

Study on Corporate Social Responsibility Activities regarding Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Romania (2017-2018)

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Abstract:

This article is meant to be an insight into the acceptance and implementation of CSR by Romanian SMEs, which is generally underestimated and poorly acknowledged, due to the fact that the internal organization of SMEs is largely informal and is mainly carried out under local or regional conditions. Social responsibility can not be seen only as a response to problems that appear during the company's development. Unless the company includes ethical concerns in its business strategy, social responsibility as a concept can not be integrated into its daily decision-making. That is why business strategy determines how the company uses the human and financial resources at its disposal to achieve its goals, and the value system of companies and stakeholders will have a profound effect on development. Measuring and evaluating CSR will not be an easy task for SMEs that do not have highly developed and reliable internal management, measurement and reporting systems (human resources, time and financial resources) and sophisticated management information systems, as the activity is difficult even for larger companies, which in many cases have these resources. In order to help companies, whether multinationals or SMEs, overcome these obstacles and have a clearer picture of CSR practices, in the paper we are going to present, we will provide not only part of what the questionnaire regarding socially responsible activities performed by the respondent companies in Romania showed, but our conclusions on it, as well.

Keywords: CSR; SMEs; business strategy; practices; motivations; measuring and evaluating.

JEL Classification: M14, O16

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility is a rather complex concept, developed mainly for large businesses, which is why there are voices that say it is not the most suitable term for the engagement of SMEs. Therefore, these voices prefer the term responsible entrepreneurial spirit. However, as a description, CSR has become a norm, so this is the term that we will also use.

Despite obstacles and unresolved issues with regard to measuring and evaluating CSR, companies should try their best to substantiate the invested resources, which will encourage them to continue the responsible activities from the social point of view.

Companies will be able to take advantage of the tools and systems already in place to evaluate and measure marketing activities, and will simply be able to adapt them to measure and evaluate the costs and benefits of CSR. Of course, there will be no equal sign between marketing and CSR, but there are many similarities in terms of measurement and evaluation. However, despite many common attributes and features, there is a serious problem that needs to be solved and overcome - the time problem. Usually, the costs and results of marketing campaigns and marketing activities can be allocated over a certain period of time, and when marketing effectiveness is calculated, costs and benefits will be allocated directly to that period (sometimes there will be taken into account a period of time). But corporate social responsibility activities, if they are seriously thought of, will be a long-term project without a predictable ending. In addition, socially responsible activities, in order to be efficient, will need to be embedded in a company's global strategy and in all decision-making

processes at all levels of the hierarchy. Also, many CSR activities and initiatives will take place anyway, as they save costs, and thus the exact cost allocation of CSR-related activities in time will be the least complicated.

As well as tools and systems for measuring marketing activities, companies can apply for measuring and evaluating CSR activities through benchmarking methods and methodologies, such as the questionnaire used for the thesis which was the base of this article.

1. Global context

The literature and experience of the past ten years reveals that in the context of globalization and regionalization of economies, the increase of interdependencies between states and market segmentation, the development of new economic entities (be they SMEs, transnational or multinational corporations) solely on the basis of profitability and the volume of sales will become limited and sometimes, even impossible. An internationally established notion, corporate social responsibility has become a reality for Romania, being an evolving concept and quite an important requirement for business. While there is no standard at the moment for it or a definition accepted by everyone, CSR is, in the opinion of most professionals, a highway to success and performance, much more complex and viable than the older vision of industrial capitalism or the tertialization of the economy as unique chances for economical growth.

Involvement of companies in the community life has become necessary for those that want to ensure not only economic success but also the respect of the society in which it operates. Numerous studies over the past decade, in Europe, underline the importance of responsible and sustainable corporate behavior, which is generally perceived as a way for an entity to integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their own cultural values, decisions, and activities, in a manner that is transparent and responsible. CSR is therefore a way of setting up exemplary practices to create wealth and improve the quality and sustainability of the society.

