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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting challenge: an overview

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Abstract
Corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting should reduce information asymmetry and provide an accurate picture of overall company performance. However, managers do not hesitate to adopt less transparent communication strategies, especially when the legitimacy of their companies is threatened. This raises the question of the usefulness of CSR reporting from the perspective of the various stakeholders. This is especially challenging as managers can choose between reporting quantitative and narrative CSR information, as well as information that may have a positive impact on society and other harmful (negative) information.
Keywords: corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting,CSR communication strategy, quantitative vs. narrative CSR information, positive vs. negative CSR information.

Introduction

The growing importance of sustainable development in the international community has not left companies indifferent. The place they occupy in the international economic scene has led them to demonstrate a commitment to the premises of sustainable development and, consequently, adapt their strategies to societal[1] issues. Thus, the implementation of this notion at the micro level is inevitable, and the emergence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the outcome.

The concept of CSR appeared in the economic literature from the 1960s but only gained significant momentum in the 1990s. It is a multidimensional and intrinsically complex construct that lacks a consensus on its definition (Kühn *et al.* 2014). On the one hand, CSR is a matter of public interest with legal, ethical and economic aspects that need to be integrated into a general strategy, on the other hand, CSR has the task of establishing a rigorous, and sometimes delicate, balance between economic, environmental and social considerations.

The definition of CSR given by Dyllick and Hockerts (2002) is based on its connection to the major principle of sustainable development (SD), namely, inter and intra-generational equity. In fact, the authors assume that CSR consists of

> *meeting the needs of a firm's direct and indirect stakeholders (such as shareholders, employees, clients, pressure groups, communities etc), without compromising its ability to meet the needs of future stakeholders as well*. (p. 131)

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This shows that the real challenge is to push the boundaries of corporate responsibility. Commitment to society in general and to stakeholders in particular has been added to a constant preoccupation with profit maximization. Thus, the assumption of a predominance of shareholder interests, often retained by researchers in economics, finance, and accounting, has been neglected. Managers try to find a fair balance between satisfying shareholders' demands and committing to the company (Carroll, 1991). In this way, they build a win-win relationship that would improve the overall performance of the company.

To assess its responsible behaviour, it is necessary to evaluate the impact of its activities by measuring societal performance. Thus, companies have voluntarily established indicators for measuring CSR performance. However, few companies are required and guided by regulatory standards to prepare and disclose CSR information. This gives rise to a form of self-regulation in which societal reporting is partly the responsibility of accounting professionals (Chen and Bouvain, 2009). Consequently, CSR reporting practices have remained perplexed, varying across sectors, and resigned to corporate social and moral perspectives (Huang and Watson, 2015). This latitude explains the multitude of qualifications attributed to companies' CSRreports (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013).

CSR reporting is the use of different channels of communication to inform internal and external stakeholders about societal information and the overall performance of the company, which moderate their increasingly expectations and help the company fulfil its responsibility toward society.Initially, it was a voluntary practice; therefore, its adoption was a matter of debate.Then, the focus shifted to the content of published CSR information, particularly on its scope, often expressed in terms of the volume released, and on its quality, which is generally confused between a narrative and descriptive disclosure approach, as opposed to quantitative and monetary data (Cho *et al.* 2010; Fifka 2013).

Most of the information published in societal reports sheds light on the impact of a company's activities. Therefore, CSR reporting is seen as a communication rather than an informational tool: it remains at the discretion of management to disseminate what they consider material and relevant (Holder-Webb *et al.* 2009). As a result, many reports have been criticised for their self-elaborating, predominantly strategic, and selective tendencies (Chelli *et al.* 2014; García-Sánchez and Araujo-Bernardo, 2020). Companies generally prefer this form of reporting because it offers the possibility of shaping the impressions of stakeholders(Neu *et al.* 1998). This raises the question of the transparency and usefulness of societal reporting. It should be noted that even after the regulation of societal reporting in some countries, this question remains unanswered.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. The first section details the motivations for CSR reporting. Section 2 focuses on the purpose of the CSR reporting. In Section 3, we examine different CSR communication strategies and their impact on company performance. The final section concludes the paper.

