Corporate Social Responsibility As A Basis For Interaction Between Business And Government

Khubaev Tamerlan Alekseevich*, Pozmogov AnatolijIvanovich2, Tavasieva Zalina Ramazanovnav3, Gergiev IrasJ eduardovich4

1Doctor of Economics, Professor Department of Management, Faculty of Finance and Economics Federal State-Funded Educational Institution of Higher Education "Financial University under Government of the Russian Federation" (Vladikavkaz branch)

2,3 Candidate of economic sciences, Professor Department of Management, Faculty of Finance and Economics Federal State-Funded Educational Institution of Higher Education “Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation” (Vladikavkaz branch)

4Candidate of economic sciences, Senior Researcher Federal State-Funded Educational Institution of Higher Education “Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation” (Vladikavkaz branch)

*Corresponding author Email: tamerlanenergo@gmail.com

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Abstract

The article shows the essence and content of corporate social responsibility, its importance in realizing the corporate interests of owners, employees, as well as society as a
whole. The author systematized levels and stages of corporate social responsibility, disclosed the main methodological approaches to the assessment of corporate social responsibility, taking into account the life cycle and the scope of the company as a tool for making managerial decisions. The author also analyzed the interrelation between corporate social responsibility and corporate governance, the main reasons restraining the introduction of socially responsible in the practice of domestic corporations as an instrument for achieving strategic goals, improving business reputation and competitiveness and increasing market capitalization. It is dealt with the necessity of the organization’s compliance with the current legislation, moral and ethical standards and fulfillment of obligations to counterparties as a tool for increasing competitiveness, risk management and maintaining the image of a socially-oriented company, as well as state regulation of companies’ activities in the field of corporate social responsibility with the aim of eliminating duplication of social and environmental programs in the regions.

**Object:** The aim of the research is to find the most effective options for interaction between business and government in the turbulence of the economic system.

**Methods:** formal-logical and general scientific.

**Findings:** Weak mechanisms for monitoring and analyzing corporate social responsibility prevent widespread adoption of socially responsible behavior in the practice of domestic corporations. There is a need to develop a technique and a methodology that allow to determine the level of social responsibility, to identify the optimal directions of interaction between business and government with the goal of further positive for the society changes.

**Conclusions:** The need to introduce policies and standards of corporate social responsibility is related to the specifics of the functioning and development of the domestic economy. Non-financial risks (political, social, environmental, legislative, etc.) in Russia are higher than in the European Union countries and the United States. This makes it necessary to improve the management of non-financial risks within corporate social responsibility, which play a de facto increasingly important role due to the peculiarities of the Russian market, weak legislative and practical enforcement
of property rights and free unregulated competition.

**Key Words:** corporate social responsibility; sustainable development; social utility; evaluation criteria; non-financial report; level of social responsibility.

# 1 Introduction

Improving the quality of life, national wealth as a combination of the physical, financial, natural and human capital of the country in valuation, social and environmental responsibility are priority areas of social development. The interaction between business, government and society is the basis for the sustainable development of socio-economic systems. Corporations possessing considerable resources among which human capital are increasingly interested in their effective use for the formation of newly created value, their development through the establishment of mutually beneficial relations with various stakeholders, thereby demonstrating corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The production and population growth has caused aggravation of environmental and social problems. In this way, corporate social responsibility and formation of a strategy for the transition to sustainable development are in the spotlight now.

In the developed world the social responsibility of business is a platform for mutually advantageous cooperation between business and government. However, this is a long and not easy process even in developed and prosperous economies. The formation of socially responsible behavior in the corporate environment is possible only with system support from the state and its direct participation in solving ecological and social problems.

Recognition of social responsibility, identification and interaction with stakeholders which are fundamental practices of corporate social responsibility contributed to an increase in the number of theoretical and practical works devoted to the social utility of corporations. In particular, a significant number of publications and scientific reports are related to the definition of the essence and content of CSR, the disclosure of forms and tools, the objective necessity and internal motivation for implementing CSR principles, the rationale for CSR as a tool for risk management, its place in the corporate governance system and interaction with authorities.
and administration.

