



TRAINER NOTES UNIT 3.1: INVOLVEMENT OF WRs IN CRS: MOTIVATIONS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Objective

The PowerPoint presentation for unit 3.1 “Involvement of WRs in CSR: motivations and objectives” aims at explaining the importance of workers’ representatives’ and trade union participation in CSR policies, to define the objectives that should guide this participation and the key elements to materialize it.

2. Description of contents

Below key concepts to address in this training session are briefly presented

a. WR approach of sustainability

The concept of sustainability has three dimensions that must be in balance: economic, to meet the needs; the social, so that this satisfaction is universal; and the environmental, so that our actions are not carried out at the expense of a planet on which we depend.

If sustainability is shown as a triangle in which each side represents each of the dimensions that make up this concept, this triangle should be equilateral, i.e. with all its sides equal. This triangle would represent the balance that sustainability should have in decision making. Therefore, when addressing a specific aspect or taking a decision related to the management of a company, in terms of sustainability all three dimensions should be addressed equally. That should also be the perspective of the legal representation of workers in the defense of their interests.

However, an environmental organization, in its conception of sustainability, and taking into account its scope of action, may give more weight to the environmental dimension, so that its triangle will not be equilateral. Or for example, the management of a company may give more weight to the economic dimension.

Therefore, from a WR approach, at the beginning, sustainability issues must be taken into account by addressing the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) as balanced.



b. The role of workers and their legal representatives in CSR policies. Workers and representatives as stakeholders

This section aims at presenting the WR importance in CSR policies and defining what role workers and their legal representatives should play in the framework of CSR policies implemented in companies.

CSR must be translated into a form of management by companies aimed at incorporating the concerns, needs and expectations of the society, as part of their business strategy, assuming the commitment to paying due attention to their actions with adequate transparency. The role of workers and their organizations within the company and outside, as an integral part of both spaces, is fundamental. Therefore, in addition to requesting the adoption of CSR policies and commitments to businesses, they must play a role in its implementation, follow-up, verification and communication. This aims at collaborating with the company in managing its impacts on society.

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who have an interest in any decision or activity of the organisation, i.e. they are groups on which the company has an impact along its entire value chain.

To fully assume their social responsibility, companies must implement, in close collaboration with stakeholders, a process to integrate social, environmental and ethical concerns, respect for human rights and consumer concerns in their business operations and basic strategy.

Stakeholders may represent general interests, i.e. affecting the whole society, such as environmental organisations like Greenpeace or consumer organisations, or proprietary or private interests, the scope of which is smaller, e.g. a local tourist organisation.

WRs and unions combine a particular interest derived strictly from labour issues; however, they have a general interest arising from matters pertaining to or affecting citizenship.

One of the relevant stakeholders is the group of workers and their legal representatives, which calls for the inclusion of these issues in the social dialogue and specifically, in collective bargaining.

Workers are direct stakeholders in these situations, by which they are affected at the workplace and, indirectly, as citizens, since they have the ability to represent and defend the general interests of society as a whole from within a company.

Typically, companies draw up a matrix of relevance, where stakeholders' needs and expectations and their relevance are determined.

Therefore, it is important to state WRs' and union's priorities, needs and expectations.



c. Motivations and objectives of WRs' involvement in CSR

WRs' and union involvement in CSR must aim at materializing a series of specific objectives, among which the following should be noted:

1. Ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability as a guarantee of employment and working conditions.
2. Improve working conditions and labour relations.
3. Collaborate in the response the company should give to the needs and expectations of its stakeholders. In this context, stakeholders may demand or be interested in the opinion of the workers' legal representatives in relation to any matter affecting their interests.

These objectives will be the object of development in this section, deepening in the implications of union involvement in each one of them.

d. Key aspects to materialize WR involvement in CSR policies (*for further information see Annex I*)

In order to effectively develop WRs' and union involvement in CSR policies, there are some key aspects that must be taken into consideration.

These are related to collective bargaining and social dialogue, communication and participation in tools/forums existing in companies, the training and training needs of WRs and union representatives or union communication with workers, among others.

e. WRs experiences of participation in CSR policies

This section is aimed at learning about some union experiences developed of CSR, so that the previous contents are supported with some practical examples.

