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# **Social responsibility and accountability in work integration social enterprises. The case of the Balearic Islands**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Work integration social enterprises constitute a subsector of the social economy. They are organizations that operate on the market, incorporating the concept of solidarity into their corporate purpose. Essentially, this implies helping to improve the financial and social conditions of disadvantaged groups. The fact that solidarity economy companies apply management principles which are in line with the concept of corporate social responsibility led us to analyze their effective application level in work integration social enterprises in the Balearic Islands, in their strategies, management and external communications. Furthermore, one of the requirements of social responsibility is the provision of information on the company's social and environmental impacts. Consequently, we also analyzed the voluntary disclosure of social and environmental information by work integration social enterprises in the Balearic Islands and the variables that determine the level of disclosure.*

**KEY WORDS:** Social responsibility, accounting, social and solidarity economy enterprises.

**ECONLIT DESCRIPTORS:** M140, M410, L310.

**Reference:** SOCIAS, A. & HERRACH, P. (2012): "Social responsibility and accountability in work integration social enterprises. The case of the Balearic Islands", *CIRIEC-España, Revista de Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa*, 75, 251-275.

## **Responsabilidad social y contabilidad en las empresas de integración laboral. El caso de las Islas Baleares**

**RESUMEN:** Las empresas de integración laboral constituyen un subsector de la economía social. Son organizaciones que operan en el mercado, integrando el concepto de solidaridad en su misión social. Ello implica fundamentalmente mejorar las condiciones económicas y sociales de los grupos desfavorecidos. La existencia de principios de gestión de entidades de economía solidaria asimilados al concepto de responsabilidad social corporativa, nos ha llevado a analizar la efectiva aplicación de los mismos en las empresas de integración laboral en las Islas Baleares, en sus estrategias, en su gestión y en su comunicación externa. Además, uno de los requisitos de la responsabilidad social es el suministro de información sobre los impactos sociales y ambientales de la empresa. En este sentido, también se analiza la divulgación voluntaria de información social y ambiental emitida por las empresas de integración laboral en el ámbito de las Islas Baleares y las variables que determinan tal difusión.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Responsabilidad social, contabilidad, economía social y solidaridad.

## **Responsabilité sociale et comptabilité dans les entreprises d'insertion professionnelle. Le cas des Îles Baléares**

**RESUME :** Les entreprises d'insertion professionnelle composent un sous-secteur de l'économie sociale. Ce sont des organisations qui opèrent sur le marché, en intégrant le concept de solidarité dans leur mission sociale. Cela implique fondamentalement d'améliorer les conditions économiques et sociales des groupes défavorisés. L'existence de principes de gestion d'entités d'économie solidaire assimilés au concept de responsabilité sociale dans l'entreprise nous a poussé à analyser l'application effective de ces derniers dans les entreprises d'insertion professionnelle aux Îles Baléares, dans ses stratégies, sa gestion et sa communication externe. De plus, une des conditions requises de la responsabilité sociale est de fournir des informations sur les impacts sociaux et environnementaux de l'entreprise. En ce sens, nous analysons également la divulgation volontaire d'informations sociales et environnementales provenant des entreprises d'insertion professionnelle au sein des Îles Baléares et les variables qui déterminent cette diffusion.

**MOTS CLÉ :** Responsabilité sociale, comptabilité, économie sociale et solidarité.

## 1.- Introduction

The term Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) is used to refer organizations whose characteristics mark them out as being one of the different types of bodies that form part of the social economy. They are corporate enterprises that engage in market activities, obtaining an important source of finance from them, although they have clear public interest objectives aimed at supporting disadvantaged groups who are integrated as human resources of the organization.

A sense of solidarity is not the only common feature of these enterprises. According to the standards of practice of social economy established by Social Economy Europe (2002) and the standards of social economy enterprises, established in the European Union by Nyssens, Adams and Johnson (2006) and REAS (1998) in Spain, there must be a strong social component to the management of the enterprise, based on the criteria of transparency, democratization, cooperation and environmental management, among others<sup>1</sup>.

This has led us to analyse whether the cornerstones on which social responsibility is based are an inherent part of the management of WISEs. This study starts out by offering an insight into the concept of social responsibility (CSR) and transparency in social economy enterprises. It explores the specific features of these organizations and their standards of practice in order to ascertain whether social responsibility is an inherent part of them.

Secondly, an applied analysis is made of WISEs in the Balearic Islands, focusing on the application of elements of CSR and sustainability strategies, management and reporting by these enterprises, and on the profiles of those that stand out for their higher degree of CSR and transparency.

As far as the transparency concerns, as Gibbon and Dey (2011:71) point out, headway must be made in critical analyses of the accounting data reported by this kind of organization, particularly given the fact that they are enterprises based on ethical values and social justice.

In Spain, the compulsory financial and social information that is legally required of these enterprises is established, to a greater or lesser extent, in regulatory provisions, although it depends on the exact legal form that the enterprise takes and the sector to which it belongs. The public disclosure of this compulsory information is, we believe, the first step on the road to meeting the criterion of transparency.

