

ENVIRA



Impact and Sustainability

Congratulations on your award-winning success. Please tell us more about Steward Redqueen

René Kim: "Steward Redqueen is a specialised consultancy that works around the globe to advise organisations on impact and sustainability. 'Making business work for society' is our mission. Our head-office is based in The Netherlands and we have an office in Singapore and representative offices in Barcelona, Spain and Princeton, USA.

With a team of some twenty professionals we service multinational corporations in various sectors including food & beverage, (development) finance, mining, agriculture, transport and energy. In addition, we work for governments and nonprofits.

Corporations around the globe are looking to operate in harmony with their surroundings and to become sustainable; that is, to be a steward for people and planet. At the same time, corporations are competing for sound market positions. In a global economy, the combination of stewardship and competition offers dilemmas, challenges and – above all – opportunities.

We provide our clients a broader view. We deliver impact-oriented solutions that strengthen our clients' potential for long-term value creation."

What is stewardship?

Wouter Scheepens: "Stewardship is an ethic that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources. As resources become more scarce, clients more demanding, society more concerned and millennials more aspiring, stewardship offers a range of business opportunities. Yet, as it is an ethic it also challenges businesses to ask questions on what they stand for, on their license to operate and their relationship with stakeholders."

How does Steward Redqueen help companies navigate the challenges of profit and stewardship?

Wouter continues: "We combine board room dialogue with thorough quantitative and qualitative analysis. 'Sustainable development' still sounds fuzzy and soft to many people in business. By pointing out a range of developments and showing hard numbers we hope our clients understand the upside of

'making business work for society'. Sustainability is not a soft, but an even harder part of business. By engaging with our clients and crunching their numbers we provide them with new perspectives on their value chain and their operating environment."

What are the opportunities available?

Willem Vosmer: "Our work is extremely tailored. There is no magic bullet to most of the sustainability challenges. Becoming more sustainable, anticipating societal needs while providing new solutions to clients is a process of managing trade-offs. You need to have a sense of direction but proceed step by step. We do not promote a revolution but help clients to make credible progress."

When a company first comes to you, where do you start?

Willem adds: "A question we often ask is for what result in a few years' time they would open a bottle of champagne. We want to challenge them by envisaging a success on a 'big audacious goal'. Next to that it is helpful to understand the personal drive of our counterparts. How do they define success as a manager? What is the kind of conversation they are having with friends and family on the relevance of their corporations? Is this all about creating financial value, or do they have a broader view on their contribution to their stakeholders?"

What does the analysis stage involve?

René: All our work is based on thorough research and analysis, both quantitative and qualitative. For example, we are frequently asked to conduct impact assessments that aim to quantify the socio-economic contributions of a company and its environmental footprint. We use a methodology based on input-output modelling. We have a team of analysts that are specialised in combining our client's datasets with a range of (public) databases. The result is a clear overview of how our client's customers,

suppliers, governments and society at large benefit from the company's activities. This gives relevant management information on how upstream and downstream processes can be adapted to increase the positive impacts of the company. This obviously helps to have a different conversation with stakeholders and to cement relations.

How do you support companies in the implementing sustainability strategy?

Wouter: "We work with small, dedicated teams of specialists who work in close cooperation with our clients to provide tailored solutions. By working closely with our clients we help them invent the solutions, not the least because this way we avoid the 'not invented here syndrome'. Not only does the client need a sense of urgency to act, also ownership is needed to actually turn the business case into a new reality. The worst thing that could happen is that a sustainability strategy only remains a nice narrative in a report. We have a proven track-record in supporting our clients in making their business work for society."

What are some of the tools available to clients?

Willem: "We are really proud on our big data and tooling work. We have developed a range of web-based management information tools that allow our clients to have real-time information on their impacts and help make better informed discussions. A well-known multinational uses our tools to compare the impact on various countries. By understanding the differences between those impacts specific interventions can be made that can help increase positive impacts, thereby solidifying the company's local legitimacy and stakeholder relations. Along these lines, a global bank is using a tool we have developed to map sustainability risks across the portfolio. This not only improves the quality of risk management. By providing their clients with this

information and the comparison to sector averages it offers a new dimension to the client dialogue. Both the bank and their clients appreciate the added value this tool generates. Finally, for financial institutions we created an "SDG Mapping" tool that assesses how financial portfolios both positively and negatively interact with the targets supporting the Sustainable Development Goals."

Wouter adds: "We also do independent evaluations for example for impact investors or development finance institutions that want to understand the impact they have made across their portfolios. What was their 'theory of change', what decisions did they make, what is the quality of the governance structure, how did their interventions make a difference to selected target groups? Such research, in combination with a dialogue on board level, has proven to help boards and investment committees to focus their efforts and perform better on the environmental, social and governance dimensions."

Why should companies Sustainable Development Goals be a priority for corporations?

René says: "The SDGs have traction. Not only for governments but for many global businesses these are the 'new normal'. This should not be regarded as a new layer of bureaucracy but as a business opportunity. Companies that fail to recognize that will become increasingly isolated. However, it makes sense to take on the SDG in a smart and business-oriented way. We can help any organization to travel that road."

What advice do you have for prospective clients?

Willem concludes: "The advice to prospective clients is to embrace these new challenges head on. It's worth it. You will get valuable insights on how to align your business with the needs of stakeholders, which helps reap opportunities for making a positive impact – on the bottom line and on society."



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