



Capacity building for sustainable food retail: Delivery of targeted advisory

Background

Over the last decade, sustainable growth in the retail sector has become one of the strategic focus activity areas for our client European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Within this context, EBRD's food retail clients often strive for the sustainability standards applied within very advanced markets.

The pressured situation caused by skills mismatch is exacerbated by demographic pressures in countries like Poland, where the labour force is projected to shrink substantially as rapid ageing sets in. According to estimates from the European Commission, over the next 50 years, the country might experience a drop in the share of the working age population to total population of over 15 per cent. While higher fertility and net inward migration can fill a small portion of this gap, a declining labour force can only be remedied by higher labour force participation. Polish firms must confront how they make use and develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of their older workers.

Project Aim

The aim of this project was to support the retail chain SPAR in establishing their envisioned training programmes by defining the exact skills needs of the company's workforce. The overall objective of the programme was to support improvements in the food retail sector and implementation of higher standards in line with the requirements of advanced markets. These improvements relate to 3 possible key areas, both in the food retailers' operations as well as their supply chain:



1. Product standards such as food safety, quality and traceability



2. Energy and resource efficiency and waste management



3. Corporate standards and policies that promote inclusion and skills sharing

Outcomes

A skills needs analysis, was developed in direct response to the scoping exercise undertaken with SPAR and its employees across May and June 2022 and has two sections:

- Company insights
- Training needs analysis

SPAR identified key stores and personnel that should be included in discussions and surveys, and as a result, we had:

- An initial meeting with 8 senior managers
- 75 respondents to the staff survey
- 24 respondents to the management survey
- 3 focus group meetings with 14 staff

Based on the outcomes of these discussions and surveys we were able to expertly analyse the data and develop a baseline assessment report, which included recommendations and assessment of the work-based training needs related to SPAR's business activities, to highlight skills and employment gaps and demands and establish the principal training needs of SPAR's older workforce to be addressed by the new training programme.

To support our recommendations, we also provided sample training outlines, suitable for face-to-face training, along with checklists and resources including:

Training workshop outlines (suitable for face-to-face training):

- Coaching skills
- Developing an induction
- Implementing inclusive recruitment and selection practices
- Implementing the induction programme
- Mentoring
- Monitoring KPIs and targets
- Recruitment and selection
- Retention strategy

Checklists:

- Gender and Inclusion
- Inclusive recruitment
- Induction

Information sheet:

- Overview of buddy system

In addition, we also provided a sample green environmental training programme that SPAR can adapt and use either through face-to-face training or via their e-learning system.

"Working with People 1st International was very fruitful and enriched our existing knowledge with very interesting and at the same time, practical tips that we can use in creating and developing our training programs for SPAR stores' employees.

"Overseeing the entire course of the project, People 1st International were extremely committed and very willing to share their knowledge and experience. It was a real pleasure to work with professionals who, with great openness and curiosity, delved into the issues and specifics of the Polish FMCG retail market, the labour market, especially in the context of the changing demographic background.

"All the activities proposed in the project were carried out as envisioned and designed. A very thorough report with numerous recommendations and supporting materials (checklists, training handouts with issues, presentations) provide a very solid basis for further activities in the areas of improving employees' competence, recruitment and selection, onboarding, developing implementation programs and raising employee awareness of environmental responsibility. Many of these activities have already been implemented. We hope that this was not our last project with People 1st International." - Sławomira Wołoszyn, Dyrektor HR / HR Director, SPAR