# JUST CULTURE concept

## Member Company

Aperam

## Category

Workplace improvement
Accident analysis and countermeasure development
Safety training and/or skills development to reduce the number of safety incidents
Introduction or enhancement of behavioural safety approaches

## The Challenge

As part of our project to develop the maturity of the Aperam H&S culture, the results of the analysis conducted in 2019-2020 on almost all Aperam sites showed a lack of confidence in Aperam's Fair Play policy: not fair and not clear enough in its application.

But to become a true learning organization we need to learn from our mistakes, that means If we want to progress in safety we need an environment in which individuals feel free to point out their mistakes.

## Why?

We needed to make a fundamental change in our way of treating accidents. In our complex working world, quick decisions are increasingly important. Mistakes are part of everyday work and can rarely be completely avoided. It is crucial to deal with mistakes in a constructive way, which allows the whole organisation to learn quickly. People are less willing to inform the organisation about their own errors and other safety problems or hazards if they are afraid of being punished or prosecuted. Such lack of trust of employees prevents the management from being properly informed of the actual risks. Managers are then unable to make the right decisions in order to improve safety.

But it is also crucial not to accept any deliberate infringement of the rules.

The aim of this revised concept, which we have decided to call the "Aperam Fundamental Standard JUST CULTURE", is to provide a response to improve one of the biggest weaknesses revealed in the survey of our health and safety culture.

This new standard, based on an analysis of human factors, is a guideline to provide sites with a common definition, an understanding of human behaviour and a common methodology for the decision making process.

The application of the Just Culture Standard is intended to ensure a rapid and appropriate response to good/positive individual behaviour and, in return, to correct bad/negative individual behaviour, all in a fair and transparent manner.

The aim is to value the positive more, to have a culture where the positive

consequences outnumber the negative.

The aim is to ensure that people are treated fairly, without blaming and punishing them hastily - but remaining strict and clear about unacceptable behaviour - by providing a consistent impartial and objective approach when analysing events.

For each event (accident with or without stoppage, first aid, incident, dangerous situation), for which it is clear that the behavioral component is predominant, we ask to carry out a more detailed analysis before taking any personal consequences!

We take care of a qualitative investigation including an analysis of the human failure that led to the accident. This to better understand what are the latent conditions, the weaknesses, in our organization.
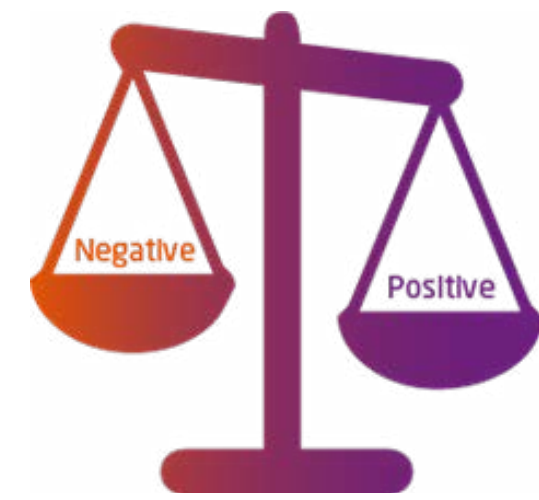
The treatment of positive aspects should be given more weight than the treatment of negative aspects - at least 4 times more.

It is important to have a clear procedure for deciding how a breach of the rules should be dealt with depending on the type of behaviour: is it an error of action, an error of understanding or a deliberate violation, and if so for what reasons? The appropriate measures may then vary from coaching to discipline.

Treating people fairly, not rushing to blame and punish, and taking into account the actual circumstances in which staff find themselves, encourages them to be more open and proactive in reporting hazards.

## Needed Action

The first step was the H&S cultural maturity evaluation and its analysis.