There are two distinctive features of a corporate responsibility program in the global context: firstly, CSR has a voluntary character, implying moral responsibilities assumed by companies, more than those imposed by the law; secondly, CSR involves the creation of long-term relationships with the stakeholders and with the social environment, so much more than the mere act of philanthropy or donation. Although it costs, CSR is a profitable management strategy to the extent that it generates the credibility and the long-term trust that a company needs in relation to its stakeholders, namely shareholders, business partners and customers. The European approach to CSR enables the idea of sustainable development for businesses to be operational. In practical terms, the term social responsibility is associated with the "triple-bottom-line" concept: economic prosperity, respect for the environment, respect for and improvement of social cohesion. The development of the company, therefore, is represented by the following objectives: economic one (creation of wealth for all, based on sustainable production and consumption patterns), another (conservation and management of resources) and third, social and the participation of all social groups).

In all of history, professionals have strived for the development of a society based on ethics. In a strict sense, ethics implies respecting human values and conditions from the point of view of moral principles, so that to result in a conduct appropriate to a particular ideology. Social responsibility is, according to experts, a strong ethical approach. I believe that ethical aspects should characterize the whole of human activities by promoting moral conduct rules that target all parties involved in a business: investors, buyers, sellers, manufacturers, managers, employees, or civil society, where is the case. Corporate Social Responsibility does not just mean debt to the company. Orientation of part of the company's profit to human resources, economic assets, social capital or goodwill can create a sustainable form of capital.

Founded on compliance with legislation and regulations, corporate social responsibility embraces numerous engagements and activities that have to respond, as has been shown, to legal requirements in many areas.

2. Literature review

Most studies have identified a definite, not always directly proportional relationship between CSR activities and the company's performance, measured through specific indicators such as turnover, profit, earnings per share, or marketing impact.

In the opinion of most specialists, the economic justification of CSR differs from case to case, depending on various factors: company size, activities, product or service offerings, location, leadership, reputation, suppliers or the importance of the industry. There is a strong consensus between social responsibility and the success of an enterprise. It is statistically noted that those companies that do not involve in their activities social and ecological considerations can not remain competitive; it is necessary to continuously adapt the strategic

measures to the requirements of the market and of society, and the new stakes of mankind must become key factors of success in a world of interdependencies and the struggle for supremacy.

“The World Business Council of Sustainable Development” has highlighted the fact that a coherent CSR strategy based on integrity, solid values and a long-term approach gives businesses significant business advantages and contributes to the welfare of civil society. The objective of any economic organization needs to be redefined, not just a purely economic one for individual profit, but an economic, social and environmental one that militates for the public good. Worldwide, CSR has already become part of everyday businesses. Internationally renowned companies invest in this kind of social programs important business weights. Budgets allocated by organizations to develop partnerships with the community often reach odds that seem, at first sight, to be unrealistic. However, these amounts represent, in the view of the managers of the companies involved, a safe investment with significant business results.

As expectations of CSR policies have become brought into the spotlight, convergence of concepts, tools and practices can lead to greater transparency without crippling innovation and initiative to benefit all players. Certain market-oriented initiatives have begun to appear and converge towards transparency in this area and EU countries, including Romania, have promoted initiatives in line with their own EU-color approach to CSR.

Responsibility is reflected in company, collective and individual, recognition and remuneration performance targets. It is necessary to prepare people to integrate business responsibility into the ordinary life, in order to achieve the CSR performance and objectives at all levels and in all the activities of the companies.

We note that the core principles of CSR are integrated into the main policy objectives of different economies and companies at a global level, and they also move beyond their individual business initiatives. For European companies, the “European Commission’s Green Paper on Promoting a CSR framework” and the “European Code of Conduct on the activities of transnational corporations activities in developing economies” are two instruments that guide them when integrating CSR principles into their own core policies.

