Public-private initiatives for industry specific corporate social responsibility

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Public-private initiatives for industry specific corporate social responsibility

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Introduction
This paper addresses an emergent development in corporate social responsibility thought and practice, i.e. an increasing involvement of governments and/or their agencies in partnerships with industry or civil society organisations or both in order to promote greater corporate responsibility. It is also based on a realisation that it is useful to think about CSR initiatives and CSR policy at the level of industry sectors, something which has featured in recent EU papers on the subject. The paper focuses on nine CSR initiatives in the United Kingdom, Spain and France¹, involving some form of partnership, collaboration or co-operation between government and industry participants, in five different industries: retail and wholesale, financial services, construction, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications. More specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

- What public, private and third sector participants are involved in industry specific CSR initiatives?
- What are the organising, governance and funding arrangements underpinning such collaborative CSR initiatives?
- What are the underlying mechanisms by which such initiatives are expected to foster greater corporate responsibility?
- How do such initiatives vary in scope and focus?
- How do participants rate the outcomes and success of such initiatives?

Literature Review
In its renewed corporate social responsibility strategy for 2011 – 2014 (CEC 2011) the European Commission reiterates its commitment to promoting CSR within the European Union and its belief that greater CSR engagement by firms will lead to greater social and economic wellbeing for societies as well as greater economic success for companies. The strategy document outlines a role for governments in supporting CSR through smart mix of voluntary policy measures and complementary regulation. At the same time, the European Commission also acknowledges that CSR issues vary between industry sectors and thus encourages sector specific initiatives to foster CSR.

¹ The nine short case studies were compiled as part of a larger research project involving 24 cases of public policy initiatives for CR in particular industries, across eight European countries. The research was funded by the Bertelsmann Foundation, Germany. A version of the case studies was first published in Beschorner et al. (2013).
The involvement of governments in promoting corporate responsibility has received a modest amount of academic interest in recent years. Since approximately the beginning of the 21st century, European governments in particular have taken an increasing role in promoting CSR. Over recent years there has been a trend towards more explicit CSR efforts in Europe (Matten and Moon, 2005), which has been accompanied by a greater interest of European governments (in contrast to the US government) to promote CSR through various public policy measures (Aaronson and Reeves, 2002). However, European governments also vary significantly in the extent and manner in which they have sought to influence business behaviour through public CSR policies. In the United Kingdom, central government has been involved in a series of public-private CSR initiatives since the 1980s (Moon 2004), whereas in most other European countries public policy for CSR has only been initiated following encouragement from the European Commission (Steurer, 2010) in the form of a Green Paper on CSR (CEC, 2001) and a later communication on CSR (CEC, 2002). The trend towards greater government involvement in CSR initiatives has also coincided with the publication of the UN Global Compact.

Although the private sector is still seen as the primary agent in CSR initiatives (CEC, 2011) such government involvement means that CSR turns into something different from purely voluntary business action ‘beyond the law’. Rather, CSR becomes incorporated into a form of soft law (Joseph, 2003; Moon, 2004; Albareda et al., 2007), located in a new, relational governance space between government, business and civil society (Midttun 2005). Government sponsored CSR initiatives fit into a landscape of new social partnerships, which may include governments and private sector firms but also civil society organisations, business-led CSR coalitions, regional and international multilateral government organisations, think tanks, foundations, research institutions, and individual citizens (Nelson and Zadek, 2000).

Moon (2002; 2004) identified three reasons why governments would encourage CSR: (1) to substitute for government efforts (for example in the provision of services); (2) to complement government efforts (for example by providing work experience to complement state financed formal education); and (3) to legitimise government efforts (for example by demonstrating that business agendas are being incorporated in government policy). Steurer (2010) argues that initiatives to encourage CSR can be attractive to governments because (1) they can help meet government objectives related to sustainable development and international development, (2) they can complement ‘hard law’ regulation, and (3) they coincide with broader moves away from hierarchical to relational and partnering social governance models.

