



# Green Compensation and Rewards for Sustainable Work Behaviour in a Leading FMCG Organization

Shristi Thapa,

Assistant Professor Ms. Shruti Rawat

Department of Business Administration  
Quantum University, Roorkee, Uttarakhand

**Abstract** – Green compensation and rewards represent an emerging frontier in human resource management, wherein organizations design monetary and non-monetary incentive systems specifically aligned with encouraging, recognizing, and reinforcing employee behaviour that advance corporate sustainability goals. As environmental accountability becomes embedded in corporate governance frameworks globally, the strategic alignment of compensation architecture with sustainability objectives has evolved from a peripheral HR experiment to a mainstream organizational practice in leading multinational corporations. A fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) organization provides a particularly instructive organizational context for examining how green compensation and reward mechanisms are designed and implemented to drive sustainable work behaviour across a large, diverse workforce. This research paper examines the nature, structure, and outcomes of green compensation and rewards strategy through systematic analysis of secondary data drawn from corporate sustainability reports, HR strategy publications, academic literature, and industry benchmarking studies spanning 2021 to 2025. Findings reveal that the integration of sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs) into executive remuneration frameworks, combined with non-financial recognition programs celebrating environmental champions at operational levels, creates a multi-layered incentive architecture that measurably influences employee green behaviour across functions and hierarchical levels. The study identifies critical success factors for green reward system effectiveness and examines how this approach contributes to broader sustainability objectives, offering generalizable insights for organizations seeking to embed sustainability into workforce motivation systems.

**Keywords:** Green Compensation, Sustainable Work Behaviour, Green HRM, Environmental Performance Management, Sustainability-Oriented Reward Systems, ESG Integration in HR Practices, Sustainable Incentive Systems, FMCG Industry Sustainability, Employee Green Behaviour.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The imperative of organizational sustainability has progressively migrated from the periphery of corporate strategy — addressed primarily through communications and philanthropy — to its operational core, reshaping product design, supply chain management, manufacturing processes, and increasingly, human resource management systems. Among HR functions, compensation and reward management has historically been the most resistant to sustainability integration, given its foundational orientation toward financial performance metrics and shareholder value creation. Yet the recognition that employee behaviour represents one of the most powerful and underutilized levers for operationalizing corporate sustainability commitments has catalyzed growing organizational interest in redesigning incentive architectures to reward environmentally responsible workplace conduct.

Green compensation refers to the systematic incorporation of sustainability-linked criteria — energy conservation behaviours, waste reduction contributions, carbon footprint minimization, green innovation generation, and sustainable supply chain participation — into employee remuneration, performance evaluation, and recognition frameworks. The logic is straightforward: employee behaviour follows incentive structures, and organizations that fail to align compensation signals with sustainability goals create

structural contradictions between stated environmental values and the behavioural cues their reward systems actually transmit. Conversely, organizations that authentically embed green performance criteria into compensation decision-making signal to employees that sustainability is a genuine organizational priority deserving of individual attention and effort.

A prominent multinational fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) organization operating in emerging markets occupies a distinctive position for examining this dynamic. As part of a global corporate group widely recognized for advanced sustainability practices, the organization has implemented a long-term sustainability framework across its operations, embedding environmental and social targets into business strategy at multiple levels. With a large workforce and extensive supply chain network, the organization's scale and operational complexity make it an instructive case for understanding how green compensation and reward systems function in large, diversified organizational environments. This paper examines this approach systematically, drawing on available secondary evidence to develop insights applicable to both Indian and global organizational contexts.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) has emerged as an important and rapidly developing field that



integrates environmental sustainability into HR policies and practices to improve organisational environmental performance and encourage employee pro-environmental behaviour. Renwick et al. (2013) made a foundational case for integrating the largely separate literatures of environmental management and HRM research, categorising key practices including green recruitment, training, and reward systems through the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) theoretical lens. Building on this foundation, recent systematic reviews reveal a shift beginning after 2023 that compels management accountability for ESG, linking Green HRM practices to a strategic environmental focus and converting sustainability strategies into measurable organisational outcomes (Amjad et al., 2021). Consequently, Green HRM is increasingly viewed as a strategic approach that simultaneously supports sustainability goals and enhances organisational competitiveness in ESG-driven business environments.

