



Are environmental considerations an integral part of any of your company's product designs or services?

Rationale for question

Good design has the ability to reduce the negative environmental impacts of human consumption by creating environmentally-friendly products and services. The UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection encourage 'the design, development and use of products and services that are safe and energy and resource efficient, considering their full life-cycle impacts.'

Life-cycle thinking is fundamental to sustainability. It provides a framework to consider the environmental, social and economic costs over the whole life of a product or service, from raw materials, through production, into use, maintenance and disposal. Essentially the process accounts for the full costs of production or service rather than just the monetary costs included in the economic transactions.

Being more sustainable in business means considering where products come from, what they are made of and who made them. It means considering if a product or a service is really necessary, if it is possible to obtain the same resource in a different, more efficient or less wasteful way, such as from recycled goods and materials or simply using less material. It means using creative thinking and design, throughout the 'life-cycle' of a product or a service, to achieve beneficial outcomes. Such benefits may include gaining a competitive edge, making

cost savings, obtaining tax breaks, gaining eligibility for loans, having the opportunity to make 'green' claims for your products and an enhanced public image and reputation.

It might appear easier to think of re-designing physical products rather than services, but relatively small changes can also impact on service providers. It is possible to design a service so that it is offered in an environmentally-friendly manner. For example, intelligent use of communication technology eschews the need for business travel, reducing both the financial and environmental cost of meetings.

The physical buildings and facilities in which a business is operating can also be designed (or re-designed) to achieve environmental benefits such as reduced energy use, improved water management, and better thermal and light control for workers. The office, workshop or factory can be built or refurbished in accord with principles of sustainable construction and taking whole-life costing into consideration.

Defining terms

[No specific or technical terms require definition.]

Primary and Secondary answer requirements

ANSWERING YES

Companies must:

1. describe how they have incorporated fundamental environmental considerations into their product design or service provision; and
2. explain where they have been able to address environmental impacts through managing different stages of the product or service lifecycle such as procurement, manufacturing, marketing and sales, transportation, use and disposal.

Companies may:

1. use this as an opportunity to show how environmentally sensitive design has improved the company work environment in the previous 24 months.

ANSWERING NO

Companies must:

1. explain why they do not or cannot answer YES to this question, listing the business reasons, any mitigating circumstances or other reasons that apply.

Companies may:

1. list any activities that are relevant, but not sufficient to answer YES, e.g. taking environmental considerations into account in only a few products and services; and
2. mention any future intentions regarding this issue.

DON'T KNOW is not a permissible answer to this question.

NOT APPLICABLE is not a permissible answer to this question.

NO ANSWER YET is only permissible under extraordinary circumstances and then for only a limited period.