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Implementation of ESG as a Strategy for Business Sustainability in a Public-Listed Tobacco Company in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) has been introduced to the business communities for the past two decades. It has grown in importance as a framework for measuring a company's sustainability and as a guide for investment decision-making. In Indonesia, the publicly listed companies at the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) have been required to implement and report ESG practices since 2021 through a regulation issued by the Financial Services Authority (OJK) in 2017. Among those is a tobacco company operating in Indonesia, PT HM Sampoerna Tbk. (Sampoerna/The Company/IDX: HMSP) that has been an affiliate of an international tobacco company, Philip Morris International (PMI), since 2005. The tobacco industry's ESG implementation is particularly interesting due to the adverse externalities generated by its products, which is stated by WHO as one of the biggest issues for public health. This research focuses on analyzing the company's ESG initiatives and creating improvement strategies in the context of a company operating in the tobacco industry with the objective of maximizing the role of ESG implementation to ensure business sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Business Strategy, ESG, Sustainability, Tobacco Company, Tobacco Industry.

I. INTRODUCTION

As a widely recognized term among the business community globally, ESG has been an important factor in measuring a company's sustainability and consideration in investment decision-making. It is beyond Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as ESG covers wider topics and issues of the company's environmental, social, and governance, internally and externally. In Indonesia, the implementation and reporting of ESG have been required for public companies by the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) through a regulation by the Financial Services Authority (OJK) since the full reporting year of 2021. One of these companies is PT HM Sampoerna Tbk., which operates in the tobacco industry.

The industry where Sampoerna operates has often been called a sunset industry in the past few years due to decreasing demand. Some of the factors behind this situation are the increasingly strict regulations that restrict its promotional and selling activity as well as the increasing tariffs of excise taxes. The reason behind such a strict regulation would be due to the health impact caused by tobacco companies' products, cigarettes. However, the company, in the context of this research, has done a comprehensive ESG strategy and multiple initiatives that have a role in contributing to its important stakeholders, such as employees, business partners, shareholders, adult consumers aged 18 years old and above, and the wider communities. The company's ESG initiatives are also derived from its parent company, Philip Morris International (PMI/NYSE: PM), which was just ranked first in the 2024 Net Zero Leaders ranking by Forbes in June this year.

Sampoerna has been operating in Indonesia for 111 years in 2024. By Q1-2024, the company employs more than 90,000 employees across the country, spread in its seven owned factories, 43 production facilities owned by local cooperatives and entrepreneurs, as well as headquarters offices and 109 sales and distribution offices. Creating value and multiplier effect is important for the company in doing business. Stakeholders are at the center of the company's sustainability strategy, with the social pillar at the core of the company's ESG material topics. These core material topics are product innovation for better alternatives, socio-economic well-being for the value chain, and a supportive working environment.

This research aims to identify how the ESG initiatives done by the company could be leveraged to ensure its business sustainability while also assessing which of the company's strategies worked well and what improvements are needed. This research utilized several theories such as VRIO, PESTEL, Triple Bottom Line and Balanced Scorecard combination, a gap analysis, and McKinsey's theory titled Five Ways that ESG Creates Values to identify and formulate the strategy to improve the company's business sustainability by leveraging on ESG initiatives.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term ESG was first introduced by the United Nations Environment Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) in 2005 to integrate into a firm's decision-making. This recommendation was needed in the business community at a time when companies had not considered their businesses' impact. The business communities previously only considered financial aspects and profitability, with little to zero regard for caring for their surrounding environment and community. The practices have been set into action worldwide, including in Indonesia. Beyond mere compliance with the requirements, companies can leverage ESG implementation to boost their business sustainability, as demonstrated by a case study in this research. This research used some analysis tools.

A. VRIO Analysis for Internal Organization

Jay Barney, an American professor at the University of Utah for Strategic Management, founded the VRIO analysis tool to evaluate a company's resources and capabilities. The tool comprises four elements to be identified: Value (V), Rarity (R), Imitability (I), and Organization/Organized (O). The analysis could be done for several capabilities the company has to explore, such as which of them has the potential or has already been the company's competitive advantage. The tool could help decide the resource allocation for each of these capabilities according to their impact on business.