Despite the fact that there is a permanent discussion on the relationship and the role of business in society there is no single and universally accepted definition of corporate social responsibility in theory and international practice. Literature Review

The tradition of studying the ethical foundations of the economy goes back to the works of ancient Greek scholars. Originally the concept of responsibility was formed in the framework of ethics among such categories as morality, duty, good and evil, conscience and freedom [20, p.5]. The origin of the concept of social responsibility, in the modern sense, refers to the beginning of the XIX century, when there was a movement in defense of workers’ rights in the US and Europe. The theoretical preconditions for understanding of corporate social responsibility go back to the teachings of H. Gantt, R. Owen, H. Ford, A. Carnegie, O. Sheldon and other authors. Social responsibility is a multidimensional and multilevel concept. Directions for the implementation of corporate social responsibility by most theorists and practitioners are systematized and ranked in three key areas - economic, social and environmental or ecological. A. Carroll was the first who in the late 1970’s suggested multi-level interpretation of corporate social responsibility which included economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic (discretionary) aspects in the activity of an organization [6, p.449].

A large number of studies have been already implemented on the study, systematization and refinement of existing interpretations of corporate social responsibility. Having studied 37 different definitions of the essence and content of CSR, A. Dahlsrud distinguished two priority approaches to CSR: "social" and "stakeholder" one [7, p.5]. This approach to the definition of CSR, in our opinion, is quite logical, since in the first case it reflects a direct orientation to the company’s contribution to the society development, and in the second case it personifies its participants.

Consider the gradation of levels and development stages of corporate social responsibility proposed by various Russian and foreign authors. The Association of Managers proposes to distinguish three stages according to the degree of business participation in the social development of the society: traditional charity, strategic charity, social investment. The Commission of the European Communities identifies five stages of CSR development: defensive stage,
legal stage, functional stage, strategic stage, civil stage.

With the aim to motivate corporations to socially responsible activities by increasing the investment attractiveness SA. Strizhov considers five levels of CSR development (liberal, traditional, partnership, integration, innovation). From the standpoint of stakeholders B.S. Bataev aggregates three levels of CSR development: internal level, intermediate level, external level.

D. Robin and R. Reidenbach distinguished in their papers five levels in CSR development which are based on compliance with ethical behavior:

1. Immoral behavior which means owners and managers are the only stakeholders in the organization. The mission and financial strategy of the corporation is aimed at maximizing profits;
2. Law-abiding behavior that means to do business with national and international CSR laws;
3. Responsive behavior that means to do business according to ethical laws. The campaign management understands the importance of building good relations with society;
4. Initial ethical behavior. The activity of the organization reflects a heightened attention to the generally accepted values. Companies that have reached the fourth level demonstrate an understanding of the inevitability of costs in the implementation of the strategy of corporate social responsibility;
5. Developed ethical behavior. The fifth level corresponds to the developed moral conduct of the corporation. The organization demonstrates in practice a commitment to the generally accepted values, and the values are shared by all employees and are prioritized in the process of the company’s functioning.

H. Johnson also identifies five levels of social corporate responsibility. These are irresponsibility, law-abiding, fragmented, strategic and all-round support of society. At the level of irresponsibility in the corporation the priority is the maximization of profits. At the next level of corporate social responsibility companies still cannot position themselves as socially responsible, but they minimize the costs arising from the violation of the law. Companies that have reached an understanding of the need to integrate socially responsible behavior into the financial and economic activities are characterized by a fragmented level of CSR development. Strategic corporate social responsibility is to build the strategy of the company’s
development based on the ideas of social responsibility. It is aimed at the interests of stakeholders and benefiting from strategic philanthropy, which increases the competitiveness and transformation of the profit-making chain in the course of relevant innovations.

Compliance with the fifth level means giving up the target to maximize profits. Profit becomes a tool for the implementation of social and environmental corporation programs and is considered as a necessary factor of doing business. At this level, more attention is paid to the reputation and image of the company, social and environmental performance.

All these authors categorize the levels and stages of CSR development of the companies based on the degree of companies’ participation in the social development of the society, interaction with stakeholders, etc. At the same time, insufficient attention is paid to the relationship between the stage of the company’s life cycle and the level of corporate social responsibility.

