Effective Implementation of Sustainability Approaches in Companies

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Problem identification
- Increased attention and work on integrating sustainability considerations and strategies in businesses.
- Existence of many supporting approaches (Cleaner Production, Eco-design in product development, Green Supply Chain Management, Green Business Models, etc.).
- Difficulties to turn sustainability goals, commitments and initiatives towards long-lasting approaches ingrained in daily-standard business practices.

GAP: Lack of comprehensive reasoning and evidence on the barriers to the implementation of sustainability strategies, as well as situation-specific recommendations.

Aim 1: Increase visibility of why it is so complex to implement sustainability strategies in organizations.

(Aim 1) RQ1: What are the main barriers to the implementation of sustainability strategies in organizations within a specific organization profile? Do they differ depending on the type of approach, the industry, the size of the organization, the organizational structure, the position in the value chain?

(Aim 1) RQ2: What is the implementation framework/roadmap/instrument? Who is involved for which tasks and with which responsibility? How is the implementation monitored? Are the sensitive dimensions related to identified barriers addressed in the implementation framework used by the organization?

(Aim 1) RQ3: How do the barriers emerge and express in poorly performing organizations? Why is the implementation frame/roadmap used or not-used? How are the barriers mitigated in best-in-class organizations?

(Aim 2) RQ4: Based on the findings of the previous RQs, which dimensions/matters should be managed/monitored in order to facilitate the implementation of the organization’s sustainability strategy and how should they be managed/monitored?

Methods
- Literature review and survey
  - Survey based on a theoretical framework derived from academia:
    - Barriers
    - Implementation instruments
    - Hints of root causes
    - Focus on the profile, e.g. 20-30 organizations
  
- Case studies
  - Focus on "representative" organizations (e.g. 4) and e.g. 10 main barriers
  - Root causes analysis versus barriers
  - Analysis of implementation framework versus barriers

Outcomes
- Catalogue of options for improvement
- Follow up indicators: KPI, status parameters
- Set of generic recommendations / guidelines for further investigation in other contexts.

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