B. PESTEL Analysis for External Environment

Another consideration a company should consider is the external environment. One tool for this analysis would be PESTLE or PESTEL, which consists of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal aspects that have influenced or could influence the company's operations. This tool was first developed by an American scholar of Harvard Business School, Francis Joseph Aguilar, in the 1960s.

C. Triple Bottom Line Theory and Balanced Scorecard Combination

An entrepreneur and author on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility from the UK, John Brett Elkington, came up with the Triple Bottom Line theory in his book before UNEP FI introduced ESG. Elkington introduced the three Ps (Profit, People, Planet) as the components of his theory, which highlights the importance for companies to consider and manage their impact on social and environmental aspects as well, not only profit. The theory is not used standalone in this research. Instead, it is combined with the Balanced Scorecard, invented by Harvard Business School scholar Robert S. Kaplan and his research partner, David McMillan. The two published a paper in 2020, providing an idea to combine a Triple Bottom Line and a Balanced Scorecard (the latter was also invented by Kaplan), which will eventually be used to develop a strategy map for a company by adding vision, value for stakeholders, an updated business model, and enabler elements to the tool.

D. Congruence Model Gap Analysis

From the organization management point of view, a congruence model gap analysis introduced by David Nadler and Michael Tushman in the 1980s could help a company analyze the interaction and gaps between aspects within the organization. The interactions between work, informal and formal organization, and the people of a company could determine the organizational behavior and gaps that need to be closed to create an effectively running organization.

E. Five Ways that ESG Creates Value

ESG creates value for a company in many ways, but according to a McKinsey report published in 2019, there are five most important ones. These criteria could become a set of added value for a company by being the framework of the new ESG proposition. The framework consists of topline growth, cost reduction, regulatory and legal intervention reduction, uplifting employee productivity, and optimization of assets and investments.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research mainly uses qualitative methods to analyze the current ESG strategy and implementation, identify areas for improvement, and propose a new strategy to improve the company's sustainability. The data collection is conducted through primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources consist of a structured focus group discussion (FGD) with multiple managerial members of the company and a semi-structured interview series with internal management and external stakeholders, such as micro, small, and medium

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enterprises, farmers and farm workers, ESG program partners, and an ESG expert in a consulting firm. The question lists are defined by interpreting the research objectives and questions.

The secondary sources include Sampoerna's Annual and Sustainability Report 2023, Philip Morris International's Integrated Report 2023, and other sources such as news articles and supporting reports. The research also analyzes the company's reports based on OJK's ESG reporting guideline for Indonesian publicly listed companies to identify the congruence and room for improvement.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The total number of FGD informants and interview respondents for this research is 27, consisting of eight internal middle and senior managers who are responsible and related to ESG implementation and reporting, eight internal company senior management, eight ESG program beneficiaries, two ESG program partners, and one expert in the ESG field.

A. FGD Results

The internal self-assessment pointed out that the company's ESG strategy and initiatives have been holistic and comprehensive and that the company conducted the initiatives long before authorized agencies required them. There are three strongest associations when it comes to Sampoerna's ESG initiatives. First, these are all people—or stakeholder-focused. The company's ESG programs have always centered on stakeholders' needs. The second and third points are on the flagship initiatives: the MSME development and product innovation on developing better alternatives, which are smoke-free products that are not burned, resulting in a significant reduction of harmful constituents compared to cigarettes.

However, there is some room for improvement that the company has to consider. In terms of initiatives, the waste—particularly post-consumer waste—is the biggest issue the company hasn't solved so far. For the operational waste, the company has set a target of zero waste to landfill by 2024 and conducted some initiatives in this area. Another room for improvement is the need for transparent and gradual progress reporting that should not be limited only when there is a major milestone. Transparency is also needed in terms of the percentage of progress against the objectives. Additionally, not all initiatives have certain targets or KPIs in place. The last suggestion for improvement from the FGD is to better define the roles and responsibilities in terms of ESG integration and to add or expand the dedicated sustainability coordinator team. Internally, there is also a challenge to alignment in such a large organization.

