



**RSE.COOP METHOD IMPLANTATION
OF CSR POLITICS UPON
SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISES**

Implemented between 2004 and 2007, RSE.COOP, *Responsabilitat Social de l'Empresa a l'Economia Cooperativa* was a pilot programme for the adaptation of the Cooperative Economy to economic and structural changes based on the creating of value for the Social Responsibility inherent to the business culture of these organizations. Through innovative methodology, the project financed by the Equal Community Initiative, encouraged the implementation of CSR in 39 cooperative economy businesses in Catalonia, which has helped strengthen the values of this business model – solidarity, transparency, democratic management, etc. – and ensure its sustainable development and competitiveness in the markets. The programme was promoted by the Catalan Confederation of Cooperatives, with the collaboration of the Generalitat de Catalunya Institute for the Promotion and Training of Cooperatives, Barcelona City Council, the Catalan Women's Institute, the Spanish Confederation of Social Economy Organizations and the six Catalan cooperative federations.

The collection of files presented below emphasizes the main impact of corporate social responsibility on each of these 39 organizations as a result of this individualized process of reflection, action and continuous improvement.

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Chairman of the Catalan Confederation of Cooperatives

application of methodology

The RSP.COOP, Responsabilitat Social Empresarial a l'empresa cooperativa programme was designed in line with the following general objectives:

1. To implement CSR values in cooperative economy companies in Catalonia.
2. To improve the competitiveness of cooperative economy companies in the markets.
3. To contribute, from the cooperative companies, towards sustainable development and equal opportunities between men and women.

Based on this, at methodology level, the implementation of CSR policies in the 39 organizations – selected through two public tenders in 2005 and 2006 – a tool for the diagnosis and measuring of CSR prepared in 2004 by the Confederation of Cooperatives was used, which includes specific, identifying indicators of the Cooperative Economy.

Despite the implementation of the social responsibility tool in RSE.COOP companies being a process adapted to the needs of each organization and, therefore, dynamic and subject to changes and modifications, the different stages of the methodology process used and validated in these 39 cooperatives of different activities, sizes and regions of Catalonia are indicated in simple, schematic form below.

a) Selection of cooperatives

Three main criteria were established for the selection of the cooperative companies:

- * The economic feasibility of the organization
- * The involvement of the cooperative's senior management in the process
- * Sensitivity towards responsible management, analyzed using an initial selection questionnaire.

b) Appointment of a tutor or consultant

For implementation of social responsibility policies in companies in line with RSE.COOP methodology, a tutor or consultant outside the company was

appointed who, for a period of fifteen months, guided the company through all the stages of the process.

c) Initial diagnosis

The aim of the initial diagnosis that, as indicated, used the “Responsabilitat Social en empreses d’Economia Cooperativa” tool designed by the Catalan Confederation of Cooperatives as a reference, is to learn of the current stance of each company in relation to the different commitments regarding corporate social responsibility.

The results of the questionnaire enabled us to prepare an initial diagnosis report that indicated the action to be carried out by the company, which can be considered socially responsible, and the aspects to be improved. This analysis, which indicates the initial stance of the company, is important not only for identifying the corrective measures to be considered during the following stage, but also for showing and making the organization aware of the responsible behaviour it has already taken on board.

Depending on the results of the diagnosis report, a proposal of corrective and improvement measures to be developed by the company during the implementation process was prepared.

d) Systematics of the process for the implementation of corrective measures.

During the implementation of corrective and improvement measures, the cooperative was advised in order to prioritize certain actions and/or measures and to establish the best methodology for their implementation. Initially, the assessment was given in line with the following general parameters:

- Implementation of CSR considered as a business investment factor;
- Implementation of CSR as a strategy to be included in the core of the business strategy and form a notable part of its culture: from strategic planning to the personnel policy, including its day-to-day activity.
- Implementation of CSR based on clear and measurable criteria.

Hence, the implementation of each of the actions was monitored in order to detect any problems arising and to seek an appropriate solution. It must be

noted that the starting point for each company is different and, therefore, the improvement actions must be adapted to this situation and to the singularities of each organization.

