

ST.5

Do a workshop/ interviews with staff

Complex activity

This activity uses interviews or a workshop with staff from the company to get their input on the operational strengths and weaknesses of the company.



INPUT

- Data Gathering Checklist from the activity *ST.1 Plan my data gathering strategy*.
- Operational strengths and weaknesses identified from the activity *ST.4 Do a Walk-Through Audit*.

OUTPUTS

- At least five strengths and five weaknesses within the operational performance of the company (if any of these were previously highlighted from the Walk-Through Audit try to further your understanding of them through the interviews). This output is used in the activities: *ST.6 Update the sustainability hotspots* and *ST.7 Do a SWOT analysis*.

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The next step in your data gathering activity is to follow-up on issues highlighted by the Walk-Through Audit and investigate new areas of operational performance that might be relevant to the eco-innovation activities. This can either be done through interviews with individual employees or through a workshop. Conducting a workshop is optional as it may not always be possible to arrange this type of session due to time and practical constraints. The benefits of a workshop over individual interviews is that a workshop can be more time efficient for you and can help to build interest and engagement from staff. The benefit of individual interviews over a workshop is that you avoid the risk of one person dominating the session and you may be able to go into more detail on interesting topics.

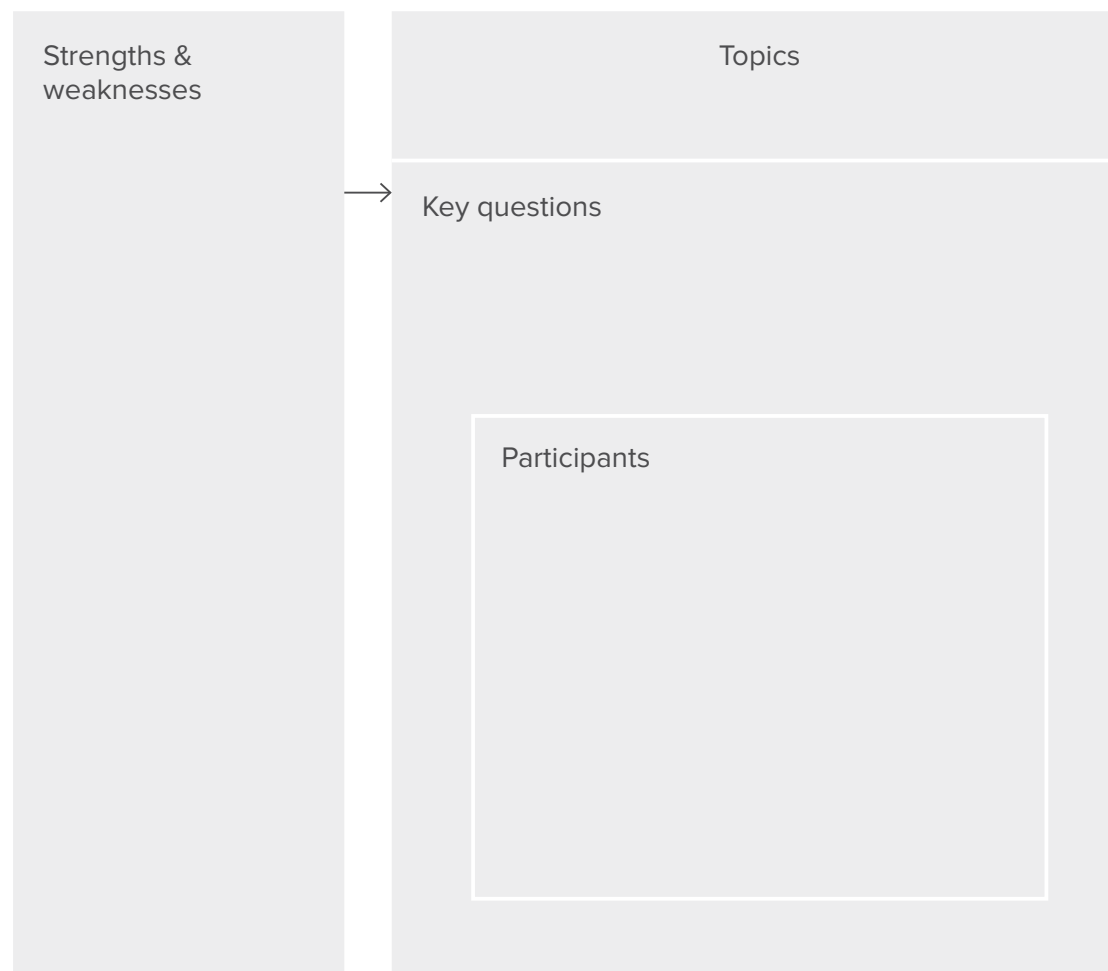
HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