*1.- Even in the Spanish legislation these principles of management have been adopted (Act 5/2011 of March 29th, on social economy)*

In the field of accounting, analyses of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability reporting have concentrated on profit-making organizations (Deegan, 2002). Studies of social responsibility and sustainability reporting have been conducted from an empirical perspective, facilitating an analysis of reported data (particularly of environmental disclosures) and the true motives for reporting it. These analyses concentrate on corporations, especially the listed ones<sup>2</sup>.

Some attention has also been paid to social responsibility, accountability and relations with stakeholder groups by non-profit-making bodies, particularly non-governmental ones (Gray, Bebbigton and Collison, 2006; Unerman and O'Dwyer, 2006a; Unerman and O'Dwyer, 2006b; Chenhall, Hall and Smith, 2010; Awio, Northcott and Lawrence, 2011), and even specific social economy enterprises and solidarity-based enterprises (Capron and Gray, 2000; Dey, 2007) or public sector bodies (Sangle, 2010). In Spain, social responsibility and transparency in the social economy have also been explored, as is the case of studies by Arcas and Briones (2009) or Gálvez, Caba and López (2009).

## 2.- Social responsibility and accountability in WISEs. A theoretical approach

Lately, a new concept has been developed along the lines of what is referred to as the 'social economy', encompassing organizations that reflect a solidarity-based vision of the economy. The term "social enterprises" embraces organizations of differing legal forms that opt to use alternative production models<sup>3</sup>. These entities engage in business activities, situating them in the profit-making sector in terms of their management and need for self finance (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001; Nyssens, Adams and Johnson, 2006; Salinas and Rubio, 2001; Socías and Herranz, 2001). At the same time, however, they are incorporated with a public interest corporate objective, aimed at assisting disadvantaged groups, who are integrated into the enterprise's production model or into its commercial activities<sup>4</sup>: for instance, fair trade entities and work integration social enterprises (WISEs).

2.- See, among others, Al-Tuwaijri, Christensen and Hugues (2004), Gueben and Skeerrat (2007), Magness (2006), and in Spain, Carrasco and Larrinaga (1995), Larrinaga et al. (2001), Moneva and Llena (1996), Moneva and Llena (2000), Rodríguez and López (2004), and Husillos and Álvarez-Gil (2008).

3.- See studies by the EMES European network on the makeup of social economy enterprises in Europe and Spain, such as those of Defourny and Nyssens (2008) or Vidal and Claver (2004).

4.- Although they have a public interest corporate purpose, they can be differentiated from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) insofar as they engage in a main business activity with a consumer demand, integrating disadvantaged groups into this activity. They are also solidarity-based enterprises even though they engage in market practices. In contrast, NGOs offer free goods and services to disadvantaged groups as their main public interest activity.

WISEs are focused on providing stable employment for disabled groups and for other collectives at risk of exclusion by integrating them into the workforce. In Spain, *special employment centres*<sup>5</sup> and *insertion enterprises*<sup>6</sup> are the main examples of WISEs.

Thus, the workforce of *special employment centres* must be made up of disabled workers in a 70 % of all staff. These centres may be business companies or non-profit-making bodies (association or foundation), and their objectives revolve around providing stable employment for disabled workers and collaborating with ordinary businesses so that their workers can be integrated into them once trained.

*Insertion enterprises* can be business companies or non-profit-making bodies carrying out any kind of trading activity involving the production of goods or services, providing that their corporate purpose is the social and labour integration and training of people at risk of social exclusion as a transition toward ordinary employment. These enterprises are obliged to reinvest 80% of their profits in the improvement or extension of their corporate structure, and at least 51% of the workforce must comprise people at risk of social exclusion.

In Spain, from an associative perspective, the mission of the *Economía Alternativa y Solidaria* network (REAS) is to publicize the initiatives of social enterprises and to offer them support. REAS (1998) established the principles or standards of practice of these enterprises<sup>7</sup>.

*The principle of equality* is defined as the integration of the demands of the stakeholders and transparency towards them; *the employment principle* encompasses the integration of people at risk of exclusion, training activities, fair wages, equal opportunities, professional and personal life balance, stability and health; *the principle of environmental management* implies the reduction of environmental impacts; *the non-profit principle* states the reinvestment of the company's profits in its own social activities; *the cooperation principle and the principle of commitment to local society* imply the cooperation with other social and local enterprises and fair trading relationships.

The principle of *equality* and criterion of *transparency* in these enterprises are crosscutting aspects of social responsibility. Indeed, socially responsible management is based on the integration of stakeholder expectations, the development of systems of dialogue, and information reporting. The social economy principles of *employment, environmental management, cooperation and a commitment to local society* encompass CSR initiatives outlined in national and international standards and documents relating to internal and external stakeholders (European Commission, 2001; AccountAbility, 2011; AccountAbility, 2008a; AccountAbility, 2008b; AECA 2004; ISO, 2010; Forética, 2008).

