

## Study: CSR, a convincing path over time

**The more organizations commit over time, the more their social responsibility approach brings positive results in all respects. This is the main lesson of a study undertaken by the AFNOR group, with the support of the BVA institute and in partnership with Echos Executives, with more than 400 French organizations of all sizes.**

*Saint-Denis, November 7, 2019* - Experimentation with [sectoral CSR labels](#) by France Stratégie, Pacte Law, duty of vigilance... The acceleration of initiatives in the CSR field required a progress update. After 10 years of supporting more than 800 VSEs, SMEs and local authorities, the AFNOR group therefore offers an inventory of what organizations that say they are committed to social responsibility do, the actions they carry out, the tools on which they use it to highlight their commitment, but also the difficulties and benefits they observe.

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An essential or very important issue for 72% of the organizations surveyed, CSR is an area very often invested in to promote internal initiatives (55%), unite employees (44%)... but also to improve the efficiency of their organization (38 %) or their competitiveness (35%).

CSR is also synonymous with a demanding commitment, difficult to implement (52%) due to lack of time or know-how, which requires convincing. But when they maintain their mobilization, organizations observe multiple benefits for their image (employee engagement (80%), attractiveness (80%)), but also for their activity (innovation (78%), differentiation (75%) , hiring (44%), profitability (40%), turnover development for companies (38%).

### Four profiles of committed organizations

The study reveals that all organizations have as a common base an initial environmental action, with the implementation of waste sorting, accompanied by a monitoring and implementation system in compliance with regulations. This is the starting point of a progressive journey leading organizations to increase the number of actions they undertake and to diversify them in the social and economic fields, year after year. Four key stages emerge from this study, like the stage of development of certain plant species:

- At start-up: **young start-ups** (12% of organizations), engaged for 1 to 2 years. They carry out on average 5 actions, here and there, under the leadership of a few employees, in particular to develop the local roots of the organization. Small structures are more represented here than in other segments, proof that CSR is no longer the prerogative of large companies groups.
- Then comes the time of organization **for the shrubs** (23%), engaged for more than 3 years. They undertake between 5 and 9 actions with greater emphasis on HR issues (recruitment promoting diversity and the integration of disabilities for 55%), working conditions or towards stakeholders (59%).
- **The poplars (38%)**, engaged for more than 5 years, choose to push more strongly on certain subjects, such as the reduction of their waste (69%), their consumption (60%) and are beginning to reflect on the reason for be part of the organization (60%). They undertake 10 to 14 actions.
- Finally, **the oaks** (27%), engaged for more than 8 years, are delving deeper into the main issues not covered in a global search for control of all impacts. Reduction of

CO2 emissions (80%), responsible purchasing (78%), protection of biodiversity (61%), circular economy (51%) are all examples of the 15 to 21 actions undertaken on average.

### **Standards, CSR labels: organizations looking for tools**

The organizations involved indicate that they are familiar with the CSR reference texts. The international voluntary standard ISO 26000 is therefore known to almost all of those interviewed (93%), far ahead of the compact global UN (68%) and the SDGs (66%). The ISO 26000 instructions and its sectoral variations are therefore well established in the organizations' toolbox.

2/3 of the organizations involved consider it essential or very important to promote their CSR approach, to improve their image and promote the work accomplished. They undertake on average two or three valorization actions, favoring labels (48%), articles or press releases (45%) or a CSR/SD report (43%). These actions are carried out with both internal and external audiences (customers, suppliers, stakeholders); the most active seeking to reach the general public.

*Engaged CSR* is the best-known label (76%) among those awarded following an evaluation on the organization's website; closely follows *Lucie 26000* (65%) and *Ecocert 26000* (64%). Among the evaluation devices remotely, *Ecovadis* is recognized at 64%, ahead of *e-engaged CSR* (51%) and *B Corp* (43%).

**Methodology** : survey carried out in September/October 2019 among organizations active in CSR, via online survey and telephone interviews. Sample of 408 complete interviews, including 1/3 from organizations certified by AFNOR Certification.

About the AFNOR group

An international associative group, established in 14 cities in France, the AFNOR group designs and deploys solutions based on voluntary standards, these consensual documents developed by and for market players, in the service of economic development and innovation. . For more than ten years, he has been supporting organizations in the field of social responsibility. More than 800 VSEs and SMEs have adopted the voluntary international ISO 26000 standard in their sectors and territories.

As a provider of professional monitoring, training, benchmarking, certification and assessment solutions, the group also operates in the competitive field in more than 100 countries. With 1,250 employees worldwide and a portfolio of 77,000 customers, the AFNOR group positions itself as a vector of trust for public actors and organizations in general. The general management of the AFNOR group is ensured by Olivier Peyrat. <https://www.afnor.org/developpement-durable-rse/>

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