There have been several attempts to classify government CSR initiatives and policies, according to the aims of public CSR policy – e.g. promoting CSR formalisation vs. promoting transparency (Benbeniste et al., 2005), the roles that government might adopt – such as mandating or facilitating (Fox et al., 2002), and the themes of the CSR agenda to which public policy might speak, such as setting and ensuring compliance with minimum standards or responsible investment (Fox et al., 2002). Albareda et al. (2007) identify 4 different types of public CSR policy in Europe: (1) the partnership model (Nordic countries and Netherlands); (2) the business-in-the-community model (UK and Ireland); the sustainability and citizenship model (Austria, Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg); and the Agora model, based on government-business-civil society dialogue (Mediterranean countries).
Steurer (2010) synthesises from several earlier works to identify five different public CSR policy instruments: (1) informational instruments (‘sermons’), working on the rationale of moral persuasion; (2) economic instruments (‘carrots’), working on the rationale of financial incentives; (3) legal instruments (‘sticks’), working on the rationale of hierarchy and authority; (4) partnering instruments (‘ties’), working on the rationale of exchange of complementary resources and avoidance of regulation, and (5) hybrids of the above; as well as four thematic fields of public policy CSR action: (i) raising awareness and building capacity for CSR, (ii) improving disclosure and transparency, (iii) facilitating socially responsible investment, and (iv) leading by example (for example through public procurement, applying SRI principles to government funds, adopting CSR management systems, reporting on the social and environmental performance of government bodies).

Not surprisingly perhaps, given the emergent nature of this field of enquiry, there appears to be no extant work that investigates public policy initiatives for CSR at the detailed level of individual policies, rather than a broader look at government approaches to CSR in general. At present we therefore only have very limited understanding of how such initiatives are being set up, organised, governed and funded, how they are expected to effect change, and how they successful they are perceived to be. The present paper aims to make a contribution towards addressing this gap by looking in greater detail at several different public policy CSR initiatives across Europe.

**Methodology**

This paper is developed from parts of the data gathered for a larger research project, funded by the Bertelsmann Foundation in Germany and undertaken under the overall guidance of the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Institute for Business Ethics at the University of St Gallen, Switzerland. This project looked at public policy initiatives to encourage greater CSR in five industry sectors: chemicals, telecommunications, financial services, retail, and construction, representing five of the most important industries in Europe. The study was conducted from September 2011 to July 2012 in eight European countries: Germany, Switzerland, France, Netherlands, Poland, Denmark, Spain, and the United Kingdom. In each country, an academic or a small team of academics based in that country collected and interpreted the data according to a set of common criteria. The rationale for the selection of industries and the methodology of the overall project are described in more detail in Beschorner et al. (2013).

The aim of the project was to explore what sector specific public policy initiatives to promote CSR existed and what the characteristics of these initiatives were. The aim of the original project was to establish what constituted good practice and what factors contributed to such good practice. The present paper focuses on the case studies in Spain, France and the United Kingdom. Here we pursue the slightly different aim to explore the characteristics of such initiatives in more detail, particularly the processes and mechanisms by which they (are meant to) operate.

In each country, three short, qualitative case studies of public policy initiatives to promote CSR in a particular industry sector were developed. There were certain criteria for the selection of case studies: they had to be in the five industries specified above and no more than one case study in any one industry; they were meant to illustrate examples of good practice; they needed to be either current or relatively recent; they should be examples of public policy initiatives for CSR specific to
one industry sector rather than industry as a whole. In practice, accessibility was an important criteria for the selection of cases, particularly given the relatively short time span in which the research had to be conducted. Possible case studies in each of the industries were identified by desk research, talking to colleagues and other experts in the industries, particular in industry associations and ministries. The final choices of case studies were made on the basis of whether information – either through desk research or interviews with industry experts – was accessible and sufficiently rich and whether the initiatives promised sufficient interest in terms of complexity, successful completion or likelihood of success, and significance of the issues addressed.

Data on each case study was collected through two main sources: interviews with experts and published data sources from government, industry and, in some cases, academic sources. Experts that were interviewed could be either industry insiders, mostly from industry associations, government (or government agency) staff involved with that particular initiative, and other academics who had some expertise of the respective industry and CSR initiatives within it. The limited time scale and funding of the project meant that the number of interviews conducted and number of document consulted for each case were by necessity limited. The contribution of the study thus does not primarily lie in the detail and richness of each case study but in the possibility of searching for common themes across a totality of 24 cases in eight countries. The present paper starts this process by looking at nine cases in three countries initially.

