

Social and Environmental Issues in Corporative Management: A Romanian Story

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Abstract. *The complex process of monitoring entities environmental impact entails ability, respect for the environment and reduction of the ecological footprint. This research defines Romanian trends as regards the effects and actions to adapt to climate change and characterizes corporate management in terms of compliance with environmental management systems requirements. The main objective is to assess the current state of environmental management implementation and identifies relevant social and environmental issues that companies use to include in corporate management. The current agenda would allow developing a framework for environmental management implementation in Romanian entities, in order to assume the corporate social responsibility.*

Keywords: climate change; adaptation; social and environmental impact; corporative management; Romania.

JEL Codes: M14, Q01, Q54.

REL Code: 15D.

1. Introduction

The context of sustainable development is strongly influenced by current global climate changes. The extent and intensity of environmental impacts caused international, national, regional, local, and individual positions and actions (in terms of individuals and economic entities). The starting point of this accounting research is the presentation of Romanian activities directed towards environmental protection and the trends assessed by the authority in the field, in terms of adapting to climate change.

In a broader sense, climate change is understood as any form of climate deviation that has no physical cause and is not statistical in nature. The causes of this complex phenomenon are *natural* (changes in solar activity, long term alterations of the Earth's orbit, internal natural processes of the climate system) and *anthropological* (the increase in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases atmospheric concentration). In a narrow sense, climate change indicates significant alterations of climatological elements during a given period, entailing economic, social and environmental consequences. Climate change is an environmental problem leading to risks in the development process (European Communities, 2009). Food crisis, water shortage, spread of diseases in new areas, damage caused by floods, the labour migration forced by the desertification of farmlands and the rising sea and ocean levels are only a few of the effects of climate change that all countries must recognize.

The perspective of the planetary history explains and refines the understanding of the problem. Effects such as global warming have been offset by stimulating the development of new species that have found the new conditions favourable for life and have multiplied explosively in the absence of competition, recreating an atmosphere with less carbon. Therefore, the answer was primarily provided by nature instead of technology or policy, and has resulted in the disappearance of some species and the emergence of others. This is already perceived as a risk: dozens of species disappear each day, and biotechnologies based on cultures of microorganisms having a versatile enough behaviour as to meet technological needs/purposes are able, at least in theory, to generate global epidemics, leaving nature as the sole regulating factor of climate change. Nowadays, the danger of climate change must be approached not only from an ecological, but as well as from the social and economic perspectives.

The current paper aims to position Romania from the perspective of the effects and actions to adapt to climate change, as a substantiation to assess the current level of environmental management implementation and to identify environmental and social elements that are relevant for entities to include in

their corporative management. Achieving the objective has determined the presentation, in the *first section* of the paper, the manifestations of climate change that have affected the Romanian environment, based on the quantitative information concerning temperature levels or precipitation, and extreme weather events, discussed in terms of vulnerability and impact on various economic and social sectors. In order to create the scientific context it was developed the concept of adaptation to global climate change and multiple perspectives identified in approaching the concept, both in the literature and by the Romanian and international regulators. *Section 2* reviews the European Union Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) requirements to assess the current degree of environmental management implementation in Romanian entities. *Section 3* completes this picture with data from a questionnaire-based study that was aimed at assessing the way Romanian entities incorporate social and environmental aspects into corporate management. Finally, there are presented the conclusions of the study, its limitations and future research directions.

2. Adaptation to climate change: realities and reactions

The phenomenon of climate change and its effects are manifestations of an acute reality, to which the only one rational and efficient response is *adaptation*. Accordingly, in addition to the global concerns to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases, in the context of the Kyoto Protocol, an increasing number of countries develop and implement strategies and plans to adapt to the consequences of climate change. One of the most recent documents is the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, recently adopted by the government in Paris, preparing France for temperatures higher by 2°C to 3,5°C and precipitations levels lower by 30%, namely heat and drought conditions.

