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**Structuring Government-driven Activities Fostering of Corporate
Social Responsibility and Corporate Sustainability
A Survey in Austria**

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Abstract:

In Austria government has launched miscellaneous official programs to trigger and support corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability, partly based on compulsory legal regulations, partly based on self-committed, voluntary action of the enterprises. The proliferation of activities causes redundancies, incongruities and poor efficacy.

This paper presents a framework for structuring governmental CSR and CS policies and instruments as to their degrees of government involvement and binding force. It is based on a comprehensive literature research and a 2010 survey of government-driven programs on environmental aspects of CSR and CS. The framework enables governments to reflect on their policies and programs as to influencing and controlling social responsibility and sustainability activities of enterprises. This helps them structure and coordinate their activities and thus avoid incongruities and inefficacy.

1 Introduction

In Austria like in other Western Central European countries the concept of voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) only became popular some ten years ago. Voluntary commitment had not been necessary as for most cases concerning employee rights, product responsibility or (during the last twenty years) environmental protection the state had taken responsibility and enacted and executed legal regulations. Enterprises had (re)acted according to “codified norms, rules, and laws (that) are not conventionally described explicitly as CSR” (implicit CSR, Matten & Moon 2008).

In its Greenpaper on CSR (EC 2001) the European Commission emphasizes explicit and voluntary social and environmental contributions of enterprises (explicit CSR), consisting of voluntary, self-interest driven policies, programs or strategies addressing issues perceived as being part of a company’s social responsibility (Matten & Moon 2004).

Although the Greenpaper does not link the CSR concept to sustainable development by definition, the concepts of CSR and sustainable development are closely linked. CSR represents the enterprises’ contribution to overall sustainability (cf. to the Global Reporting Initiative’s “Sustainability Reporting Framework”, GRI 2006, and the forthcoming ISO 26000, ISO 2009). In this paper CSR and sustainable development and – particularly concerning enterprises - corporate sustainability (CS) are regarded to be synonyms (Marrewijk 2003). Thus we include sustainability-related, but not typical CSR- instruments and activities like waste or environmental management in our research.

The Greenpaper on CSR builds on two phenomena: a move towards participation of non-governmental actors in so far exclusively public agenda and the governments’ wish to shift responsibility to other institutions including enterprises (Heritier 2002). Accordingly a plethora of non-enacted regulations and programs have been devised by governments themselves and other institutions who are willing to assume social responsibility – from the enterprises themselves to business institutions, non-governmental-organizations (NGOs).

Any form of non-compulsory commitment is warmly welcomed and supported by the governments, who have to accommodate mandatory regulations and voluntary programs and to decide on how to make use of all the instruments available. As a consequence of this actionism the individual projects and activities seem uncoordinated and ad-hoc. Frequently there are redundancies and incongruities, synergies remain unused and the efficacy of individual activities is poor. There is a lack of structure and guidance for governments to decide on when to devise mandatory regulations and when voluntary programs and activities.

Accordingly this paper presents a framework for structuring governmental CSR and CS policies and activities as to their degrees of government involvement and binding force.

The method rests upon on extensive secondary and primary research to provide a survey of government supported or driven enterprise-relevant CSR and CS initiatives and programs in

Austria with a focus on environmental sustainability. This restriction has become necessary as we identified more than 200 sustainability related programs and activities in Austria, although we only included those directed at enterprises and at environmental topics. We expand on previous literature on the topics of soft law and regulations to devise a conceptual framework for structuring government driven CSR activities and support the framework with examples and cases from our survey.

The paper first depicts the origin of the new form of governing in enterprise-related sustainable development: Next it discusses voluntariness in CSR and the meaning of soft regulations for CSR and CS. In the next step we present a conceptual model that is supported by theory approaches and then illustrate the model with highlights from empirical research.