Although there are not a lot of studies on CSR in Romania we have focused our efforts on the literature that was most relevant to our study. Previous studies have used various measuring methods to determine the disclosure of CSR information ranging from simple methods such as the number of words in CSR reports to standardized GRI guidelines or other internationally recognized guidelines.

A study titled CSR Trends and Realities in Romania made by CSR Media.ro together with EY Romania for the first time in 2013 and having annual editions by 2016, reveals a 21% increase in the interest of Romanian companies in involving, in CSR in that period, from 67% to 88%. Also, the study called The dynamics and the prospects for CSR in Romania, conducted by the same CSR Media.ro but this time together with Valoria 2017, which had two editions, namely 2017 and 2018, reveals some differences, regarding these years, in the motivations behind the implementation of CSR in the interviewed companies, namely: 86% of respondents defined social responsibility as involvement in the community in 2017, compared with 78% in 2018; 57% of respondents defined social responsibility as community involvement in 2017 compared to 55% in 2018; 75% of companies targeted education for intervention and support, surpassing the social field in 2017 compared with 65% in 2018; 67% of respondents said they involve their employees in corporate CSR actions in 2017, compared with 79% in 2018, and finally 38% of companies considered it most likely to develop a CSR or sustainable development report in the coming period, compared with 43% in 2018.

Concluding, the movement towards a sustainable development has led to increased pressure from different stakeholders to report on CSR. As a result, over the last few years, companies have been invited to improve transparency in CSR performance reporting.

Also, from the above-mentioned studies compared to 2014 (which was the weakest year in this aspect in Romania) when companies deployed an average of 8.7 projects on CSR, an average that was decreasing compared to what was declared in 2013 by 36% (13.7 projects), in 2017 companies carried out an average of 12.9 CSR projects. From this we can conclude that there is an increase in the number of projects compared to the incipient years of CSR in Romania, but there is still a very long way to reach the European average in this field. We also believe that Romania does not have a culture yet in terms of CSR, but it is on the right track to understanding the concept.

Our research can be considered as a novel way of research because we are among the few independent studies who had no sponsors, so research has been done strictly from an academic point of view and we have not pursued any interest other than that of finding a reality in a certain area at a certain point in time.

The research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Romania (SMEs), developed for the thesis that is the basis of this paper, should contribute to the knowledge of

the current state of affairs in the Romanian business sector and to encourage understanding of the developments taking place in this area.

3. Study case on corporate social responsibility activities in Romania

The CSR investigation in small and medium-sized companies, which was conducted for the purpose of the thesis which is the base for this article, took place between June 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018 and was based on a random sample of SMEs in Romania that aimed at the proportional representation of micro, small and medium enterprises in the national sample, based on the following specifications: number of employees, company age, registered office, number of employees and the period the business was running for, which no more than 10 years.

For a better understanding of the study by readers, we will mention here that since 1998, Romania has been divided into seven administrative regions and the capital Bucharest. In the author's opinion, this type of segmentation provides both the regional perspective and the assurance of a sufficient representativeness and a predilection value of the interviewed sample.

According to the author, the selected sample is sufficiently representative and appropriate to the intended purpose - which is the CSR review and analysis in SMEs.

Table 1. Number of companies participating in the survey, sorted by the region where they have their registered headquarters and the size of company (number of employees)

The region where they have their registered headquarters	Size of company (number of employees)							
	Micro		Small		Medium		Total	
1. North –East	0	0,00%	3	3,45%	0	0,00%	3	3,45%
2. South-East	1	1,15%	7	8,05%	2	2,30%	10	11,49%
3. South	0	0,00%	5	5,75%	3	3,45%	8	9,20%
4. South-West	3	3,45%	10	11,49%	3	3,45%	16	18,39%
5. West	2	2,30%	9	10,34%	6	6,90%	17	19,54%
6. North-West	0	0,00%	4	4,60%	1	1,15%	5	5,75%
7. Centrer	0	0,00%	3	3,45%	3	3,45%	6	6,90%
8. București-Ilfov	3	3,45%	11	12,64%	8	9,20%	22	25,29%
Total	9	10,34%	52	59,77%	26	29,89%	87	100,00%

Source: Based on own collected data, Study on Corporate Social Responsibility Activities regarding SMEs in Romania; Romania - 2017-2018

A total of 87 SMEs actively participated in the survey, and they were from all the seven administrative regions of Romania and from the capital, Bucharest.

