

01/02/2025

Self Reflection Report: BBA in Sustainability Management

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## Abstract

As we know, sustainability plays a crucial role in shaping modern business practices, influencing corporate strategies, innovation, and long-term green success. Throughout the **Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)** program, various projects have provided opportunities to explore how sustainability can be integrated into different aspects of business operations within a variety of industries. These projects have allowed for the application of theoretical knowledge in the real-world setting and have prompted to solve sustainability challenges.

This report reflects on four key assignments that have contributed to the academic and professional growth:

1. **Metaal Europe**: Final Thesis – A research-based project analysing and recognising recycling practices within the metal industry in the Middle East.
2. **Mudec - Museo delle Culture di Milano × LePalette Collective (Milano/Shanghai)**: Sustainable Consumption & Green Marketing – A communication strategy exploring sustainable branding and accessibility of the museum.
3. **SONY**: Information Technology – Analysing the annual ESG report of their IT department examining how technology can support sustainability efforts.
4. **Komodra Group**: Operations Management Green Supply Chain – An assessment of sustainable supply chain processes in the ASEAN Textile Market.

Each of these projects presented unique challenges and insights. By reflecting on these experiences, this report aims to identify key lessons, highlight areas for improvement, and propose concrete strategies to enhance team efforts towards these above-mentioned projects.

## **Metaal Europe**

This thesis investigated Metaal Europe International's non-ferrous scrap metal recycling operations in Sharjah, UAE, focusing on the alignment of their practices with their sustainability commitments. My role involved analyzing their recycling solutions, material sourcing, and market facilitation, emphasizing the environmental benefits like reduced landfill waste and resource conservation. A key sustainability issue addressed was the gap between stated goals and actual environmental impact, requiring in-depth research of industry best practices and comparison with Metaal Europe's approach.

Challenges arose in quantifying the environmental benefits due to limited data availability. This was tackled through a combination of literature review, expert interviews (where accessible), and comparative analysis with similar companies. Developing relevant metrics for evaluation also proved challenging, requiring careful consideration of industry standards and adapting them to the specific context of Metaal Europe's operations. This project significantly enhanced the research and analytical skills, particularly in understanding industrial processes and carbon footprint dynamics within the recycling industry.

Metaal Europe could improve its sustainability efforts by prioritizing greater transparency in sourcing and processing. Implementing life cycle assessments to concretely quantify the environmental benefits of their recycling processes would strengthen their claims and identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, actively exploring partnerships to develop closed-loop recycling systems, minimizing waste and maximizing resource recovery, would demonstrate a stronger commitment to a circular economy model and enhance their long-term sustainability performance.

## **Mudec**

This project centered on crafting a marketing communication strategy for Mudec, highlighting its dedication to sustainability across diverse initiatives. The strategy aimed to showcase how Mudec integrates sustainability into its core operations, from preserving cultural heritage and promoting environmental awareness (as seen in initiatives like the Deloitte Photo Grant). It was recommended to foster quality education by introducing a Mudec Podcast and to champion sustainable consumption via partnerships like the Nespresso collaboration at their in-house cafe. A key aspect was emphasizing the museum's architectural innovation and its commitment to local communities through workshops promoting equality and inclusion. The goal was to create a cohesive narrative demonstrating Mudec's holistic approach to sustainability.

Integrating sustainability into the marketing strategy involved aligning communication messages with each of Mudec's sustainability-focused activities. The challenge lay in effectively communicating complex sustainability concepts in an engaging and accessible way to a broad audience. This was addressed through collaborative brainstorming, stakeholder feedback, and iterative refinement of content. The project required careful consideration of how to authentically represent Mudec's efforts without resorting to "greenwashing." Compared to the Metaal Europe project, which focused on analyzing industrial recycling processes, the Mudec project emphasized communication and public engagement. While Metaal Europe required in-depth research and data analysis, the Mudec project focused on developing compelling narratives and targeted messaging.

This project was conducted in collaboration with LaPalette, an advertising agency with the same love for sustainable communications, this project gave more professional working semantics and a high level of organization when attending to individual tasks. Many meetings and discussion were

given high importance to vote for the best strategies. Potential improvements for the Mudec project could include establishing measurable metrics to track the effectiveness of marketing campaigns in promoting sustainable behaviors. Exploring innovative digital platforms to amplify Mudec's sustainability message and further engage target audiences.

## **Sony**

Sony's IT sustainability efforts focus on energy-efficient infrastructure, ethical procurement, and digital transformation as part of their **Road to Zero** initiative, which aims for net-zero impact by 2050. However, key challenges remain, including high energy consumption in data centers, electronic waste management, cybersecurity risks, and transparency in IT supply chains. In this project, while analysing Sony's ESG reports focusing on its IT sustainability strategies, it was discovered how AI-driven analytics and cloud computing for monitoring reduce environmental impact, the role of ethical IT procurement, and how remote work policies contribute to the social sustainability aspect. However, further optimization was a dire requirement to enhance efficiency and impact.

