

How companies are using ESG initiatives to not only create a safe and diverse workplace and reduce the industry's impact on the environment, but also attract new customers and investors. **NIAMH MARRIOTT** reports



As part of its environment initiatives, BMS invested in a large electric crane for wind energy work

Good ideas

ENVIRONMENTAL

The environmental part of ESG initiatives includes management of resources to reduce waste and carbon emissions. Given the climate crisis, it is clearly vital that companies urgently adopt policies to lessen the damaging effects of burning fossil fuels and reduce their energy consumption. Having an ESG initiative in place could help track key sustainability metrics and then reducing greenhouse gas emissions and making positive changes to improve energy efficiency.

SOCIAL

The social part helps to ensure a business is working in a way that considers matters of equality, diversity and human rights throughout its operations, as well as community outreach initiatives that benefit local communities and infrastructure. It covers issues of labour rights, privacy and data security, and will offer guidance and support for anti-discrimination, modern day slavery and health and safety policies.

GOVERNANCE

Governance relates to how transparent a company's operations are and looks at establishing positive board and director practices, as well as corporate governance, behaviour and accounting. Guidance would be offered on anti-bribery and corruption matters and there would be specific guidelines for dealing with decision making and leadership.

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) refers to a set of standards that ensure companies work ethically and sustainably with transparent operations. Though not a requirement globally for all sizes of company, the largest in our industry are adopting these initiatives to promote how a socially conscious and environmentally friendly business can also be profitable.

COMPANY CULTURE

International heavy lift and transport specialist Sarens is dedicated to change and is leading the way with ESG by embedding initiatives into its company culture.

"We believe that it is time to act and ESG is the best framework to get companies like us and other corporations across the board moving," says a spokesperson.

"The effectiveness of ESG relies exclusively on the level of dedication and resources that each organisation dedicates to it. In our experience, the key is found in setting up smart ESG targets that are monitored from each organisation's business unit so that the change can be seen in all levels of an organisation.

"At Sarens, we're involved in a sphere of activities that reflect our commitment to the environment, our society, and principles of corporate governance."

Some of the company's proudest achievements include building the world's first green giant crane, the SGC-90, which can be connected to the electricity grid and can produce its own energy. It has formed

partnerships with major players in the wind energy and nuclear power sectors.

GREEN FLEET

Sarens is also investing in new hybrid cranes and its trucks are undergoing a green transition, too.

"Each new truck to join our European fleet complies with the latest Euro 6 emissions standards. We're steadily building a more sustainable fleet as we replace older, higher-polluting equipment.

The company is also researching electric power packs for use with self propelled modular transporter (SPMT). It uses biodegradable oil for all its barge hydraulic systems to protect the marine ecosystems where it operates.

Its Belgian headquarters boasts more than 3,000 solar panels and there are plans for further solar energy installations at its offices across Europe and beyond. It promotes sustainable practices such as recycling across all its sites.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Sarens' social initiatives include Sarens Women+, the first women-focused publication in the heavy lifting industry and is proud to employ a diverse workforce with professionals representing more than 80 nationalities.

Sarens uses education and training as a way to embrace its social values, from developing a free training centre for riggers and crane operators in Kazakhstan to co-operating with a technical high school in Poland.

When it comes to corporate governance, Sarens aims to work ethically, using a strict code of conduct to stand against corruption, having a continued dedication to upholding human rights and boasting a company core value of respect for people.

Sarens' ESG efforts have been acknowledged with a bronze EcoVadis recognition award. The award recognised its particularly strong progress in labour, human rights and environment categories.

Other companies are looking at training the new generation of the industry through ESG outputs. For example, Hiab has The Hiab Global Graduate programme, a 15-month, full-time paid programme for young tech talents.

Like manufacturer Liebherr, it has apprenticeship programmes throughout Europe that combine traditional education and practical learning.

Hiab looks at its company structure and decision-making from an ESG framework.

"Hiab and Cargotec operate in a complex global environment, and our industry is exposed to ethics and compliance risks related to, for example, bidding for large projects and using sales intermediaries," says the spokesperson. "With our strong governance practices and commitment to integrity, we can make a positive impact in our value chain and industry by setting an example for all our stakeholders."

LIFTING THE FUTURE

International heavy lift and transport specialist Mammoet sees sustainability as an important factor in the future of the heavy lifting and transport industry.

Electrifying fleets of cranes and self-propelled trailers has for years felt like a pipe dream, Mammoet says. Recent developments, however, mean an entire project can now be done without engine



Lifting giant Mammoet's electric SPMT system is driving green change



Japanese manufacturer Tadano uses an ESG framework to engage in the protection of the environment with activities such as beach cleaning and forestation activities

exhaust emissions. This is achieved using equipment already introduced to the market. Sustainability in heavy industry offers big rewards for sufficiently adaptable companies, Mammoet says.

Investment has been made at Mammoet to be less reliant on diesel and to offer customers a choice of alternatives. Existing equipment, including the electric self propelled modular transporter (SPMT) and the SK series of super heavy lift cranes, allows the company to serve the entire site lifting and transport scope of a project.

