

Report on activities supporting
the UN “Global Compact” initiative
and Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS)
carried out within the framework
of the “Approved Partner” Programme in 2016

Introduction

The Mission of the "Approved Partner" Program is to promote reliability and responsibility as significant values in the creation and functioning of civil society, as well as strengthening trust and positive relations between business, science and administration, e.g. by implementing projects which promote good examples of reliable and effective cooperation.

The “Approved Partner in the Local Community” project, conducted as part of the program, with the cooperation of local and government administration, as well as local trade unions, is just one example of that kind of actions.

Actions pursued by local governments and local organizations, which are worth following, are awarded and promoted. Their main goal is to achieve sustainable communities, friendly for their residents, and to encourage initiatives in the local community and build positive relations between local governments and businesses. Various organizations and institutions which pursue and support initiatives promoting such actions are also awarded.

As shown in many studies, lack of trust forms a significant barrier for business growth and for developing more effective ways of cooperation between business, science and administration. Such cooperation is particularly important in the EU’s new financial perspective and for the growth of innovation, which is one of the priorities of Poland’s long-term development strategy aimed at increasing competitiveness of the Polish economy.

The main objectives of the Programme also include dissemination of economic, legal and other knowledge about the economic market and modern methods of corporate management, paying special attention to the standards observed and followed in the European Union.

The “Approved Partner” Programme is the initiative of the Reliable Business Association and the European Education and Consulting Centre (until end of 2004 - Business Promotion Centre) introduced in 1995 in Wielkopolska. At the time it was the only programme of this type in Poland.

It is important to add that The Delegation of the European Commission in Poland and The President of the National Bank of Poland (NBP) extended honorary patronage to the Programme.

A multi-step company verification system combined with ongoing monitoring of company reliability are among the main values of the new version of the Programme implemented

in 1999, which makes it distinct among other similar 2 initiatives. The verification procedures are systematic based on verification requests submitted by companies and the documents, which are assessed in line with the principles stipulated in the Programme regulations.

The assessment checks how reliably a company conducts its business, whether it pays its liabilities on time, whether it is solvent, whether it observes legal and administrative regulations and the principles of fair competition, whether the methods used internally and externally are friendly, what the quality of its goods and services is, how involved it is in the issues of the social environment and how it cares for the natural environment.

In the period under discussion systematic marketing activities connected with the Programme were carried out, including ongoing monitoring and verification of the companies participating in the Programme. The documentation defined in the Programme regulations submitted by the company was collated and prepared for analysis by the Licence Bureau of the “Approved Partner” Programme (maintained by the Centre for European Education and Consultancy) and the Verification Committee (composed of representatives of the Association) assessed the companies seeking the award or extension of the right to use the “Approved Partner” logo and honorary title in their marketing activities.

Activities supporting the Global Compact initiative and Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS)

Systematic support (media coverage, Internet, e-marketing campaigns and dissemination of information at conferences and meetings) was continued in 2016. It aimed to popularize knowledge and help in the implementation of the UN Global Compact initiative and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

- January – December 2016 - promotional campaign in cooperation with specialized agencies, including mail shots with information about the “Approved Partner” Programme, Global Compact, CSR and solidnypartner.pl website and sent to Polish companies, accompanied by a telemarketing campaigns.

– modernization of “Approved Partner” programme website (solidnypartner.pl) and solidnypartner.eu business portal. Both pages promote laureates of the „Approved Partner” programme and other companies offering top quality goods and services. There was also website (czytelniabiznesowa.solidnypartner.eu) expanded that connects with abovementioned initiatives. One of the main aims of the programme and described webpages is creation of the “zone of greater safety in business”, which is a value particularly important for prospective customers during the “crisis of confidence”.

In 2016 Michał Wieczorek, the “Approved Partner” Program Coordinator (which is currently celebrating its 21th anniversary), took part in many conferences and meetings related to sustainability and the increased role of innovation.

12 October 2016, during the “POL-ECO-SYSTEM” International Trade Fair of Technologies and Products for Sustainable Development and Municipal Services, organized by the Poznań

International Fair (a longstanding strategic partner of the “Approved Partner” Program) under the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment, representative of the board of the Poznań International Fair and the Coordinator of the “Approved Partner” Program presented special diplomas “Approved Partner of Local Communities”.