2 A New Way of Governing in Sustainable Development

For several years CSR has become more and more an “object of governmental activity at the level of EU policy and at national, regional and local policy levels” (Vallentin & Murillo 2009). This seems to be fruitful for both business actors, as the governmental role is not based on command-and-control, and for governments, as more participatory ways of governing tend to be more flexible than traditional ones (Lepoutre, Dentchev & Heené, 2007). Yet, governments have to devise policies and guiding principles that inform and guide their activities in CSR governance. Active CSR policy gives them a chance to interfere gains affecting, directing and controlling influence on enterprise behavior, as they assume “the role of an enabling and empowering facilitator of CSR, not a regulatory enforcer” (Vallentin & Murillo 2009) and. This influence rests on three main pillars (Albareda, Lozano & Ysa 2007, Moon, Crane & Matten 2005)

- a new role of especially multinational enterprises (MNEs) in society.
- a new way to manage multi-stakeholder-relationships
- a new role of governments.

2.1 A New Role of MNEs

Corporations and especially MNEs “are created by society and derive their legitimacy from the societies in which they operate. They need to be able to articulate their role, scope and purpose as well as understand their full social and environmental impacts and responsibilities” (McIntosh et al. 2003). They “owe their existence to a partnership (...) between shareholders and governments, built on the ... understanding that corporations have an unconditional (categorical) obligation both to obey the law and to treat their stakeholders ethically” (Cragg 2002). So due to their rising creative power and their growing influence, enterprises are bound to assume responsibility beyond economic aspects (Wood & Logsdon 2002). It is considered to be a proper obligation upon corporate actors to address issues of multiple stakeholders.

Especially in cases where regulation is weak corporations are increasingly likely to have a share in ensuring the basic rights of their stakeholders, e.g. their employees (Moon, Crane & Matten 2005). But also in countries with relatively sound welfare states and a long-standing tradition of intense public discussion on sustainable development issues (like Austria) companies should maintain a direct link with their local environments and contribute to resolving social problems by forming partnerships with other actors in society (Albareda, Lozano & Ysa 2007).

2.2 A New Way to Manage Multi-Stakeholder-Relationships

For several years the enterprises' focus has shifted from a mere marketing/customer orientation to a broader set of societal/employee needs (Ferrell et al. 2010). Stakeholder management is regarded to be "vital to the survival and success of the organization" (Freeman 2004), focusing at the needs and wants of "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization objectives" (Freeman 1984). Multi-stakeholder processes focus at bringing together all relevant stakeholders to put up a new form of communication for finding and making decisions on special topics (Hemmati 2002).

As for governance this implies that private actors get involved in decision-making in order to provide common goods and non-hierarchical means of guidance are employed. There are several ways for governments to manage these relationships: Private actors may "regulate themselves on a voluntary basis; a regulatory task may have been delegated to them by a public actor; or they may be engaged in co-regulation, regulating jointly with public actors." (Heritier 2002)

2.3 A New Role of Governments

In Europe from 1970es and 80es a new demand for more participation arose and made governments enhance and extend possibilities for participation (Renn, Webler & Wiedemann, 1995). This was also due to the fact that efforts towards sustainable development require intensive co-operation (cf. the Agenda 21, UN, 1992). Market mechanisms cannot secure social and environmental sustainability. Regulations cannot produce the amount of commitment necessary for sustainable development (Bass, Dalai-Clayton & Pretty, 1995). In a "fluid world of globalization, deregulation and individualization" (Bauman, 2002) in combination with internationalization and transnationalization of political bodies, participation can help "to provide a healthy political life within the large sphere of relative autonomy that democratic countries will still possess" (Dahl 1994, Perkins 1995, Gelbmann & Peskoller 2008).

Furthermore governments have become eager to assign social responsibility to someone else and reduce their societal commitment and their capacity of defining and providing public goods (Knull & Lehmkuhl 2001). The state focuses on cooperation rather than on being an active, formative actor. This attitude is referred to in the term of governance: A new percep-

tion of governing, the structures and processes of “making policy”, of defining and implementing policy which is based on new forms of cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors on par with each other (Jann & Wegrich 2004).