The data was first analysed on a case by case and country by country approach, following a common template. For the original country by country analysis see Roloff (2013), De la Cuesta Gonzalez and Pardo (2013) and Schaefer (2013). For the purposes of the present paper the data was reanalysed using a thematic approach, focusing on the themes presented by the research questions, i.e. participants involved; organising, governance and funding arrangements; underlying change mechanisms; variations in scope and focus; and participants’ views of the outcomes of the initiatives.

**Findings**

**Overview of initiatives**

The nine initiatives that were analysed for this paper varied significantly in terms of the problems they were meant to address, the participants involved, and the intended outcomes. Table 1 gives an overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of initiative</th>
<th>Problem that is addressed</th>
<th>Intended outcomes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courtauld Commitment (UK, food retail, Phase 1: 2005-2008; Phase 2: 2008-2012; Phase 3: 2012-2015)</td>
<td>Waste Increased levels of waste in the food retail chain; problematic due to negative public perception and lack of landfill space; the EU landfill directive and the resultant UK landfill tax also contributed to the salience of this problem</td>
<td>Phase 1: eliminate further growth in food packaging waste, reduce overall food packaging waste, reduce total food waste; Phase 2: reduce total impact of food packaging, including carbon impact of food packaging</td>
<td>WRAP, a government funded, not-for-profit company dedicated to helping industry reduce waste; individual retailers and food manufacturers; industry associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating Customers Fairly (UK, Financial Services, 2004 - 2009 as a discrete initiative;)</td>
<td>Customer service Series of market failures in retail financial services, including unsuitable investment advice and</td>
<td>To &quot;maintain efficient, orderly and clean markets and to help retail customers achieve a fair deal&quot;; culture</td>
<td>Financial Services Authority (FSA) as the regulator; all financial services providers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle</td>
<td>Strategy for Sustainable Construction</td>
<td>Lyon - Ville équitable et durable</td>
<td>Effinergie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical sector, 2005</td>
<td>Sustainability, incl. mostly social and environmental aspects</td>
<td>Sustainable consumption, fair trade</td>
<td>Energy efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Químico Industrial del Sector Observatorio</td>
<td>Large number of dispersed initiatives aimed at improving different aspects of sustainability in the construction industry</td>
<td>Lyon's municipal administration aims at fostering ethical consumption through public procurement and promotion of similar practices by private; focus on fair trade</td>
<td>The organisation was founded with the objective to develop certification standards for low energy housing. It brought together a number of isolated local initiatives and became eventually a nationwide initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>came into force in</td>
<td>To bring together these diverse initiatives under one document, to achieve a more joint-up strategy on improving sustainability in construction; complex set of high level targets, classified into two areas: means (e.g. public procurement) and ends (e.g. climate change mitigation and adaptation)</td>
<td>1. Change of public procurement policies; 2. local restaurants and retailers to use and sell fair trade products. 3. changed procurement policies in large enterprises; 4. information campaign on Fair Trade; 5. creation of local fair trade councils</td>
<td>Development of certification labels. Certification audits delivered by four pre-existing certification bodies. Dissemination of knowledge around low energy buildings. linking construction firms with the relevant know-how with potential clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain, this public procurement plan came into force in 2008</td>
<td>Strategic Forum for Construction - aims to bring together the main bodies in the construction industry, including construction clients; construction professionals and contractors, product suppliers and site workers, represented by their respective industry associations or trade unions</td>
<td>Public administration, in particularly canteens of administrations and schools; private actors</td>
<td>All main regions of France, nine local associations and 30 organisations in the field of research, technology and business associations as well as 18 companies are members or partners of Effinergie.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
companies to improve the management of environmental issues

| Cajas de ahorro, (Spain, Financial Services, founded in the 19th century) | Financial exclusion | Fostering social inclusion, avoiding usury, stimulating saving, developing the area in which they operated and avoiding the full range of abuses committed by other financial institutions | Central government, local governments, founders, depositors, employees. |

One of the first points to note here is that the countries included in this study vary considerably in the number of accessible cases of public policies for industry specific CSR. In the UK there were a larger number of these initiatives and they were often more focused on specific industries than in France and in Spain. No particular effort was made to include cases in representative fashion across the five industries but the cases in the table above cover all of these except the communications sector.