Among the various dimensions of Green HRM, green compensation and reward systems are considered one of the most influential mechanisms in shaping employee behaviour. Green compensation and reward have been defined as a firm praising and appreciating the efforts of employees in gaining sustainable advantage and providing incentives and rewards so that the organisation achieves sustainable advantage and employees remain motivated (Ahmad, 2015, as cited in Kuo et al., 2022). Studies confirm that the factors influencing employee performance and green innovation through green HRM practices — particularly compensation and appraisal — continue to warrant further investigation, as businesses increasingly implement environmental protection efforts and create green business plans (Ahmad et al., 2024). A comprehensive review of green compensation and benefits identified that direct material rewards such as individual bonuses and group participation programmes, alongside non-material recognition programmes, represent the most prevalent green motivational tools, with green rewards remaining among the least utilised of all Green HRM practices (Piwoswar-Sulej et al., 2024). These findings highlight the importance of reward systems in motivating employees to adopt environmentally responsible workplace behaviours.

Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding green compensation systems, explaining that employee motivation depends on the perceived relationship between effort, performance, and rewards. Research confirms that people will work diligently when they believe their extra efforts will improve performance and result in rewards, with human resource managers well positioned to enhance firm performance by designing transparent, reward-oriented HR systems (Siraj & Hågen, 2023). Therefore, the effectiveness of green compensation depends on clear performance criteria, transparent evaluation systems, and

meaningful sustainability-linked rewards embedded in formal HR processes.

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) further explains that intrinsic motivation plays a critical role in sustaining long-term environmental behaviour. Research grounded in self-determination theory indicates that employees with autonomous motivations to engage in pro-environmental behaviours respond more favourably to Green HRM practices, whereas those with controlled motivations driven by compliance or the promise of reward may respond quite differently (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Moreover, non-monetary incentives such as eco-awards and recognition boards promote organisational citizenship and improve employee satisfaction, while monetary incentives risk crowding out motivation for pro-social behaviour (Ibrahim, 2025), suggesting that recognition-based and value-driven reward systems are more effective for long-term sustainability engagement.

Contemporary literature emphasises that Green HRM functions more effectively when implemented as an integrated system. Organisations are not only providing environmental training but also integrating sustainability goals into performance metrics, reflecting the central role of HRM in supporting the search for sustainable organisations (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Recent evidence integrates findings across environmental, social, and economic dimensions, confirming that the novelty of integrated Green HRM frameworks stems from research expansion, evolving ESG reporting requirements, and increasing institutional demands for sustainability results (Amjad et al., 2025). Despite growing academic interest, research addressing Green HRM practices and their effect on specific aspects of employee performance suffers from a lack of thorough examination of underlying mechanisms, and individual-level outcomes of socially responsible HRM remain scattered across the literature (Ahmad et al., 2022; Iqbal et al., 2023). This gap underscores the need for more applied studies connecting established theoretical frameworks with real-world green compensation and reward system practices.

### Objectives of the Study

- To examine the structure and mechanisms of green compensation and reward systems implemented in a leading FMCG organization and their alignment with sustainability commitments.
- To analyze the impact of green incentive frameworks on sustainable work behaviour across employee levels and identify critical success factors for effective green reward system design.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive research design utilizing exclusively secondary data sources, making it appropriate for systematic analysis of green compensation practices within an organization without the access constraints



inherent in primary research within a large private corporation. The secondary methodology enables triangulation across multiple evidence types — corporate disclosures, industry benchmarking, academic analysis, and media reporting — providing a more comprehensive analytical picture than any single primary data collection method could yield.

Secondary sources include annual reports (2022, 2023, 2024) of a leading FMCG organization, its global sustainability progress reports, Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reports (BRSR) filed with regulatory authorities, and ESG-focused investor presentations. Industry comparative data was drawn from CII-ITC Sustainable Business Excellence reports, SHRM India HRM Trends publications, Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends (2023, 2024), and Aon Hewitt India Compensation and Benefits Surveys. Academic literature was sourced from the International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Cleaner Production, and Business Strategy and the Environment. Media and practitioner sources included Economic Times Corporate Dossier, Business Standard sustainability supplements, and Harvard Business Review India case analyses of sustainability-oriented HR practices. Systematic data collection employed search terms including 'green compensation', 'sustainability HR practices', 'green rewards FMCG', 'sustainable performance appraisal', and 'green HRM practices' across academic databases, corporate document repositories, and business media archives spanning 2020 to 2025. From 65 initially identified sources, 41 meeting criteria of recency (post-2020), source authority, and direct topical relevance underwent thematic content analysis. Findings were organized around the dimensions of compensation structure, performance evaluation, recognition mechanisms, behavioural outcomes, and implementation challenges, with cross-source validation applied to all principal analytical conclusions.