Then we looked how other companies treat the issue of human failure and look for literature. We found the Model for a Just and Fair Culture from Patrick Hudson immediately appealing. The Just culture philosophy is already used in a considerable number of high reliability organisations such as the oil and gas industries, airlines and hospitals.

We defined our new standard in collaboration with the worker representatives. We called it the "Aperam Fundamental Standard JUST CULTURE"

We shared the principles with our Top Management and gave them a training on Human Behaviour. Then we gave training to the Site Managers.

In parallel, training at various levels has been launched. The "Just Culture" philosophy and the understanding of human behavior are core parts of the "Safe - Me with my team" leadership training, given at all sites to operational managers and supervisors. This 20 hours training has been created for the specific needs of Aperam and translated in 10 languages. It includes workshops and discussion. Today nearly 600 people took part to this training.

For the analysis of safety incidents, a new common Root Cause Analysis tool has been created, taking into account the human factor. This tool has been broadly shared in the Health and Safety network and training has been given. This tool has been developed in consultation with the corporate team of Environmental & Industrial Risk Management, to ensure compatibility with the needs arising from the analysis of such events too.

A part of that an E-Learning on Human behaviour and the main principles of our JUST CULTURE standard has been developed, as well as a complementary training on the practical application of the Root Cause Analysis principles and tool.

A 3 days training dedicated to blue collars has been created. At the moment the future moderators are trained.
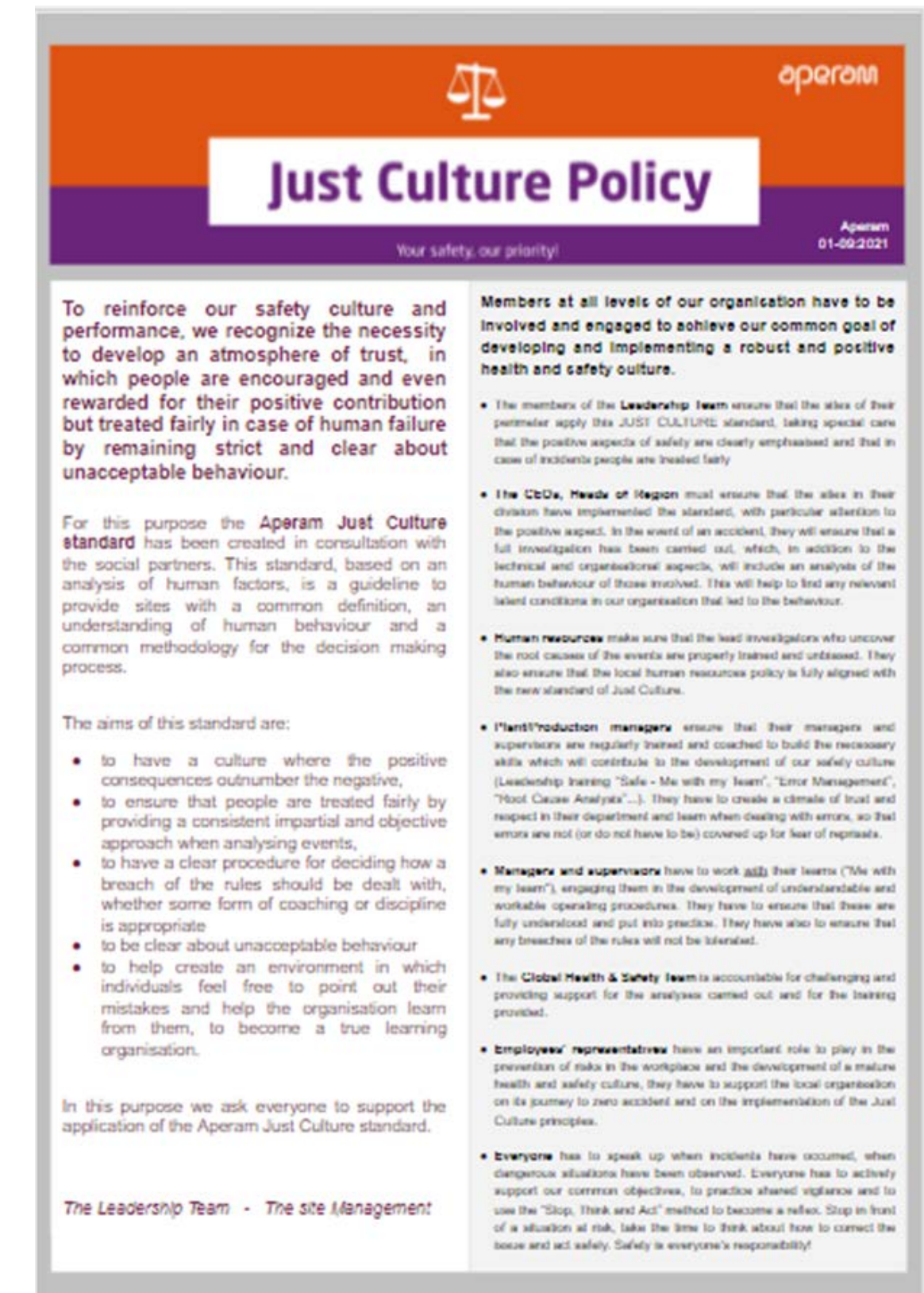
## What is Just Culture?