1. Whether you are conducting an individual interview or a workshop, you should introduce the session by explaining that the aim of the workshop is to find out about the strengths and weaknesses of the company that might be relevant for the eco-innovation activities.
2. Topics to cover in the interviews/workshops include: innovation and product development, sustainability performance, suppliers and partners, competition, marketing and communication, management. The types of questions you ask during an interview/workshop will need to be adapted taking into account the knowledge and experience of the participants of the session. Below are some examples of the types of question you could ask:
 - How important is innovation for the company?
 - What policies or procedures does the company have in place to ensure that good ideas from staff can be implemented?
 - Which processes that occur in the factory have the biggest environmental impact?
 - Which processes that occur in the factory cost the most?
 - How is the company performing in terms of social issues such as worker health and safety, equal opportunities, fair pay, working conditions, and having a positive impact on society?
 - Is the company certified against (or does it comply with) any sustainability standards or international conventions?
 - What partnerships does the company have with other organisations?
 - What is the nature of the partnerships?
 - How does those partnerships benefit your company?
 - When negotiating with suppliers does the company just focus on getting the lowest price possible or are other factors taken into consideration?
 - If so, what other factors?
 - In what ways are products and services offered by your company better than those of competitors?
 - Who are the biggest competitors your company faces?
 - Why would customers select your company's products and services over a competitor's?
 - In what ways are those competitors better than your company?
 - Are you receiving pressure from your customers or other stakeholders to improve the environmental performance and quality of your products or operations?

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- If so, what specific issues are they interested in (e.g. energy consumption in use phase, compliance with hazardous substance regulations, gender equality)?
 - What types of activities does the company do to communicate with customers or other people outside the company?
 - Does the company have a clear strategy that is communicated to all staff?
 - If so, what are the main elements of that strategy?
 - Which three words best describe the company today?
 - What are the company's biggest strengths and weaknesses?
3. Once you have completed the interviews or workshop, you should identify at least five strengths and five weaknesses for the company based on what you have heard. Where possible, follow-up with participants to gather some relevant data related to the strengths and weaknesses that you have identified.

Template of Operational Performance Review



Operational performance review

Project _____

Date _____

Version _____

Strengths and weaknesses

What key strengths and weaknesses in the current operational performance did you identify during the Walk-through Audit?

**Innovation and product development — Sustainability performance — Management
— Suppliers and partners — Competition — Marketing and communication**

Key questions

Considering the topics listed above, what are the key questions do you need to ask?

Get inspiration from the questions provided in the Tips & Tricks of activity ST.5

Participants

Who are the participants?

How do questions need to adapt to fit their expertise and knowledge?

☐ Are all those questions aligned with the Data Gathering Checklist?

Used during activities

ST.5

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LEARNING CASE STUDY OF OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Strengths and weaknesses

- *Well-optimised manual processing of tuna thanks to skilled, loyal workforce*
- *Effective, innovative and adaptable sales and marketing team.*
- *Production Manager due to retire in one year.*
- *No internal capacity for packaging material innovation.*



Innovation and product development — Sustainability performance — Management — Suppliers and partners — Competition — Marketing and communication

Key questions

- *Does the company have a clear strategy that is communicated to all staff?*
- *What are the company's biggest strengths and weaknesses?*
- *How important is innovation for the company?*
- *What experience does the company have of developing new products?*
- *What partnerships does the company have with other organisations?*
- *Which processes that occur in the factory have the biggest environmental impact?*
- *Which processes cost the most?*
- *How is the company performing in terms of social issues?*
- *Who are the biggest competitors your company faces?*
- *What types of activities does the company do to communicate with customers or other people outside the company?*
- *In what ways are those competitors better than your company?*

Participants

- *1 x Purchasing staff*
- *2x Production staff*
- *1 x Marketing manager*
- *1 x Sales person*

☐ Are all those questions aligned with the Data Gathering Template?

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TIPS & TRICKS

INPUT FROM ACROSS THE COMPANY

If conducting a workshop, try to involve personnel from across the different operational areas of the company (design, production, marketing etc.). The participation of the CEO or senior management is not required (if they would like to attend this should not be discouraged). Aim for between 4 and 10 participants in the workshop from the company. The ideal group size will depend on the company, but in general – fewer than 4 can result in limited discussion and ideas and, conversely, more than 10 participants can make it difficult to remain focused (and will be very expensive for the company). If conducting individual interviews, try to interview

at least three members of staff and select those participants from across the different operational areas of the company (design, production, marketing etc.)

GENDER BALANCED INPUT

Whether conducting interviews or a workshop make sure to involve a representative balance of male and female participants and try to find participants that have a good understanding of gender equality issues. If staff members do not have a good understanding of gender equality issues then consider offering training on these issues - further sources of information on gender equality issues are provided in the references.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

References and resources

Gender equality and gender issues:

- UN Women, 2014. World Survey on Gender Equality and Sustainable Development. Available from: http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2014/unwomen_surveyreport_advance_16oct.pdf
- Global Gender Office, 2013. Environment and Gender Index (EGI). Available from: <http://genderandenvironment.org/egi/>
- UN Environment, 2016. Global Gender and Environment Outlook 2016 Available from: <http://web.unep.org/ggeo>.

→ Further information in the Metals Supplement