Manifestations of the climate change phenomenon in Romania

The adoption of the best adaptation measures requires an accurate knowledge of the possible effects of climate change on social and economic sectors. Based on the data provided by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests (RMEF) in the Appendix to MO 1170/29.09.2008 concerning the adaptation to the effects of climate change, there have been identified a series of manifestations of the climate change phenomenon in Romania, and the adjacent economic and social implications.

Temperature. Compared to the global annual increase in average temperature of 0.6⁰C in the period 1901 – 2000, in Romania the annual average

temperature increased by only 0.3°C in the period 1901-2006, the increase was 0.5°C , compared to a global increase of 0.74°C (1906-2005).

Similar to the global situation, there have been changes in the regime of extreme weather events (based on the analysis of the data above from multiple weather stations).

- An increase of the annual frequency of tropical days (daily maximum temperature higher than 30°C) and a decrease of the annual frequency of winter days (daily minimum temperature lower than 0°C);
- A significant increase in average minimum summer temperatures and the average maximum winter temperatures (up to 2°C in the South and South-East during the summer).

Precipitations. In the last eight years (2000-2007) in Romania there were registered two opposite extreme rainfall events: draughts in 2000 and 2007 and floods in 2005. In 2007 there has been registered an extreme weather event, the winter 2006-2007 being the warmest winter since observational measurements are performed in Romania; at the time, pronounced deviations of maximum/minimum temperatures from the average multiannual regime have persisted over long periods of time.

The longest drought periods recorded in the twentieth century had a peak year: 1904, 1946, and 1990. The area affected the most by the hydrological drought in Romania in the last decades of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century was the South, excessively in the Oltenia region.

These results confirm one of the 4th Assessment Report (AR4) conclusions of Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), showing an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events caused by the escalation of the global climate change phenomenon.

Impact and vulnerability. The sectors affected by the increasing temperatures, the changes in precipitation levels, and the manifestation of extreme weather events are: biodiversity, agriculture, water resources, forestry, infrastructure – land and buildings, tourism, energy, industry, transportation, healthcare and recreation. In addition, there are some indirectly affected economic sectors, such as: food, woodworking, textiles, biomass and renewable energy production.

The increase in winter temperatures will result in a 6 to 8% in energy demand for heating, in the period 2021-2050. Instead, until 2030, the energy consumption during the summer may increase by as much as 28%, because of high temperatures.

Adaptation to climate change: concepts and perspectives

The two fundamental choices in response to risks caused by anthropogenic climate change are the mitigation of climate change (limiting global climate change through reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases and enhancing their sinks) and the adaptation to climate change. Starting from the assertions of Füssel and Klein (2005), in Table 1 are analysed and adapted the two feedbacks.

Table 1

Mitigation vs. adaptation to climate change

	Mitigation of climate change	Adaptation to climate change
<i>Benefited systems</i>	All systems	Selected systems
<i>Scale of effect</i>	Global	Local to regional
<i>Life time</i>	Centuries	Years to centuries
<i>Lead time decades</i>	Decades	Immediate to decades
<i>Effectiveness</i>	Certain	Generally less certain
<i>Ancillary benefits</i>	Sometimes	Mostly
<i>Polluter pays</i>	Typically yes	Not necessarily
<i>Payer benefits</i>	Only little	Almost fully
<i>Monitoring</i>	Relatively easy	More difficult
<i>Responsibility</i>	Unidentified	Specialized organizations (i.e. IPCC) and entities
<i>Research</i>	Exact sciences	Post-normal sciences

Currently, adaptation to climate change has become a pervasive topic in public debates on environmental policies. Detailed and regionalized cost estimates as a basis for cost-benefit analyses are rare (Osberghaus, Reif, 2010). Accounting, as a communication and managerial tool, is expected to provide a comprehensive account of resource consumption and its effects. However, in terms of *natural* resources and the regeneration of natural resources, the question arises: Can one speak of the correct application of the comprehensiveness principle? Gray and Bebbington (2000) raise the problem of a fundamental conflict between the main objective of a business (profit) and environmental protection, especially from the perspective of sustainable development goals. In addition, Ngwakwe (2010) emphasizes the fact that “there is no alternative to accounting at the moment for communicating corporate sustainability information”. We adhere to the aforementioned assessments through the current paper, which is also an attempt to create an objective image of the Romanian situation in the European context, in terms of the actions taken to adapt to climate change and the feedback form Romanian entities management.