5.- Regulated in Act 13/1982 and Royal Decree 2273/1985.

6.- Regulated in Act 44/2007.

7.- Some of them along the lines of those defined by the European EMES network (EMES, 2006) for social enterprises, in the sense of the public interest objective of ensuring a social benefit for specific groups, democracy in decision-making, and the restricted distribution of profits.

In this respect, different facets of responsibility can be distinguished in social enterprises: moral and social responsibility and philanthropic responsibility. On the one hand, moral and social responsibility is implicit in the principles of equality, employment, environmental management, cooperation and commitment to local society that should be inherent in the strategies and management of the enterprise.

On the other hand, philanthropic responsibility is inherent in the actual definition of these enterprises. It is implicit in the non-profit-making principle, established by their public interest corporate purpose and the reinvestment of benefits, and it is also specified in the employment principle through the priority given to disadvantaged groups. In this respect, economic responsibilities are subjected to the compliance with primary ethical responsibilities (Kang and Wood, 1995).

As for the accountability of WISEs, they must legally draw up and register annual accounts and an activities report. It should also be noted that, regardless of their legal form, enterprises registered and classed as special employment centres or insertion enterprises must also submit a social report to the competent registry office<sup>8</sup>. In our opinion, the voluntary disclosure of these documents is an exercise in transparency, publicizing an enterprise's main financial and social impacts at no extra cost.

The GRI's sustainability reporting guidelines (2006) are some of the most firmly established when it comes to the voluntary disclosure of information in its triple financial, social and environmental dimensions. There are three cumulative levels for applying the guidelines – application levels C, B and A – and supplements have been drawn up with additional indicators for NGOs (GRI, 2010) and social economy enterprises (GRI, 2007).

When the compulsory information required by work integration social enterprises is compared with the GRI's level C, it covers over half the contents of this first level<sup>9</sup>. To cover the whole of level C, the remaining information relates to the report parameters (3.1. a 3.8), table of contents (3.12), identification of stakeholders, relationship with them and corresponding commitment (4.14 a 4.15), and additional performance indicators, particularly environmental ones.

These additional aspects and the information that is legally required suffice to cover this minimum application level, facilitating an analysis of the impacts of these enterprises, their real commitment, and the actual application of their standards of practice. What is more, this information is both reasonable in amount and not over expensive.

8.- According to Royal Decree 2273/1985 of December 4th, which regulates special employment centres, and Act 44/2007 of December 13th, on insertion enterprises.

9.- More specifically 1.1, 2.1 to 2.10, 4.1. to 4.4., EC1, EC4, EC8, LA1, LA10, LA13. They comply with about 45% of the items adapted to social economy SMES (GRI, 2007) and the supplement for NGOs (GRI, 2010).

### **3.- Social responsibility and accountability of WISEs in the Balearic Islands**

#### 3.1. Objectives of the study and hypothesis

The aim of this study is to analyse the application level of CSR initiatives by WISEs in the Balearics and, in short, the effective application of the social economy principles, namely their social performance and their accountability. At the same time this paper provides an applied perspective of the variables that influence the social performance and the transparency of WISEs.

The hypothesis, based on Ullmann (1985) is that the explanatory variables behind social information disclosure are the organization's social management, the organization's size, its values and the external pressure received by powerful stakeholders groups.

In this respect, the size of WISEs, their membership of REAS, their legal status as non-profit making enterprises, should influence the application of CRS initiatives and the social disclosures of these enterprises.

In social economy enterprises, their principles encompass the consideration of the demands of stakeholders related to the entity and initiatives focused on employment, eco-management, fair trade relationships and non-profit making. In this sense, we can establish that adherence to REAS, could reveal a first approach to a proactive position towards CSR initiatives.

Other variable to be considered is the stakeholders' capacity to demand certain action. Thus, is obvious that WISEs obtaining public funds (basically non-profit entities), could be more likely to improve their social performance and their transparency on social and economic items in order to justify their activities.

#### 3.2. Methodology

Firstly, using verified sources<sup>10</sup>, the thirty-four WISEs that form part of the Balearics' social economy were identified, together with their legal status and corporate purpose, ascertaining whether they belonged to REAS or not.

*10.- REAS and the Balearic Regional Ministry for Tourism & Labour.*

The main financial, asset-related and corporate statistics of the twenty-four enterprises for which official information could be obtained from the Mercantile and Entities Register in the Balearic Islands,<sup>11</sup> were analysed. Particularly the size of the enterprises, their main source of funding, the reinvestment of profits and the employment that they generate were determined by analysing their annual accounts and their social report.

In order to assess the application of CSR initiatives and given the objectives of the study, a methodology was chosen that would allow us to encompass the whole universe of this particular collective, by conducting a structured, closed model of questionnaire, made up of qualitative questions and a choice of responses based on a 5-point Likert scale in order to measure initiatives in the field of CSR by the said enterprises from a descriptive point of view.