The study showed that the companies that have their headquarters in the 8th development region - Bucharest - Ilfov form the largest part of the sample (25%), followed by the companies in the 5th development region – West, which are second in the survey with over 19% and the companies in the 4th development region - South – West, with a representation of over 18%.

According to the survey, a clear majority (over 50%) of the sample for SMEs is made up of companies that ranged from 4 to 9 years. These companies can be considered as mature in terms of their development stage. 28% of the sample is made up of companies with a service life of between 1 and 3 years, 13% are companies operating for 10 years or more, and only 9% are companies set up for less than one year before the study. These results could imply that out of all the companies when it comes to participating to studies, the companies with the most experience are aware of the benefits of sharing their past findings with others.

Due to the nature of the studied topic, it was desirable to find out whether foreign companies were present in the companies under review or whether some companies were part of international corporations. This is due to the fact that there are opinions suggesting that companies with foreign capital have more chances to implement CSR activities than Romanian companies.

The study revealed that 64% of the assessed SMEs were owned exclusively by Romanian owners, which is a clear majority. Companies that combine Romanian ownership with a foreign investor, but the main shareholder is Romanian, constituted 23%, 11% of the companies were owned by a majority foreign shareholders, and only 1% of the companies have an entirely foreign shareholding.

We were also interested in the distribution of the interviewed SMEs according to the field of activity they were involved in and amazingly learned that 25% of the companies belong to the construction sector. The second largest share belongs to the companies in the economic sector and the financial services sector, representing a 14% share in the sample. IT companies account for the third largest proportion of the analyzed sample, with a

share of almost 13%, and companies in the retail sector are in fourth place in the survey with an 11% share, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of companies participating in the survey, sorted by business sector and by company size (number of employees)

Business sector	Company size							
	Micro		Small		Medium		Total	
Production	3	3,45%	3	3,45%	1	1,15%	7	8,05%
Retail	3	3,45%	6	6,90%	1	1,15%	10	11,49%
Wholesale	0	0,00%	2	2,30%	5	5,75%	7	8,05%
People transportation/ tourism	0	0,00%	2	2,30%	3	3,45%	5	5,75%
Cargo transportation	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	2,30%	2	2,30%
IT	2	2,30%	6	6,90%	3	3,45%	11	12,64%
Consultancy	0	0,00%	3	3,45%	1	1,15%	4	4,60%
Research and development	0	0,00%	1	1,15%	1	1,15%	2	2,30%
Constructions	0	0,00%	18	20,69%	4	4,60%	22	25,29%
Economic and financial services	1	1,15%	6	6,90%	5	5,75%	12	13,79%
Others	0	0,00%	5	5,75%	0	0,00%	5	5,75%
Total	9	10,34%	52	59,77%	26	29,89%	87	100,00%

Source: Based on own collected data, Study on Corporate Social Responsibility Activities regarding SMEs in Romania; Romania - 2017-2018

Even though the author's CSR questionnaire has always been addressed to business executives or owners, in fact, the questionnaire was completed by people in different positions and at different levels in the company hierarchy. As the survey results, the targeted persons - managers and owners - account for only 54% of respondents (more precisely 28% managers and 26% owners).

Middle management represents 18% of respondents, while lower management and ordinary employees represent the remaining 28%. The large reaction capacity of the target group (upper management and owners) can be considered to be at this level due to the specifics of the companies. Typically, SMEs do not have bureaucracy, multi-level hierarchy, and an abundance of administrative staff, so tasks such as completing different forms remaining in the hands of the managers and owners (often the same people in SMEs).