In domestic and foreign literature theorists and practitioners distinguish different number of stages of the corporate life cycles. An important contribution to the development of the theory of the corporate life cycles was introduced by I. Adizes. His method is based on that the number of years in the organization’s market and the amount of profit do not have a direct impact on the stage of the corporate life cycle. I. Adizes identifies the characteristics of organizations in the certain stages of life and proposes to explore the stages of the organizations life cycle through the prism of administrative and strategic management. The sequence of the stages of the organizations life cycle according to Adizes is as follows: origination, infancy, high activity, youth, prosperity, stability, aristocracy, early bureaucracy, bureaucratization, death[1]. A number of authors distinguish five stages of the life cycle of organizations. D. Miller, P.H. Friesen identifies the following stages:

1 Birth phase;
2 Growth phase;
3 Maturity phase;
4 Revival phase;
5 Decline phase.
E. Flamholtz similarly to D. Miller, P.H. Friesen also defines five stages [15]:

1. New venture;
2. Expansion;
3. Professionalization;
4. Diversification;
5. Decline and revitalization.

W. Dickinson classifies the life cycle levels depending on the main type of activity, cash flows on financial and investment activities, determining their characteristics according to their growth or decline. We believe that the most relevant in relation to the CSR assessment is W. Dickinson’s classification, because unlike the other authors classifications he introduces the phase of uncertainty. This phase unites a wide range of corporations in the period of destabilization of external or internal environment that leads to a reducing of the company’s financial opportunities.

2 Results

The concept of corporate social responsibility has become widespread in recent years both at the world level and in the Russian Federation. Currently, in economically developed countries, corporate social responsibility has become an instrument of social partnership with authorities and society as a whole.

The implementation of corporate social responsibility in order to ensure sustainable development is carried out in the areas related to environment protection, human health and gene pool, production of quality products and compliance with generally accepted legislative and ethical standards of business.

The most important normative document defining and regulating corporate social responsibility in the Russian Federation is the National Standard of the Russian Federation GOST R ISO 26000-2012 “Guidelines for Social Responsibility”.

In the social responsibility guide GOST R ISO 26000-2012, social responsibility is defined as the responsibility of an organization
for the impact of its decisions and activities on society and environment through transparent and ethical behavior that:

- promotes sustainable development, including health and welfare of society;
- takes into account the expectations of interested parties;
- complies with the applicable legislation and confirms to international standards of conduct;
- is included in the activities of the whole company and used in its relationship.

The same standard defines the notion of sustainable development as follows: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without impugning the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

The level of corporate social responsibility is the most important criterion of the company’s actual participation in solving social and economic problems of the society. Companies implementing more significant strategic goals, in the form of social and environmental programs, acquire competitive advantages.

The current trends actualize the issue of assessing not only the economic performance of an organization, but also its social utility. Analysis of the current state, forecasting, comparative analysis of corporate social responsibility, management of social responsibility are impossible without defining criteria for assessing the socially-oriented activities of the corporation.

Weak mechanisms for monitoring and analyzing corporate social responsibility prevent widespread adoption of socially responsible behavior in the practice of domestic corporations. There is a need to develop a methodology and techniques that allow determining the level of social responsibility, identifying the optimal directions of interaction between business and government with the goal of further positive changes.

In the Russian Federation, like in most developed countries, the formation of social reporting is carried out on a voluntary basis. Types of social reporting are presented in the form of practiced principles of corporate social responsibility, social policy of the corporation, its ecological projects, patronage and charity. At the same time, there are tendencies aimed at using the principles of corporate social responsibility in order to extract economic benefits, thus rejecting the basic norm of corporate social responsibility.
and sustainable development that is integrating the social and environmental activities of the corporation with business objectives.

Despite the legislatively fixed voluntary nature of the use of the principles of CSR, the state needs to act as a strategic regulator and to create the conditions for large-scale implementation of corporate social and environmental responsibility, to be an example of the fair implementation of its principles.