3 Voluntariness and Binding Force of CSR related Policies

3.1 How binding is CSR?

The European Greenpaper on CSR claims CSR to be on a voluntary basis and “going beyond compliance and investing ‘more’ into human capital, the environment and the relations with stakeholders” (EC 2001). Rather than to something being optional the notion “voluntary” refers to activities and strategies that have not been enforced by law. But quite frequently the interpretation of “voluntariness” has a strong smack of “arbitrariness” (Gelbmann 2010).

Scientific discussion in the USA identifies four “core responsibilities (of CSR) that cannot be escaped because they are integral to action” (Geva 2008, Carroll 1991). These comprise economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic or discretionary components which can be linked in different ways (Schwartz & Carroll 2003; Council for Economic Development 1971; Carroll 1979, 1999). The most well-known way is Carroll’s pyramid model, which implies a hierarchical order of the categories (Carroll 1979, 1999): Economic success is the basis, legal compliance the next level, ethically correct behavior towards all stakeholder groups including the natural environment going beyond that and finally philanthropy is “the icing on the cake” (Geva 2008) and the highest level of CSR. Here voluntary action (or philanthropy, Carroll 1991) is an important part of CSR, but not the main point (Dahlsrud 2008).

The Greenpaper (EC 20021) definition seems to cut economic aspects and legal compliance away, but actually only the philanthropy level is “optional”. The others are at least morally or ethically binding – either in order to secure enterprise survival, due to law or to ethical obligations. Responsibility is not a question of voluntariness (Waddock 2006), but of reasonable economic action in accordance with existing law, linked to the firm’s value chain (Porter & Kramer 2003, 2006). It can add to long-term prosperity of the enterprise and to fulfilling the stakeholders’ needs (Burke & Logsdon 1996). By helping to put sustainable management and conduct into action it adds to overall sustainability (Gelbmann 2010). Through the Greenpaper definition the European Commission wants to raise the enterprises’ awareness of this fact and also amend existing law by non-legally-binding measures.

3.2 Soft Regulations as a Means of Putting CSR into Action

Implementing this new form of governing according to a “voluntary, but not optional” concept of CSR requires a new attitude of governments towards third-party actors like NGOs. This new attitude finds expression in a phenomenon called soft law, soft regulation, “private” or

“corporate” governance” (Aguilera, et al. 2008) or self-regulation (Graz & Nölke 2008; Pattberg 2009). In this paper we use the notion “soft regulations”.

A generally accepted definition for soft regulations does not exist yet. Hard law regulations “typically set standard provisions while dealing with specific rights and obligations rather than general principles and include sanctions” (Sadowski & Ludewig 2003). Hard law is “static and comes from the top down” (ISO 2010). The main characteristic of soft regulations is their non-binding nature. The European Commission (1997) defines soft regulations as “flexible frameworks” rather than “compulsory and rigid systems”. In fact a dichotomous distinction between hard and soft regulations does not exist, but there is a gradual transition from one to the other (see table 1 for an overview of major characteristics).

Table 1: Typical features of soft and hard law (Source: adapted from Sisson & Marginson 2001)

| | Soft regulations | Hard regulations |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| focus | General principles | Specific rights and obligations |
| degree of formalization | minimum | standard |
| further negotiation or discussion intended | yes | no |
| processes applied | Open-ended like peer group audit, bench marking, monitoring | sanctions |
| binding force of regulation | permissive (recommendations, opinions) | (usually) compulsory |
| topics | “soft” (equal opportunities, philanthropic activities) | “hard” (payment, working time, environmental regulation) |

In the broader sense all regulations except for acts, laws, legal ordinances, and contracts are part of soft regulations. In the narrower sense soft regulations can also be understood as various instruments which do not usually feature force of law and have been developed by economic actors on their own initiative and/or their special self-commitment (Sadowski & Ludewig 2003) or in cooperation with public or other non-public actors. Typical examples of this kind are joint opinions, declarations, resolutions, recommendations, proposals, guidelines, codes of conduct, agreement protocols and agreements proper’ (European Commission, 2000). Soft regulations can exist at national and company levels and relate to “single employer, sector and national multi-sector levels in many countries” (Sisson & Marginson 2001). Non-state actors have the “ability to cooperate across borders in order to establish rules and standards of behavior accepted as legitimate by agents not involved in their definition” (Graz & Nölke 2008).