*"A Just Culture is an atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged (even rewarded) for providing essential safety-related information, but in which they are also clear about where the line must be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour."*

*Professor James Reason, 1997*
Professor of Psychology, world-renowned researcher on human error

By implementing these principles we become a true **learning organisation**, knowing its risks better and implementing effective measures. This will greatly help us on our **journey to zero accidents**.

Start



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Is this an example of Just Culture?

Yes    No

When an accident occurs, the manager first determines what caused the incident rather than blaming the person who caused it.

## Roles and responsibilities

Members at all levels of our organisation have to be involved and engaged to achieve our common goal of developing and implementing a **robust and positive health and safety culture**.



Find out **which roles are involved** in developing and implementing a positive health and safety culture.

worldstainless

BACK    ?

**The 4-Step approach of the concept**

In our complex working world, quick decisions are inevitable. Errors are part of everyday work and can rarely be completely avoided. It is crucial to **deal with errors constructively**, which enables the entire organization to learn quickly. The focus is on **root cause analysis**: What exactly happened? What caused the error? How can it be **prevented** in the future?



**Step 1**
Classify the behaviour

**Step 2**
Check whether it is a routine error or violation

**Step 3**
Identify effective interventions

**Step 4**
Determine accountability

**Step 1 : Understanding human failure and behaviour classification**

In the previous chapter, we have seen examples on how behaviour below expectation is classified. This graph summarizes the categories.