Motivations for CSR reporting

The myriad of recent scandals involving several companies has continued to shake up capital markets and stimulate media interest. Thus, the completeness and transparency of the

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information required by stakeholders is at the heart of a debate in which companies have come to recognise the importance of financial and societal reporting. Moreover, social (*e.g.*, poverty, social inequality, corruption) and environmental (*e.g.,* carbon emissions, water use, waste) concerns are currently more acute than ever. This has led companies to consider a more systematic account of CSR reporting. Through societal reporting, a company communicates how it uses, develops (or depletes) and more generally, affects human capital and natural resources. Thus, the organisation should not only take responsibility for the impacts of its activities and decisions, but also be accountable for them. Thus, the organisation must be transparent, which will generate a gain in trust from stakeholders. Shareholders, for example, will be able to correctly assess the risks and opportunities associated with climate change (Matsumura *et al.*, 2014). According to Clarkson *et al.* (2013), transparency increases value.

Cho *et al.* (2015) provide three reasons for the growth in the volume of societal information published by US companies. The first is specific to environmental aspects. The tightening of environmental regulations (Superfund legislation and the Toxics Release Inventory "TRI") which has spilled over into the requirements of accounting standard setters (*e.g.,* the FASB, SEC and AICPA have all required the recognition and disclosure of environmental provisions). Second, the emergence of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) which seek to promoteCSR reporting to the same level as financial reporting, and the widespread practice of disclosure through independent CSR reports. The third cause is due to the emergence in the 1980s of new investment portfolios that included only socially and environmentally efficient companies, and the growth of socially responsible investments in capital markets, where investors are prepared to pay an additional premium for committed companies.

Similarly, the emergence of agencies that evaluate, rate, and rank companies according to their societal performance (*e.g.,* Vigeo, KLD...), as well as the creation of societal stock market indices, have prompted companies seeking to top these indices to disclose more CSR information. In this respect, Ioannou and Serafeim (2015) point out that this movement towards socially responsible investment explains the decadence of an institutional logic framing the financial markets where the search for shareholders' interests prevails (agency theory) in favour of the emergence of an institutionalisation of a logic turned towards all stakeholders (stakeholder theory). Thus, the behaviour of the main actors in financial markets has changed. For example, CSR practice is no longer interpreted as generating agency costs, but as a means of satisfying the expectations of stakeholders. Consequently, financial analysts applaud companies engaging in CSR by formulating optimistic investment recommendations that were previously pessimistic.

The motivations that drive companies towards CSR reporting differ from those of financial reporting in that the audience goes beyond investors to include all stakeholders. First, the achievement of objectives such as enhancing reputation, gaining competitive advantage, achieving industry leadership, motivating employees, attracting top talent, and building mutually beneficial partnership relationships (Dhaliwal *et al.* 2014). All these objectives lead to sales growth and improved financial performance. For example, Lev *et al.*

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(2010) show that charitable donations enable future revenue growth in companies that belong to sectors sensitive to consumer perceptions.

Many studies show that investors recognise the value relevance ofinformation relating to CSR by incorporating it into their decision-making processes, thus allowing them to benefit from both social and economic benefits (Ioannou and Serafeim 2017; Cho *et al.*, 2010; Kühn *et al.*, 2014). The availability of other external sources of CSR performance assessment (*e.g.,* the TRI in the United States or the ratings from specialised agencies) does not seem to diminish the usefulness of societal reporting for investors as it provides additional information (Clarkson *et al.*, 2013). Indeed, the voluntary disclosure of societal information is used as a positive signal that reflects companies' confidence in their societal performance. It can also be used to justify poor performance (Dhaliwal *et al.*, 2011). Sustainable performance reporting is therefore a crucial step towards a market that rewards long-term wealth creation in a fair and just society. Recent work has sought to understand the role of capital markets as an intermediary mechanism through which CSR creates long-term value (Cheng *et al.*, 2014).

The purpose of CSR reporting

Despite the large number of studies confirming the value relevanceof CSR information, in particular, environmental information, either by measuring the reaction of the financial market (Berthelot *et al.*, 2012; Clarkson *et al.*, 2013; Peters and Romi 2014, Hung *et al.*, 2015; Aouadi and Marsat, 2018) or by studying the behavioural reactions of investors and analysts (Dhaliwal *et al.*, 2011; Plumlee *et al.* 2015; Ioannou and Serafeim, 2015;), we note that there is still a lack of clear and unanimous answers regarding the purpose of this information: Is it for shareholders? To other stakeholders? Or both?

