

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR BREWDOG PLC.

Assignment 2 - Embedding Sustainability within Organisations (BMSP7003D)

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Sustainability plan for BrewDog PLC to increase level of organic ingredients in BrewDog beer by 10% by 2026.

This report will use the UN Global Compact Management model, as seen in Figure 1. As detailed in the ‘define’ section of this report, it is suggested that BrewDog PLC commit to the United Nations Global Compact principles to further integrate their sustainability plans into their business model which will contribute to achieving the United Nation’s SDGs. This report builds upon the value chain analysis seen in the previous report. Through hypothesizing what areas may be of ‘highest risk’ (Deloitte, 2022) for BrewDog PLC, this report proposes that BrewDog should focus primarily on the following three environmental principles of the UN Global Compact in regards to their supply chain.

Principle 7: *Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;*

Principle 8: *undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and*

Principle 9: *encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.*

(United Nations, 2022)

Figure 1: UN Global Compact Management Model



Figure 1

Assess: Current situation

BrewDog do not ‘consider the materials or products purchased and whether or not they have social or environmental certification or approval’ (BrewDog, 2021). The main ingredients in BrewDog’s products are water, malt, hops and yeast (BrewDog, 2022). As highlighted in the concluding remarks of the previous report, BrewDog must also go further in their sustainability actions to ‘further create an authentic brand to dispel concerns from investors and customers’ (Wynne, 2021). These ingredients furthermore are threatened from climate change induced agricultural issues.

BrewDog’s Malt, ‘a catch-all for malted barley, wheat, rye, oats and other cereals’ are procured from various sources (BrewDog, 2022). BrewDog have committed to local growing of some barley at their Ellon brewery (BrewDog, 2020). Their transparency on their sourcing of malt is low, however. Yawson, Adu and Armah (2020) conclude that within the UK for barley, ‘even though spring barley yields in the UK could increase under projected climate change, reductions in croplands (due mainly to climate mitigation policies and aspirations) could combine with population growth to undermine the sustainability of malt barley supplies, both nationally and internationally’.

90% of BrewDog PLC’s hops are procured from Yakima, Washington in the USA (BrewDog, 2017b). Yakima is ‘the leading county’ in the USA in the production of hops with nearly ‘19,000 acres of hops planted and harvested annually’ (Sallato, 2022). Whilst BrewDog does have plans to create a hop farm on their Columbus brewery 42-acre site to reduce distance travelled of raw materials (Eaton, 2020) BrewDog do not consider the environmental impact these ingredients. This presents a risk for BrewDog PLC due to the

potential impact of climate change, pesticide use and water resources within the Yakima Valley, a key supplier for BrewDog's hops. Yakima is at risk from climate change induced impacts on agricultural production, for example, 'Yakima River Basin are expected to trend towards rain-dominant watersheds with less snow and more rain during winter...and are threatened by more severe and frequent winter flooding' (Childress, 2021).

Whilst outside of the remit of this report, there are large opportunities for BrewDog to reduce their water usage, and improve waste water management systems, compared with competitors such as Diageo (Wynne, 2021). In the location of their supplied hops, Yakima, 'water shortages have occurred in 14% of past years and are expected to increase to 32% of the 2020s, 36% of the 2040s, and 77% of the 2080s without the implementation of anthropogenic adaptation' (Vano et al, 2010). This must therefore also be a priority to protect their supply chain.

Define: Proposed sustainability initiative

The proposed sustainability initiative is to **increase level of organic ingredients in BrewDog beer by 10% by 2026**. This would then support the earlier mentioned UNGC principles 7,8 and 9, with the aim of expanding to focus on further principles once this target has been achieved.

Potential impact to BrewDog PLC and its stakeholders

In adopting this strategy in areas of operations and procurement BrewDog ‘could create more value for its shareholders and stakeholder alike’ (Deloitte, 2022). By reducing pesticide use BrewDog reduce the risk of future lawsuits, which other Yakima based businesses have faced (Center for Food Safety, 2020). Farmers can reduce pesticide use without sacrificing productivity (Lechenet et al., 2017). Pesticides furthermore are becoming less effective, and ‘the use of pesticides is financially costly’ (As You Sow, 2021) which may impact on the cost of raw materials for BrewDog, reducing their profit margins.