Adapting to climate change is an intensely debated issue in the literature. We base this assessment on the conceptual approach provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Adaptation to climate change – conceptual approach	
Source	Concepts
Burton, 1992, in Smit et.al., 1999	<i>Societal adaptation to climate</i> is “the process through which people reduce the adverse effects of climate on their health and well-being, and take advantage of the opportunities that their climatic environment provides”.
Smit, 1993	<i>Adaptation</i> involves “adjustments to enhance the viability of social and economic activities and reduce their vulnerability climate, including its current variability and extreme events as well as longer term climate change”.
Stakhiv, 1993	<i>Adaptation</i> means “any adjustment, whether passive, reactive or anticipatory, that is proposed as a means for ameliorating the anticipated adverse consequences associated with climate change”.
Smith et al., 1996	<i>Adaptation to climate change</i> includes all adjustments in behaviour or economic structure that reduce the vulnerability of society to changes in the climate system.
Watson et al., 1996	<i>Adaptability</i> refers to “the degree to which adjustments are possible in practices, processes, or structures of systems to projected or actual changes of climate”.
Tol et al., 1998	Adaptation is considered in a balanced context, seen as a change not static but a dynamic response to continuous climate change. This will in turn help to determine the optimal control level of greenhouse gas emissions, and optimal government policies to adapt to climate change.
Smit et al., 2000	Adaptation to climate stimuli includes the ability to adapt through feedback to extreme events, to yearly climate variability and long-term changes in the mean conditions, both individually and in interdependence.
Füssel and Klein, 2005	Adaptation primarily aims at moderating the adverse effects of unavoids climate change through a wide range of actions that are targeted at the vulnerable system (It may also include taking action to seize new opportunities brought about by climate change.)
Blanco et al., 2009	Adapting to climate change is somewhat similar to mitigating natural hazards, through climate change results in spatially dispersed and systemic impacts, while natural hazards are generally localized, episodic events.

Academia was the first in addressing this issue and leading the way towards institutional efforts and specialized regulations. Table 3 presents the concept of adaptation to climate change, as defined by specialized organizations.

Table 3

Adaptation to climate change – regulatory approach	
Source	Concepts
IPCC, 2001	Adaptation refers to actions that people take in response to or in anticipation of projected or actual changes in climate, either to reduce the adverse impacts or to take advantage of opportunities offered by such changes.
European Commissions, 2007	Adaptation aims at reducing the risk and damage from current and future harmful impacts cost-effectively or exploiting potential benefits.
IPCC, 2007	Adaptation means the adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

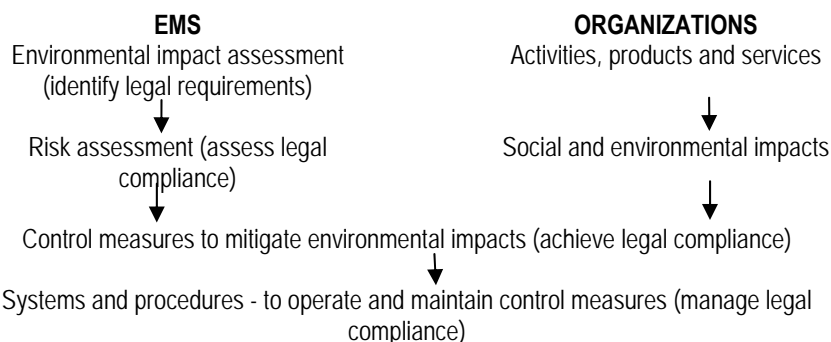
The central public authority in Romania for environmental issues, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF), defines (OM 1170/29.09.2008) adaptation to climate change as follows:

“...the ability of natural and anthropic systems to respond to the effects of climate change, including climate variability and extreme weather events, in order to reduce potential damages, seize the opportunities or faces the consequences of climate change”.