According to our study, despite the fact that 74% of the respondents know about corporate social responsibility, only 59% of them fully agree with the fundamental principles of CSR and 25% agree only partially. The consensus on company orientation seems to be obvious - most of the participating companies are aware, in addition to their commercial role, of their responsibility towards the community in which they operate.

These results support the general view that CSR is a viable concept based on clear principles that should be adopted by companies and not just a simple and unfounded theory formed by academics. Table 3 examines whether SMEs measure and assess CSR, ie the social and environmental activities they are involved in.

Table 3. Number of companies participating in the survey, sorted by record keeping of CSR activities and by company size (number of employees)

Is there a record of CSR activities within the company?	Company size							
	Micro		Small		Medium		Total	
Yes	1	11.11%	10	19.23%	7	26.92%	18	20.69%
No	7	77.78%	38	73.08%	13	50.00%	58	66.67%
No, but we are going to keep records in the future	1	11.11%	4	7.69%	6	23.08%	11	12.64%

Source: Based on own collected data

Despite the fact that a large number of SMEs have been involved in internal and external measures of the CSR, only 21% of SMEs have evaluated their CSR activities at that time and only 13% of them are to do so future. In terms of company size ranking, medium-sized companies ranked 27%, followed by small companies by 19% and micro-enterprises by 11%.

These results demonstrated that SMEs did not consider CSR sufficiently serious and did not integrate them into their business strategies or operations, or did not have enough time, resources and know-how to measure and evaluate CSR, or both.

In accordance with the principles of modern management, and especially during the economic slowdown, management needs to receive consistent reports on all of the company's activities for them to be managed

effectively. Therefore, the CSR approach should not be different. In the author's opinion, it is very sad that SMEs do not measure and evaluate CSR activities, as CSR measurement and evaluation can:

- give an insight into what is happening, both qualitatively and quantitatively, within the company. The results can be used as inputs in a CSR report or in a study comparing the company's performance with other companies in its industry. In all these intermediate uses, RSC measurement can improve business concentration and performance;
- provide a disciplined approach that allows an SME to react to protect its reputation and is therefore a brand as society's (stakeholders) requirements change and multiply;
- help justify and allocate resources for the most effective CSR activities and eliminate inefficiencies;
- help to open new ways of thinking that can lead to new products, better marketing or wiser investments;
- allow communication of evaluation results that can strengthen relationships with stakeholders.

However, the author believes that SMEs will start to evaluate CSR activities as other investments in the future due to increased resource prices, increased external pressures, stronger competitive environment and internal pressures.

To find out exactly which of the CSR internal dimension issues are important for small and medium-sized businesses in Romania, what engages them the most and what topics they consider important, the author has offered to a series of topics in the questionnaire where companies were asked to choose the CSR topics they were involved in.

Table 4 provides an overview of the various activities within the internal dimension of small and medium-sized companies. It is sorted by company size and includes an average for all SMEs. Referring to the activities the SMEs are involved in regarding socially responsible activities and focusing on the internal dimension of CSR, the author's study shows that these activities focus mainly on four areas (areas where the average involvement was higher than 60%). Companies have shown the highest commitment in the following activities:

- health and safety at the workplace (83%);
- discussions / consultations with employees or their representatives on issues of interest to them (72%);
- discouraging any form of discrimination, both at work and during recruitment of new staff (65%); and
- existence of recruitment procedures for disabled people (64%).

Other socially responsible activities, internally accountable, have received less attention from the questioned SMEs. In particular, companies have given the lowest level of attention to employee health insurance programs. Only 2% of SMEs were not involved in any of the socially responsible internal activities, which corresponds to an average involvement of 98%.