The issues or problems that these initiatives were designed to address vary widely, which is not really surprising given the multitude of social responsibility issues posed and their variance across industries. The issues include social issues such as unemployment, financial exclusion, customer service and fair trade; and environmental concerns such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, resource efficiency and avoidance of pollution in construction. The initiatives and their intended outcomes also differ considerably in scope: they range from fairly well defined and measurable but limited outcomes such as precise targets for waste reduction in the UK food retail chain to much broader but less clearly defined and measurable goals of encouraging companies to incorporate environmental concerns into their strategies. One case, the Observatorio Industrial del Sector Químico in Spain, stands out as it was not originally designed to address any CSR problem but it ended up fostering environmental management in chemical companies.

Participants on the industry side could be either individual companies or industry associations (or both). On the government side there is a much greater variety of possible participants, ranging from national government departments, regional and local governments, to specifically created, arms-lengths organisations funded by government but not directly part of government (such as WRAP in the UK). Research and other specialist institutions also figured in the lists of participants but there was less presence of civil society organisations. The few civil society associations we identified are close to business such as professional chambers and associations and trade unions. Under-represented are non-governmental organisations which represent a social movement such as Greenpeace or Human Rights Watch and charity organisations.

One question that arises out of this first look at the cases (and others that would have been available for study) is why there seems to be such a varying number of industry-specific public sector initiatives for CSR in different countries. There would seem to be two broad potential reasons why governments might not start or encourage such initiatives to any great extent: (a) there is an overall ideology that government should stay separate from industry and that CSR should be an entirely voluntary activity on the part of industry; or (b) governments prefer to influence industry through direct regulation rather than through soft law or initiatives to encourage CSR. In contrast, the relatively greater focus of the UK government on encouraging CSR through public policy has been
linked to a series of Conservative governments’ reluctance to regulate directly paired with a need to tackle social issues and make the large scale privatisation of public utilities more palatable to a sceptical public (Moon, 2002; 2004). Public sector CSR initiatives may also have been seen as conducive to the ‘third way’ espoused by the Labour government under Tony Blair, intended to cut a way between the extremes of pure capitalism and socialism. In France, few public sector initiatives are industry specific as there is a strong expectation that public involvement should advance a level playing field not only within an industry, but also between industries. The nation-wide consultation process Grenelle de l’Environnement exemplifies this reasoning. This multi-stakeholder consultation resulted in two laws containing over 300 articles furthering sustainability (Roloff, 2013). In Spain most of the public initiatives for fostering CSR have a broad approach or are focused on certain CSR aspects such as environment or equality but, as in France, there are few industry specific initiatives.

One other thing to note here is that government involvement in industry in order to advance public and social goals is not a new phenomenon. One of our cases, the foundation of the savings banks in Spain in the 19th century has several parallels in other countries. From this we may conclude that such initiatives are born out of the general requirements of governments although they will be tempered by historical, political and societal circumstances.

Organisational, governance and funding arrangements: how participants work together

Table 2 shows the organisational, governance and funding arrangements for the nine initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courtauld Commitment</td>
<td>Lead organisation Small team in WRAP leads on the project; they provide advice and free consultancy to the signatory companies; industry associations provide some input into goals and encourage their members to sign up</td>
<td>Lead organisation responsible to government Project owned by WRAP - responsible for achieving targets and reporting publicly; involvement of individual companies and industry associations voluntary - contribute to targets but are not responsible for them</td>
<td>Government Government (UK, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland) fully funds WRAP; this is general funding for the organisation, not just for individual projects; initial outlay for particular projects described as low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating Customers Fairly</td>
<td>Lead organisation Larger FS providers expected to demonstrate their implementation of TCF principles and improved customer outcomes during regular meetings with FSA supervisory team. Smaller firms controlled through thematic reviews and sample investigations.</td>
<td>Hierarchical control Regulatory initiative, hence some hierarchical control; individual firms have discretion of how they are fulfilling the principles of TCF and to set and own their own objectives and targets</td>
<td>Fees based The FSA was an independent body, funded by fees from financial services companies but with a board appointed by the Treasury; funding for this particular initiative came out of the general funding for the FSA ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy for Sustainable Construction</td>
<td>Specific responsibilities of different partners (However, in reality, the ways of working together and responsibilities never seem to have been defined all that</td>
<td>Collaborative governance body plus lead organisation responsibility Officially the strategy sat under the auspices of the Strategic Forum for Construction but individual part-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Note: the FSA was abolished in 2012 and its responsibilities divided between two new bodies: the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority
clearly for this initiative) strategies and targets were (are) often owned by other bodies, such as WRAP (responsible for target relating to reducing waste in construction); these part strategies often survived the demise of the Strategy and are still owned by these bodies).

