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Joint PhD Between NTNU and DTU on the Industrial Implementation of Design for Sustainability

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Increasing pressure on global resources and growing interest in environment friendly initiatives have made sustainability integration in business models a prime area of concern for all businesses alike. Academic research and industrial experience have shown that sustainable practices in economic, social and environmental contexts are rewarding both in economic and environmental performance terms. In light of these observations, more and more industries are adopting sustainability in their business activities. These activities extend across product development, raw material acquisition, supply chain management and further. The research also shows that there are a number of tools and frameworks to aid and facilitate these initiatives. However, most tools and models developed for this purpose are devoid of parameters capable of identifying and evaluating organization specific characters such as employee perception of the idea, geographic issues, cultural dissimilarities existing in global organization located in around the globe and so on. The project stems from the view that these soft side parameters play a decisive role in determining the success or failure of design for sustainability tools. Focus group of the research would be small and medium sized companies that are large enough in terms of operations and economic scale to have sustainability issues, but restricted in terms of internal resources required to identify and mitigate these issues. The research as part of the PhD project aims to contribute to the successful implementation of design for sustainability in by creating knowledge about soft and hard side requirements in the organizations that are necessary for the development of such initiatives. Further, use this knowledge for integrating these requirements into tools and methods used for sustainable product portfolio development. The joint PhD program designed between NTNU and DTU aims to make use of the diverse yet mutually complementary expertise of both the Department of Product Design, NTNU, and the Division for Quantitative Sustainability Assessment division, DTU to achieve the aforementioned goals.

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