Consequently, the European Commission discerns self-regulation by industry for industry and voluntary or commonly agreed regulations that have been fostered by public or political institutions and developed in cooperation with non-political bodies (EC 2000). In reference to the actors who are in charge of devising and evaluating of soft regulations we can distinguish merely private initiatives and different forms of cooperative politics.

4 Devising a Classification and Categorization of Public Fostering of CSR and CS

Government programs on CSR and CS transform the governments' rationalities into concrete policies, strategies, action plans or projects. Before doing so governments have to check whether CSR rationalities and their realization are consistent. To this end they need a framework that helps them compare the instruments they have chosen with the degree of bindingness and the degree of public participation they want to achieve.

There have been various approaches to classifying and categorizing CSR as to different criteria like countries (e.g. Chen & Bovain 2008), the main intention (e.g. Garriga & Melé 2004), the size of enterprise they appeal to (Jenkins 2004) or the purpose of the respective instrument (EC 2002, 2003).

When deciding on CSR and sustainability related programs and actions these classifications are not sufficient as governments are confronted with a more-dimensional task. They have to consider

- which degree of legal force to exert (binding force)
- to which degree they intend to make the sustainability/responsibility performance transparent to the public (degree of transparency).
- whether they should devise and implement these programs and actions on their own or involve partners from non-profit or profit sectors (government and public authority involvement)

4.1 Binding Force and Transparency

The question of how binding CSR measures have to be goes hand in hand with the question of transparency to the public, as governments have little influence on whether enterprises make their CSR performance visible to the public when they apply soft regulations. For this reason we discuss these criteria in common.

4.1.1 Degree of Binding Force

The degree of binding force equals a transition from hard to soft regulations (Albareda, Lozano & Ysa 2007). Binding regulations usually take the form of hard law and also imply a restricted degree of participation, as compliance has to be checked and sanctions have to be imposed when necessary. Hard law can comprise environmental or social legislation, the hard adaptation of international agreements to national standard measures like obliging companies to produce sustainability reports, or compulsory regulation regarding public contracts and selection processes (Joseph 2003).

Most related to hard regulation is the devising of hard frameworks with a soft impact. This includes tax incentives for CSR or funding streams for sustainability measures. Governments can also issue and promote unstructured hard measures like evaluation and auditing accord-

ing to national or international mechanisms (e.g. GRI reporting or social/environmental labeling). Structured soft regulations comprise measures of capacity building like fostering research programs or providing guidelines and technical assistance. Finally unstructured soft measures are directed at publicizing good/best practice and disseminating information on particular CSR issues or publication of CSR reports. The soft end of CSR politics is taken by initiatives like promotion in order to raise awareness for the topic.

4.1.2 Degree of External Accountability

Reporting and transparency count among the most important tasks of CSR and CS (Welford 2003, GRI 2006, Kolk 2008), as a win-win concept for both the enterprises and society (Porter & Kramer 2006). So government policy is also directed at increasing the degree of external accountability and transparency of sustainability related enterprise performance, though not all of their instruments directly aim at accountability/transparency.

From the enterprises' point of view and regarding their self-commitment we discern four groups of how they see their own role regarding the content and evaluation of regulation mechanisms (Gereffi, Garcia-Johnson & Sasser 2001):

- First-party-certification: Enterprise itself devises the self-commitment declaration and also the evaluation (for problems that can arise cf. Lim & Phillips 2008).
- Second-party-certification: Organization and evaluation are done by an association or industry
- Third-party-certification: Evaluation/audit is done by a non-public institution like an NGO or a Screening Agency (e.g. for the food system cf. Hatanaka, Bain & Busch 2008)
- Fourth-party-certification finally includes an audit or verification by public authorities or a cross-national institution.

In this classification first-party certification is the least credible whereas fourth-party certification is the most credible, as the auditors are independent and institutionalized (Prakash & Potoski 2006).