B. Interview Results

Sampoerna's priorities focus on at least two aspects: the creation of value and multiplier effect and human capital development. Both of these aspects are also integral to the company's sustainability strategy. In terms of sustainability, the company has adopted the ESG framework since 2022. Before then, some of the currently implemented initiatives were implemented using a different framework the company developed independently.

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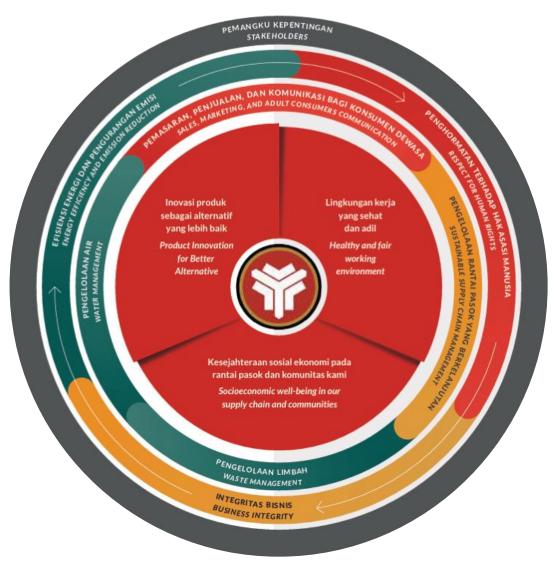


Figure 1: Sampoerna's 2023 Sustainability Strategy

Sampoerna's ESG strategy adopted PMI's framework, which divides the ESG topics into two issues: product impact, which is related to what the company produces, and operational impact, which is related to how the company produces. Both PMI and Sampoerna have done an ESG materiality assessment involving key stakeholders to define the most important materiality topics that matter to the company, which are then adjusted to where it operates. For instance, in Indonesia, the biggest issue will be socioeconomic, while in European countries, environmental issues are the first priority. The company has established a Sustainability Committee that mainly oversees the governance of ESG strategy setting, implementation, and reporting. They report to the Board of Directors and have members from various departments. These practices have been in place for at least the last 1-2 years, during which time the company has started integrating ESG principles into its business operations.

From the point of view of program beneficiaries, the MSME owners, farmers, and farm workers, the ESG initiatives or specific programs that Sampoerna has done were very beneficial in changing the life quality of their families and their surrounding communities. Their most important key takeaway is that the company has been shifting the beneficiaries' mindset for continuous learning, providing knowledge and support, and developing its capabilities. Instead of providing funding or capital, Sampoerna developed beneficiaries' capabilities through training and assistance to increase productivity, independence, and welfare of the value chain and community in general. Their businesses and productivity grew significantly to the extent that they can now provide

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employment for others. At the same time, they keep on adding their families' productive assets to reach for more revenues and welfare improvements in the future.

Similarly, program partners have seen how Sampoerna's social and environmental initiatives have changed people's lives. At the same time, they've also learned so much from the governance and integrity practices the company required from its partners. They've experienced some challenges in terms of the company's fast working pace and shifting the mindset of community members and MSMEs who were first expecting fresh money to help fund their capital. Over time, the MSMEs understood that knowledge and capabilities are much more worthy than one-time funding support.

Meanwhile, the ESG expert shared that an ideal ESG strategy is one that has conducted a preliminary materiality assessment to define the key material topics that matter the most for the company. Every company is different, and their initiatives should match the negative externalities and impacts. For the frequent challenges, Indonesian companies usually find it difficult to get full internal support from all employees, especially if implementing ESG will add to their workloads. Thus, the "most favorite" ESG initiatives and achievements are developing and issuing internal policies that do not necessarily create any impact without adequate programs or implementation in place. There has been a wide disparity between ESG implementation in developed countries and Indonesia in terms of awareness, understanding, prioritization, and integration into daily business operations.