Initiatives and good practices of local governments and local government organizations aimed at sustainable development of communities (friendly for their residents) were also awarded, among them initiatives, which encourage civic activity in local communities and which build positive relations between local governments and business. The awards were presented to:

Investors’ Assistance Center of the Marshal Office of the Westpomeranian Region (recommendation of the Marshal Office of the Westpomeranian Region)

The City of Grodzisk Mazowiecki (recommendation of the Marshal Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship)

The City of Wałbrzych (recommendation of the Marshal Office of the Lower Silesia Region)

The County District Office in Krapkowice (recommendation of the Marshal Office of the Opole Voivodeship)

The County District Office in Przasnysz (recommendation of the Marshal Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship)

The County District Office in Szczecinek (recommendation of the Marshal Office of the Westpomeranian Region)

The ceremony was broadcast online via the Web City platform, which also hosted the “Good Practice Fair” held concurrently with the ”POL-ECO-SYSTEM“ trade fair (11-14.10.2016). The event presented activities undertaken by companies and local governments in local communities. A conference promoting knowledge about the availability of funds (particularly EU funds), how to apply for them and presenting practical examples of project implementation was also held on that platform.

As all these events were available online, prospective participants, including trade fair visitors, had an opportunity to join them. Conference participants could interact in real time with the exhibitors present at the “Good Practice Fair”, as well as actively contribute to the conference (more information – <http://solidnypartner.pl>).

Rewarded companies are taking part in the Reliable Business Club "Approved Partner", informal forum gathering Programme laureates, simplifying contacts and cooperation of companies as well as promoting reliability and responsibility in business (approximately 90% of them are small and medium firms).

Activity report in favour of local environment (social and natural) part of the companies present independently, 4 companies (3 medium and 1 micro) also referred an information to here presented report:

„ANDRE ABRASIVE ARTICLES” Spółka z o.o. Sp.k. – Koło,

„WIELKOPOLSKA GILDIA ROLNO-OGRODNICZA”, S.A. - Poznań,

Zakład Usług Informatycznych „NOVUM” Sp. z o.o. - Łomża,

AUDIT Kancelaria Doradztwa Podatkowego Alicja Szymańska – Poznań.

The percentage of women managers in these companies in the period covered by the report was as follows:

- medium companies – 11%-65% (no change compared to 2015),
- micro companies – 0%-100% (no change compared to 2015),

There is no information on discriminatory practices regarding remuneration of women.

Involvement in activities protecting the natural and social environment

Natural environment

In 2016 the mentioned companies participating in the “Approved Partner” Programme continued or started the following ecological activities:

- collection of post-production waste,
- ion exchange treatment of electroplating wastes,
- hazardous waste reduction, reduction of gas and dust emission programmes prepared by companies (and approved by the county government),
- use of ecological raw materials in production,
- Freon recovery,
- use of low emission fuels,
- continued activities to reduce detrimental effects of production to the environment: upgrading and reconstruction of production assets, i.e. exchange of insulation on heat networks and assembly of condensation neutralizers in boiler houses,
- participation in local programmes carried out in schools, aimed to make the children aware why it is important to protect the natural environment
- collection of used packaging, waste paper, cells, etc. (assistance in organization and transport).

The above activities have been carried out for a number of years by: Zakład Usług Informatycznych „NOVUM” Sp. z o.o., Łomża, ANDRE ABRASIVE ARTICLES”, Koło and others.

Modern management methods compatible with international standards (mainly ISO 9001, in some cases ISO 14001 and HACCP) were implemented in over 60% of the companies

participating in the Club. About 12% of the companies in this group implemented Integrated Management Systems (Quality, Environment, H&S), among them:

- „ANDRE ABRASIVE ARTICLES” Spółka z o.o. Sp.k., Koło,
- operation of the wholesale market in Poznań in line with the ISO 9001 and HACCP management systems (“Wielkopolska Gildia Rolno-Ogrodnicza” S.A., Poznań).

Social environment

In 2016 the companies participating in the „Approved Partner” Programme were involved in the following social activities:

- assistance in repairs of public buildings,
- support to day care centres, social welfare centres,
- management of youth sports teams,
- secondment of company employees to work for the social environment,
- cooperation with appropriate institutions in the field of training courses and work placements for the unemployed (e.g. permanent cooperation between the Wielkopolska Gildia Rolno-Ogrodnicza S.A. – Poznań),
- cooperation with the County Labour Office and Family Support Centre – employment of disabled persons and creation of jobs for them (“ANDRE ABRASIVE ARTICLES” – Koło),
- tangible donations (products) to schools, kindergartens, social care centres; also financial help extended to natural persons (e.g. to help treat children with chronic medical conditions) and legal persons (foundations, associations, etc.),
- sponsorship of different events for children, including cultural and sports events, charity and social campaigns (e.g. co-organization of the Novum Jazz Festival and the Young Jazz Performers "New Hope for Jazz" festival; sponsorship of the Chamber Philharmonic in Łomża and the North Mazovian Museum in Łomża, regular school marathons – ZUI “NOVUM” Sp. z o.o., Łomża).

It should be emphasized that accomplishment of the different activities connected with the “Approved Partner” Programme and dissemination of information about the principles of the “Global Compact” and “CSR” were financed from very limited funds contributed by the Programme participants.