### Lyon – Ville équitable et durable

**Lead organisation AND collaboration**
Delegation for Sustainable Development and Social Economy initiates and coordinates most activities. Collaboration in local councils and in other project related committees more equally distributed among different stakeholder, notably representatives of retailer and gastronomy. Collaboration mostly on project/activity basis.

**By example from lead organisation**
Public administration sets example for responsible purchasing; companies are encouraged to follow this example. Consumers are addressed through special activities and information on responsible consumption and Fair Trade consumers are encouraged to reconsider and change their own consumption patterns. Three calls for projects proposals were made and 8 projects received financial support so far.

**Local government**
The town of Lyon is financing the activities of the Delegation for Sustainable Development and Social Economy. Specific activities and projects may receive funding from other sources too.

### Effinergie

**Collaboration**
Collaboration on certification guidelines and fora for collaborative learning are organised by a small number of employees of the association. Experts from the regions, organisations, associations and companies meet regularly, with some regions more active than others. Collaboration mostly on project/activity basis.

**Collaborative governance body**
Effinergie is an association. The main positions such as president, vice president and treasurer have so far been held by representatives from different regions. The association’s 5 employees do the main work. Overall, public actors are dominant in the governance of the activities.

**Participant contributions.**

### France Active

**Collaboration with specified roles**
Partnership between for-profit, not-for profit and public actors; The public Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, the related Fonds de Cohésion Sociale and the departmental Conseil Généraux provide the financing for the departmental sections of France Active. This money covers the costs for human resources, rent etc. The credits are mainly provided by banks and in some cases partly through public subsidies.

**Collaborative governance body**
This is an association (NGO). The founding partners are represented in the supervisory board. A number of work groups (strategy, innovation etc.) are active in developing and revising the approach. Here representatives of the partners are also present, e.g. people from banks. In each French department France Active has one or several branches in order to be close to its clients.

**Participant contributions and self funded**
Founding members, the government and the EU make contributions that pay for the employees and the offices. The guaranties are self-financed, i.e. paid for by the clients; credits are usually paid back and remainder is re-insured. Partners pay for additional services, e.g. trainings.

### Plan de contratación pública verde

**Lead organisation(s)**
The government bodies are responsible for developing environmental procurement criteria, which apply directly to larger companies involved in tenders; and indirectly to a large number of small companies subcontracted by those big companies.

**Top-down control through market mechanism**
Government sets the environmental requirements. Companies have to demonstrate that they fulfil them. Some of the requirements imply that the company should have been previously certified by independent certification bodies.

**[No specific funding allocated]**

### Observatorio industrial del

**Collaboration**
Each year participants define a lead

**Collaborative with government lead**
The OISQ had an annual budget
Like the overview of initiatives above, a look at the organisational, governance and funding arrangements provides a picture of considerable variety. In terms of organisation, domination by one lead organisation and more collaborative sharing of responsibilities among participants seem to provide the end points on a continuum, with the variations of different participants taking on clearly defined responsibilities for specific aspects and a mix of lead organisation and collaborative arrangements somewhere along that spectrum.

Governance arrangements are also diverse and seem to align to some extent with the types of CSR instruments identified in the literature, particularly whether an initiative is more along the lines of a partnering instrument or a mandating instrument. The opposites on a spectrum here could be described as top-down control, either through hierarchical or through market mechanisms, vs. governance through various types of collaborative governance bodies, with some mixed arrangements along the spectrum.

In terms of funding arrangements the three main models we found were government funded (in different forms), participant funded (through some kind of subscription or membership fee) and self-funded through income generating activities. Figure 1 represents these organising, governance and funding arrangements in a three-dimensional diagram.
All public policy CSR initiatives must surely share a primary aim of bringing out some socially desirable change in industry behaviour. The question of how such change is to be effected therefore becomes a crucial one. Table 3 shows the mechanisms by which the intended outcomes of each initiative were meant to be achieved.