State regulation of companies in the field of CSR should also be implemented in order to avoid duplication of social and environmental programs in the regions, as well as to exclude a formal approach from the part of companies management to participate in them. It is not practical and illogical to involve organizations and enterprises in the same types of CSR, in this way programs implemented in the territory of registration and functioning are reduced. The scope of activity is also a factor determining the direction and possibilities for effective implementation of CSR principles. Thus, industrial enterprises, unlike organizations operating in the financial sector, have objectively greater opportunities to implement environmental programs to reduce harmful emissions into the atmosphere and reduce the impact on the environment. At the same time, the lack of sufficient funding from the budgets of all levels of health, education, and low-income development programs actualizes the charitable financing of these social sectors by the financial sector, which is more valuable and useful for society in terms of the effectiveness of investment.

It is important to note that at the local and regional levels, a reciprocal mutual movement between business and the authorities is already taking place, and their joint work is often carried out in effective partnerships, and support for socially responsible business is becoming more transparent and systemic. In this area, the state regional and municipal authorities are already implementing a whole range of effective tools and methods:

1. organization and holding of joint social forums at the regional level, allowing to formulate agreed social and environmental development priorities;

2. development and implementation of joint targeted programs in the social, environmental, cultural and sports fields with shared financing of business and government;
3 participation of regional and municipal authorities in social and environmental programs of corporations including social and environmental responsibility programs aimed at the developing specific recommendations for business;

4 organization of the programs by the authorities aimed at developing intersectional social and environmental partnerships with the involvement of all stakeholders;

5 including non-profit organizations (for example, community foundations) in the implementation of joint social and environmental programs of both government and business to improve their efficiency and ensure transparency in the use of pooled funds.

At the present stage of the formation and implementation of the CSR principles in the economic practice of domestic enterprises, it is necessary to limit economic opportunities for corporations with state participation in the authorized capital of more than 50%, avoiding social and environmental obligations. At the same time, it is necessary to develop methodological recommendations on the practical implementation of CSR principles in corporations with state participation.

The analysis of the practice in implementing CSR by the largest Russian corporations revealed the problems associated with poor coordination and lack of internal communication and a common strategy that unites all implemented programs in the corporation. It also demonstrates that CSR programs are initiated and implemented mainly by medium-level managers. The need for government regulation of CSR programs is due to their positive influence on the efficiency of financial and economic activities and the possibility of positive impact on social and economic systems.

The growth in production and sales, profits pledged in the proceeds, expansion of the taxable base are in the context of applying economic sanctions against Russia the most important direction of increasing GDP and tax revenues of all budget levels.

In addition, through the implementation of CSR programs, the financial burden on local budgets and budgets of the subjects of the federation and administrative-territorial entities on social and environmental programs financed from the budgets is reduced.
In order to maximize the positive impact on the social and environmental systems, it is necessary to develop a consistent CSR strategy that should become an integral part of the activity of the board of directors and (or) the company’s management.

To determine the scope of the company’s social responsibility in the National Standard of the Russian Federation GOST R ISO 26000-2012 “Guidelines for Social Responsibility” seven main social responsibility topics are proposed:
- Organizational management;
- Human rights;
- Labor practices;
- Environment;
- Conscientious business practices;
- Problems related to consumers;
- Participation in the life of communities and their development.

As the practice shows, the wider the range of covered corporate social responsibility areas, the more difficult is the process of their harmonization. However, administration and coordination of directions allow increasing the synergetic effect from their implementation.

The results of the company’s activity are presented in the form of a report. Non-financial or social report allows the company to become transparent and accountable to a wide range of stakeholders in all areas of social and economic activity.

The main type of report used by Russian companies is the triune total report, which includes data not only on economic, but also environmental and social performance.

In our opinion, the assessment of corporate social responsibility should be understood as a set of consistent actions to analyze and assess a large number of social, environmental, and economic indicators. At the same time, the assessment of corporate social responsibility should be carried out taking into account the level of satisfaction of stakeholders as a basic criterion for the effectiveness of the company’s social and environmental performance.

In the economic literature, at present, three approaches to assessing CSR are distinguished:

1. A minimalist approach;
2. an approach based on the identification of several key areas for the implementation of the social policy of the corporation;

3. a system approach.

The first approach is based on the assessment of the company’s compliance with national and international CSR legislation. In the second and third, in addition to the minimalist approach, an assessment is made with voluntarily taken over by the company of social and environmental obligations.

Evaluation of corporate social responsibility enables the company to identify "weak points" in the field of CSR and identify priority areas for implementing the basic principles of CSR. At the same time, it is an important tool for making managerial decisions both at the corporate level and at the local and state level with the aim of harmonizing and increasing the effectiveness of social and economic projects and programs.