4.2 Degree of Government Involvement

Especially in Europe environmental issues had been predominant in the sustainability discussion for years and strict environmental regulations were released. Most European countries also have a sophisticated obligatory legislation as to labor and safety at work. On the other hand, CSR-related topics traditionally feature a very high degree of participation in the Western Central European countries like Austria with many of the responsibilities passed into private hands (Albareda, Lozano & Ysa 2007). Yet, governments have to develop rationalities as to tasks and issues they want to transfer to non-governmental actors.

If governments decide to cut back their own involvement as to sustainability related affairs and vice versa to raise public participation they can (Fox, Ward & Howard 2002)

- mandate business by defining minimum standards for business performance within the legal framework, (e.g. to use the best technology available)
- facilitate sustainable behavior of enterprises by raising their awareness through positive and negative incentives.
- apply partnering tactics by creating strategic partnerships with business to work at the responsibility agenda.
- appreciate CSR achievements and make them visible using endorsing schemes like awarding the “best”, or changing public procurement.

Furthermore governments can cooperate with non-governmental/non-profit institutions and/or enterprises. This cooperation be very intensive and take the form of a “joint-venture”/public-private-partnership, governments can be in the management boards and delegate the operative tasks to the non-government actors and finally governments can restrict themselves to just funding CSR and CS related programs.

4.3 A model of Government Fostering of CSR and Corporate Sustainability

The discussion above suggests confronting the degree of binding force/transparency with the degree of government involvement (see table 2). This paper especially investigates the degree to which governments delegate their responsibility. A high degree of government involvement equals a low degree of participation and vice versa. According to the results of our survey we discern five ordinal categories:

- Governments tackle particular tasks alone. This is typical as far as hard law is concerned as this is not participatory matter (cf. table 1)
- Governments cooperate as the leading actor. This constellation occurs mainly in cooperation with supra-national organizations like the UN
- Governments cooperate with NGOs (e.g. the Federal Economic Chamber, the Red Cross) or enterprises (e.g. environmental consultants) as associate actors
- Governments support actions taken by NGOs, NPOs or enterprises
- Governments delegate their agenda completely to other actors

As for the y-axis we combine the results from the discussion on binding force and transparency, as we regard the transparency criteria to represent an umbrella term for all the measures of soft regulation that are connected with external transparency. There is an ordinal transition from hard to soft regulations:

- binding law including all laws and regulations in the context of sustainability
- fourth party-certification including tax incentives and funding, as they are linked to “government auditing”

- third party-certification including certified (environmental) management standards and also third-party monitoring of reports where certification is not available (e.g GRI)
- second party-certification
- first party-certification meaning all activities of making sustainability activities transparent to the public without seeking external validation, e.g. CSR reports, homepages
- awards and prizes awarded by supra-national, national and regional governmental, non-governmental and other institutions, as these (relating to the transparency of the evaluation criteria and the evaluation itself, feature some transparency)
- sustainability empowerment comprising all activities directed at increasing the CSR and CS capacities of enterprises like training, guidelines, handbooks, consulting
- good/best practice examples provided in order to raise interest and awareness, thought to give first ideas on how CSR and CS can work
- general information on CSR and CS, awareness raising through publications (including websites), events and presentations

As table 2 shows there is also a transition from high to actually no public transparency, as the last three criteria relate to an enterprise's internal CSR and CS performance and do not aim at transparency at all.