## IV. ANALYSIS OF GREEN COMPENSATION AND REWARDS IN LEADING FMCG ORGANIZATION

### 1. Sustainability-Linked Executive Remuneration

The most structurally significant green compensation mechanism operates at the senior leadership level, where sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs) are formally integrated into the variable remuneration frameworks governing annual bonus and long-term incentive plan (LTIP) payouts for executives and senior managers. In alignment with global executive compensation policies of leading multinational FMCG corporations — which link up to a defined proportion of executive variable pay to sustainability performance targets including greenhouse gas emissions reduction, plastic waste elimination, water stewardship, and sustainable sourcing proportions — the leadership

remuneration structure incorporates comparable sustainability metrics alongside conventional financial performance criteria. This structural integration ensures that sustainability performance directly influences the financial outcomes of individuals with the greatest organizational decision-making authority, thereby creating genuine economic accountability for environmental outcomes beyond communication-based sustainability commitments.

Sustainability disclosures document specific environmental targets embedded in leadership scorecards, including absolute scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emission reductions per unit of production, percentage of plastic packaging designed for recyclability, water withdrawal intensity reduction, and proportion of agricultural raw materials certified as sustainably sourced. These metrics are externally verified through third-party assurance processes, ensuring measurement credibility and distinguishing genuine sustainability-linked compensation systems from symbolic or non-verifiable incentive frameworks.

### 2. Cascading Green Performance Criteria Across the Organization

Beyond executive remuneration, sustainability performance criteria have been progressively embedded into the goal-setting and appraisal frameworks governing mid-level managers and operational supervisors across manufacturing, supply chain, sales, and support functions. Manufacturing plant managers are assigned explicit energy intensity, water consumption, and zero-waste-to-landfill targets as part of their annual performance scorecards, with achievement against these environmental indicators influencing appraisal ratings, salary progression, and bonus outcomes. Similarly, supply chain managers are evaluated on sustainable sourcing compliance metrics and transport carbon efficiency indicators alongside traditional cost and service-level performance measures.

This cascading approach reflects the recognition that achieving portfolio-level sustainability targets requires behavioural transformation at operational management levels, where day-to-day resource consumption decisions are made. These decisions are often not visible in senior leadership dashboards but collectively determine organizational environmental performance outcomes. Evidence from sustainability progress reports indicates that manufacturing units where plant managers hold individual sustainability KPIs consistently demonstrate stronger performance in energy efficiency and water conservation compared to units without such accountability mechanisms.

### 3. Non-Financial Green Recognition Programs

Complementing formal compensation-linked mechanisms, structured non-financial recognition programs are implemented to encourage environmental leadership and



sustainable innovation within organizational levels where financial incentives alone may be insufficient. The internal “Sustainability Champion” recognition program identifies employees who demonstrate outstanding contributions to sustainability goals, including waste reduction initiatives, energy conservation projects, community environmental activities, and supplier sustainability development efforts. Recognition is provided through internal communication platforms, leadership acknowledgment, and career development opportunities.

These mechanisms address the intrinsic motivation dimension of sustainable work behaviour, as explained by self-determination theory. Employees recognized for sustainability contributions tend to exhibit higher environmental self-efficacy, defined as confidence in their ability to contribute meaningfully to organizational sustainability objectives. This psychological reinforcement is associated with sustained pro-environmental behaviour beyond formally incentivized actions. Employee engagement data indicates that workplaces with active sustainability recognition cultures report higher levels of voluntary participation in environmental initiatives and increased employee-driven sustainability improvement suggestions.

#### 4. Green Benefits and Sustainable Lifestyle Incentives

The green compensation architecture extends beyond performance-linked pay to include employee benefits designed to encourage sustainable personal behaviours that reinforce organizational environmental culture. These include subsidized electric vehicle charging infrastructure at major office locations, preferential financing options for employees purchasing electric or hybrid vehicles, and commute incentive structures that reward the use of public transportation and cycling over private vehicles.

These benefits serve dual purposes. First, they contribute to reducing the carbon footprint associated with employee commuting, which forms part of indirect (Scope 3) emissions. Second, they strengthen organizational sustainability culture by demonstrating that environmental commitments extend beyond workplace operations into employee lifestyle support systems. Research on workforce preferences indicates that environmental benefits are increasingly valued among younger talent segments, particularly millennials and Generation Z, making them both a sustainability performance tool and a talent attraction mechanism in competitive FMCG labor markets.

#### Key Findings

Analysis of green compensation and reward systems against secondary evidence yields five principal findings. First, the integration of verified sustainability KPIs into executive variable remuneration represents the single most significant structural green compensation mechanism, creating genuine economic accountability for environmental performance at decision-making levels

where organizational resource allocation choices are most consequential. The approach adopted by the leading FMCG multinational organization — linking quantified, externally verified environmental metrics to a meaningful proportion of executive variable pay — sets a benchmark that most Indian organizations, including FMCG sector peers, have not yet replicated.