Two approaches have been considered to explain management behaviour in relation to CSR reporting, one focuses on shareholder value, and the other on stakeholder value. The shareholder approach, embraced by economic researchers and brought back to the forefront in recent years through recent works published in leading international journals[2], assumes that any action taken by managers aim to improve firms’ financial performance, thereby increasing shareholder value. The central question is whether CSR creates value or not. Subsequently, any societal disclosure practice that does not lead to a reduction in risk is considered inappropriate because it destroys companies’ value. Moreover, benefits, if any, must be greater than costs (Matsumura *et al.* 2014). In this case, the pretenders to this view consider that the CSR actions undertaken are 'irresponsible' and lessened to an act of waste of resources (Walker*et al.*, 2019). Thus, they reject any positive link between CSR commitment and financial performance. Several explanations have been proposed to explain the absence of this relationship. Naturally, the first explanation is the absence of altruistic behaviour by managers, where CSR spending only benefits the interests of managers, for example, to fund their own charitable projects (Huang and Watson, 2015). In addition, according to Bénabou and Tirole (2010), CSR expenditure is a form of delegated philanthropy, where the company spends some or all of the money originally intended for them under the endorsement of stakeholders (investors, consumers, employees, etc.) on CSR activities. Stakeholders delegate this action because they believe that a company can do so more efficiently.

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However, this approach is reductive and does not provide a wide range of research opportunities (Moser and Martin, 2012). It shows its limitations if the following question is raised: How would managers behave if shareholders express a desire for more societal information, even ifthis means a transfer of wealth from shareholders to other stakeholders?
By contrast, the stakeholder approach places societal reporting within the framework of the social contract between the firm and society (García-Sánchez and Araujo-Bernardo, 2020). In the eyes of managers, the interests of stakeholder prevail, even at the expense of those of shareholder interests. They may retain projects that destroy shareholder value, where financial costs exceed revenue (Moser and Martin, 2012). Similarly, societal benefits outweigh financial benefits.

Overall, divergence between the objectives of the two approaches is evident. As Huang and Watson (2015) pointed out, profit maximisation constrains the integration of CSR into corporate affairs. Despite this, managers have not stopped trying to reconcile shareholder expectations with the needs of stakeholders by seeking to increase both shareholder and stakeholders' values. Indeed, placing CSR at the heart of a competitive strategy is a sine qua non for managers with moral and ethical fibres to succeed in undertaking societal projects that will enrich shareholders (Flammer 2015). For example, Epstein (2008) argues that companies that integrate climate change risks into their strategies (*e.g.,* investing in renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions) will have their stock price expectations revised upward by investors. Similarly, Ioannou and Serafeim (2015) show that as the analyst community and financial markets are invaded by an institutional logic oriented toward stakeholders (replacing a vision dominated by the shareholder-manager agency relationship), CSR has been considered a key component of the strategy that minimises operational risk and contributes to the improvement of long-term financial performance. Consequently, analysts' forecasts, which investors trust, have become optimistic regarding companies that perform in CSR. However, Moser and Martin (2012) argue that, even if CSR investments are profitable, deploying resources in other investments yields a higher return. Alternatively, this profitability could be derived from the entire portfolio of activities and within this portfolio, there may be unprofitable activities.

CSR disclosure strategies

Quantitative information vs. narrative information

Although a universal definition of good-quality disclosure is lacking, coupled with the difficulty of measuring it, the literature shows efforts to construct quality indices reflecting the volume of information published, particularly environmental information (*e.g.,* Chelli *et al.* 2014; Clarkson *et al.* 2008). Indeed, CSR reporting is a particularly complex subject of investigation, as it combines quantitative and narrative information (Plumlee *et al.* 2015).

Academic research presents quantitative indicators as quantities established from observable or calculable quantities that reflect the impact of a given activity in various ways (Liberti and Petersen, 2019). Quantitative information can be non-financial, such as the physical quantity of substantial reductions in polluting emissions or the volume of recycled materials. By contrast, quantitative financial information focuses on the economic aspects of

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societal activities and events. In both cases, these quantities can be reported in absolute or relative terms.