The negative impact of climate change, including that of climate variability and extreme weather events on natural and anthropic systems, determines the degree of system vulnerability. Watson et al., (1996) believe that vulnerability depends not only on system sensitivity, but also on its adaptive capacity when confronted with new climate conditions. The instruments, resources and institutional structures needed to effectively implement the measures for adaptation constitute the *adaptive capacity*, which is enhanced by an adaptive management system oriented towards sustainable performance: economic, social and environmental performance. A successful adaptation depends on technological advancements, institutional commitments, financing availability, and the willingness to communicate (Watson et al., 1996).

3. Environmental management system: a normative view

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is “that part of an organisation’s management system used to develop and implement its environmental policy and manage its environmental aspects” (ISO 14001, 2004). Figure 1 shows a schematic of the key elements of an EMS. The EMS process can be expressed in terms of environmental management techniques set out below.



Source: Caraiani et al., 2007.

Figure 1. Key elements of an EMS

The normative view offers opportunities for the debate, design, and implementation of an environmental management system, in the context of area-specific and voluntary regulations. The choices depend on the degree of responsibility, culture and respect for the environment. Table 4 provides a synthetic view of the main normative options in the field of environmental management systems.

Table 4

EMS – Normative choices			
	Description	Applicability	Standard/ Regulation
In-house EMS	Many companies choose to design and implement an EMS to their own specification. An in-house EMS may be as effective as any other, but the main drawback for regulators is that it is more difficult to assess the effectiveness of such an EMS in the absence of a standard approach, including assessment criteria.	International	-
EMS: Requirements with guidance for use	The standard specifies the different elements of an EMS and how they relate to one another based on a methodology known as plan-do-check-act. The overall aim of the standard is to support environmental protection and prevention of pollution in balance with socio-economic needs. In common with all management systems, the standard provides a means for continual improvement of performance. Conformity against the requirements of ISO 14001:2004 can be demonstrated through self-declaration, accredited certification or by other independent means. Organisations are also required "to establish, implement and maintain a procedure(s) to identify and have access to applicable legal requirements and other requirements to which the organisation subscribes related to its environmental aspects" and "to determine how these requirements apply to its environmental aspects". This requirement is intended to promote knowledge and understand legal responsibilities. This standard does not require an organisation to establish libraries of legal or other documents that will rarely be referenced or used, but to develop information that will help the organisation to know what is legally required and how it relates to their organisation.	International	ISO 14001/2004
EMS: Guide to the phased implementation of an EMS including the use of environmental performance evaluation	The standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides guidance to organisations on environmental management and the use of environmental performance indicators; • describes a six-phase, incremental approach to implementing an EMS using environmental performance evaluation; • is suitable for any organisation, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to implement an EMS – for example to ISO 14001 standard; • may be used to demonstrate improved environmental performance to customers and stakeholders. 	British entities	British Standard (BS) 8555/2003

Eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)	It is a registration scheme, not simply a standard. It is a voluntary initiative designed to improve organisations' environmental performance. Its EMS specification is the same as that of ISO 14001:2004 but it places additional emphasis on legal compliance and environmental performance.	European	European Council, Directive no. 1836/1993
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The voluntary adoption of EMAS involves the recognition of and the compliance with the entire set of provisions, as a sole guarantee of a reliable and rigorous approach of environmental management. The main characteristics of EMAS are summarized below:

- is an European regulation with precise requirements;
- involves the binding obligation of an external audit;
- requires the mandatory disclosure of the audit report and the disclosure of results arising from the implementation of measures resulting from the audit, to inform stakeholders;
- operates under the specific requirement of compliance with legal provisions;
- the focus is the continuous improvement of environmental performance/impact.

The main EMAS objective is the continuous improvement of environmental performance through the implementation of adequate measurement, evaluation and reporting tools. The main results consist of the continuous improvement of environmental issues management, as well as providing reliable information in the field. This voluntary environmental management tool is operational since 1995. The development of EMAS has undergone three major qualitative stages:

- EMAS 1 – 1993-1995 – EMAS is adopted by the European Council and opens for participation by industrial companies;
- EMAS 2 – 2001 Regulation No. 761/2001 adopted by the European Council open to all economic sectors including public and private services;
- EMAS 3 – 2009-2010 New Regulation No. 1221/2009 adopted by the Council and entered into force on 11 January 2010. This new regulation aims voluntary participation in EMAS of all entities inside and outside the European Community.