Table 2: Classification Framework of Government CS and CSR Policy

| | Binding force | Degree of government involvement | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| | | high govern- ments alone | Cooperation as the lead- ing actor | Cooperation as associate partner | Patronizing Funding | |
| hard regulations | Binding law | | | | | high |
| | 4 th party certi- fication | | | | | |
| | 3 rd party certi- fication | | | | | |
| | 2 nd party certi- fication | | | | | |
| | 1 st party certi- fication | | | | | |
| soft regulations | Awards and prizes | | | | | low |
| | sustainability empowerment | | | | | none |
| | Good/best practice | | | | | |
| | information | | | | | |

5 Government fostering of CSR and CS in Austria:

In this section we present some of the results of our empirical survey, structured according to the conceptual framework that had been devised above. The results presented in table 3 relate mainly to the activities and programs of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry,

Environment and Water management ("Ministry of Life"), which is in charge of most environment-related government activities, and the affiliated Federal Environmental Agency (BMLFUW 2010). The Ministry of Life devises draft laws, provides information on all kinds of environment related information and funds and patronizes CSR and CS-related activities. The Ministry of Life also funds and coordinates the regional governments' initiatives that have been established in six of Austria's nine provinces. These make up an integral part of Austria's CSR-related policy. In Styria like in other federal states the so-called "WIN"-program (acronym for "economic initiative for sustainability" in German) has been provided by the Styrian regional government, Styrian Economic Chambers and the Styrian business development agency. The Ministry of Life bears one third of the expenses. Devising the programs by regional governments allows for coordination/cooperation with other regional initiatives. The goal of the regional initiatives is to fund expert advice as to corporate sustainability for private and public enterprises in order to boost awareness and efficiency and effectiveness of sustainability related investment (WIN 2010).

In table 3 we complement the initiatives and programs provided by the Ministry of Life by activities and programs provided by the Styrian regional government (for the whole section including table 3 cf. BMLFUW 2010, WIN 2010, Regional Government of Styria 2010).

Table 3 features a non-exhaustive enumeration as it mentions only one example per cell. The list of all activities that we have identified up to now would by far exceed the length of this paper. Our research shows that all activities can be attributed to a particular cell of the table. Some of the elements of the table, however, remain empty: Either the combination of row and column is not possible, especially in the upper section on the right side, as governments cannot delegate their power and responsibility of legislation. Or the combination does not make sense, e.g. a second party certification provided by a ministry would mean it could only certify other ministries and governmental units. Nor is the Ministry of Life engaged in second and third party certifications.

Table 3: Sample of Ministry of Life and (italic) *Styrian regional government* activities/programs structured as to government involvement and binding force

| Binding force | Degree of government involvement | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| | high | | | | low | | |
| | governments alone | Cooperation as the leading actor | Cooperation as an associate partner | Patronizing Funding | Complete delegation, (possibly funding) | | |
| Binding law | e.g. on waste, air pollution control, environmental impact assessment | not possible | not possible | not possible | not possible | high | |
| 4 th party certification, funding | Subsidies of up to 30 % for climate relevant, air pollution and waste related investments of enterprises, associations and other organizations | EMAS in cooperation with ecological auditors | Austrian Environmental Label in cooperation with the Austrian Association for Consumer Information (devises guiding principles and manages process) | not possible | not possible | | |
| 3 rd party certification | not suitable | | | <i>Implementation of ISO 14001 (partly funded by regional government of Styria)</i> | | Degree of external accountability | |
| 2 nd party certification | not suitable | | | | Certified Austrian Waste Management Enterprises, cooperation of Austrian Waste Association Austria, International Solid Waste Association Austria and Austrian Water and Waste Management Association | | low |
| 1 st party certification | (Sustainability report on the Ministry itself) | <i>Writing of Sustainability Reports, funded by WIN</i> | "Reporting about Sustainability" Guideline in cooperation with Federal Ministry of Economy and Labor, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, ABCSD; developed by Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development | | <i>Development of sustainability reports provided by Plenum, agency for sustainable development, patronized by the Ministry of Life and WIN, also provides website on sustainability reporting: www.nachhaltigkeitsbericht.at</i> | | |
| Awards and prizes | | Global Chemical Leasing Award, since 2010, in cooperation UNIDO | Austrian State Prize for environmental and energy technology since 2008, tender and settlement by Austrian Society for Environment and Technology (OGUT) | Energy Globe since 1999 on regional, national and international levels, national partner in cooperation with 15 partners from EU, NGOs and business | TRIGOS since 2004 awarded for responsible enterprises in employment, society, environment, market)by resPACT-ABCSD in cooperation with Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the Federation of Austrian Industry and several Austrian NPOs | | |