According to another view, academic research focuses on qualitative management indicators that trace the efforts of companies to reduce the impact of their activity. For example, in an environmental framework, the integration of environmental objectives into company planning, eco-design, product life-cycle analysis, and the development of green products are qualitative indicators for measuring companies' environmental performance (Albertini 2013).

Many studies have found that it is preferable to distinguish between these two types of information (Jeriji and Louhichi, 2021). It was assumed that they did not have the same informative content. Despite the predominance of qualitative information in annual reports, researchers argue that quantitative information is less biased and more credible, and therefore, of higher quality (Boiral *et al.,* 2019; Plumlee *et al.* 2015). Criado-Jimènez *et al.* (2008) consider that environmental information is of good quality if, in addition to being announced to the general public, it is described and evaluated. Indeed, without an operational measure, the notion of quality remains vague and imprecise. Quantitative or numerical information is of good quality if it is verifiable, easily comparable, sufficiently precise, and can be communicated in a standardised form (Liberti and Petersen, 2019). By contrast, narrative and soft information are reflexive and usually capture strategies and policies (Jeriji and Louhichi, 2021). As this soft information is easily manipulable, it may be used to manage public impressions (Neu *et al.*, 1998) and improve the company's image (Cho *et al.* 2010). In fact, the narrative information is easily imitated by companies with poor CSR performance because it is difficult to verify, compare, and inaccurate. They are fraught with uncertainty due to their high degree of subjectivity, making it difficult to ascertain their credibility (Huang and Watson, 2015). In this line, Clarkson *et al.* (2008) claim that the percentage of narrative/soft information in CSR report can be used as a proxy of the adoption of the 'legitimisation' strategy.

Although societal disclosure should not be used for the concealment of repugnant activities and their negative impacts, several authors argue that this practice is used as a tool for impression management, which helps maintain or improve the reputation of the company and the legitimacy of its activities (Cho *et al.* 2015;García-Sánchez and Araujo-Bernardo, 2020; Rupley *et al.* 2012). Moreover, several organizations promoting CSR, such as the GRI, have used reputation to covet companies to practice societal reporting.

Legitimacy theory proponents (Deegan 2002, Patten 1991) argue that companies exposed to social and political pressures release more CSR information in an attempt to reduce their visibility. For example, in France, the dissemination of societal information, which gradually became a norm after the adoption of the NRE law, has always been explained by factors related to legitimacy, notably, the size of the company, belonging to sensitive sectors, and the disclosure of significant information with a negative impact, rather than factors that reflect better quality and transparency (the qualitative attributes of information), as required by the legislator (Chauvey *et al.* 2015). The authors conclude that 'managerial

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capture' of the reporting process runs counter to the objectives of the NRE law, namely transparency.

Reputation is assessed based on stakeholders' perceptions of the company's activities and actions. This leaves considerable room for improvement in the company's image. Thus, there is a risk of perceptions discounting performance in the assessment of a company's reputation. In this case, voluntary disclosure of societal information is used to filter and shape perceptions. Bebbington *et al.* (2008) confirm that reporting is a perception-creating mechanism, and subsequently assume that societal disclosure is a tool for managing reputational risk. To achieve this goal, managers manipulate qualitative and narrative information, and even hide embarrassing information by acting on the amount of information to be disclosed, on its scope or the themes addressed, and on rhetorical devices, that is, the language and tone used in the report. For example, in the United States, Patten (2000) notes that following the enactment of a law in the early 1990s which required the publication of negative environmental information (hazardous waste remediation), companies sought to overshadow the impact of this bad news by publishing positive information. Indeed, companies with poor CSR performance and reputation hold an ambivalent discourse under optimistic rhetoric, where uncertainty and complexity prevail, which would allow them, according to legitimacy theory, to camouflage their poor CSR performance and disguise their reputation (Cho *et al.* 2015; De Villiers and Van Staden 2011). The same behaviour is conceivable for companies that are most exposed to environmental risks, owing to the nature of their activities (Aerts and Cormier 2009). However, Cho *et al.* (2015) show that the effect of belonging to a sensitive sector on the quality of information disseminated is becoming increasingly less important. The authors explain that this trend is due to the widespread practice of disclosing standalone CSR reports by 'clean' companies. Consequently, these companies often use vague and biased wording in their reporting (Boiral *et al.,* 2019), similar to the voluntary announcement of bad news, which is synonymous with a downward forecast of a company's value (Plumlee *et al.* 2015).