Reducing pesticide usage, and potentially gaining organic certification for BrewDog’s beers could help attract ‘millennials who have active, healthy lifestyles’ which is the target market of Ultra Pure Gold Beer (Kelso, 2018). AB InBev launched Michelob Ultra Pure Gold beer in 2018 in the US market which was the ‘first nationally available USDA certificated organic beer’ (Michelob Ultra, 2021). AB InBev’s motivation is ‘to capitalise on the popularity of organic food and beverages - and win over people who might turn up their noses at big beer brands’ (Kaplan, 2018). This product launch has resulted in \$100 million in additional revenue for AB InBev (Alcántara, 2020). AB InBev, however, does not use organic hops for their beer, therefore BrewDog could utilise this as a unique selling point for their products.

The organic market, furthermore, in the US grew more than 12% in 2020, to nearly \$62 billion in sales (OTA, 2021). As ‘the fastest growing beer company in the U.S’ this should be an area of consideration for BrewDog (Mellor, 2021). 10% of customers who purchase Ultra Pure Gold Beer are new to the market, and were not purchasing beer previously (Held, 2020). Again,

within the UK or non-US market, BrewDog could use organic status in one or more products to attract new customers to the brand, whilst emphasising and cementing their sustainable brand image. Few breweries in the UK have this status, or provide organic beer, however, some competitors do, such as Samuel Smith who have extensive ranges of organic beer certified by the soil association (Samuel Smith's Brewery, 2021). Samuel Smith, however, does not have craft beer status nor strong brand recognition like BrewDog.

Ultra Pure Gold Beer, furthermore used the conversion of suppliers to organic status as a marketing tool, with a campaign '6 For 6-Pack' which assisted farmers transitioning into organic practices. The brand had a Super Bowl advert which 'encourages consumers to join the brand in helping farmers transition six square feet of farmland into organic with each purchase of a 6-pack of their beer (OTA, 2020). Their scheme has faced criticism however, with the brand limiting the funding of its farming project despite strong sales. BrewDog could utilise a similar scheme as part of their strategy to be the 'Planet's Favourite Beer' with true, substantial actions behind the marketing campaigns, potentially linking to the marketing of their re-forestation projects. These changes to supply chain and procurement will impact the marketing team in terms of adopting the new strategies in marketing materials.

88% of investors 'believe companies that prioritise ESG initiatives represent better opportunities for long-term return than companies do not' (MarshMcLennan, 2020) which should be a priority for BrewDog prior to their upcoming IPO. Diageo, as the seller of the number one selling craft beer in the UK 'Hop House 13', has been a member of the UNGC since 2002. It has used GRI standards since 2011, and SASB standards since 2018 (Global Reporting, 2021). Equally General Mills have committed to 'reduce the use of synthetic pesticides on supplier farms' (FDI Forum, 2019), which Christy Spees, Environmental Health

Program Manager of As You Sow, highlights are a ‘way to transparency, accountability, and long-term value for the company’ (FDI Forum, 2019). GM started sustainability reporting more than 20 years ago, using GRI standards since 2000, and SASB standards since 2018 (Global Reporting, 2021).

Challenges and impact on stakeholders

Potential barrier	Time	Stakeholder impact	Potential solution
<i>Insufficient supply of organic hops and barley available.</i> A challenge facing BrewDog would be the procurement of sufficient quantities of organic hops. In 2016, farmers harvested ‘50,857 acres of hops in the US’, estimated of these only 674 acres (on just 37 farms) were organic (Held, 2020). Again, organic barley is rare, with only 0.02% of barley	3 years + NB: It is a three-year transition for a farm to become certified organic	<i>Farmers and suppliers</i> will have to undergo financial investment to convert to organic farming to become suppliers for BrewDog going forward.	AB InBev, offered farmers four-to-six year contracts paying premium for ‘transitional barley’. They also offered technical support. Both to encourage conversion to organic farming practices and farm certification (Held, 2020).

grown in the US organic, and often is grown for animal feed. However, in Washington, the source of 90% of BrewDog's hops, organic hop production currently makes up a small but steadily increasing percentage of the worldwide hop supply. Certified organic hop land increased from 1.6 ha to more than 26 ha in Washington State from 2004 to 2010, with another nearly 7 ha in transition in 2010 (Kirby and Granatstein, 2011). However, 'due to high N requirements and severe disease, weed, and arthropod pressures, hops are an extremely difficult crop to grow organically' (Turner et al., 2011).			
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<i>Cost of organic ingredients.</i> AB InBev pays 175 to 200% premium for organic barley compared to non-organic (Held, 2020).	NA	<i>Shareholders, and Equity Punks, if purely financially motivated may not be receptive to increased costs, and therefore potentially lower dividends.</i>	BrewDog may be able to charge a premium for their beers which contain organic ingredients. A US study found that ‘the majority of beer consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable beer’ (Carley and Yahng, 2018). One study however, found that Belgian consumers are unwilling to pay high price premiums for organic beers, with no statistically different
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			preferences for male or female respondents (Poelmans and Rousseau, 2017). The sample size was small however, and focused on the Belgian market (Held, 2020).
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An alternative path for BrewDog, which can be detailed in further reports, could be that rather than purely organic beer production, BrewDog PLC could focus more generally on improving the sustainability of their procurement and supply chain. Other breweries, such as Suspended Brewing, a US based brewery which describes themselves as ‘ecologically conscious’ originally bought organic ingredients, but then focused then more on energy and water-saving systems and waste diversion (Held, 2020) as they found that their customers did not consider organic status specifically as important in their purchasing decisions. Other brewers are awaiting on verification that organic is truly the most environmentally positive action, with concerns that the ‘low yields leading to more land use and greenhouse emissions and are hoping for more research to boost yields’. (Held, 2020). This is an area BrewDog could benefit from

