

# Preface

The importance of logistics has increased enormously leveraged by technically effective and relatively low cost means of transport. As a severe consequence this development has led to tremendously increased traffic volumes, which have risen even faster than economic growth in recent decades. The decoupling of this trend has been a major aim of the European Union (EU) policy, and has been controversially discussed in the professional world. In order to get a better understanding of the interrelation between economically driven logistics decisions of single companies and the resulting transportation development, the European Commission (EC) supported a number of research projects concerning these issues. As a result, considerable findings and useful advice have been produced in these projects, which unfortunately were not always made explicit to a wider professional audience. However, to achieve the EC's political objectives with regard to sustainable economic development, these findings must be transferred and translated into the daily operations of (industrial) shippers and logistics service providers. Therefore, a project called bestLog (<http://www.bestlog.org>) was initiated in 2005/2006 consisting of nine partners from different European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom). Amongst others, one major goal of bestLog is the promotion and dissemination of logistics best practice into the professional community of logisticians and supply chain managers. This has been done by multiple means, including dedicated meetings, workshops, and conferences. Through such events the topic of sustainability in logistics and transportation, i.e. solutions which are economically, socially and environmentally favourable, became more and more evident.

Constituting one major part of the bestLog activities, this textbook about Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SCM) was written, to present and summarise the specific insights and experiences of the bestLog project and to reproduce this knowledge in a structured, comprehensive and accessible manner. Though all contributors have a strong academic background, this book intentionally does not aim to be overly scientific. Instead, it is written for professionals and trainers striving for logistics and supply chain management know-how from practice.

In order to integrate as much conceptual knowledge and practical experience as possible into this book we divided this book into four sections:

The first part of this volume (Part I) deals with the fundamental need for sustainable SCM in the light of changing customer demands and the current developments in logistics and transportation.

The second part (Part II) takes on the need for sustainable SCM and provides different levers and areas of action for sustainable SCM. These areas are derived from the specific experiences of the bestLog project and structured in order to tackle certain areas of sustainable SCM. In order to make the insights as explicit as possible, we integrated little illustrative hints in boxes within the text. Those hints are derived from the real world bestLog-cases.

Part III provides an outlook on future developments in Supply Chains.

Part IV then closes the book with the case studies used for illustration in Part II. The listing of the cases follows a certain structure in order to provide a quick overview and allow the interested reader to quickly elect the right case for their needs.

Of course, the completion and publishing of this book would not have been possible without the assistance and contribution of many people. First of all we thank the entire bestLog-team for four years of intense work and “sustainable” progress. Also we would like to thank representatives of companies and institutions which supported our work providing data for case studies and shared their experience during project workshops and conferences. Furthermore we thank the reviewers who supported us with expertise and by submitting valuable recommendations to the authors. Here we especially thank the members of the Advisory and Communications Board of bestLog with their fruitful contributions and input (Please see the following table for the names and institutions). Additionally, we thank Springer for being such a supportive publisher. For their administrative and secretarial support, we additionally thank Maria Horn, Manuel Rusch, Katrin Schuler, Marcel Tulke and Florian Wimmer. Last but not least, we would especially like to thank the European Union for their financial support of such an important project!

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Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Practical Ideas for Moving Towards Best Practice

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