POWERFUL IMPACT

Japanese crane manufacturer Tadano says it believes "that engaging in ESG initiatives can have a positive impact not only on our business but also can empower investors and stakeholders to drive sustainable policies and practices in the whole industry.

It says it feels a responsibility as a major manufacturer to lead the way to new sustainable solutions.

"Our advice is to be focused and keep implementing ESG initiatives, as it not only benefits company business but it can bring about important changes in society."

Tadano has set itself environment targets and is heavily investing in green technologies for its cranes. In December 2023, the company launched the first fully electrified rough terrain crane EVolt eGR-250N for the Japanese market. It is planning the launch of another electrified rough



Tadano's electrified rough terrain crane EVolt eGR-250N is already available for the Japanese market

terrain crane for the USA and Canada.

At the Bauma 2022 trade show, Tadano presented its AC 4.070-1 Hybrid concept study, which is in a testing programme.

The company is also looking to green steel manufacturing. A spokesperson says, "Green steel embodies a significant shift towards eco-conscious manufacturing. By prioritising renewable energy sources, minimising waste, and reducing carbon emissions during production, green steel contributes to a cleaner and more sustainable industrial landscape."

To ensure the ethical treatment of workers along the supply chain, the Tadano Group has established the Tadano Group CSR Charter and the Tadano Group Compliance Regulations that define principles for coexistence with business associates, ethical and environmental considerations, and fair procurement activities.

MINIMISING EMISSIONS

Denmark-based crane rental and heavy lifting specialist BMS Group says it is an important priority for the company to actively contribute to the green transition, stating they see it as "a natural obligation for us to continuously minimise emissions of carbon dioxide and other hazardous particles within our field of work."

"We continuously monitor the development of the crane market closely," says a spokesperson. "We purchase the greenest possible equipment; either fully electric cranes or hybrid cranes that are

transported by diesel engines but use electric power for hoisting.

“Electric or hybrid cranes can save more than 100 kg of carbon dioxide in a normal eight-hour working day compared to diesel cranes. Last year BMS invested in the largest electrically driven crane in the world - a ringer crane for wind energy work.

“When it comes to fuel it is possible to take quite far-reaching environmental considerations into account by using alternative fuels rather than traditional diesel. BMS has chosen to give our customers the opportunity to choose HVO [hydrotreated vegetable oil] fuel instead of traditional diesel, which reduces CO₂ emissions by up to 90 per cent.

“We work on optimising and recycling existing products. When relevant we keep and repair our equipment for longer instead of exchanging for new ones in order to conserve the earth’s resources.”

DRIVING CHANGE

The specialized transport sector is also making green moves. Portugal-based transport company Laso has been investing in sustainable options to modernise its fleet and reduce emissions, including purchasing eight Tesla electric vehicles and ensuring more than 90 % of its fleet complies with the Euro 6 standards.

“Investment in less polluting vehicles is part of our concern to contribute to the development of sustainable mobility in the transport sector. In addition to investing

in this type of vehicle, we seek to raise awareness among our drivers about less polluting driving, particularly through the Eco-drive system and awareness-raising actions,” says a spokesperson.

Crane rental company Hovago Cranes says it believes the proper observance of ESG initiatives will lead to a better long-term financial performance of the company. “Our recommendation to fellow organisations is to establish clear targets to strive for in order to drive tangible outcomes,” says a spokesperson.

“Environment is one of the most important pillars of our ESG strategy, Hovago has a large fleet of mobile cranes with combustion engines and our company’s goal is to reduce the carbon footprint” through investment in modern engines. Recycling and solar panels are in place at its facilities.

For its social initiatives, Hovago Cranes is part of the ProDelta Holding which is involved in various national and international projects that are aimed at the development of young people who have few opportunities, regardless of nationality, religion, political views or gender.

“We believe that learning and cultural education is the best way to offer future prospects,” Hovago adds.

TRAINING THE INDUSTRY

Training specialist CM Labs says, “We view ESG initiatives as highly effective tools for driving sustainable development within the



Hovago Cranes says ESG initiatives will lead to a better long-term financial performance

construction industry. This industry can be quite resource intensive.

“We think that ESG initiatives are important in the current climate to not only ensure that all businesses are doing their part but also to drive innovation on more efficient, more resource-savvy building and operating techniques. Our advice would be to share your best ESG practices within the industry and talk to others about it; even [with] competitors. Transparency in ESG builds trust with your stakeholders and has the ability to elevate the whole industry if everyone is aware of the latest cutting-edge ESG strategies and technologies.

In its manufacturing facility in Quebec, Canada, 94 per cent of its electricity comes from hydroelectric dams. It is also working on reducing the weight of its hardware and reduce the number of computers required to run the simulations, saving emissions with transport of its kit. It is also currently exploring the simulation of electric and hybrid heavy equipment.

Be sure to check out cranebriefing.com for more information about ESG initiatives. ■

ACCESSORIES FOR HYDRAULIC CRANES IN THE LIFTING AND HANDLING MARKET

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