Furthermore, societal reporting strongly influences the policies of the institutions that manage socially responsible indices. Paradoxically, Cho *et al.* (2012) show that the influence of societal performance is not as strong as that of disclosure. On this basis, any company that seeks to build its reputation by being present in these indices, especially poor CSR performers, discloses more societal information. Indeed, Cho *et al.* (2012) conclude that the lowest-performing large US companies in environmentally sensitive sectors have the highest presence in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) because they disclose more voluntary environmental information than other companies.

A few companies have developed proactive and understandable reporting methods (Toppinen *et al.* 2012). Instead, they tend to disseminate information of a positive nature in reports that whitewash the company by adopting a positive communication tone, which becomes complex when it comes to hiding unfavourable information (Cho *et al.* 2010). In this way, reporting is approached in a superficial manner, and risks are reduced to mere public relations exercises. In this case, a sceptical and suspicious public would not hesitate to accuse companies of fraud and reduce reporting to mere greenwashing. Thus, the objective of

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voluntary disclosure is to protect a company's interests by avoiding possible intervention by public authorities (Matsumura *et al.* 2014). Consequently, managers implement a communicative strategy of concealment that diverts readers' attention from sensitive to progress points (Chelli *et al.* 2014). Thus, information is rich and complete on some actions or events with a positive impact and approximates and obscures on other aspects that give a negative perception (Neu *et al.*, 1998; HolderWebb *et al.* 2009). Moreover, the results of Plumlee *et al.* (2015) support the assumption of managers that the publication of positive information, and to a lesser degree, neutral information, will have an impact on the company value. In order to discharge their responsibilities towards society, companies do not hesitate to broadcast a discourse that attributes poor performance to external factors. Good performance, on the other hand, is attributed to the company (Cho *et al.* 2010).

In order to put an end to this spurious trend, the GRI, through its guidelines (2011, 2013), advocates that the relevant aspects to be disclosed should respect the principle of positive/negative balance of the organization's societal performance. In other words, every company is required to disclose positive and negative information that will allow a reasonable assessment of overall performance. Thus, according to GRI G4. (2013, p13):

> *The report should avoid selections, omissions, or presentation formats that are reasonably likely to unduly or inappropriately influence a decision or judgment by the report reader...It should include both favorable and unfavorable results...It should clearly distinguish between factual presentation and the organization's interpretation of information.*

This principle has certainly been borrowed from another framework similar to that in our study. Previously, various national and international financial reporting standard setters have referred to the notion of "neutrality," whereby information should not influence decisions one way or the other by the very way it is presented.

Reporting of negative CSR information

Undoubtedly, managers are reluctant to publish harmful information, particularly when it is relevant. They believe that stakeholders perceive the disclosure of negative aspects as a departure from commonly accepted norms, values, and beliefs (Criado-Jiménez *et al.* 2008; Aouadi and Marsat, 2018). This could put managers in an uncomfortable situation as the impact of these negative aspects diverges significantly from society's expressed expectations of the organisation's behaviour and performance. Consequently, the company's legitimacy is threatened. Chelli *et al.* (2014) show that in France, following the enactment of the NRE law requiring listed companies to disclose a set of societal information from 2002, environmental information with a negative impact has had less momentum than the rest of the information. Matsumura *et al.* (2014) argue that the publication of this type of information generates costs related to new litigation by awakening previously uninformed victims.

Managers also believe that investors perceive this type of information as poor societal performance, which could cause the deterioration of financial performance because of increased financial risk (Hahn and Lülfs, 2014). Chapple *et al.* (2013) and Matsumura *et al.* (2014) provide examples of carbon and sulphur emissions, which have become key elements

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in analysing the companies' risk profile. Indeed, the empirical results indicate that firm value decreases in proportion to the amount of $CO2$ and S02 released.

Generally, stakeholders are informed through the media about controversies related to environmental issues and would expect companies to react by being transparent. They may not be comfortable with publishing information free of negative connotations. As noted above, they will accuse companies of greenwashing and go so far as to question the reliability, comparability, and informative content of published information (Aouadi and Marsat, 2018; Reimsbach and Hahn 2015). Thus, by disclosing negative information, managers can send a positive signal of risk awareness and, consequently, of their management's ability to mitigate or even avoid its occurrence and consequences. Hence, the target appreciates the true value of the managers' preventive policies and choices when addressing negative incidents. Indeed, such a policy reduces the environmental risks that are potentially costly in terms of cash flow. Investors reward the company for its ability to anticipate and defer potential costs and liabilities. For example, the risk premium demanded by shareholders would decrease. Moreover, Clarkson *et al.* (2013) prove that in the American context, communicating a proactive strategy helps reduce production costs and therefore increases profits, since the environmental issue is no longer seen as a constraint but as a business opportunity.

