

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in Management (MIM)
Student:	Denis Sitnikov
Title of thesis:	Corporate sustainability peculiarities in oil and gas industry: comparative case study of Finnish and Russian companies

Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis. Justification of the topic choice; accuracy in defining the aim and tasks of the thesis; originality of the topic and the extent to which it was covered; alignment of the thesis' topic, aim and objectives.

The topic of the thesis is important in theoretical and practical sense due to (1) the growing role of corporate sustainability concept as an actual interpretation of corporate social performance; (2) the current debate on the business participation in achieving UN SDGs, (3) the potentially central role of oil and gas (O&G) industry in sustainable development movement; (4) the lack of comparative studies of the UN SDGs implementations by O&G companies. The topic looks original and is in line with the actual theoretical debate. In general the topic is covered by the presented research. Unfortunately, the very purpose of the thesis is presented unclear, at least in two different ways: "to determine the corporate sustainability peculiarities of Finnish and Russian oil and gas companies through the investigation of peculiarities how these companies implement the sustainable development goals" (4); "to provide insights and comparison of best practices of two O&G companies in developed and developing countries" (8). Nevertheless, the main research question and subordinated research objectives are clear and directly related to the topic.

Structure and logic of the text flow. Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.

The research is conducted in a logical manner. The results and conclusions are directly followed from the study. The theoretical and empirical parts of the thesis are in good balance.

Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives. Adequacy of objectives coverage; ability to formulate and convey the research problem; ability to offer options for its solution; application of the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives.

The coverage of objectives is quite adequate. The research problem is formulated clearly. The main trends in modern literature on corporate sustainability and the related theoretical "pillars" (CSR, sustainability, and stakeholder concept) are carefully analysed and applied to research.

Quality of data gathering and description. Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references.

The research tools and methods are selected properly. The very research is exploratory one and is based on the qualitative data. The cases of Sakhalin Energy and Neste are justified properly. The framework for assessment the implementation of SDGs into corporate sustainability practices connected with IPIECA and other guidelines benchmark looks correct. The very framework is used in an adequate manner. The list of references is complete and directly connected with the topic and objectives.

Scientific aspect of the thesis. Independent scientific thinking in solving the set problem/objectives; the extent to which the student contributed to selecting and justifying the research model (conceptual and/or quantitative), developing methodology/approach to set objectives.

The way of scientific thinking is independent. The proposed methodology looks quite understandable. The entire research is made on the mainstream level and the author demonstrated the ability to use the main typical approaches.

Practical/applied nature of research. Extent to which the theoretical background is related to the international or Russian managerial practice; development of applied recommendations; justification and interpretation of the empirical/applied results.

The theoretical background is directly related to the international and Russian business practices. The

national/companies peculiarities can be used by managers of O&G industry in their international practices.

Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.

The main Regulations for the master thesis preparation are fulfilled. The tables, figures, and references in general are presented correctly.

Originality of the text. All sources of match identified by the Safe Assign system follow the allowed cases, the paper does not contain any elements of plagiarism.

The thesis text is original and does not contain elements of plagiarism.

The Master thesis of Denis Sitnikov meets the requirements for master thesis of Master in Management program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date: June 3, 2018

Scientific Advisor:

Associate Professor Yury E. Blagov

