



Association Internationale de la Savonnerie, de la Détergence et des Produits d'Entretien
International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products

A.I.S.E. CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE CLEANING

Why should SMEs join the Charter?

(Version 1.7, 10 May 2006.)

INTRODUCTION

This document gives an overview of the benefits and arguments why an SME should join the Charter for Sustainable Cleaning. The document is divided in two parts.

The first part relates to the direct benefits that SMEs derive from implementing the Charter Sustainability Procedures (CSPs), perform KPI reporting and continuously monitor procedures and KPI data.

The second part details overall Charter benefits, arguments and specific concerns SMEs might have for joining the Charter.

BENEFITS AND ARGUMENTS

I. DIRECT BENEFITS

PROCESSES / IMAGE / COSTS

The Charter allows participating companies to:

- improve overall **quality** of products and processes due to a regular monitoring;
- improve **image with local communities, authorities** : environmentally friendly, sustainable entrepreneurship;
- increase product **safety** and improve customer relations;
- increase overall **safety** / decrease accidents via risk assessment (Occupational Health & Safety Management System/ Finished product safety evaluation); potentially reduce insurance costs
- increase **efficiency** due to better resource use policy;
- decrease **costs** / reduce **waste**: better use of resources in the production process, i.e. energy, water, raw material, packaging;
- **add-value** to consumers (via the "care-line" follow-up procedures, which better answer clients' requests / guide them in a sustainable use of products);
- improve **sustainability** of operations: control arrangements, environmental and quality & assurance management system, social standards;
- **reduce costs** by decreasing the packaging 's volume and weight;
- increase **transparency**: showing environmental interest through logos, packaging and monitoring and reporting;
- **credibility**: safety of chemical substances is crucial for consumer / customer confidence and the overall societal reputation of the industry.

II. INDIRECT BENEFITS

Retailers

- Retailers are showing a lot of interest in respect of **private label products**. They will **collaborate** with supplying companies in order to put the label on their packaging.

Communication

- The Charter will gain considerable **recognition** by stakeholders, including users and legislators. A **pan European communication campaign** on the Charter is launched from April 2006.
- Help to provide structured information and usage & safety instructions for Industrial & Institutional sector and consumers.
- Widespread **promotion of the logo** in the near future will allow companies to show their commitment to this unique sustainability initiative on all of their products. This is a way of making commitment to sustainability a part of individual corporate identity, thus, promoting further the image of the industry.

Cost and resources

- The Charter is relatively **easy and cost efficient** to join – especially if schemes such as **ISO or EMAS** are already in place. There are no registration costs for companies that are members of an A.I.S.E. National Association. Participating companies in the Charter can use the logo free of charge. On the other hand, the non-member companies can participate but have to pay an annual administration fee of 1.500 Euro.
- The verification cost is modest as it is feasible to carry out the verification checks within **one day** if the company is well prepared.
- There are some artwork costs related to the change of the labels on packs necessary for the printing of the best / safe use pictograms and the Charter logo.
- When correctly implemented the Charter should result into **cost-efficiencies** as companies will be able to better analyse and define elements for improvement.

Benchmarking and collaboration

- The Charter allows SMEs to demonstrate that they are also concerned with Sustainability and show that they take sustainability seriously
- The Sustainability Report allows the company to **benchmark** against the industry on the reported KPIs.

Legislation

- National and European legislators are more and more directing to **Sustainability legislation**. A successful Charter is the ideal vehicle to **prepare** the organisation for future legislation implications, and consolidate interaction with the legislator.

Timing

- Companies can work at their **own pace** within the Charter timeframe on progressively improving their own management procedures. The companies can take the time to train in the training area of the extranet and prepare all processes and procedures. Only when the company itself feels **ready**, it contacts the verifier to perform the entrance check.

Eco-labelling

- The Charter provides a broader-based **alternative to type 1 eco-labels**, more in line with the international sustainability agenda.