| Binding force | Degree of government involvement | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| | high | | | | low | |
| | governments alone | Cooperation as the leading actor | Cooperation as an associate partner | Patronizing Funding | Complete delegation, (possibly funding) | |
| sustainability empowerment | Environmental Agency offers consulting and teaching on waste management, toxics and climate protection | <i>Training programs on energy consulting provided by Styrian Energy Agency, a cooperation of regional government of Styria, three Styrian universities, and several NGOs and enterprises</i> | Separate homepage on (further) education in the sectors of energy and environmental technology "MUT", in cooperation with ECOWorld Styria www.kursfinder.at/cms/529/ | Patronizing of (further) education in the sectors of energy and environmental technology "MUT" by providing a homepage, see left column | support, planning implementation of ecological services (waste management, sustainable events), training and education provided by "Die Umweltberatung", an NGO supported by the Ministry of Life and regional governments, NGOs, esp. adult education centers | Degree of external accountability none |
| Good/best practice | | | <i>Comprehensive presentation of Styrian best practice examples on the homepage of Ecoworld Styria, a Greentech cluster, cooperation of regional government of Styria, Styria Business Development Agency, City of Graz and several NGOs and enterprises</i> | | Presentations live and on homepage as well as supporting and promoting of CR and sustainable development by raising awareness and lobbying CSR among enterprises and in the public by resPACT-ABCSD, major national CSR-related initiative in Austria resPACT-ABCSD is privately geared by enterprise members, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Federation of Austrian Industry, although one member of the board of directors was delegated by Ministry of Life, resPACT gets funding from four Austrian federal ministries (including Ministry of Life). Although not mentioned above resPACT also provides first party certification and sustainability empowerment | |
| Soft regulations Information, Awareness | Comprehensive homepages: http://umwelt.lebensministerium.at/article/archive/1468/ (general information in English) www.umweltnet.at/article/archive/1458/ (additional information in English) http://www.umweltnet.at/article/archive/1458/ (website of Federal Environmental Agency, only in German) Plethora of reports and publications | Austrian Energy Agency provides information on energy related topics, on mobility, climate change, cooperation with Federal Ministries of Economy and Traffic, Innovation and Technology, all Austrian regional governments and more than 30 NGOs and enterprises | | <i>Survey "Corporate Social responsibility in Austria" by the Network Social Responsibility (Authors: Raith, Mark-Ungericht, Korenjak), patronized and funded by the regional government of Styria. Network Social responsibility itself is patronized by the Federal Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and consumer protection</i> | | |

6 Discussion

The table provides a framework for governments to reflect on their policies and programs as to influencing and controlling enterprises-related social responsibility and sustainability. This helps them structure and coordinate their activities and thus avoid incongruities and inefficiency.

Most activities and programs can be attributed to the elements either to the left top side or the right bottom side of the table, which hints at governments preferring to do hard law related activities on their own and rather withdrawing from soft measures. This may also be due to the fact that standardization and other soft regulation mechanisms work “from the bottom up, are dynamic in nature and simplify development. Because it is based on voluntary action, consensus and openness, the result is a positive commitment, rather than a restrictive sense of obligation.” (ISO 2010).

Considering all the enterprises' activities related to sustainability it is obvious that there is a considerable difference between implicit and explicit CSR (cf. 1): Enterprises featuring implicit CSR are more likely to react to hard regulations. So if governments want to strengthen public participation and reduce their societal commitment they will have to continue and even intensify their activities on involving non-governmental actors and creating awareness for CSR.

Preparing a complete inventory of governmental activities on environmental CS and CSR in Styria is the task of ongoing research activities. The additional restriction has become necessary due to the enormous number of activities that have to be considered. Statistical evaluation of the data against the framework devised in this paper will possibly reveal hints at topics that are typically treated by applying a particular combination of government involvement and binding force of the measure. As the final inventory will also contain information on the underlying procedures it will also be possible to give recommendations on which procedures to apply as to respective combinations.

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