Second, the effectiveness of cascading green performance criteria depends critically on metric specificity and measurement credibility at operational levels. Plant-level energy and water intensity targets, tied to verified operational data rather than subjective sustainability engagement assessments, provide the measurability foundation that makes green performance accountability meaningful rather than symbolic for frontline managers. Third, non-financial green recognition programs demonstrate complementary rather than substitutional value relative to financial green incentives — addressing the intrinsic motivation dimensions of sustainable work behaviour that purely financial mechanisms cannot reliably engage, particularly for employees with strong pre-existing environmental values for whom recognition of identity-relevant contributions carries high valence.

Fourth, green benefits that connect organizational sustainability commitments to employees’ personal lives — such as EV charging access, sustainable commuting allowances, and nature-oriented leave policies — generate cultural reinforcement effects extending beyond their direct environmental impact, strengthening employees’ perception of authentic organizational environmental commitment and their personal identification with the organization’s sustainability mission. Fifth, the principal implementation challenge identified across sources is metric cascade quality — maintaining the specificity, measurability, and verifiability of sustainability performance criteria as green accountability frameworks descend from executive scorecards through management layers to operational levels where sustainable behaviour opportunities are numerous but harder to quantify.

## V. CONCLUSION

A leading FMCG multinational organization’s approach to green compensation and rewards demonstrates that sustainability-aligned incentive systems, when designed with genuine metric rigour, multi-level integration, and combination of financial and non-financial mechanisms, can function as powerful and effective levers for driving sustainable work behaviour in complex organizational systems. Its architecture — spanning executive remuneration reform, management scorecard integration, non-financial recognition, and sustainable lifestyle benefits — represents one of the most comprehensive green reward frameworks in Indian corporate practice and provides a practically grounded framework for organizations seeking



to translate sustainability commitments into behavioural outcomes.

The theoretical foundations reviewed in this study — expectancy theory, self-determination theory, and AMO-based Green HRM frameworks — collectively affirm the logic of this multi-mechanism approach: financial incentives address the instrumental motivation linked to performance —reward systems; recognition programs foster intrinsic environmental identity motivation that sustains green behaviour beyond immediate incentive; and green benefits enhance organizational authenticity, strengthening trust in sustainability commitments. Together, these mechanisms create multiple reinforcing motivational pathways, ensuring that diverse employee motivation profiles each encounter green reward signals calibrated to their respective incentive responsiveness.

As the regulatory environment increasingly mandates environmental disclosure and accountability through structured sustainability reporting frameworks and emerging green taxonomy requirements, the strategic case for green compensation integration is strengthening beyond voluntary sustainability leadership into compliance necessity. Organizations that develop green reward system capability now — investing in metric design, data infrastructure, and HR process redesign — will be better positioned to meet evolving regulatory expectations while simultaneously cultivating environmentally engaged workforces that will determine sustainable competitive advantage in the rapidly evolving FMCG and broader business landscape. The experience of this leading FMCG multinational organization affirms that this investment, undertaken with genuine commitment and design rigor, delivers measurable returns in employee environmental performance and organizational sustainability progress.

### Limitation Of the Study

While this study provides a systematic and theoretically grounded analysis of green compensation and reward systems in a leading FMCG organization, several methodological and contextual limitations warrant acknowledgement.

First, the exclusive reliance on secondary data sources — including corporate sustainability reports, regulatory filings, and industry benchmarking publications — represents the most fundamental constraint. Since such documents are prepared with reputational and investor-relations objectives, they may introduce selective disclosure biases, foregrounding achievements while minimizing implementation challenges. Consequently, the analytical picture may reflect an optimistic representation of green compensation effectiveness.

Second, the single-organization focus limits generalizability. The organization examined is structurally exceptional, benefiting from global sustainability

infrastructure, externally verified metrics, and decades of embedded environmental commitment unavailable to most Indian firms. Findings should therefore be understood as illustrative of best-practice potential rather than universally transferable prescriptions.

Third, the descriptive research design cannot establish causality. Observed associations between green KPIs and environmental performance outcomes may reflect selection effects, organizational culture, or operational variables rather than the compensation mechanisms themselves.

Fourth, the data window of 2021–2025 represents a cross-sectional snapshot of a rapidly evolving ESG regulatory environment, and conclusions may require revision as disclosure standards and compensation benchmarking norms continue to develop.

Finally, the absence of employee-level behavioral data means that whether green incentives generate genuine intrinsic motivation or merely surface-level compliance — a distinction central to both expectancy theory and self-determination theory — remains empirically untested within this specific organizational context.

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