

### 1. Company ID

Company Name:	<b>Zeiringer GmbH &amp; Co. KG</b>
Activity Sector:	Heating engineering and energy systems
Core Business / Main Activities:	Installation and maintenance of heating systems, baths and energy-supply
City/Country:	Murau, Austria
Year of Foundation:	1957
Number of Company Sites (2004):	1 site in Austria
Website (if available):	<a href="http://www.zeiringer.net">www.zeiringer.net</a>
Number of Employees (2004):	Full Time 35, Part Time 5, Women 8, Men 32
Annual Turnover in 2004 (€):	3.000.000

### 2. Responsible Business Practices – Main Topics

Broad Area(s) of CSR Good Practices:	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Ethics <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marketplace <input type="checkbox"/> Community
CSR Issue(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmentally favorable products and heating systems <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement in sensitizing the local and regional community regarding heating and environment
Main Drivers to be Responsible:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management values and corporate philosophy</li> <li>▪ Effecting a transition to environmentally favourable heating</li> <li>▪ Furthering acceptance of environmentally favourable heating and recycling. Example set in own corporate building</li> </ul>
Some Examples of CSR Initiatives in the Broad Area Identified:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training employees professionally to be aware of and prepared for market changes in the private energy sector</li> <li>▪ Encouraging and creating ecological consciousness in the region</li> <li>▪ Actively encouraging clients to cease installing oil-fired central heating in new buildings</li> </ul>
Are the Good Practices integrated into a broader Business Strategy? Yes/No? How?	<p>Yes. The entire corporate strategy has changed into "Öko-Zeiringer", the company's ecological strategy. The CSR approach is directly orientated toward the core business activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employees are trained in ecological energy systems and products</li> <li>▪ Priority has been given to implementing the "Öko-Zeiringer" ecological approach in their own company, prior to entering the market</li> <li>▪ The entire branding and marketing activities are oriented toward changing the company philosophy, so as to become a partner for sustainable and ecological energy solutions</li> </ul>
Business Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee-training and motivation to instill in employees the awareness that they possess a unique market knowledge in their field of business in the region</li> <li>▪ New clients and markets</li> <li>▪ Excellent reputation for being responsible expert</li> <li>▪ Growth in media coverage</li> <li>▪ Sustainable development of the organization – future-oriented solutions whilst the market price of oil is at a high level</li> </ul>
Stakeholders/Beneficiary Groups addressed by the CSR Good Practices:	<p>The main beneficiaries are <b>Planet Earth</b> and the <b>clients</b> but as the responsible business approach is integrated into company operations, other beneficiaries are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local and regional communities engaged in sustainable development</li> <li>▪ Employees, through acquiring technical knowledge that is increasingly gaining importance</li> </ul>

Benefits for Society/Stakeholders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge-based support in furthering ecological heating within the community</li> <li>▪ Reduced negative environmental impact</li> </ul>
To Whom and How did the Company Communicate their Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The owner of the family business began by driving a solar powered car (in a small town like Murau such a "marketing tool" inevitably gave rise to intensive discussions in the community)</li> <li>▪ Personal involvement of the company-owner in the local initiative: "Energievision Murau" (energy vision for Murau)</li> <li>▪ Communication and information regarding ecologically favourable energy systems directly to the clients by the trained employees</li> <li>▪ Press releases and information provided on the company- website</li> <li>▪ Participation in award-competitions</li> </ul>
Awards / Certifications / Marks of Honour:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ÖGUT Umweltpreis 2002 (Austrian National Award for Environment-oriented Companies)</li> </ul>
Difficulties Found in the Good Practices Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resistance to Change: employees of Zeiringer have been used over the years – and some of them for decades – to install oil-fired central heating systems. It took considerable effort to overcome employees' skepticism concerning the quality and functionality of alternative heating systems</li> <li>▪ Investment in Training: employees are receiving continuous training in all aspects of ecologically favourable energy systems and products which represents a high investment from the company</li> <li>▪ Communication with Clients: The changes in the company strategy and philosophy caused existing clients with oil-fired central heating a lot of confusion. The company management experienced some difficulties in the communication with clients: the new "Öko-Zeiringer" policy of no longer installing oil-fired central heating in new buildings was misunderstood by some existing clients who feared that the company would no longer look after existing oil-fired central heating systems. Some clients therefore switched to competitors, but the company was able to compensate this loss by gaining new clients who regarded this ecological approach positively</li> </ul>
Sources of Further Information:	-

### 3. Responsible Business Practices – Description

Zeiringer GmbH & Co. KG is a family-owned business founded in Murau, a remote part of Styria, in 1957. Its main business is the installation and maintenance of heating systems, baths and energy-supply. Currently 40 employees work at this SME.

When, in the early nineties, Ms. Zeiringer Junior took over the business from her father, she decided to completely transform the company philosophy into an ecological one. It all began at a trade-fair, where Ms. Zeiringer saw and was impressed by a small car powered by solar energy. She bought this car for her private and business use and immediately began to learn a lot about alternative energy systems. As a result of this, the whole town began talking about solar energy.

All employees received training in ecological energy systems and the company started to reorganise its own energy system ecologically. Ms. Zeiringer's next step was to change the type of heating systems installed by her company, focussing entirely on ecological systems and no longer installing any oil-fired central heating systems as of 2005.

A lot of information work had to be done by Ms. Zeiringer to heighten regional awareness of alternative central heating systems; a key step was to change her own employees' minds. As many of them had only installed oil-fired central heating systems during their whole working life, there was obviously considerable skepticism.

The company now calls itself "Eco Zeiringer" and the employees are proud of being the leading experts on alternative energy systems in the region. The company has gained a lot of new clients as a result of this ecological approach.

When identified as a best-practice example on CSR, Ms. Zeiringer reacted with some skepticism. She doesn't know how to deal with the expression, "corporate social responsibility": "I just want to manage my business in a humane way".

### 4. Training Exploitation

#### A). Additional Relevant Information concerning the Exploitation of this Study Case in Training Situations (relevance criteria: broad area(s) of CSR good practices)

Zeiringer has been a family-owned business for nearly five decades. For the last decade it has been managed by Ms. Zeiringer Junior who has transformed the business into what is now a completely sustainable business. As Zeiringer installs energy systems it has a direct influence on the environment.

This case can be used as an example of CSR good practices both in environment and marketplace fields.

#### B) Pedagogical Suggestions concerning the Exploitation of this Study Case in Training Situations (relevance criteria: broad area(s) of CSR good practices)

##### Topics for discussion:

- Knowledge and expertise required by the management and employees concerning ecological techniques / systems / processes / products must be up-to-date
- Role of continuous vocational training in an SME
- Importance of specific means of communication when changing a company philosophy and strategy (inhouse / employees / external communications / clients)
- Possible need for support of a SME in building up a strong CSR strategy
- Effects on a family business when it is overtaken by the next generation
- Return on investment through learning about new environmental-friendly technologies