Furthermore, the choice of a specific assessment method is determined not only by country characteristics, but also by the level of CSR development of a particular corporation.

In the assessment process, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the company: the stage of the life cycle, the ownership of the industry, the scale of the company, financial stability, the purpose of the assessment, the public or non-public nature of the company and others. The assessment of corporate social responsibility pursues the following goals:

1. Assessment of the company’s activities in accordance with the environmental legislation, the code of corporate conduct, the main international agreements of the field of human rights, labor law;

2. Analysis of the performance of the obligations undertaken by the company, in accordance with the standard GOST R ISO 26000;

3. Maintaining the image and reputation by informing the public about the company’s socially-oriented activities;

4. Comparison of the corporation with the others in the level of development of CSR and taking measures to increase it, etc.
The results of the assessment of corporate social responsibility are the basis for making managerial decisions aimed at improving the company’s performance in the social, environmental and economic areas, synchronizing activities with authorities and management. The received data are reflected in the decisions made by the management of the corporation and are covered in the mass media for enhancing and maintaining the image of a socially responsible company, increasing competitiveness and market value of the company. Corporate governance has country specific features that reflect the specifics of the economic system and the current legislation.

The relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate governance can be traced in the following areas:

- at the level of values;
- at the level of allocation of responsibility and competencies areas;
- at the level of management of non-financial risks.

In modern society, the system of corporate governance is built on the basis of generally accepted values, honesty, openness and transparency, responsibility and cooperation with society are basic among them.

The hierarchy of CSR tools in corporate governance can be represented in the following form:

1. Mission, vision and values, Corporate Ethics Code;
2. Strategy of the company. The goals of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social);
3. Doctrine of non-financial risk management and interaction with stakeholders;
4. Activities on CSR and sustainable development;
5. Non-financial reporting;
6. Communication.
The majority of effectively functioning and developing companies practice corporate governance principles in their activities. All of this points to the fact that corporate governance can be defined as a way of interaction between the three management parties (the board of directors, management, shareholders of the company), as well as other stakeholders, which maximizes the company’s profits and ensures the interests of all interested parties.

Adherence to the principles of corporate governance integrated with the principles of CSR, allows you to get certain benefits.

The main advantages for companies:

- Improving the image;
- Simplification of access to borrowed financial resources;
- Preferential access to long-term investments;
- Favorable search for strategic partners;
- Effective use of own capital;
- Optimization of company management.

The main advantages for owners and lenders:

- Accountability of the company’s board of directors and management;
- Possibility of prompt and ongoing monitoring of the company’s activities;
- Risk reduction in investment decision-making;
- Observance of the legitimate rights and interests of all interested parties.

At the same time, the introduction of the concept of corporate governance, based on the principles of corporate social responsibility, brings with it a number of benefits for society as a whole.

An unquestionably socially significant aspect in management practice is the opportunity for companies to realize the idea of a socially responsible business, because today the public requires from
companies not only to realize the economic concept, but also a significant contribution to the development of the society, voluntary response of companies to existing social and environmental problems through the implementation of socio-significant projects.

Apparently, the values and principles of corporate governance are closely correlated with the values of corporate social responsibility, which predetermines the use of them for the effective development of the company. The corporate governance system is modified throughout the whole life cycle of the corporation in accordance with the mission, vision, strategic orientations and tasks.

The social indifference of corporations, manifested in irresponsible activities in the fields of ecology, health, safety, civil rights, consumer protection, etc., according to the Davis Iron Liability Law in the long run will inevitably lead the corporation to loss of credibility and position in society [8, p.175]. It is natural that such a social protest can not only reduce the economic efficiency of the company, but, ultimately, lead the organization to bankruptcy. Thus, CSR is a new management paradigm based on open and transparent relations with the external environment and maintaining its stability in the global economy. The use of CSR as a competitive advantage of the company is not only in the implementation of socially significant programs, but, first of all, in the introduction of CSR into the culture of corporate governance.