Table 4: Percentage of SMEs involved activities regarding in the internal dimension of CSR sorted by company size (number of employees) and an average per activity

Activities implemented in the company	Company size			
	Micro	Small	Medium	Average
Employee incentives or trainings	12.00%	25.00%	41.00%	26.00%
Discouraging any form of discrimination, both at work and during the recruitment of new staff	52.00%	70.00%	74.00%	65.33%
Health and safety at the workplace	84.00%	86.00%	79.00%	83.00%
Discussions/consultations with employees or their representatives on matters of interest to them	82.00%	73.00%	62.00%	72.33%
Existence of procedures for the recruitment of people with disabilities	68.00%	60.00%	64.00%	64.00%
The existence of a flexible program within the company	24.00%	45.00%	58.00%	42.33%
Is it possible to work part-time in the company?	35.00%	32.00%	40.00%	35.67%
Is there an Internal Regulation and an Ethical Code implemented within the company?	17.00%	25.00%	40.00%	27.33%
Does the company contribute (more than legal obligations) to health insurance programs for employees?	0.00%	15.00%	48.00%	21.00%
Are there more free days specified in labor contracts than those that are mandatory under the Labor Code?	22.00%	73.00%	48.00%	47.67%
None of the above are implemented within the company	0.00%	7.00%	0.00%	2.33%

Source: Based on own collected data

Concluding the results of the survey, the reason why the four CSR internal activities mentioned above had the best ratings is either that they bring the company a competitive advantage to attract and retain qualified employees, or can bring the company the most benefits (both from a financial point of view and from the company's reputation point of view).

The most likely explanation for why small and medium-sized companies have given a lower level of attention to the development and implementation of the Company's Code of Conduct is that SMEs can consider developing a Company Ethics Code as an example typical of bureaucracy for which they have no time and resources available. Moreover, they are often considered themselves to be ethical and, therefore believe that transposing something in writing is a waste of time.

According to the author's opinion, it is a pity that such a low percentage of SMEs have a Company Ethics Code, as it can also positively influence their competitiveness. The Code of Ethics should be considered a constitution of the company, the cornerstone of its values on which future developments can be built. The Code of Ethics should serve as a guideline for the daily professional conduct of employees and its objective is to support standards of behavior and law and order, on the one hand, and to inform the public about the behavior they may require to the company employee on the other hand.

Corporate social responsibility also extends beyond the company's doors to the local community and involves a wide range of stakeholders including employees and shareholders: business partners and suppliers, customers, public authorities, and non-profit organizations representing local communities as well as the environment.

The view that companies have a profound interest in developing strong, healthy, secure, sustainable and wealthy communities has increasingly gained ground. Corporate social responsibility is now considered to be central to business strategy and long-term success and should be closely aligned with business mission, values and practices.

On average, the most common involvement (76% of all SMEs) in a wide range of CSR external dimension activities was to provide financial or non-financial support to non-profit organizations. The CSR Media 2017 survey has reached the same result, which reinforces the validity of the author's results.

The second and third types of involvement most commonly used were support for sports activities (36% of all SMEs) and environmental protection (36% of all SMEs). The fourth place, with 22% support, belongs to cultural activities. All other types of external CSR activities were less common among Romanian SMEs.

The results suggest that non-profit organizations have been very active in Romania and have been able to raise funds from SMEs. The direct support of other initiatives has been reduced, perhaps due to their low activity in attracting funds or reducing the interest of SMEs in these activities or the combination of the two previous factors. Available data also suggest that there is a positive relationship between the size of companies and their involvement in most of the activities targeting external stakeholders. Table 5 presents the results of the author's research and the percentage of SMEs operating in Romania and were involved in a wide range of external CSR activities in 2017.