On a declarative level and in terms of legislation, Romania is in line with the actions to adapt to global climate changes. However, the efforts are very limited. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, there are currently four Romanian entities holding the EMAS certification.

Table 5

Romanian organization EMAS certified

Organization name	Date of registration	Number of sites	Industry
Association of Metropolitan Zone of Oradea	2007	1	Urban development
Evangelical Parish of Sibiu	2009	3 (Church, Parish House, Parish Centre)	Service
Evangelical Parish of Sibiu	2009	1 (Luxemburg House)	Service
SC Schaeffler România SRL Brașov	2009	1	Automobile industry, tools

Source: MEF, 2010.

4. Empirical research of the issue

The assessment of the degree of environmental management implementation by Romanian entities was performed from two different perspectives.

The first approach was centred on the international *legal and institutional framework* for the environmental management systems and the manner in which it was assimilated by the Romanian economic environment. The adoption by Romania of the *Regulation on the voluntary participation by organizations in EMAS* (MO no. 1514/6.06.2011) was considered to be a leverage factor for the increase in the degree of implementation. Consequently, it was found that the number of entities which adhered to the EMAS has increased as opposed to the previous study (one entity in 2009, see Dascălu et al., 2009). However, the fact that at the end of 2010, only four Romanian entities were certified by EMAS reveals a very low level of implementation for this type of management system.

Searching for the causes and explanations of this *status quo*, during the second phase, we focused on the Romanian economic entities, by means of a questionnaire-based research.

Target sampling and questionnaire design

The sample choosing process was an attempt to identify the Romanian companies displaying interest for social and environmental issues. Therefore, a part of the population consists of entities that have voluntarily registered on the first Romanian corporative social responsibility portal (www.responsabilitatesociala.ro). The rest of the population consists of listed companies of the *Bucharest Stock Exchange* (BVB), which *must* report, as requested by the Corporate Governance Code, the state of the integration of social and environmental aspects in their operational activities (*The Apply or Explain Declaration*).

The surveyed companies were asked to answer a series of questions about the management of social and environmental issues. An identification was attempted for the actual ways social and environmental actions are enclosed (or not) in the corporate management process and the actual ways social and environmental information is built, prepared and disclosed by the annual financial statements, social responsibility reports or by other means of reporting.

Discussions and results

The respondents reside in different industries (finance, beverages, pharmaceuticals, energy transportation, cosmetics, software), also having different sizes and organizational patterns. 71% of the responding entities are registered on the aforementioned *www.responsabilitatesocială.ro* portal, which shows that, in the absence of any legal constraints, the voluntary character is the leading influence factor, placing the entity inside or outside the social and environmental aspects sphere of interest. The very limited number of respondents (only 5% of the surveyed entities) leads to the conclusion that the assimilation of the social and environmental aspects is still at an early stage, being still far from becoming a current or mature practice. This conclusion correlates with the previous findings concerning the reduced number of entities using EMAS.

Even if all the entities stated the concern of their corporate management for the social and environmental issues, 57% of them provided a negative answer to the question regarding the use of the legal and institutional framework for the environmental management (EMAS, ISO 14000 or ISO 26000). Thus, most of the surveyed companies voluntarily support the idea of social and environmental reporting, but very few of them actually use the voluntarily applicable legal framework in the field of environmental management. We consider this aspect to be specific for the early stage of the environmental management in Romania: in the absence of regulations, the social and environmental actions are managed as punctual, independent projects, whose results are informally presented, and treated somewhat similar to advertising campaigns.

