

# Industrial relations for a green economy

Innovative bargaining processes for a sustainable growth and a quality employment



Project VS/2014/0405 co-founded

by

DGESAI - DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS and INCLUSION

**Belgium Case:  
SWIFT S.C.R.L.**

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## **PRESENTATION (IDENTITY CARD OF BEST PRACTICE)**

### **Information on good practice**

Company: SWIFT S.C.R.L.

Region/Area: La Hulpe, Brabant Wallon, Belgium

Company:

SWIFT is the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication, a member-owned cooperative through which the financial world conducts its business operations. More than 10,500 banking organisations, securities institutions and corporate customers in 215 countries use SWIFT to exchange millions of standardised financial messages every day.

SWIFT's main business activity concerns international interbank telecommunications, which includes the standardisation of information (payment securities, trade finance and treasury). SWIFT also develops and markets interfaces that enable connectivity to its network and to process messages. SWIFT also provides consultancy services and develops IT applications for banks (i.e. "matching": comparing two orders to verify that they are identical for both the vendor and purchaser).

Address: 1, avenue Adèle, 1310 La Hulpe

### **Project description and employment impacts:**

SWIFT is a multinational company with significant operations in EMEA, the Americas and Asia Pacific. SWIFT headquarters are located in Belgium.

SWIFT employs approximately 2000 people worldwide with half of all employees working at La Hulpe.

SWIFT's business activities are not industrial and therefore not focused on the development of "green" products and do not generate "green" jobs. Instead, efforts have been made to focus on the day-to-day management of on-site activities by the management and staff.

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A CSR unit (Corporate Social Responsibility) was established in 2008, and the company is a member of the United Nations Global Compact programme:

<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/COPs/detail/37691> since 2012.

These two initiatives simultaneously address the environment, human rights and employee rights, the fight against corruption and the promotion of diversity. Our initial objective of a 60% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions between 2007 and 2012 was achieved through work aimed at reducing energy consumption and through carbon offsetting. A further objective targeting an additional reduction of 10% by 2015 has been set.

The company's main sources of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are the computer servers and air travel.

The measures taken to reduce the environmental impact of the La Hulpe site in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the management of the site and its daily activities are as follows:

- Through a series of initiatives, efforts are being made to improve energy efficiencies of our servers.
- The company's head quarter buildings, which date from the 1980s, have been fully renovated with a particular focus on heating, lighting and insulation systems. SWIFT installed a chilled ceilings system that circulates water and enables reduced use of air conditioning. In carrying out these improvements the company had to take account of the architectural constraints of the pre-existing building. Office space was reduced because of the new office setting and employees are offered the possibility to work from home two days a week.
- SWIFT encourages the use of video conferences as an alternative to business travel and emissions due to air travel are now being offsetting by purchasing green certificates.
- SWIFT is located in 25 hectares of grounds that are managed in a sustainable manner. The quantity of pesticides used is being kept to a minimum and today amounts to approximately 10 litres per year, chiefly for the pathways and lawns. Work on the wooded parts of the grounds has been scaled back extensively. For example, tree trunks are now left in the forest. SWIFT is undertaking works to increase the biodiversity in certain parts of the grounds. In particular, a flower meadow has been sown and a conservatory orchard has been created with 52 different varieties of fruit trees (apple trees, prune trees, cherry trees, etc.). Beehives have been installed and they produced 15 kg of honey in spring 2014.
- Efforts have been made to increase staff awareness of the beauty of the site in which they work. A path crosses the flower meadow enabling the workforce to enjoy a stroll through the orchards.

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- Projects to reduce food waste and to encourage the consumption of seasonal fruit, vegetables and products from organic farming in the canteens are underway. Max Havelaar fair trade coffee is now served across the whole Belgian site.
  
- **Regarding mobility:**
  - SWIFT has carried out mobility analyses, which show that 50% of SWIFT's workforce lives within a radius of 15 km of the company.
  - SWIFT is a member of a European Bike To Work programme, which encourages the use of bicycles for trips between home and the workplace. The programme is implemented differently in individual member states. SWIFT concluded a contract with the Fietsersbond to record the daily cycled kilometres by staff, thereby avoiding the need for the human resources department to carry out this task.
  - A private shuttle service is in place between Brussels and the La Hulpe site and between the office and La Hulpe railway station.
  - On site 20 electric bicycles are available to staff. Showers, locker rooms and covered bicycle parking areas have been installed.
  - Financial incentives to encourage staff to choose alternatives to commuting by car have been introduced: a €0.22 per km contribution for bicycle commutes, access to a mobility budget for employees to opt for a car/bicycle combinations or for a subscription to the public transport system (a 100% reimbursement of train-bus-metro subscriptions) as alternatives to company cars. Staff are also given the option to choose a company car with a small-engine for day to day journeys and use a larger car for going on holiday.
  - SWIFT is a member of Tous Vélo Actifs (an initiative by the Walloon Region) and obtained the best score of all participating companies during the bicycle audit in 2013 and the maximum score in 2014.
  - A "home-working" policy has been developed, allows staff to work from home two days a week and collect a contribution of 15 Euros per month for the personal internet subscription. "Home-working" has enabled the company to achieve savings by reducing its office space.
  - SWIFT introduced flexitime enabling staff to choose their working hours between 7 AM to 7 PM

## **Regarding employment, these various measures have had the following positive impacts:**

- C-TEC (a company specialised in setting up, financing and maintaining bicycle and electric bicycle fleets for companies and institutions) was able to expand its business thanks to SWIFT and the publicity generated through participation in the regional *Tous vélo-actifs* initiative. As a result, it has been possible to maintain employment levels at C-TEC's sites.

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- A number of employees, predominantly women, have been able to return to full-time employment thanks to better opportunities to combine and reconcile family life and work at SWIFT.