The survey questions on the subject initiatives undertaken by the enterprises, as elements of CSR, were directed at testing the extent to which they were applied.

The first element tested, explored the integration of stakeholder expectations (encompassed in the principle of *equality*). According to Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), organizations centre their strategies on stakeholder groups with power in terms of control over the organization's resources and moral or contractual legitimacy. Thus, in the survey we focused on including items related to the integration of stakeholder groups with contractual legitimacy in WISEs: customers, public authorities, private donors and employees.

The items included in the survey related to the effective application of CSR initiatives involving internal and external stakeholders we designed taking into consideration the statements of *social economy principles* (REAS, 1998) and some other initiatives incorporated in AECA (2004). They were related to fair employment and staff professionalization (the principle of *employment*), environmentally-friendly management (the principle of *environmental care*), responsible trading relations and active involvement in the sector (the principles of *cooperation* and a *commitment to local society*).

There was a 35% response rate, that is, by twelve of the enterprises. Of these, nine were non-profit-making enterprises out of a total of sixteen. Only three of the eighteen trade companies took part in the study.

In addition, corporate information was analysed for the 2008 and 2009 financial years, reported online by the said enterprises, in order to ascertain the sector's level of informative transparency. The type of financial, corporate, social and environmental information that was reported was ascertained, establishing whether it included report content from the GRI's first application level or not (GRI, 2006).

11.- At the time of the study, in mid-2010, the last financial year officially reported was for 2008.

### 3.3. Determining the economic and social configuration of the Balearics' WISEs

In the Balearic Islands, there were thirty-four operative WISEs in the period 2008-2009 according to the data provided by REAS and the Balearic Ministry for Tourism & Labour.

Of the thirty-four bodies, sixteen (forty-seven percent) are non-profit-making bodies and eighteen (fifty-three percent) are business companies (limited corporations). Seventy percent of the organizations are registered as special employment centres and three percent as insertion enterprises. Twenty-seven percent correspond to other labour integration enterprises. Geographically, eighty-five percent are local bodies<sup>12</sup> and the rest correspond to local branches of large national organizations.

The information above is shown in the following tables.

**Table 1. Legal form of WISEs in the Balearic Islands**

Legal status	Number of entities	Percentage
Association	6	17,65 %
Foundation	6	17,65 %
Other non-profit legal status	4	11,75 %
Limited Corporations	18	52,94 %
Total	34	100 %

SOURCE: REAS and Balearic Regional Ministry for Tourism & Labour.

**Table 2. WISEs in the Balearic Islands. Legal status and corporate social purpose**

Legal status	Special Employment Centres	Insertion Enterprises	Other WISEs	Total
Association	5	0	1	6
Foundation	2	1	3	6
Other non-profit legal status	0	0	4	4
Limited corporations	17	0	1	18
Total	24	1	9	34

SOURCE: REAS and Balearic Regional Ministry for Tourism & Labour.

12.- Only two of them are large enterprises.

Economic, financial and employment's data of twenty-four enterprises (twelve non-profit bodies and twelve business enterprises) could be obtained from the Mercantile and Entities Register in the Balearic Islands. In 2008, income from the business activities of the enterprises from which data was compiled amounted to fifty-eight percent of their operating revenue. Thirty-five percent corresponded to subsidies and seven percent to user or member fees.

The information mentioned above is shown in tables 3 and 4. Table 3 represents the revenue's source of the twenty-four WISEs, while Table 4 shows the revenue's source depending on their legal status.

In this respect, we can state that non-profit-making bodies have a high, over-average dependency on subsidies (some 51 % of revenues comes from grants) and their business activities imply 39 % of their total revenue. On the other hand, business companies rely on grants to a minimal extent and their business activities generate some 99 % of their total income.

**Table 3. WISEs' revenue in 2008. Balearic Islands**

WISEs' revenue	Amount	Percentage
Member fees	3.980.525,63	7,34%
Grants	19.000.840,79	35,04%
Turnover of business Activities	31.251.192,15	57,62%
Total	54.232.558,57	100,00%

SOURCE: Own.

**Table 4. WISEs' revenue depending on the legal form in 2008. Balearic Islands**

WISEs' revenue	Non-profit entities		Limited corporations	
	Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage
Member fees	3.980.525,63	10,65%		0,00%
Grants	18.909.145,92	50,59%	91.694,87	0,54%
Turnover of business Activities	14.490.294,73	38,76%	16.760.897,42	99,46%
Total	37.379.966,28	100,00%	16.852.592,29	100,00%

SOURCE: Own.

From the information included in annual reports it can be concluded that all the enterprises reinvested the benefits, even the business companies, which have not shared out any profits over the last three financial years.