utilising their relationship with Mike Berners-Lee and Small World Consulting to consult on this issue.

Step 4: Implement and Step 5: Measure

To increase level of organic ingredients in BrewDog beer by 10% by 2026.

Roadmap of actions

Action	Target completion date	Stakeholders' involvement / Organisational Function impacted	Resources needed	Metrics tracked / assessment of action.	Team / individual accountable
Capture data on environmental status of each supplier <i>NB: Kellogg's, PepsiCo and Campbell's have all</i>	December 2022	Suppliers, supply chain management team.	<i>People (work resources)</i>	Ensure 100% of BrewDog suppliers are included in data collection.	Morag Thomas, Head of Supply Chain.

<i>committed to pesticide data collection (As you sow, 2020).</i>					
To enrol supply chain team on an organic farming awareness course by Soil Association.	March 2022	Supply chain management team. HR Learning team to enrol employees on course. Finance for approval of spending.	<i>Capital (Cost Resources)</i> £100 per supply chain team member. (25 employees) (BrewDog, 2017a). £100 x 25 = £2,500 (Soil Association, 2022)	For all employees within team to have completed organic farming awareness course.	Head of Learning and Development (newly appointed December 21)

Key feedback opportunity	Following UNGC advice BrewDog should concentrate ‘effort to continuously improve, looks to its employees to gain a steady stream of feedback and ideas’ (Deloitte, 2022) which BrewDog’s team can use to inform an adapted procurement policy.				
To adapt procurement standards to include new UNGC goals.	March 2022	Procurement, CEOs.	<i>People (work resources)</i>	Completion of document	Supply chain team, signed off by CEOs.
For all procurement teams to adhere to the adapted procurement standards.	December 2022	Procurement	<i>People (work resources).</i>	Audits of supply chain to be carried out. Supplier self-assessment could also be used (Deloitte, 2022).	Head of supply chain

Produce a supplier code of conduct to encourage sustainability mindset. <i>Adding to the current CIPS Code of Conduct BrewDog current use (BrewDog, 2020).</i>	January 2023	Suppliers	<i>People (work resources).</i>	Completion of document	Supply chain management team.
Key feedback opportunity	BrewDog ‘can ask suppliers to provide actionable feedback and ideas to further promote the company’s own strategy and performance’ (Deloitte, 2022).				
Encourage at least one hop farm in Yakima to convert to organic	2025 (3 year transition period).	Supplier farm	<i>People (work resources).</i>	Number of farms agreed to convert.	Supply chain management

farming practices					
To secure new suppliers of organic barley	January, 2023	Procurement	<i>People (work resources).</i>	Securement of contract with organic barley farmer.	Procurement
To secure new suppliers of organic hops.	January, 2023	Procurement	<i>People (work resources).</i>	Securement of contract with organic hops farmer.	Procurement

**All metrics should be monitored by Jennifer Crilly, recently appointed (December 2021)
Sustainability Projects Manager.**

Step 6: Communication on progress

As part of the UNGC commitment BrewDog must create a Communication on Progress document on an annual basis. This is to detail ‘its progress and forward-looking strategies for implementing its commitment’ (Deloitte, 2022). Alongside this BrewDog must engage with stakeholders ‘to solicit feedback on performance and get input on future directions and priorities’ (Deloitte, 2022), as previously mentioned this is important at the current stage prior to IPO for BrewDog. If BrewDog is resistant to feedback ‘it risks limiting its ability to improve performance and enhance reputation with stakeholders’ (Deloitte, 2022).

The road map of actions should be considered at each key target completion date, assessed, and should be discussed at frequent meetings with key project stakeholders.

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