Companies deploy a proactive strategy by implementing environmental management tools, notably an environmental management system (EMS), often ISO 14001 certified, to take advantage of the progressive scarcity of resources and gain a strong and sustainable competitive advantage (Albertini, 2013). Reimsbach and Hahn (2015) conduct an experimental study to examine lay investors' reactions to the disclosure of negative incidents by companies and/or independent third parties (NGOs). In the first case, their results show that, in line with signalling theory, investors do not react to this practice. However, their reactions change if this type of information is disclosed only by NGOs against company concealment. Devaluation is heavy and, as a preventive measure, investors punish the company for other (potential) incidents that have not (yet) been disclosed. Finally, simultaneous disclosure of negative incidents by the company and third parties moderates investors' negative reaction of investors. Similarly, Rupley *et al.* (2012) show that institutional investors react only to damaging media reports by encouraging management to publish more voluntary environmental information. These findings concur with those of Matsumura *et al.* (2014), as their results show that the market sanctions all companies that emit carbon (CO_2) and the sanctions become more severe if the company hide this information with negative connotation. In an earlier study, Chan and Milne (1999) showed that, when faced with the publication of environmental information with negative impacts, the attitude of investors would be a negative reaction. However, they do not react to information that reflects a good environmental performance.

Furthermore, companies that deploy a strategy of substantial legitimisation of corrective actions to resolve, limit, or prevent the occurrence of negative incidents are more successful in changing stakeholders' perceptions of their legitimacy, in contrast to those that opt for a symbolically oriented strategy that prioritises the orientation of stakeholders' judgments to the detriment of the true picture of societal performance (Aouadi and Marsat,

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2018). The latter believe that such companies recognise these incidents and are willing to deal with them. Reimsbach and Hahn (2015) assimilate this strategy of proactive disclosure of negative aspects as a risk mitigation tool, particularly when simultaneous disclosure of the same negative aspect is ensured by another independent third party. Authors also show that nonprofessional investors value this type of information. Similarly, Plumlee *et al.* (2015) find that this practice is more prevalent among companies in sectors with higher environmental risk and conclude that investors do not sanction negative disclosure. This suggests that the market is tolerant of negative information from companies in polluting sectors but much less so when it comes to concealing information.

Conclusion

This study is part of a body of research that focuses on the quality of the societal information disclosed by companies. Many companies use vague and biased language in their societal reporting (Boiral *et al.,* 2019), to protect their image and reputation. Hence, the usefulness of such information is highlighted, and the credibility of its content is questioned.

Regulations and reporting requirements have been established. Governments, through their various institutions, in particularly financial market regulators, have taken the initiative to mandateCSR reporting. In addition, companies can resort to the work of private law organisations that have promoted their own reporting standards, particularly the GRI. Despite these harmonisation efforts, many disparities in reporting practices have persisted. However, regulation in favour of CSR reporting is only relevant if behind it, the legislator puts in place an effective monitoring and enforcement procedure. We emphasise the importance of having complementary institutions to monitor companies' actions and enforce CSR rules more effectively.

However, disclosure is the only control mechanism that protects stakeholders, particularly investors, and improves capital market efficiency. Additionally, the disclosure of information with negative impacts reduces the threat of tighter laws and regulations, as well as the risk of incurring additional costs and liabilities (Chan and Milne, 1999, Dhaliwal *et al.*, 2011; Jeriji and Louhichi, 2021). Therefore, we assume that deciding to disclose more this type of information is a courageous act that contributes to improving the quality of reporting and helps provide stakeholders a better perception regarding information transparency and reliability (Hahn and Lülfs, 2014; Reimsbach and Hahn, 2015).

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[1] The terms 'societal' and 'CSR' are used interchangeably.
[2] e.g., the Accounting Review, the Journal of Accounting and Economics, the Journal of Accounting Research.

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