According to the information included in annual accounts and in social reports of the twenty-four enterprises from which data could be compiled, in 2008, 1.581 people were employed in these enterprises, accounting for 0.5% of the labour market in the Balearics (CES, 2009). Of this employment figure, forty-two percent corresponded to disabled people and other people at risk of social exclusion. The stability of employment should be highlighted, with seventy-four percent being hired on an indefinite basis. This is eleven points higher than the corresponding average figure for the Balearic economy during the same financial year.

By means this previous analysis, we can stated that the compliance with some of the precepts laid down in the principles of social economy enterprises (REAS, 1998) was tested for twenty-four out of thirty-four WISEs in the Balearic Islands. Actually, we can conclude that these enterprises comply with the non-profit principle (none of them shared out dividends, even being limited corporations), with the stability of employment and the labor integration of disadvantaged groups.

### 3.4. The application of elements of CSR strategy and management of WISEs

As we mentioned, only twelve enterprises took part in the study, which means a 35 % response rate. Nine entities were non-profit-making enterprises out of a total of sixteen. And only three of the eighteen trade companies took part in the study. Six out of the nine non-profit entities belong to REAS. As for the size of the enterprises, five were large organizations.

Table 5 and 6 show the information related to the entities which participated in our research.

**Table 5. WISEs participants in the study**

Legal status	Special Employment Centres	Insertion Enterprises	Other WISEs	Total
Association	1	0	2	3
Foundation	0	1	2	3
Other non-profit legal status	0	0	3	3
Limited corporations	2	0	1	3
Total	3	1	8	12

SOURCE: Own.

**Table 6. WISEs' participants. Revenue depending on the legal form in 2008**

WISEs' revenue	Non-profit entities		Limited corporations	
	Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage
Member fees	1.410.359,25	4,43%	-	0,00%
Grants	15.952.995,10	50,08%	-	0,00%
Turnover of business Activities	14.490.294,73	45,49%	16.760.897,42	100,00%
Total	31.853.649,08	100,00%	16.760.897,42	100,00%

SOURCE: Own.

It can be highlighted the fact that the twelve organizations that have participated in the study out of thirty-four, generated nearly 90% of the WISEs sector's income.

### 3.4.1. Elements of CSR strategy: The integration of stakeholder demands

In the words of Freeman (1984), the identification and integration of stakeholder demands in an organization's strategies are indicative of an active corporate management approach. The limited vision of taking into account its stakeholders<sup>13</sup> just focuses on those groups that play a direct role in the survival of the enterprise. In the words of Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), with this limited vision, organizations will centre their strategies on stakeholder groups with one or more of the following attributes: power in terms of control over the organization's resources<sup>14</sup>, moral or contractual legitimacy, and more urgent demands than the rest.

In our view, following this premise, in the case of WISEs, stakeholder groups with contractual legitimacy comprise their customers, the public authorities, private donors and the enterprise's employees.

Social economy enterprises might see their customers as being a powerful legitimacy stakeholder group, due to the fact that these enterprises offer goods and services to customers, which consider the company to be socially responsible.

At the same time, public authorities can be regarded in the same way, especially, in the case of non-profit-making enterprises with a high dependency on public funding. From the study that was conducted in the Balearics, with the exception of a few cases, non-profit-making WISEs are in this precise

13.- In contrast with the broad vision of them that includes "any group or individual that might affect or be affected by an organization's decisions" (Freeman, 1984: 46).

14.- Pfeffer and Salancik (2003).

situation, since more than fifty percent of the funding they receive is from the public authorities, through subsidies. So, we can conclude that for these enterprises, the public authorities are a dominant stakeholder group in terms of Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997: 876)<sup>15</sup>.

Meanwhile, private funding is relatively unimportant for non-profit-making bodies and non-existent in the case of business companies, and so this collective, despite its legitimacy, is not *a priori* a powerful stakeholder group for such organizations.

Most work integration social employees are people at risk of social exclusion. Obviously, they are a stakeholder group with legal legitimacy, mainly because the corporate purpose of these enterprises revolves primarily around the social and labour market integration of such workers. It is a stakeholder group dependent upon the organization, whose demands are met depending on their urgency.

As we stated, the integration of the demands of stakeholders groups of the organization indicates a proactive position in social corporate management. In social economy enterprises, the principle of *equality* implies the consideration of the demands of stakeholders related to the entity. In this sense, we can establish that adherence to REAS, could reveal a first approach to a proactive position in these entities.

Of all the institutions studied, only six are associated with REAS and have collaborated in the study. These are non-profit entities that, *a priori*, have pledged their commitment to implement the principles. However, to realize the real strategic posture, the design of the questionnaire included items related to the assessment of integrating the demands of stakeholders groups.

Thus, the stakeholders included in our stakeholder panel were, in first instance, those with a contractual relationship with the organization and powerful legitimacy: customers and public authorities, from which the core financing is obtained. In addition, we considered other less powerful stakeholders with contractual legitimacy, such as donors, employees and suppliers. In addition, we considered those non-organizational stakeholders: social agents and other entities of social economy due to the fact, that the *cooperation principle* encompasses the collaboration with social entities and network relationships.