In addition to these efforts in the employment field, the various policies have allowed for outstanding integration within the local economy and the development of excellent relationships with the local public authorities.

## **Description of critical elements, areas of risk/opportunity, elements that produced conflict**

Generally speaking, decisions are taken in a non-conflictual manner based on consultation between the various stakeholders on a "win-win" basis for the company and its workforce. For example, staff was widely consulted during the interior renovation of the buildings.

No major conflicts (such as strikes for example) have taken place. As the environment is not the company's "core business", measures were mainly adopted if they allowed for financial gain and/or if they improve the company's image. This is not a strict rule, as the flower meadow and the installation of beehives were carried out purely on the principle of good environmental management.

Regarding the granting of, the management initially refused an official "home-working" status as requested for insurance reasons by the staff representatives, due to the equipment to be supplied to staff and the cost to the company. Additionally, staff was not quite ready for this at the time.

With the rationalisation of the buildings, management realised that savings could be made and revised its position accordingly.

Unfortunately, the contribution of 15 Euros per month for the internet connection costs do not cover all of the costs incurred by the workers at home (heating, water and electricity, etc.).

Staff representatives also proposed the introduction of a four-day week. However, management prefers to maintain a five-day week in order to ensure that employees are on-site.

Staff representatives submitted comments to the CPPT (committee for prevention and protection in the workplace) concerning the landscaping of the grounds, when a new car park was built, which has reduced the amount of land available for the flower meadow.

A number of employees have complained about the lack of lighting on-site, but light-related pollution has been reduced.

Regular discussions take place concerning the management of the on-site electronic bicycles and particularly the possibility of introducing an electronic key system.

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## **Actors involved in the negotiation process: characteristics, roles, interactions, capacity**

The stakeholders involved in the company negotiation process are: the management (managers and supervisors of the office facilities, IT and CSR departments, the latter being in a position to positively influence the various managers concerning their objectives with regard to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and improvements to the visual appearance of the workplaces) and the trade union representatives (1 FGTB, 7 CSC and 2 CGSLB). The various viewpoints expressed above were included on the agenda and discussed by the staff/management consultation bodies (Works Council, CPPT and union representatives). Several staff consultations were organised by management and by staff representatives.

A process of cooperation has developed between staff representatives and management as the latter have the resources necessary to implementing projects.

## **Duration of the negotiation process and the events that have led to stalling or acceleration of projects**

### **Outcome of the process in terms of agreement**

**A collective agreement was concluded concerning flexitime. Regarding mobility and "home-working", the various decisions have resulted in amendments to the contracts of employment or revisions to the company's staff rules.**

### **Theme of the information/communication (workers, citizens, institutions,...)**

Staff is regularly briefed on the latest environmental news and achievements by either their representatives or management via the intranet. This includes: mobility-related events, the creation of the flower meadow or the sale of honey, etc.

External communication is carried out as part of the United Nations Global Compact programme, via the SWIFT website ([http://www.SWIFT.com/about\\_SWIFT/csr/greener\\_SWIFT?lang](http://www.SWIFT.com/about_SWIFT/csr/greener_SWIFT?lang)) and during the annual SIBOS conference organised by SWIFT. On this occasion, SWIFT's customers have the opportunity to reduce their impact by offsetting of their air travel and minimising their food wastage.

At a more local level, staff representatives have invited environmental associations from the local area to visit the grounds. Mushroom picking events have also been organised. The associations have been able to see the excellent state of the grounds for themselves and do not consider the SWIFT site as a sort of walled city.

### **Topic of health and safety**

Consultation has taken place concerning the theme of psycho-social well-being in order to apply the latest legislation in this field and take into consideration the high workload and work intensity levels.



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## **Training of workers**

No training is organised internally concerning the environment. Charles-Etienne Jamme has participated in the training sessions organised by the RISE/Mobility unit of the CEPAG education centre/Wallonian FGTB and the CIEM (inter-university mobility studies centre). He is an active member of the "green" delegates' network launched in 2013. Awareness sessions for employees are occasionally organised. The next will take place in October 2014.

## **Satisfaction of the actors involved in the process**

Most staff members are very satisfied with the improvements made. However, some remain opposed to the whole initiative, based on the principle that "the environment is not SWIFT's business".

## **Impact of the regulatory/legal/contractual environment on the implementation of good practice**

Tax legislation in the mobility field has proved an incentive in the implementation of the project:

- A 120% deduction from the company's basic taxable amount for the acquisition of electric bicycles and the price of cycling infrastructure in addition to the purchasing of the company shuttle;
- A "third party payer" system (based on an agreement between the company and the public transport operator (SNCB possibly combined with the STIB or the TEC), with the employer covering 80% of the subscription price and the remaining 20% being paid by the SNCB (agreement between the public authorities and the transport company). As a result, the subscription is then free of charge for the employee;
- An allowance of 0.22 Euros per km for employees travelling by bicycle, etc.

The legislation also obliges companies employing more than 100 people to carry out a mobility assessment every three years.

SWIFT has not benefited from public aid packages with the exception of regional financial support for the installation of solar panels (green certificates).

## **Transferability of good practice**

The measures taken by SWIFT concerning biodiversity are perfectly transferable to any other company with a park/grounds. As an example, the pharmaceutical company GSK situated nearby has also landscaped part of its grounds and adopted mobility solutions. The energy savings measures, the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and mobility can be implemented in any company. The measures concerning the organisation of working time and "home-working" are already applied in many companies. Good practice on mobility is becoming increasingly widespread.

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Among future initiatives, the possibility for staff to opt for an electric company car is particularly noteworthy. The fuel card will be replaced by an electricity card and the company will supply the equipment needed to recharge the vehicle at the SWIFT site or at home.