According to this, the dominant idea that the main goal of the companies’ activity is profit maximization, currently does not meet the existing realities and expresses an outdated management paradigm. In contrast to this approach, the world business community has realized the need to build an open dialogue with society. Companies that begin to understand the importance of human and social factors, honest and conscientious relations with employees that determine the consumers choice and improve the image and business reputation of the company on the market, maximize their opportunities in two ways. In the first way, they identify the key success factors (KSF) of the corporation, which affect the company’s value increase in the market related to corporate social responsibility, which enhances the efficiency of activities in this direction. In the second way, companies improve the effectiveness of interaction with stakeholders on KSF and CSR issues, demonstrating and informing them what work they have done in this area.
over the past period and what actions they intend to take in the medium and long term. And after that only they offer the independent parties (auditors) to evaluate the results of the fulfillment of their promises.

3 Conclusions

To sum up it should be noted that the goal of corporate social responsibility management is to integrate corporate social responsibility programs into the company’s business processes which are focused on sustainable development, since the influence of corporate social responsibility extends to all aspects of the company’s activities and ensures balanced economic, social and environmental development of the society. As a result, the relationship among business, society and authority is significantly strengthened. Corporations opportunities force business to take responsibility for many areas of society development that are not directly related to economic activity, taking an active part in them. The domestic business community often lacks a clear understanding and internal conviction that doing business in accordance with the interests of society is not something exceptional, but a norm due to the essence of a large corporate business. Business can not function apart from society, since it is itself a part of the society. Large corporations are socio-economic institutions and take a lead in countries with market economies. They are often of strategic importance for the city and it distinguishes them from small and medium-sized businesses. However, it imposes additional obligations on the society. The environment, the quality and availability of manufactured goods influence their activities. They concentrate large number of stakeholders both inside the organization and in the external environment. Relationships and interrelationships of stakeholders form a system of coherency that affects the financial and economic activities of the corporation, depending on the quality and transparency of the system. The presence of social coherency also confirms the thesis that corporations are public institutions included in the system of public relations and largely determine the socio-economic development of individual subjects of the federation. If we take the corporate sector as a whole, then corporations determine the socio-economic
development of the entire state. All of this points to the fact that the corporate sector, like the state, should share responsibility not only for social and labor relations, but also for the well-being of society as a whole.

The main reason for the slow implementation of CSR policies and standards in corporate governance in the Russian Federation is the underestimation of CSR as a factor of capitalization, competitiveness growth and strengthening of corporate image.

In our opinion, Russian companies need to strengthen interaction with stakeholders, and the state is the key player among them, that allows identifying priority areas of CSR implementation, developing a plan of actions aimed at meeting the needs and interests of stakeholders. World integration processes, the entry of large domestic companies the markets of developed countries, their merging with transnational companies, the possibility of attracting foreign investors have become a powerful argument for changing the attitude of these companies to corporate social responsibility. The importance of socially responsible behavior, adherence to universal values and observance of ethical norms in international economic practice are of great importance for corporate governance and business reputation. In this regard, any decisions in the field of CSR are taken by all interrelated levels of corporate governance: company owners, boards of directors and management, taking into account the views of stakeholders. This makes CSR a powerful tool for achieving strategic goals, improving business reputation and competitiveness, as well as increasing the market capitalization of companies.

The need to introduce policies and standards of corporate social responsibility is also related to the functioning and development of the domestic economy. Non-financial risks (political, social, environmental, legislative, etc.) in Russia are higher than in the countries of the European Union and the United States. This makes it necessary to improve the management of non-financial risks within CSR. They play a de facto increasingly important role due to the peculiarities of the Russian market, as well as weak legislative and practical enforcement of property rights and free, unregulated competition.

At the same time, the state needs to strengthen work on the formation and development of socially responsible business. Among
the main factors necessary for the large-scale implementation of CSR principles we can determine the followings:

- a) guaranteed property rights and business security;
- b) an independent judiciary;
- c) a transparent legislative framework for the conduct of social activities;
- d) social responsibility priorities, etc.

At the regional and local level, there is gradually an understanding of the necessity to build relationships with business on a permanent and transparent basis. If earlier the authorities built their relations with business in the social and environmental spheres on an unsystematic basis, now they prefer to plan joint medium-term projects and programs in various fields. This is beneficial both for the authorities and for business. Gradually, a stable partnership is built.

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