The table below shows the results related to the percentage of entities that integrate the stakeholders demands.

15.- The Balearic Administration's Directorate-General for CSR encourages active policies in the field of social responsibility, dialogue with stakeholders, and transparency and the establishment of corporate clauses regulating social responsibility in order to apply for the public tenders for the provision of goods and services that these companies often bid for (DGRSC, 2008).

**Table 7. Integration of demands of stakeholder groups**

	Porcentaje of enterprises					Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4	5		
The enterprise integrates the demands of							
Workers	0,00%	16,67%	0,00%	58,33%	25,00%	3,92	1,00
Customers	0,00%	25,00%	0,00%	50,00%	25,00%	3,75	1,14
Public authorities	16,67%	0,00%	8,33%	58,33%	16,67%	3,58	1,31
Donors	41,67%	16,67%	0,00%	33,33%	8,33%	2,50	1,57
Suppliers	33,33%	16,67%	16,67%	16,67%	16,67%	2,67	1,56
Social agents	25,00%	16,67%	25,00%	25,00%	8,33%	2,75	1,36
Other social economy enterprises	33,33%	16,67%	16,67%	16,67%	16,67%	2,67	1,56

SOURCE: Own.

The results demonstrate the importance that the enterprises lend to worker demands, as a stakeholder group with legitimacy, together with the demands of customers and the public authorities, as stakeholder groups with legitimacy and power. The demands of other groups are taken into account to a lesser extent, i.e. those of social agents, suppliers, other enterprises from the sector and donors.

An individual analysis of the responses by each of the enterprises served to determine whether they took an active or passive strategic approach. Given the importance of organizational stakeholder groups with legitimacy and power, an active stance was considered to be reflected by average ratings of four points in the integration of worker, customer and public authority demands by non-profit-making enterprises and in the integration of worker and customer demands by business companies.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, seven enterprises took an active approach to integrating the demands of stakeholder groups. They consisted of three local non-profit-making bodies (two of them were large organizations) that were members of REAS, with a high dependency on public funding, three local branches of large national organizations (two of them limited corporations and one, a non-profit making body), and a local business company. As for the five enterprises that took a passive approach, two of them were non-profit bodies members of REAS and three were highly dependent on public funding.

So basically the size of the enterprise can be considered the main item to integrate the stakeholders' demands by WISEs. The REAS membership and the dependency on public grants have not a direct relation with the effective integration of stakeholders' demands.

16.- Additionally, it could be seen that, in the case of these enterprises, global measures to integrate the demands of all stakeholder groups achieved a rating of over three points.

### 3.4.2. Elements of CSR management concerning internal stakeholders: employees

The items included in the survey related to the effective application of CRS initiatives involving internal stakeholders we designed taking into consideration the statements of the *employment principle* (REAS, 1998) and some other initiatives incorporated in AECA (2004).

In this respect, elements relating to the employees encompass training activities, empowerment, fair wages, equal opportunities, reconciling one's working and personal life, and safety. Information relating to this kind of initiative taken by the enterprises is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. Results of “Initiatives involving elements of CSR management: employees”**

Initiatives	Percentage of enterprises						Mean	Standard deviation
	1	2	3	4	5	DK/DA <sup>17</sup>		
Training activities:								
- Production or operating techniques	16.67%	8.33%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	3.33	1.44
- Prevention of occupational hazards	0.00%	8.33%	25.00%	25.00%	41.67%	0.00%	4.00	1.04
- Environmental management	8.33%	41.67%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	2.92	1.38
- Social responsibility	8.33%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	16.67%	0.00%	3.50	1.09
- Management skills	8.33%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	16.67%	0.00%	3.17	1.27
Continuous working day	25.00%	8.33%	25.00%	8.33%	33.33%	0.00%	3.17	1.64
Flexible timetable	0.00%	8.33%	16.67%	25.00%	5.00%	0.00%	4.17	1.03
Management of occupational hazards	0.00%	8.33%	25.00%	16.67%	5.00%	0.00%	4.08	1.08
Wages higher than Bargaining Agreement	16.67%	0.00%	8.33%	41.67%	25.00%	8.33%	3.64	1.43
Tenders for public services	8.33%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	16.67%	0.00%	3.17	1.27
No discrimination when hiring labour	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	66.67%	0.00%	4.67	0.49
Control of working environment	41.67%	8.33%	16.67%	16.67%	8.33%	8.33%	2.36	1.50

SOURCE: Own.

Among the labour-related initiatives taken by these social economy enterprises, non-discriminatory policies stand out particularly, receiving the highest mean rating. The introduction of flexible timetables for workers was a widespread initiative, together with risk management and risk training as occupational safety measures.

The next initiative in order of importance was the introduction of wages above the Collective Bargaining Agreement, with slightly less than half the organizations applying this policy to a relevant extent.

17.- DK/DA = The respondent doesn't know or doesn't answer the question.