To complete this stage, a minimum of ten 3-hour sessions were carried out by each company individually.

e) Process validation

Once the implementation stage had been completed, the level of compliance of the company with the commitments established was analyzed once again and the organization's sustainability report prepared, which included its main areas of impact on its groups of interest.

Alongside this individualized system of implementing CSR policies in the company, the RSE.COOP programme developed four additional supporting actions in order to promote some of the key values of corporate social responsibility and strengthen the entire implementation process.

These actions were as follows:

1. Advanced business management criteria: Training on how to improve the business management of management posts, training on how to professionalize management bodies and implement strategic management plans.
2. Equal opportunities in participation and decision-making processes: Actions to encourage women to become partners, participate in management bodies and gain access to positions of responsibility.
3. Reconciling private and professional lives: implementation of plans for the reconciliation of private and professional lives in the company as a result of the analysis of the needs of each organization.
4. Mutual cooperation as a means for developing corporate social responsibility: Development of meeting grounds for companies and advice on resulting cooperation projects.

balance sheet

Having completed the implementation stage of RSE.COOP and independent of the individual impact generated on each of the 39 organizations, below is an initial approximation of their more tangible overall results as a result of a continuous assessment process undertaken during implementation.

There are three areas of analysis within this framework:

- Impact on society
- Impact on the sector from a qualitative and quantitative viewpoint
- Impact on the cooperatives.

Impact on society

- Management transparency of the sector for its groups of interest.
- Opportunity for consumption with guarantees of responsible management.
- Improvement of the environment.
- Creation and maintenance of stable, quality jobs.
- Creation of new public policies supporting the implementation of CSR in small and medium-sized enterprises as an instrument of competitiveness.

Impact on the cooperative sector

qualitative analysis

- RSE.COOP has placed the cooperative sector at the forefront in Catalonia regarding any other segmentation making the deployment of Corporate Social Responsibility an instrument for business competitiveness (application in 39 organizations).
- Provision of a tool and specific methodology tested and supported by Global Reporting Initiative (Manual for the preparation of sustainability reports in Social Economy companies) to create value for the socially responsible management of the cooperative and social economy.
- Creation of a legitimate competitive advantage in comparison with other business models relating to sustainable development.
- Creation of a BRAND value for the sector.
- Transformation of public development policies in the sector.

- The methodology applied by Catalan cooperativism has become a paradigm for other Social Economy organizations in Spain.
- Exchange and comparison of CSR experiences and practices with other regions of Europe (RSEurope Project).

quantitative analysis

- 34 cooperatives published a sustainability report in 2007.
- ESADE business school management training for 65 people in positions of responsibility.
- Business training for 111 people belonging to Management Bodies.
- Definition and review of 36 strategic business plans.
- Implementation of equal opportunities plans in 13 cooperatives.
- Implementation of plans to encourage the reconciliation of private and professional lives in 26 cooperatives.
- Definition of five lines or actions of mutual cooperation between cooperatives in the programme.

Impact on cooperatives

- Crossways application of Social Responsibility values to all areas of the cooperative.
- Arranging of daily cooperative management from the viewpoint of corporate social responsibility and from a more strategic scope. Improvement of business management.
- Professionalization of management posts and management bodies.
- Contribution towards sustainable development with the inclusion of environmental conservation measures.
- Guarantee of equal opportunities within the organization.
- Contribution towards the professional and personal development of people and, therefore, the attracting and retaining of talent.
- Definition of actions for the reconciliation of private and professional lives that have encouraged the unity of the workforce.
- Promotion of stable agreements of collaboration between companies.
- Provision of a new channel of communications (sustainability report) to show the basic values of the cooperative economy in line with socially responsible management.
- Improvement of the cooperative image given to consumers.

