

Company:	Rabobank
Sector:	Financial Services
Report Year:	2007
Headquarters:	Utrecht, The Netherlands
Standard Application:	GRI G3 A+, AA1000
Format:	Matrix

Dialogue is a vital element in corporate social responsibility

The Rabobank Group attaches great importance to the way stakeholders perceive how we operate within society. Our dialogue with them helps us to take well-considered decisions in the area of sustainable business and financial services, but it can on occasion lead to friction.

Stakeholder dialogue as part of issue management

Stakeholder dialogue forms part of issue management at the Rabobank Group. Trends and issues of relevance to the bank are analysed at an early stage, putting us in a better position to manage risk, capitalise on commercial opportunities and apply sustainable business principles. As well as stakeholder dialogue, websites and academic publications are also used for the purpose of analysing trends. Structural stakeholder dialogue is first and foremost a valuable source of information that can be used to identify new topics for our sustainability policy. The bankers of Rabobank and stakeholders hold meetings to communicate their positions on social issues to each other, and the information gained during these meetings is communicated to the relevant account management and product development departments. This dialogue also provides us with a better picture of the information our stakeholders require from us in order to be able to form a well-considered opinion of the Rabobank Group's performance in the area of sustainability.

Selection of issues for policy and reporting

The way in which we select stakeholders for a dialogue or consultation on trends and issues in relation to our CSR policy is described in our Annual Sustainability Report 2006. With regard to the selection of structural issues, we use a number of other sources to identify the issues of greatest relevance for our stakeholders and for the Rabobank Group. The selected issues are reported on in the annual sustainability report.

We use the following sources for this purpose:

- meetings, consultations and written correspondence (chiefly in the form of e-mail) with stakeholders,
- research into the most important issues reported in the media,
- issues that affect the Rabobank Group’s day-to-day activities,
- international studies and evaluations (by rating agencies, for instance) of social developments and trends, and
- information gained attending conferences on social issues and trends.

In order to determine the importance of the social issues identified on the basis of these sources, we first drew up a long list of social issues. We then held several sessions to rate these issues on the basis of their relevance for stakeholders and their impact on the Rabobank Group. Finally, the issues were entered in a matrix in which the vertical axis

Relevance to stakeholders	7	3	1
	8	4	2
	9	6	5
	Financial literacy, duty of care, debt rescheduling for private customers	Complaints handling, local communities, human rights, biodiversity, animal welfare	Diversity policy, carbon reduction, sustainable innovation
	Relevance to Rabobank Group		

Note:

This matrix serves illustrative purposes only. Accordingly, it does not provide a full picture of the most important issues.

represents relevance for stakeholders and the horizontal axis represents relevance for the Rabobank Group (Box 1 indicating the highest relevance, and Box 9 the lowest). A gap analysis was also performed when the issues were placed in the matrix. All the issues in Boxes 1 to 4 are covered in the annual sustainability report in any event, while issues in the other boxes are reported on where we consider this would be useful, depending on the nature of the issue and any exceptional significance the issue may have for stakeholders or the Rabobank Group.