The team ideated circular economy practices within IT departments in order to optimize the infrastructure within. Unlike Mudec's green marketing strategies, Sony's IT approach prioritizes digital efficiency rather than material sustainability. While it reduces carbon footprints through data-driven solutions, improvements could be made by implementing AI-driven energy management, increasing transparency in IT procurement, and expanding circular economy practices, such as, IT hardware recycling, which I have realised through Metaal Europe's initiatives. This project deepened my understanding of how technology drives both environmental responsibility and business efficiency.

## **Komodra**

The consultancy project with Komodra Business Group provided valuable insights into sustainable supply chain management within the ASEAN textile industry. The company's commitment to eco-friendly materials (mainly the ramie fibre), ethical sourcing from Indonesia, and innovative supply chain practices highlighted the complexities of integrating sustainability into specifically, the supply chain. Through research and analysis, the project explored strong sustainable procurement strategies, through a designated village of 60 artisans who weave the fabrics, while the company was still in its pre-launch phase within the Italian market. The reliance on stakeholders was also measured with the heaviest role being their biggest supplier, who is responsible for converting the fibre to the yarn. This aligned with the sustainability ethos of the Komodra Group ensuring long-term environmental and social impact.

A key takeaway was the importance of balancing sustainability goals with market competitiveness. Unlike previous projects focused on consumer engagement and ESG reporting, this assignment required a deeper understanding of supply chain logistics, whether it was Kanban process, or Just-in time production, Komodra Group showcased a roadmap to manage as and when the company shifts to increased production year on year. In addition, the continuous supervision of their supplier relationships and reliance. The experience reinforced the significance of transparency, ethical sourcing, and the challenges associated with certification processes.

To enhance sustainability efforts, Komodra could invest in third-party certifications with the partnership of its current supplier, as both their mutual interests lie strongly in sustainability and this would also reduce the financial load if Komodra was to invest solely. This collaboration strategy

could be strengthened with the implementation of technology-driven traceability solutions. Expanding partnerships with Italian manufacturers may also help mitigate high import taxes, due to the fact that there are less taxes on raw fibre materials compared to importing the tonnes of ready-fabric, all while still reinforcing sustainability claims. This is another opportunity to also represent the local “Made In Italy” standard. This project underscored the critical role of responsible business practices in shaping the future of sustainable textiles and providing a deeper appreciation of the operational challenges that businesses face when transitioning to eco-friendly models.

## **Critical Reflection and Improvement Areas**

The most effective sustainability practices observed across these projects were the integration of sustainability into core business strategies, rather than treating it as a separate initiative. For example, Komodra's commitment to ethical sourcing and eco-friendly materials from the outset demonstrates this integration. Similarly, Mudec's alignment of its marketing messages with its diverse sustainability initiatives creates a cohesive and authentic brand image. Common challenges included data scarcity for accurate impact measurement, which was particularly evident in the Metaal Europe project, and the difficulty of balancing sustainability goals with market competitiveness, as seen in Komodra's case. These projects shifted my perception of sustainability management by highlighting the complexities of implementation and the need for a holistic approach. It's not just about isolated actions, but about embedding sustainability into every facet of an organization.

Key areas for improvement include greater transparency in supply chains, as highlighted in both the Metaal Europe and Komodra projects. Companies should prioritize traceability and ethical sourcing to build trust and ensure accountability.

Furthermore, robust lifecycle assessments are crucial for accurately quantifying environmental impact and identifying areas for optimization. This was particularly relevant in the Sony project, where understanding the full lifecycle impact of IT hardware is essential. To enhance sustainability strategies, companies should invest in innovative solutions like AI-driven energy management for IT infrastructure, as proposed for Sony, and explore closed-loop recycling systems for materials like metal and textiles, as suggested for Metaal Europe and Komodra. Collaboration and knowledge sharing within industries are also vital for accelerating the adoption of best practices.

## **Conclusion**

These four projects provided invaluable practical experience in analyzing and developing sustainability strategies across diverse industries. From evaluating recycling practices in the metal industry to ideating marketing campaigns for a cultural institution, each project offered unique insights into the challenges and opportunities of sustainability management. The Metaal Europe project honed my research and analytical skills, while the Mudec project developed my understanding of communication and stakeholder engagement. The Sony project highlighted the crucial role of technology in driving sustainability improvements, and the Komodra project provided insights into the complexities of sustainable supply chain management.

These projects significantly enhanced my understanding of the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic factors in business decisions. They reinforced the importance of critical thinking, data-driven analysis, and creative problem-solving in addressing sustainability challenges. The experience gained from these projects, particularly in identifying areas for improvement and proposing concrete solutions, will be instrumental in guiding my future career in sustainability management. I am now better equipped to contribute to the development and implementation of effective sustainability strategies that drive positive change within organizations and contribute to a more sustainable future.

## References:

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