### Table 3: Change mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courtauld Commitment</th>
<th>Treating Customers Fairly</th>
<th>Strategy for Sustainable Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advice / consultancy</strong>&lt;br&gt;WRAP provides advice on waste management plans and some free consultancy to signatory companies; actual waste reduction work is done by the companies, either individually or in collaboration with others in the supply chain</td>
<td><strong>Light touch regulation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Light touch regulatory initiative; high level principles that all financial services providers had to accept and to demonstrate how they were meeting them; for firms to decide how they meet principles and to demonstrate they were doing so; firms now have to demonstrate adherence to 6 principles through normal regulatory review processes</td>
<td><strong>Public procurement, leading by example, advice</strong>&lt;br&gt;Public procurement most important intended change mechanism, with encouragement of private construction clients to also incorporate sustainability criteria in tenders; some advisory and encouragement work with private construction client and firms; smaller part strategies, such as waste reduction, worked through other means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lyon – Ville equitable et durable</strong>&lt;br&gt;Effinergie</td>
<td><strong>Certification, regulation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Provision of certifications – leading to legal provisions - to encourage construction of buildings in accordance with Effinergie standards; incentives for certified low energy housing, Dissemination of knowledge, expert dialogue, mutual learning and enabling people to find the right experts. Interactions between Effinergie and regulators and collaborative learning are important change mechanisms</td>
<td><strong>Social investment</strong>&lt;br&gt;Helping female entrepreneurs and ‘entreprise solidaire’, fostering quality of entrepreneurial projects and helping entrepreneurs to get money is expected to improve the overall economic situation in France and decrease unemployment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public procurement, leading by example</strong>&lt;br&gt;Companies that want to participate in public-procurement tenders have to fulfil certain quality and environmental standards in their management and also in their offers.</td>
<td><strong>Observatorio industrial del sector químico</strong>&lt;br&gt;Advice</td>
<td><strong>Cajas de Ahorro</strong>&lt;br&gt;Social investment&lt;br&gt;Saving banks made a change by including social impacts as a core part of their business and therefore guaranteeing financial inclusion and reinvesting in local communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the nine cases we found six different intended mechanisms for change. There were:

- Public procurement: three of the nine initiatives were wholly or partly based on securing change through incorporating CSR (environmental, fair trade, etc.) criteria in public procurement tenders.
- Regulation: in two initiatives there was a predominant or partial element of regulation. One may of course question whether these were then still CSR initiatives; however, the light touch, high level principles aspect of Treating Customers Fairly, and the fact that regulation appears to have been an off-shoot rather than the purpose of Effinergie, leads us to include these still under CSR initiatives rather than legislation; we also acknowledge that the borderline between the two can be rather fluid.
- Advice: four of the initiatives were based on advice and consultancy as the main or an additional change mechanism.
- Leading by example: the example of CSR criteria in public procurement is meant to encourage private sector organisations to follow suit.
- Certification: the development of standards and certification is meant to encourage industry to aspire to these certificates and to give construction clients the information to make socially and environmentally responsible purchasing decisions.
- Social investment: this was the main change mechanism in two initiatives, both in different ways focused on providing access to financial services to those who found it otherwise difficult to get such access.

These six change mechanisms map fairly well onto Steurer’s (2010) five types of instrument and four fields of public policy CSR action. Informational (advice), economic (public procurement) and legal (regulation) instruments were all evident, as well as ‘raising awareness and building capacity for CSR’, ‘facilitating socially responsible investment’, and ‘leading by example’. Our analysis suggests some overlap between the type of instruments and the field of action, so future research may want to reconsider whether these are really conceptually separate categories.

**Success of initiatives**

The final question we are asking in this paper is about the perceived success of these initiatives. Table 4 gives an overview.