C. Internal Analysis

Sampoerna has a number of ESG initiatives that have become the main aspect to be analyzed by using the VRIO framework. From the analysis below, one program in the environmental pillar, three in social, and one in governance are considered a long-term competitive advantage that could be leveraged further. In contrast, each one in environmental and social aspects is considered an unused competitive advantage that can be explored to ensure business sustainability.

One social program on disaster relief program and facility is considered a possible competitive disadvantage that the company can assess further on its effectiveness. Otherwise, a non-value-adding program can be discontinued. Maintenance is sufficient for the rest of the programs that are considered to have realized competitive parity.

Capabilities, Resources, or Programs	Value	Rarity	Imitability	Organization	Results
Environmental: energy efficiency,	✓			✓	Realized competitive parity
including solar panels					
Environmental: manufacturing waste	✓			√	Realized competitive parity
management					
Environmental: water management	✓	✓	√	√	Long-term competitive advantage
Environmental: post-consumer waste	√	✓	√		Unused competitive advantage
Social: youth access prevention program	√	√	√		Unused competitive advantage
Social: Innovation and R&D on smoke-	✓	✓	✓	✓	Long-term competitive advantage
free product					
Social: Tobacco and Clove Farmers	✓	✓	✓	✓	Long-term competitive advantage
partnership program					
Social: Retailer MSME development	✓	✓	✓	✓	Long-term competitive advantage
program with digitalization (SRC)					
Social: General MSME development	✓			√	Realized competitive parity
program (SETC)					
Social: Sampoerna Rescue (disaster relief		✓	✓		Possibly a competitive
and preparedness program and facility)					disadvantage
Social: Fair Working Environment	✓			√	Realized competitive parity
Governance: code of conduct framework	√			√	Realized competitive parity
Governance: responsible sourcing	✓	✓	✓	✓	Long-term competitive advantage
principle and integrity implementation					

Figure 2: VRIO analysis

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D. External Analysis

Some key issues may influence the company's ESG key strategy and initiatives in terms of risks or prioritization.

Table I: PESTEL analysis

Aspect	Key Factors
Political	Highly regulated and restrictive tobacco industry and uncertainty due to regulatory
	changes.
Economic	Challenging economic conditions in Indonesia: unemployment, poverty, etc.
	The tobacco industry provides income to millions of Indonesians across the value
	chain.
Social	Negative perception of the public health community towards cigarettes.
	Smoking is a part of the culture among Indonesian adult smokers.
Technological	Advancement in technology as an enabler for R&D and MSME digitalization.
Environmental	Potential issues of post-consumer waste and managing impact from manufacturing
	activities.
Legal	Permits, integrity, labor practices, and intellectual property and trademark protection.

E. Triple Bottom Line and Balanced Scorecard Analysis

The author selected 36 metrics for this assessment, using the triple bottom-line aspects to examine the company's ESG performance for the full year of 2023. In terms of "Profit," the company is going in a positive direction except for the slightly declining volume and a decrease in total investment.

Aspect	No.	Key Metrics	Target	2022	2023	Unit	Variance	Variance units
	1	Net revenues	-	111.2	116	IDR trillion	4.30%	%
	2	Net profit	-	6.3	8.1	IDR trillion	28.60%	%
	3	Volume	-	86.8	83.4	Billion units	-3.90%	%
	4	Share of Market	-	28.00%	28.60%	SoM	0.6	percentage points (pp)
Profit	5	Return on Assets	-	11.50%	14.60%	%	3.1	pp
	6	Return on Equity	-	22.30%	27.10%	%	4.8	pp
	7	Net Operating Income to Net Revenues	-	7	7.7	IDR trillion	10.00%	%
	8	Investment (capex)	-	2.2	1.7	IDR trillion	-22.70%	%
	9	Market capitalization	-	97.7	104.1	IDR trillion	6.60%	%

Figure 3: Triple Bottom Line – Profit

In terms of "People," the company has recorded some decreasing performances, but the one that should be paid attention to the most is the slight increase in the lost time due to work incidents.

