

Sustainable Development in Central America and the Dominican Republic

Company:	Ornamentales de Altura S.A.
Country:	Costa Rica
Project:	TMF Program: Poverty reduction and environmental improvement. An Integral Sustainable Development strategy.
Year:	2005

THE COMPANY

Ornamentales de Altura was established as a company in 1975, and was officially inscribed in 1992. At the beginning, the company aimed at satisfying the local market with products and services of added value and quality; nonetheless, it achieved expansion to the United States market in 1993. Today it has a world projection, especially since it got into the European market through solidarity and responsibility to provide quality products, on time and on agreed upon quantities. Their headquarters are located in *Concepción de Naranjo* in Costa Rica, but it also has other plants in the *San Ramon* county.



PRODUCTS AND MARKETS

The company has a variety of shefteras, crotones, dracaenas, sanseveiras y “pleomelles”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project was executed with the objective of supplying technical assistance to *Ornamentales de Altura* to improve their competitive position by implementing actions required by MPS-ABC – regulation for ornamentals that integrates concepts in the three sustainable development dimensions (economic, environmental and social).






Complementary, the company was supported in the development of an export plan that considers an insertion strategy into the European market – so that an increase in the exports be promoted on the basis of their improvement on sustainable development.

The project was executed by developing the following stages:

1. Initial company assessment
2. Development of the MPS in the company and elaboration of an exportation plan
3. Final assessment and improvement verification

MAIN ATTAINED RESULTS



Initial Diagnosis	Achieved Improvements
EXPORTATION PLAN	
Unawareness of the company's potentialities and weaknesses.	<p>An internal analysis of company's opportunities, challenges, strengths and weaknesses was performed.</p> <p>The areas needing immediate attention to improve performance in the company and further promote its insertion in the different international markets were identified.</p>
Lack of a systematic exportation management	<p>All exporting experience was documented</p> <p>An exportation strategic planning was designed as well as attention to new markets.</p> <p>A time table for the year 2006 was designed. It embodies exportation to new markets, creation of promotional tools and improvements in the productive and administrative areas.</p>
MPS – ABC	
Introduction	
It was not yet defined which farms would enter in the certification, as well as the products and the planted areas.	<p>A total of 18.5 hectares participated in the process – distributed in three farms.</p> <p>The chapter is entirely achieved.</p>
Waters	
<p>Rain water is currently collected from a brook.</p> <p>There is no management plan for polluted water (mixed with any agrochemicals).</p> <p>Water used to do laundry is not properly treated. It is currently thrown into a channel that crosses the farm.</p> 	<p>A water harnessing system was improved since part of it is taken from a small river, and the rest is collected in gutters towards a suitable tank.</p> <p>A storing reservoir was built to contain polluted waters, thus avoiding returning them to the river.</p> <p>Clothes and containers are washed in an adequate location returning polluted waters to the reservoir.</p> 

	 <p>The chapter is entirely achieved and can be confirmed.</p>
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Energy

<p>There are invoices, but currently, these consumptions are not registered for any purpose.</p>	<p>A copy of the electric consumption is attached to the periodic MPS report; besides a control is kept to compare what is reported versus what is real.</p> <p>The chapter is entirely achieved.</p>
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Recycling

<p>There is no internal program to make compost from the Non-Confirming product that is thrown away during parking.</p> <p>There is neither a plan, nor a recycling program for inorganic products.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the empty containers are returned to suppliers – guaranteeing the continuity of the products’ recycling chain.</p>	<p>Organic Recycling</p> <p>There is now a compost process in the farm available, a described procedure and an assigned zone for it.</p> <p>Plants that do not comply with requirements are used as organic fertilizer.</p> <p>Inorganic Recycling</p> <p>The process was outlined and it shows that it is being done in a responsible way.</p> <p>The chapter is entirely achieved; it is reported to the MPS the way it is being done.</p>  
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Fertilizers

<p>There are no records of the applications done in the field of fertilizers.</p> <p>There is no formal inventory that determines existing, incoming and outgoing supplies.</p>	<p>It was approved the registration of entrance and exits from the warehouses to report and control daily exits from inventory; as well as the weekly inventory form to keep track of the total weekly</p>
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<p>There is no warehouse to store fertilizers.</p>	<p>outgoing movements.</p> <p>Fertilizers are kept in the same warehouse as agrochemicals in a separate and orderly manner.</p> <p>The chapter is entirely achieved.</p>
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Planted Areas