Table 5: Percentage of SMEs involved in activities not attended by any of the company's employees or their families, sorted by company size (number of employees) and an average for each activity

Has your company supported any of the following activities (activities that do not include any of the company's employees or their families)?	Company size			
	Micro	Small	Medium	Average
Sports activities	24.00%	22.00%	63.00%	36.33%
Cultural activities	6.00%	12.00%	48.00%	22.00%
Charitable activities involving community health	0.00%	9.00%	12.00%	7.00%
Educational activities and trainings	0.00%	0.00%	38.00%	12.67%
Financial or other support for NGOs	78.00%	69.00%	82.00%	76.33%
Protection of the environment - greening actions	36.00%	24.00%	49.00%	36.33%
Creating conditions or providing support for disadvantaged groups	0.00%	28.00%	32.00%	20.00%
Participation in community-led activities initiated by public institutions	12.00%	14.00%	21.00%	15.67%
Others	0.00%	0.00%	17.00%	5.67%
No	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Source: Based on own collected data, Study on Corporate Social Responsibility Activities regarding SMEs in Romania, Romania - 2017-2018

Conclusion

The basis for corporate responsibility has moved from the question of whether companies should be socially responsible to the question of how they can become socially responsible. CSR is starting to be a major component of new business models for long-term sustainable development and it redefines corporate responsibilities in their rapport with society as follows: firstly, companies should take responsibility for their impact on the society and the environment, which sometimes goes beyond compliance with laws and the responsibility of individuals; secondly, companies now have a responsibility for the behavior of other people they do business with; and thirdly, companies have to manage their relations with a broader society, either for reasons of commercial viability or by adding value to the society.

With the growth of sustainable consumption in business as well as increasing market share competition, this convergence has made companies more responsible to public, environmental, and social needs. Global companies which integrate the essence of this convergence into their fundamental political objectives tend to ensure that CSR practices are implemented within their supply chains and, also, a proven commitment to CSR helps them secure their long-term profits, brand image and managerial performance.

Some companies have already developed their own methods of assessing their own corporate responsibilities towards the community and the environment and have helped the development of the standardization regime. This regime creates different codes of conduct, different networks and control strategies to measure the performance of corporate self-regulation with regard to CSR. At a national level (we are here referring strictly to Romania), CSR has attracted a lot of attention over the last 5 years.

Transparency and the reporting of CSR policies is another request to be taken into account, requiring the publication of the company's significant results, informing the stakeholders about the social impact or the social and environmental risk generated by them, providing information in a manner that is appropriate and through accessible channels so that companies make sure that their partners know and understand the social impact they have and can therefore defend their rights and make informed decisions. Stakeholder dialogue and involvement in the decision, which is done alongside social assessment and reporting, is a very important requirement. Companies need to have tools and to build channels of communication with interested groups and encourage their feedback.

Managing CSR priorities is just like any other aspect of the business. If a company has five people or is a multinational corporation, there are a number of key principles that apply generally. All these principles seek to ensure that a company has the right policies, the correct procedures, and that it has the right performance.

Finally, the results of the survey imply that a large number of Romanian SMEs understand that adherence to CSR principles can bring the company a number of advantages - mainly in the form of appreciating the value of intangible assets - such as corporate reputation, the value of its identity brand, human capital, relationships it has built on trust and his business partnerships, which in turn can have a positive impact on the value of the company for its owners or shareholders.

Reasons for companies to engage in responsible activities can include a wide range of considerations. According to expert literature and empirical evidence, adapting to existing legislation and regulations is one of the key motives of Romanian SMEs for engaging in environmental activities related to their own company operations, regardless of company size.

Companies, in general, and SMEs in particular are encouraged to engage in responsible activities for many pro-active reasons. Examples include the strategic choice to improve the image or the desire to achieve certain competitive advantages over their competitors.

It is also worth mentioning the growing importance of market demands (mainly from customers and especially from business customers through subcontracting relationships) for adopting solutions that are responsible for the environment in general and environmental management systems in special. Thus, supply chain management is becoming an essential driving force for the environment, as large businesses are beginning to look at and drive environmental improvements along supply chains, and the relatively important role played by existing public support must not be forgotten.

It will take a lot of effort to develop a comprehensive CSR approach tailored to the current and future needs and situations of a company, whatever it may be. However, partnerships and the scope of joint activities, including government, civil society, the non-profit sector and the private sector, can make a significant contribution to the success.

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