In support of the aforesaid idea we can provide the answers we received to the question regarding the reporting form for the social and environmental impact. The surveyed entities have chosen very different reporting techniques, too diverse to be comparable (43% annual reports, 43% Corporate Social Responsibility reports, 14% social and environmental media campaigns). Moreover, the *www.responsabilitatesocială.ro* portal was created and is managed by a group of Public Relations (PR) and communication experts, so

the disclosed information mainly refers to the entities' media campaigns, and far less to the entities' social and environmental impact. The term "reporting" seems to be used in a very broad sense, as in the absence of mandatory regulations many of entities decide to report exclusively the positive aspects. In these circumstances, a legitimate question arises concerning the content of the social and environmental reporting: impact or campaign? In other words, the place of the environmental management is taken by a sort of "PR or communications management", and punctual short-term projects take the place of coherent long-term strategies. A PR-specific point of view becomes obvious from the analysis of the results: "Why need regulations to do good deeds?"

Table 6 presents the importance that respondents assigned to the EMAS related aspects.

Table 6

EMAS – related aspects importance	
EMAS-related aspect	The importance of the aspect (on a scale from 1 to 5)
Environmental impact measurement	4.43
Environmental policy	4.29
Environmental programs	4.29
Environmental reporting	4.15
Environmental impact identification and reporting	4.14
Environmental internal audit	3.87
Compliance audit	3.59
Authority registration and validation	3.59

Items with scores higher than 4.00 aimed at environmental strategy and tactics coherence in order to identify, evaluate and report environmental impacts. Third-party verification, auditing or any kind of relations with governmental authorities were assigned significantly lower scores, revealing the entities' reluctance for the idea of authority or regulation, in a field which was almost un-regulated until recently. There is a clear demarcation between the relative importance attributed to recognition and monitoring environmental impact from those that require validation of policies, systems and procedures through checks by competent bodies. The results suggest entities tend to build in-house EMS, without the authorities involvement; this may be an explanation of the fact that most Romanian entities chose not to register for EMAS certification.

Regarding the main aspects having environmental impact considered by corporative management, Table 7 reveals that most respondents place the energy (power) and water consumption on top, as they are easy to measure and manage, and are already enclosed by the current form of the financial

statements. The other elements on the list, considered representative for the environmental component of corporate management received fewer nominations, which are not regulated elements in terms of collecting and reporting information describing environmental impact negative component (waste, greenhouse effect gases emissions, and pollution). The surveyed entities do not account as important to invest in order to reduce the ecological footprint, which means that profit is still allowed to prime over sustainable development.

Table 7

Aspects having environmental impact, considered by the corporate management

Aspect having environmental impact	Corporate management degree of monitoring (%)
Energy consumption	71
Water consumption	57
Waste storage and disposal	43
Other	57
Greenhouse gases emissions	29
Soil, water and air pollution	29
Environment protection costs	29
Ecological footprint reduction investments	14
None	0

The low level of interest for investments reducing the ecological footprint, as well as for information collection about gas emissions and soil, water, and air pollution may also be interpreted in correlation with the industry of the analysed company. They may also be interpreted in correlation with the global crisis impact. The surveyed entities do not belong to highly polluting industries, and, by consequence, do not obey reporting constraints from the environmental protection governmental institutions.

In order to get information about companies' incentives to perform environmental management, the respondents were requested to classify based on importance the benefits associated to an environmental-aware corporate management. Table 8 presents the importance respondents assigned to the possible positive effects of environmental management.

Table 8

The benefits of including environmental issues into corporative management

Benefits	The importance for respondent (on a scale from 1 to 5)
Respect for the environment	4.71
Improving the company's environmental performance	4.53
Improving the company's public image	4.43
Employee motivation	4.43

Long-term costs reduction	4.43
Competitive advantages	4.01
Preferential treatment from customers	3.55
Improving relationships with government authorities	3.00
Preferential treatment from insurance companies	2.85
Preferential treatment from banks	2.85

To conclude the aforementioned data, the top rated benefits are the ones bearing real and long-term positive effects, revealing a proper perception of the environmental management's role. The companies do not appear as opportunist, as direct benefits from customers, financiers and other types of users bear a significantly reduced score.

Getting a competitive advantage (4.01) is an important benefit of the environmental management, as long as the company's industry has a real concern and the power to monitor and publish this aspect. In the absence of some adequate stimuli (such as competitive pressure) the competitive advantage cannot occur. The 4.01 score suggests that even if the environmental management's ability to provide a competitive advantage is acknowledged, the lack of competitive pressure on the market has led to a disregard of this aspect.

