The severe floods over the past ten years in Romania caused 280 deaths and damages estimated officially at 3, 5 billions euro!

In these circumstances, for World Vision Romania, the global warming effects resulted in an increased number of relief operations throughout the country (relief operation developed in ten counties), from providing basic food and non - food goods, to house repairing and construction. More than 10, 000 people received support in the past 20 years, in order to respond to yearly and cyclic seasons of floods, many of these being children.

The disaster prevention and preparedness work is crucial if we want to reduce disaster effects and, therefore, the money allocated for relief interventions, too often not enough to provide all the support disaster affected persons need on short, medium and long-term, in order to overcome the devastating effects of a disaster.

As a child-focused, community-based organization, World Vision Romania's concern goes to the urgent need to build relief and mitigation capacities at the level of the 200 partnering communities, with a focus on **child protection in emergencies**. In 2006, when there were severe floods all over the country, WVR discovered that the intervention plans at the community level did not include at all child protection and intervention measures in case of disasters. This means that in the case of a disaster, children were at higher risk of neglect or

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even more severe phenomena like abuse or human trafficking, with all the subsidiaries entailed – prostitution, begging, etc.



It was then when World Vision Romania set up the first ever *child – friendly space* (CFS) in the country, in the flood – affected people's camp in Rast. The CFS is a space where children are provided a secure and safe establishment where they can continue their daily activities and go smoothly through the psychological trauma of losing their house, family and other belongings, under professional, supervised care from social workers, psychologists, priests, etc.

WVR ' s efforts in the area of building communities' relief and mitigation capacity, with a focus on child protection, continued in 2009 with a project funded through a MATRA-KAP grant and implemented in Iasi County, in partnership with Iasi County School and Emergency Departments. Within the project, 75 teachers in five rural schools have learned how to protect their children in case of a disaster, after they received training, learned about mitigation and practiced plans and simulation of response in case of disasters, while other 500 students in these schools have participated in information sessions on how they should re-act in case of various types of disasters. As another national premiere, the first *Guide for the Protection of Children in relief situations* has been published at the end of the 9 months project and distributed through schools all over the areas where WVR works.

More the 45% of Romania population live in rural area and are dependent on their small farm and practice subsistence agriculture, while their income is largely menaced by economical recession and equally by global warming effects over the crop and environment (e.g. desertification of the South - West of Romania is a process that is becoming extremely obvious).

The success of future development projects relies on the communities' capacity to address these two factors within the next years in our development programs, with intentional planning and integration of activities that will mitigate and adapt to the climate change effects.

In the years to come, World Vision Romania's development strategy and partnerships with communities and interested stakeholders need to look closer at the need to do risk assessment on climate change impact on rural communities and development projects, the relief and humanitarian aid need to consider economical impact on disaster area in their response and preparedness strategy and to an increased awareness, involvement and participation of communities in decision making process regarding mitigation and disaster response.

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Closure and post-closure of waste landfills

By Cristina Angheluta
Environmental expert
Royal Haskoning



Waste management on the move

EU money started to flow into Romania to address the most urgent need for proper waste management. New integrated management systems are implemented, which include new EU compliant landfills for waste storage and closure of existing landfills. The operational and recently closed landfills should meet the EU operational and technical requirements.

Existing landfills

The existing non-compliant landfills in Romania will undergo closure and post-closure care at EU standards. Small rural dump sites will have all their waste removed, while the larger urban ones will have to be capped, meaning to isolate and store the existing waste on-site. Post-closure care of the capped landfills will be needed though, and these activities involve traditional groundwater remediation and monitoring of the underground contaminants resulted from improper historical storage of waste.

Natural attenuation

Natural Attenuation (NA) is a non-traditional post-closure care method. NA is comprised of all natural processes in both the landfill body and the soil downstream from the landfill, such as the microbiological decay of organic compounds, the chemical precipitation of heavy metals and the sorption of contaminants to organic material and silt particles. NA is taking care of the reduction and/or elimination of contaminants. As a result of NA few contaminants leave the landfill, and the wide range of redox-conditions down-gradient from the landfill lead to the biotransformation and precipitation of contaminants.

Application of new post-closure care technologies such as Natural Attenuation will lower the aftercare costs by approximately 50%. Already in several countries (a.o. Netherlands, UK) the public authorities are aware of the positive effects of Natural Attenuation in an environmental as well as in a financial way.

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Asociatia Environ

Waste electrical and electronic equipment management
www.environ.ro

BT&T Software Development

BT&T Software Development SRL is a Dutch owned Romanian software development company. BT&T delivers software development services to clients in Europe and the United States. Founded in 2005, BT&T prides itself on the qualities Technical & Pragmatic.
www.bttsd.ro

CliniClowns Romania

NGO focused on making hospitalized children laugh again and forget that they are in a hospital
www.cliniclowns.ro

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Golden Blitz Taxi

Romanian private company that offers transport services – taxi and protocol – anywhere in Romania and beyond its borders with Mercedes Benz E 220 cars in accordance with Law nr. 38/2003 for transport by taxi. Although recently established, the company is appreciated for selecting professional staff and offering high quality services to its business clients.
www.goldenblitztaxi.ro

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Metro



METRO Cash & Carry Romania opened its first store in October 1996, being the first company to introduce a new trading system - cash & carry. In the following years, the company concentrated on expanding the sales network reaching a number of 25 stores with a total selling space of approximately 179,000 sqm and a range of 19,000 products. Since entering the market, METRO Cash & Carry Romania has focused on the needs of professional customers by offering an extensive selection of top quality products at competitive prices.

To further strengthen the partnership with its professional customers, METRO Cash & Carry Romania opened the Gastronomy Competence Center and the Traders Competence Center in METRO Militari store and the Office Solution Center in METRO Baneasa store. In 2010, METRO launched a new concept dedicated to trader customers - METRO Punct.

www.metro.ro

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www.stickergroup.com

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Next events

18 November	"Romania's accession to the euro: lessons from a Greek tragedy"- lecture by Aad van Mourik - for NRCC members only
24 November	CliniClowns Charity Dinner
25 November	Window of investment opportunities - Attracting investors in Romania, the Dutch experience - event organized together with TMF Romania – for NRCC members only
December	Preview 2011 Round Table

For more details please access our website: www.netherlands.ro

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