Training also ranks high, particularly in the prevention of occupational hazards, and in technical skills and social responsibility, with about half the enterprises engaging in these activities to a substantial extent and just under a fourth of them doing so on a regular basis.

An individual analysis of the responses linked the level of application of CSR internal stakeholder initiatives, with the active approach to integrating the demands of stakeholder groups discussed in the previous section. In this respect, enterprises with an active approach are taking CSR initiatives on employees by average rating of four points out of five. On the other hand, entities with a passive approach and highly dependent on public funding take these initiative in a moderate level (average of 3 – 3,9 points) and the entities having taken a passive approach and not being dependent on public subsidies take these initiatives at a low level (average below 3 points).

### 3.4.3. Elements of CSR management concerning external stakeholder groups: management of environmental impacts, responsible trading relations, and participation in networks and external projects

Initiatives of this kind that were analysed were connected with fostering customer loyalty, applying responsible screening criteria when selecting suppliers, collaboration with competitors and other social agents, the development of external projects, and management of the consumption of resources and environmental impacts. These initiatives come from the statements of REAS (1998) and AECA (2004). The results of the application of these management initiatives by the enterprises are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9. The results of “initiatives in the field of CSR management: external stakeholder groups”**

Initiatives	Percentage of enterprises						Mean	Standard deviation
	1	2	3	4	5	DK/DA		
Consumption & environmental impact management	16.67%	25.00%	16.67%	25.00%	16.67%	0.00%	3.00	1.41
Socially responsible financial investments	16.67%	0.00%	16.67%	25.00%	33.33%	8.33%	3.64	1.50
Financial liabilities correspond to socially responsible organizations	25.00%	8.33%	8.33%	25.00%	25.00%	8.33%	3.00	1.63
Social and environmental screening criteria for selecting suppliers	25.00%	5.00%	8.33%	8.33%	8.33%	0.00%	2.25	1.22
Control of customer satisfaction	25.00%	11.67%	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	8.33%	2.82	1.54
Customer care formulae	16.67%	25.00%	8.33%	8.33%	33.33%	8.33%	3.18	1.66
Participation in networks	16.67%	16.67%	8.33%	41.67%	16.67%	0.00%	3.25	1.42
Participation in or funding of external social, environmental and cultural projects	33.33%	41.67%	16.67%	0.00%	8.33%	0.00%	2.08	1.16

SOURCE: Own.

In the field of environmental management, just over half the enterprises make extensive efforts to reduce the consumption of resources and environmental impacts. The selection of suppliers, using socially responsible screening criteria, can be done in two different ways. On the one hand, just over half the enterprises select considerably, the financial operations that they engage in by assessing the CSR criteria applied by the financial body in question. On the other, only one third of the enterprises use responsible screening criteria to some extent when choosing suppliers of goods and services.

Policies aimed at fostering customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and customer care are a regular practice among about forty percent of the enterprises, which engage in this practice to a substantial extent.

Participation in social economy networks is the most widespread external initiative, common to over sixty percent of the enterprises, which stated that they engage in this practice. Involvement in joint projects with other enterprises is the least widespread practice, reflecting a lack of collaboration with other enterprises from the sector in the development of joint projects.

It is noticeable that enterprises that take an active strategic approach to integrating stakeholder demands tend to put into practice far more management initiatives. But we can conclude that external CSR initiatives are taking at a moderate and low level in all the cases analysed with averages lower than those for internal CSR initiatives.

### 3.5. On-line financial and sustainability disclosures of WISE

In order to assess whether WISEs transparency requirement was applied, a study was conducted of the type of corporate information that was voluntarily reported by our sample enterprises during the 2008 and 2009 financial years, comparing this data with GRI report content (2006)<sup>18</sup>.

Of the twelve enterprises that took part in the study, six published an online annual report. They consisted of four non-profit-making bodies belonging to REAS and another two large national bodies<sup>19</sup>. If we observe the whole sector, just six of thirty-four enterprises reported voluntarily an online report, although the majority of the sector complies with legal obligations to submit annual accounts.

Firstly, two small local enterprises can be singled out that report voluntarily on income and expenditure components of the profit and loss account, the enterprise's management structure, activities, beneficiaries and employment generated by category and type of contract, together with details of public and other funding. Only minimal external information is reported, since it does not cover more than

*18.- If the enterprises reported level C report content, they were analysed for the subsequent level.*

*19.- All of them accomplished with their obligations about reporting financial statements and social information to the Spanish official institution.*

one third of the reporting content of the GRI's first application level. These enterprises are members of REAS, with a high dependency on public funding, and they take the form of foundations or associations.