products and materials for transfer

<p>Specific methodology for the implementation of CSR policies based on an individual and tutored system for the diagnosis and application of corrective measures.</p>	<p>Methodology adapted to the real situation of each company and that is based on an initial diagnosis established using the commitments and indicators of the RSE.COOP tool. Provision of individual tutoring or assessment for the senior management of the cooperative to implement the improvement actions arising from the results of the initial diagnosis within a period of twelve to fifteen months. On completing the process, the cooperative has enough inputs to begin drafting and publishing its sustainability report.</p>
<p>GRI guide for the preparation of sustainability reports specifically for the Social Economy.</p>	<p>Guide prepared using the contributions of the 17 Spanish Social Economy organizations that is based on the contents of the manual "<i>Pathways. The sustainability reporting cycle: A handbook for small and not-so-small organizations</i>" by Global Reporting Initiative and includes the singularities of the Social Economy organizations. It basically introduces the indicators that respond to and show the principles and values governing the Social Economy. The manual provides any organization with the process for preparing its sustainability report.</p> <p>[Available in paper format]</p>

<p>Digital software for the assessment and recording of data linked to CSR</p>	<p>The methodology used in the RSE.COOP program and the indicators for measuring CSR by the Social Economy are included in a tool or digital software that enables companies to start a process for the implementation of CSR policies. The software facilitates the diagnosis process for organizations and enables them to record and print the data in sustainability report draft form.</p> <p><i>[Available in digital format]</i></p>
<p>Cooperative business management training programme for positions with responsibility.</p>	<p>As a result of the RSE.COOP program the Esade business school has set up a specialized cooperative business management course with the triple aim of expanding on and updating knowledge of supervision and management, developing the management skills and abilities of the cooperative environment and creating a space for interrelating within the cooperative sector. The structure of the programme follows these three objectives and goes into further detail in subjects such as leadership, the management function, marketing, public management, economic and financial analysis and people management, etc.</p>
<p>Business management training programme for members of the Management Bodies</p>	<p>In order to contribute towards the professionalization of the Management Bodies, RSE.COOP purchased specific training materials from Otalora – the</p>

	<p>Mondragón Sociedad Cooperativa training centre – that was subsequently, with the collaboration of Aposta Escola de Cooperativisme, adapted to the situation of Catalan cooperatives. These materials, with which over 111 people from cooperatives in the programme have already been trained, are currently available to the entire sector to begin new training courses in this area.</p> <p><i>[Available in paper format]</i></p>
<p>Manual of policies for the reconciliation of private and professional lives in the cooperative company.</p>	<p>As an additional action for the programme, some cooperatives have developed plans for the reconciliation of private and professional lives among their workers. RSE.COOP has included the main experiences or practices detected throughout the process in a digital manual. This guide also includes the regulations and legal framework regarding reconciliation.</p> <p><i>[Available in digital format]</i></p>
<p>Specific methodology for the implementation of Equal Opportunities Policies</p>	<p>Specific methodology also experienced within the framework of the RSE.COOP programme that, through three tutoring sessions lasting for around three hours each, have enabled the cooperative to implement a plan to encourage equality in all areas of the structure.</p> <p><i>[Available in digital format]</i></p>
<p>Manual on the different legal-economic formulas for mutual</p>	<p>Manual that includes the different legal-economic formulas for mutual</p>

<p>cooperation.</p>	<p>cooperation within the framework of the Cooperatives Act of Catalonia: mutual economic cooperation – with and without equity ties - , mixed mutual cooperation that may or may not have financial objectives and representative mutual cooperation. The guide also gives an introduction to the legal and economic system of the cooperative.</p> <p><i>[Available in paper or digital format]</i></p>
<p>CSR good practice guide, as a result of the RSEurope agreement for transnational cooperation</p>	<p>Publication that includes the exchange of social responsibility experiences developed within the framework of the RSEurope transnational cooperation project with regions of France, Italy and Portugal. The guide includes twenty CSR experiences in different companies, organizations and bodies in the different regions of the cooperation.</p> <p><i>[Available in paper or digital format]</i></p>

**ALL RSE.COOP PRODUCTS
ARE AVAILABLE TO THOSE
INTERESTED**

Products in paper format can be requested from:

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Products published in digital format can be downloaded from the programme website:

<http://www.rsecoop.coop>