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	10	F1		66.000	00.000	D1-	26.400/	0/
	10	Employees	-	66,000	90,000	People	36.40%	
	11	Women in leadership (Directors & Heads)	40%	39.06%	46.03%	% management	6.97	pp
	12	Women in hand-rolled factories	-	100%	100%	% women in SKT	0	рр
	13	Total percentage of women employees	-	63.53%	63.27%	% women employees	-0.26	рр
	14	Salaries, wages, benefits	-	4.8		IDR trillion	6.30%	%
	15	Comparison of lowest level new employee to min. wage: Karawang	-	139%		Wage comparison vs. minimum wage	-11	pp
People	16	Comparison of lowest level new employee to min. wage: Pasuruan	-	130%	125%	Wage comparison vs.	-5	pp
	17	Comparison of lowest level new employee to min. wage: Surabaya	-	172%	179%	Wage comparison vs. minimum wage	7	pp
	18	Lost Time Incident (LTI) rate per 200K hours worked	-	0	0.01	LTI rate	0.01	rate increase/ decrease
	19	Integrated Total Recordable Incident Rate (ITRIR) per 200K hours worked	-	0.035	0.0332	ITRIR rate	-0.0018	rate increase/ decrease
	20	Training programs	-	85	60	Events	-29.40%	%
	21	Hours of training	-	123.5	110	Hours	-10.90%	%
	22	Training content	-	271	1,626	Digital content	500.00%	%
	23	Partner farmers	-	22,000	22,000	People	0%	%
	24	MSME beneficiaries	-	292,000	315,000	People	7.90%	%

Figure 4: Triple Bottom Line – People

For the "Planet" aspect, there are more notes for improvements: the increased total energy and water consumption, a slight decline in renewable energy usage and emission reduction, as well as a significant reduction of more than 99% in terms of the fleet's CO2e reduction.

	25	Energy intensity	6.75	5.5	6	GJ/MioCig	9.10%	%
	26	Total energy consumption	-	546,392			6.20%	%
	27	Energy consumed from renewable sources	-	63%	61%	% of total energy	-2	pp
	28	Produced electricity from solar panels	-	1,048,601	2,546,682	kWH	142.90%	%
	29	Emission reduction (Scope 1+2)	-	47,565	46,605	Ton CO ₂ e	-2.00%	%
Planet	30	CO ₂ e absolute reduction in fleet	-	324	2	Ton CO ₂ e	-99.30%	%
Flanet	31	Water intake	-	412,612	423,928	Megaliter	2.70%	%
	32	Water management	-	0	0	Megaliter	0%	%
	33	Wastewater disposal	-	257,724	254,337	Megaliter	-1.30%	%
	34	Waste management	100%	99%	99%	Waste managed	0	pp
	35	Incinerate non-hazardous waste	-	4,884,701	3,291,605	kg	-32.60%	%
	36	Incinerate hazardous waste	-	479,419	24	kg	-100.00%	%

Figure 5: Triple Bottom Line - Planet

F. Congruence Model Gap Analysis

The following analysis shows that the company can explore the deployment of technology, expert hiring, and investment allocation while allocating human resources by establishing a dedicated or expanded sustainability coordinator team and deploying a project-based team for ESG-related pilot projects.

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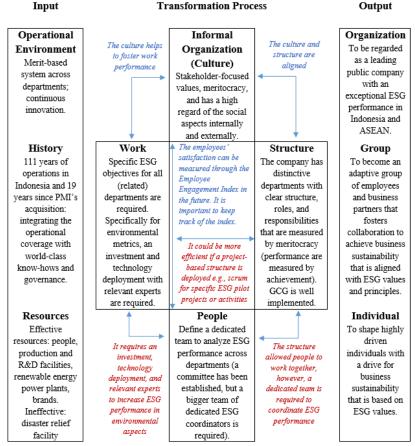


Figure 6: Congruence Model Gap Analysis

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research shows that Sampoerna's ESG strategy is comprehensive and stakeholder-focused. It has been based on a materiality assessment showing different priorities with its parent company. However, Sampoerna has not implemented or created its own Sustainability or ESG Index and Roadmap, which has been done by its parent company. This is important to track reporting and ensure transparency. The Index and Roadmap could be prioritized based on the impact to the business, and subsequently tracked with a percentage of progress based on the respective objectives or KPIs.