It is remarkable that the respondents do not perceive the improvement of the relationship with certain stakeholder groups (customers, public authorities, insurance companies, banks) as a direct benefit of the environmental management. By following Table 9, which offers a synthesis of the answers regarding information requests, we may see that these same stakeholder groups showed the least interest in the companies' social and environmental information.

Table 9

Frequency of requests for environmental impact information (%)

Stakeholder groups	YES	NO	Frequency of requests		
			Never	Once	More than once
Environmental institutions	43	57	57	0	43
Local community	14	86	86	14	0
Researchers (interviews etc.)	58	43	43	29	29
Banks	29	71	71	0	29
Insurance companies	28	71	71	14	14
Central or local administration	43	57	57	14	29

The dominant element is the reduced frequency with which various categories of stakeholders have requested information on the environmental impact. Analyzing the results it appears that researchers were interested in 58% of information on the environmental impact of entities, while the local community once called such data, which assesses its interest to 14%.

Table 10 shows the companies' perception concerning the stakeholders which are interested in environmental information, in the form of the relative importance attributed to each category of users.

Table 10

**Entities perception regarding users of
social environmental information**

Users/Stakeholder category	The importance for respondent (on a scale from 1 to 5)
Community	4.86
Shareholders	4.53
Customers	4.53
Employees	4.43
NGO's	4
Government/Agencies	3.55
Financial creditors	3.44
Suppliers	3.43
Researchers	2.55
Others	2.55

Most of the respondents have never received any request from the main categories of stakeholders who should monitor (environment institutions, local communities) and use in their own risk assessments (banks, insurance companies). The results place the community first in responding entities perceptions regarding the stakeholder category concerned in obtaining and using information on environmental and social impact. It must be underlined the fact that, even if researchers are the stakeholder type with the most frequent information requests, the respondents place this type of stakeholder on the last place, as the perceived importance of this group is very low. As a consequence, the entities are not motivated to report the environmental impact, which in turn generates a very low interest for an environmental-oriented corporate management.

5. Conclusions

The results obtained from the empirical research fall within a tacitly recognized reality of the Romanian environment: the difficult communication between the business environment and public administration, between the business environment and the civil society, between the business environment and the academic environment. The specific issues to environmental management analysed in the present paper fall under the influence of complex, oversized and often contradictory legislation. The procedures for environmental certification are difficult and bureaucratic, leading in many cases to discourage

initiatives from companies to achieve voluntary certifications or to implement voluntary environmental management systems.

The results of the study are convergent with those of the Steurer and Konrad (2009) study, which states there are realities with a negative influence over the corporate responsibility practices development in the Central and East European countries:

- The lack of the governmental initiatives to stimulate environmental performance: “*in most of the countries of the region, systematic government incentives and initiatives for social and environmental performance are generally missing*” (United Nations Development Programme-UNDP, 2007, p. 23);
- The quality of the civil society, which is not perceived as an important stakeholder, partly because the area is still underdeveloped. A possible explanation may be found in the UNDP (2007, p. 31) report: “*The awareness, ability and organizational power of NGOs to put pressure on business and government are limited. Existing NGOs commonly see the business community as a source of funding*” and not as a potential target for critical activism.

The main limitation of the research is related to the low number of respondents, which does not allow the generalization of results at this stage. Also, a perceived limitation of the research was generated to the data collection method, which did not allow absolute control over the qualification of the respondents and therefore invalidated a number of questionnaires, whenever the respondents’ role within the entity failed to meet the objectives of the research. We believe that one of the factors that have negatively affected the response rate was the low importance attributed by respondents to researchers as a stakeholder group, hypothesis confirmed by the results of the study.

The future research is supported by the responding entities declared unanimous concern for integrating social and environmental aspects in their corporative management. By continuing to interview the current study respondents it is envisaged to create a framework for implementing an EMS, in compliance with international standards (ISO 14001) or Community regulation (EMAS).

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