Click on the + signs to see what a person would typically be thinking once the error or mistake has taken place.
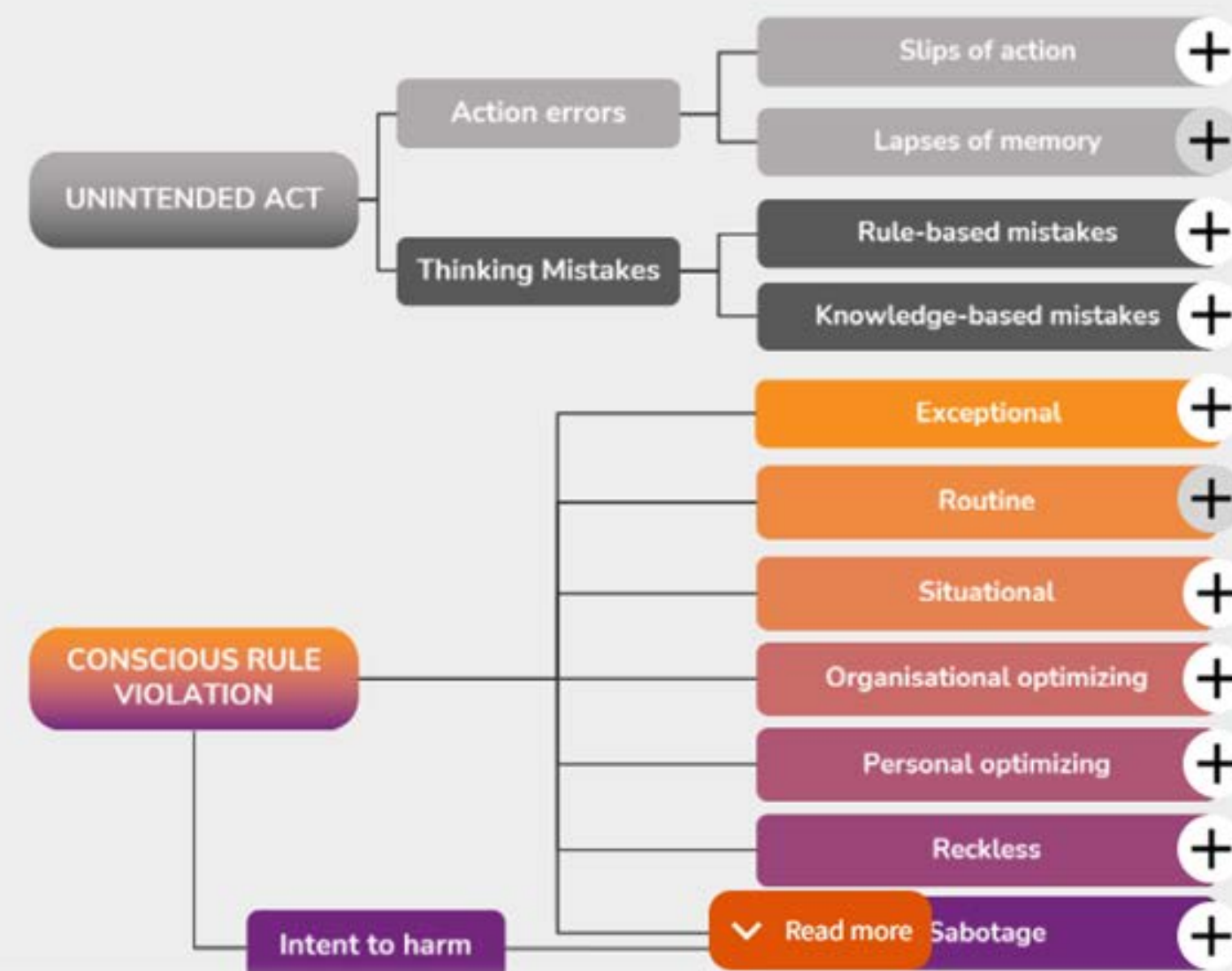
## Action Review

**Specific;** standard and training specific to the needs of Aperam, defined after the cultural assessment.

**Measurable;** nearly 600 operational managers and supervisors have been already trained. About 400 persons will get the training until the end of the year.

**Achievable;** The new standard has been validated by the Top management and the Aperam's European Health and Safety Commission*

(*a body in which workers' and employers' representatives are brought together to work on health and safety issues at European level).

**Realistic;** The Just Culture principles are in practice in other industries.

**Time-bound;** The implementation is immediate, the change of culture will take some time

## Horizontal Expansion Capability

The principles of Just Culture can be expanded to all activities where you can have human failure (Quality, sales department, environment incidents, etc.)

## Outcome

- Satisfaction of staff representatives with the system's correctness in the face of human error

- Satisfaction of employees who no longer have to be afraid of making honest mistakes and who know clearly where the line is between a mistake and an intolerable violation.

- Satisfaction of the company which, through the right culture and the analysis of human behaviour, reveals the weaknesses of its system and can thus more easily put in place the appropriate measures to avoid a repetition of an incident.