Based on the analysis, the author will recommend the following ESG proposition with a framework derived from McKinsey's 2019 report:

- 1. Topline growth: social pillar
 - a) Product innovation through R&D and introducing smoke-free products as better alternatives to adult smokers.
 - b) Establish and enhance partnerships with tobacco and clove farmers, as well as retail partners.
- 2. Regulatory, Legal Intervention: governance pillar

To continue maintaining the highest integrity and compliance standards.

- 3. Uplifting Productivity: human capital development
 - To increase the engagement of employees and integrate ESG implementation into business as usual.
- 4. Optimization of Assets and Investments: Prioritization for Strategy and Budget for Investment

To provide an ESG Index and Roadmap to determine each focus strategy's weighted prioritization. This will also be reflected in the reporting stage, where the progress of each objective will be transparently reported.

The following is the proposed strategy map for Sampoerna's ESG strategy and initiative to integrate the principle to its business model, based on the Triple Bottom Line and Balanced Scorecard combination framework.

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Aspects	Profit	People	Planet								
	Company's Vision: To be regarded as the most respected company in Indonesia.										
Vision	The vision is guided by the		principle of "Three Hands Philosophy," which represents value creation for the key stakeholders of the Company								
C4 - L - L - L-1-1	Adult Consumers	Business Partners	<u> </u>	Society at Large		The environment					
Stakeholders	Shareholders	Business Partners	Employees	Society a	it Large	The environment					
	Consis	stent, continuous, and	long-term value and m	ultiplier eff	ect creation	l					
	Adult Consumers: High-	Long-term value	Foster a nurturing and								
	quality products in various	creation, including	development-oriented	Value cre	ation and						
Value for	product types, prices, and	employment	organization where all		effects to s where the operates.	Managing environmental					
Stakeholders	format categories to fulfill adult	opportunities, welfare	employees feel belong,			impact.					
	consumers' preferences.	improvement, and	respected, and			impact.					
	Shareholders: ensure	governance	supported in terms of	Company							
	business continuity.	implementation.	physical, emotional,								
	ESG integration into daily operations with continuous monitoring and transparent reporting										
Sustainable	Product Innovation	Long-term mutual partnerships	Increase employee engagement and sense of belonging	Multiplie	r effects	Environmental impact minimization					
and Innovative Business Model	Manufacture and distribute high-quality products in multi- categories	Farmers and trade partners, including wholesalers, retailers, and key accounts.	While continuing to prioritize DEI, the health, safety, and welfare of employees	Continue to multiplies including MSME dev	r effect, through	Carbon neutrality, energy efficiency, water and waste management, including post-consumer waste.					
Key Enablers and Resources	Innovation, R&D, quality in manufacturing, distribution	Mutually beneficial partnership programs for farmers and retail partners.	Supportive policy, transparent internal communications, and integrity upholding.	MSME dev	levelopment	Energy: Renewables and reduce consumption; waste and water management.					

Figure 7: The Proposed Strategy Map

This research also proposes an implementation plan to be conducted in stages:

- 1. Materiality assessment to be conducted once every few years.
- 2. ESG Index and Roadmap development that will be updated along with the materiality assessment result.
- 3. Dedicated budget and human resource allocation.
- 4. Integration of ESG strategy and initiatives to the company's business as usual daily operational activities.
- 5. Pilot projects for new initiatives, such as post-consumer waste programs.

Last but not least, the key enablers should also be activated to ensure the company's business sustainability improves or at least remains intact. Further research on the topic is recommended to identify areas for improvement in ESG strategy, prioritization, and implementation in other companies or industries while developing the strategy map for ESG planning.

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