As an example, the GAMESA study case is provided (Spain).

This is an example from Spain. In order to accommodate it better to a specific participant group, a country specific example should be provided.



Specific clauses must be agreed upon concerning workers' participation in:

- The processes for implementing corporate social responsibility tools [ISO 26000 standard, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), etc.].
- The preparation of documents related to CSR.
- The development of mandatory reports on them.
- The introduction of labour, economic, social and environmental indicators.

2. Establishment of specific spaces for dialogue

It is important to establish specific forums for dialogue on CSR at companies where union participation exists, especially at those in which such policies are published.

It is possible to take advantage of the existence of joint bodies of participation, such as the Committee on Health and Safety or the Environment Committee, or request the establishment of a specific joint body in this area, which could have the name of Corporate Social Responsibility Committee.

It is also possible to request recognition of powers in this area for members of the Works Council, staff representatives, prevention representatives, environment delegates or consider the recognition of the delegate for corporate social responsibility.

3. Knowledge of CSR tools in place at the company

One main aim must be with regard to the required training and education in order to make an independent assessment of the company's social responsibility and to be able to participate, monitor and verify the policies and commitments the company has assumed to address this responsibility. It is essential to be familiar with and use the various instruments and tools in place at the company that enable the intervention of workers' legal representatives (ISO 14001, OSHAS 18001, SA 8000, etc.)

4. Relations with the company's stakeholders

It is essential to meet information requirements to understand the company's value chain and the impact of its responsibility in it. It is therefore important for workers' representatives to know who the company's stakeholders and what their opinions and demands are.

After consolidating participation in this area, it is important for workers' legal representatives to take part in the process of identifying stakeholders and in assessing the relevance of their needs and expectations as considered by the company.



5. Participation and collaboration in the preparation of draft reports or sustainability reports

One goal must be to ensure participation and validation by workers' and union representatives regarding the information generated and published by the company on CSR. In particular, access must be provided, at an early stage, to the draft reports or sustainability reports in order to check the accuracy of the information and incorporate the WRs' point of view. It must also be possible to participate in the design of it and negotiate the inclusion of appropriate indicators in relation to the business of the company in question.

6. Training and skills

The company must be asked for training on issues related to CSR. To do this, it may be suggested to include such training in the annual training programme designed by the company. WRs must be willing to take part in designing and implementing these trainings.

TEMPLATE APPLICATION FOR INCLUSION OF TRAINING COURSES ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE COMPANY'S TRAINING PLANS

Given the social and environmental impact of the business carried on by the company, the relevant number of initiatives and activities implemented by the Company in corporate social responsibility, as well as the existence of an environmental management system implemented according to ISO 14001 (where applicable), awareness-raising activities and staff training on these issues should be strengthened. Accordingly, the aim is to seek maximum worker involvement to meet the challenges and objectives established by the Organisation in this area.

To this end, workers' legal representatives ask Management to include courses on Corporate Social Responsibility and the environment in the company's training plans.

7. WRs' / Union CSR report

WRs' and union participation in CSR must focus, ultimately, on making an independent assessment of compliance with commitments assumed by the company in CSR and, in particular, on issuing a union report.

The starting point for this union report should be an own assessment of the report or sustainability report issued by the company.



8. Request to the company for resources to publish WRs' / union assessment of corporate CSR.

Workers' knowledge of CSR policies developed by the company is essential for them to collaborate with the company in their implementation, verification and communication to stakeholders and society in general.

Accordingly, it is necessary to first of all cover workers' information requirements, which will result in the effectiveness of these policies and their improvement.

Their legal representatives at the company must have access to information on its CSR policies and have the necessary means to communicate and provide the staff with the relevant information, as well as the valuation they make of the scope and content expressed in the policies and documents published by the company in this area.

To this end, workers' legal representatives must request from the management of the company the resources needed to provide workers with the relevant information on these matters in order to collaborate with the company on the development and implementation of its CSR policies and the communication of said policies to society.

This request can take the form of:

- A specific space on the company intranet
- The insertion of union news and assessments in newsletters or internal company publications.

9. Dialogue and relationship with other corporate stakeholders.

Consideration must also be given to the possibility of addressing the dialogue and relationship with other social players interested in the company's social responsibility.



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