**Table 4: Participants’ perceptions of success**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courtauld Commitment</th>
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<th>Strategy for Sustainable Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyon – Ville equitable et durable</td>
<td>Participants felt that some progress had been made in providing fairer customer advice but that light touch approach had not effected desired cultural change; some acceptance in the industry of legitimate stakeholder interest in industry accountability, particularly in light of state support.</td>
<td>Observers’ views were that the strategy has not been particularly successful overall, although there had been some successes in smaller part strategies; over-ambitiousness as well as abandonment by government after two year were seen as reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effinergie</td>
<td>No primary data on this, but many newly constructed houses have this type of certification and the change of law is definitely a success.</td>
<td>Between 1988 and 2010, France Active had helped to finance 5890 entrepreneurial projects of the types described above—creating and safe-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The original intention of the wider study was to collect good practice examples of public policy CSR initiatives, therefore most cases chosen were deemed to have been successful at a certain level. The main exception is the Strategy for Sustainable Consumption in the UK, which was more or less abandoned, albeit never formally abolished, after two years, probably due to over-ambitiousness and loss of government interest. What should be noticed, however, is that these initiatives were deemed to be more or less successful by widely different criteria. In some cases, success can be measured to some extent against original outcome targets or other quantitative measures, for example in the case of the Courtauld Commitment, France Active or the Plan de Contratación Pública Verde. In other cases the success or lack thereof has been assessed through more qualitative or impressionist measures, such as in the case of Lyon – Ville Equitable et Durable or Treating Customers Fairly. In yet other cases the measures of success are more related to inputs rather than outcomes, such as some of those described for Cajas de Ahorro, Observatorio Industrial del Sector Químico and, again, Lyon – Ville Equitable et Durable. Given the great variety of initial intentions, intended change mechanisms and social problems addressed, it should not surprise us that participants also used very different criteria to assess success and perhaps this is quite legitimate.

**Conclusion**

This paper is a first attempt to tease out some themes and regularities from a series of case studies of public policy CSR initiatives for specific industries across Europe. For the moment we can note a picture of great variety with a few shared observations.

Notably, public sector involvement in all three countries tends to be directly with businesses and industry associations and tends to exclude or bypass other stakeholder groups such as unions and non-governmental organisations representing social movements as well as charities. In terms of financing three dominant approaches were found, that is public funding, participant funding and funding through income generating activities. It may be a fruitful area for future research to consider in some detail the relationship between public and business funding and the implications of this relation. Cases like the UK Strategy for Sustainable Construction and the Observatorio industrial del sector químico in Spain, show that one of the challenges that public CSR initiatives have to face is related to changes in government following elections and other changes of the political agenda. The medium to longer term success of these kind of initiatives may well depend on their ability of raising
their own funding, such as Effinergie in France, or to foster changes in the company management that will survive beyond the end of an initiative, as in the case of the implementation of environmental management systems linked to the Spanish Plan de contratación pública verde or changes in supply chain management and packaging technology fostered by the Courtauld Commitment in the UK. Although all nine cases studied were considered as relatively successful — in the sense of achieving at least some of their targets, in those two cases in which the public support was not consistently given, targets could only be achieved in part or under difficulties. The continuous commitment of the public partner may well be a prerequisite for success whereas private partners such as business and civil society organisation may be more easily replaced. In general it seems that, once a public institution supports a project, a variety of private actors will consider following this lead.

In this study, the greatest diversity was identified in terms of change mechanisms. In the nine cases studied we found six different ways of fostering CSR, namely public procurement, regulation, advice, leading by example, certification and social investment. This may demonstrate a need to tailor solutions to the problems addressed and the objectives set. Also, differences in legal and political frameworks, industry dynamics and the characteristics of the civil society organisations involved are likely to influence which change mechanism is considered to be the most appropriate and the most effective.

Our findings contribute to the development of a theoretical framework for public-private initiatives for industry specific CSR. Some of our findings and observations map quite straightforwardly onto various categories developed in the literature — for example the change mechanisms—and support the transfer of public policy concepts to the study of public-private initiatives. Others seem to us to develop greater depth to the classifications of such initiatives — for example the organising, governance and funding arrangements—suggesting that existing concepts need to be adjusted and extended on in order to describe this field of action best.

With the continuation of this on-going research project we aim to contribute to the extension and adaption of those theoretical frameworks to public-private initiatives for industry specific CSR. The analysis of more cases should help to identify the most relevant concepts and to improve their empirical fit by making conceptual adjustments.

References