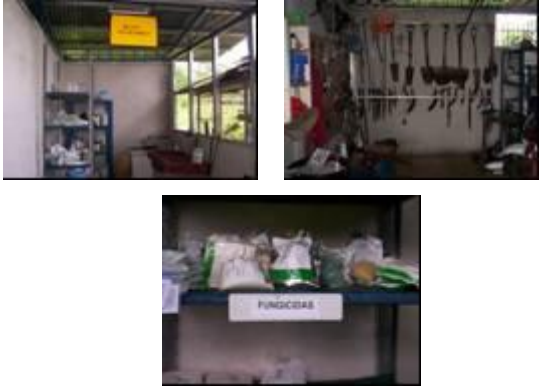
<p>Neither the total surface, nor the lots and products have been defined.</p> <p>There are no copies of the layouts with the approximate lots' marks.</p>	<p>There is a report on how much product is planted.</p> <p>A map of the farm was made to be displayed in a visible place for collaborators and visitors.</p>
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Conduct Code

<p>There is no Internal Conduct Code. For example: Labels, training regarding hygiene, cleanness, natural resources management, etc.</p>	<p>There are labels that educate personnel; for example: waste bins, Do not smoke, Restricted Access.</p>
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Health Safety

<p>Personnel with hazardous risk tasks are not properly trained.</p> <p>There is no risk assessment for the positions.</p> <p>There are no order and cleanness programs at warehouses, packing plant, nor at the field (inorganic product on the ground).</p>	<p>Instructions were written down for risky tasks ensuring personnel's health; furthermore, personnel were trained in the topic.</p> <p>An evaluation of work and environmental risks was done and an action plan was prepared for improvements regarding the attained results.</p> <p>An Emergency Plan for Poisoning and an Evacuation Plan.</p> <p>All personnel wear protection equipment according to their tasks.</p>  <p>An Internal Orderliness and Cleanness Program was implemented which encourages team work and all personnel participate.</p> <p>As part of the program, the farm's lots were weeded and labeled.</p> 
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Warehouses and Applications	
<p>Warehouses are neither labeled, nor separated. No adequate shelving is used, product is not correctly stored, nor are warehouses lacked.</p> <p>Products are not well labeled, separated, neither are there security sheets.</p> <p>The person in charge of the warehouse has not been trained in general recommendations for warehouse management, especially in fertilizers and herbicides.</p> 	<p>The agrochemicals and tools warehouses were repaired.</p> <p>National and International recommendations regarding warehouses management and prevention were followed.</p> <p>There is now a washing machine for clothing used for applications.</p> <p>Warehouses are now properly labeled.</p> 
Documentation	
<p>There are no records of training on first aid, safety training and occupational health, incidents and accidents, application pumps calibration and maintenance.</p> <p>There is no documentation for the continuous improvement in topics of quality, the environment and prevention.</p>	<p>Procedures, instructions and registers were prepared.</p> <p>Documentation is now well organized and filed.</p> <p>The chapter is entirely achieved.</p>

Phrase by the Entrepreneur

"Much has been learnt with this project; awareness amongst personnel on the subject of the environment was achieved. These were issues that we have had tried to do for a long time ... when we found in CEGESTI the support, we had to do it.

The environment is an aspect neglected by many companies, but thanks to a consultancy of this sort, one becomes aware of its importance. Many Costa Rican companies overlook this topic; they dispose of chemicals in such a way that they end up in rivers; they do not care about the human resource regarding fumigation practices – among other aspects. Now we realize that we are working in the 40's due to ignorance and we have learnt the importance of practices such as triple washing.

Before, we did not worry if we left a bottle on the field. Today, we think not only about how difficult it will be for nature to get rid of this waste, but we are also aware of the danger this could mean to people.

Today we are 100% aware of the importance of protecting the environment and this awareness is being transmitted to the other farms through what has been learnt. Today, we know this can be achieved"

Desiderio Calvo
Administrative Manager



Ministerie van
Buitenlandse Zaken