The information reported by the two national enterprises and two large local ones includes a statement by the head of the organization, the enterprise's management structure, and its commitment to CSR principles or standards. They also offer more extensive financial details of their income and expenditure and provide a comprehensive description of their activities and beneficiaries, the employment they generate, training and occupational health activities, and details of bodies collaborating with them or helping to fund them. The reported financial data does not cover the whole of their annual accounts, although substantial corporate information about activities is provided. The organizations declare a commitment to the environment, without specifying impacts or consumption, and two mention their management approach to stakeholders, although only one reports on the outcome of the integration of their demands and resulting satisfaction. About half the level C report content is provided. Depending on each case, generally 52 to 60% of this data is supplied. These are enterprises that take an active strategic approach when it comes to integrating stakeholder demands, and elements of CSR management are applied to a more extensive degree.

### 3.6. Discussion

Ullmann (1985) analysed empirical applications that describe the explanatory variables behind social information disclosure, depending on the organizations' social management<sup>20</sup> and financial profitability<sup>21</sup>. The author believes that reported social information should also be related to other variables, like the organization's size, its values, and external pressure. Ullmann developed a theoretical model that incorporates the enterprise's strategic attitude to the integration of stakeholder demands (active or passive), stakeholders' capacity to demand certain action (high or low), and financial profitability (high or low) as variables to be considered. The more (less) powerful the stakeholder, depending on the extent to which it provides essential funding, the higher (lower) the financial profitability and the more active (passive) the strategic approach, the higher (lower) the degree of social management and more (less) disclosure of compulsory and voluntary information that can be expected.

In theory, in WISEs, sustainability disclosure must be more prevalent among organizations that take an active approach to integrating the demands of powerful stakeholders with other possible determinants being their size and the geographical scope of their activities<sup>22</sup>.

20.- *The social management variables range from reputation-related indexes to the existence of specific programmes in the field of social responsibility.*

21.- *Based on accounting or market-related variables.*

22.- *Without considering the profitability or financial items due to the non-profit making.*

Indeed, enterprises that are more transparent take an active, open strategic approach and internal CSR initiatives towards employees. These enterprises are either large local organizations with a high dependence on the public authorities or national ones that are not mainly dependent on public funding. However, one national body did not disclose any information, despite its high dependence on public funding. In the case of small local bodies, dependence on public funding and membership of REAS generally condition the disclosure of a minimum level of information.

The following table shows the results commented on above.

**Table 10. Aspects that determine information disclosure by work integration social enterprises in the Balearics**

Bodies	REAS	Dependence on public funding	Strategic approach	Internal stakeholders initiatives	External stakeholders initiatives	Size	Level C coverage (GRI)
2 non-profit	Yes	High	Active	High	Moderate	Large	58-60 %
1 non-profit	Yes	High	Active	Moderate	Low	Large	0 %
1 non-profit	Yes	High	Active	High	Moderate	Small	26 %
2 corporations	No	Low	Active	High	Moderate	Large	52-58 %
1 corporation	No	Low	Active	High	Low	Small	0 %
1 non-profit	Yes	High	Passive	Moderate	Moderate	Small	32 %
2 non-profit	No	High	Passive	Low	Low	Small	0 %
1 non-profit	Yes	Low	Passive	Low	Low	Small	0 %
1 non-profit	No	Low	Passive	Low	Low	Small	0 %

SOURCE: Own.

## 4.- Conclusions

Social economy principles and criteria for WISEs encompass two aspects of social responsibility. The principles incorporate fundamental issues, like taking into account stakeholder demands (the principle of equality), the voluntary disclosure of information (the criterion of transparency) and responsible management initiatives (employment, the environment, cooperation, and a local commitment).

Through our applied study, the effective application of policies by WISEs in the fields of social responsibility has been analysed. On the one hand, compliance with the non-profit-making principle, a public interest corporate purpose, stability of employment, and access to employment by disadvantaged groups was confirmed. On the other, the CSR initiatives that they engage in were ascertained.

As for elements of CSR management, we can distinguish between elements relating to their strategic approach, their internal stakeholder and external stakeholder groups.

As for the enterprises' strategic approach to the integration of stakeholder demands, it should be highlighted that over half of WISEs that took part in the study take an active approach, focused on organizational stakeholders like the workforce, the public authorities and customers. Generally speaking, they are local non-profit-making bodies attached to REAS that are mainly dependent on public funding or else large national bodies operating in the Balearics.

Enterprises that take a passive approach are small ones whose dependence on public funding does not influence their strategic approach. Some of them belong to REAS. Although they comply with their standards of practice, it cannot be definitely concluded that membership of REAS guarantees fulfilment of the principle of equality; that is, the real integration of stakeholder demands.

Most of WISEs analysed apply CSR policies directed at their workers, above all the generation of stable employment, the integration of disadvantaged groups, policies directed at non discrimination, fair wages and occupational safety and training. In this sense, some seventy percent of the enterprises in the study, put into practice a relevant number of initiatives associated with the principle of employment.

Actually, the entities that take an active strategic approach integrating stakeholders' demands are more likely to adopt specific CSR initiatives towards the internal organizational stakeholders (employees). As we mentioned, the basic determinants are the size of the organization, the geographical scope of their activities and their dependency of public funding.

Elements of CSR concerning external stakeholder groups are applied to a relatively moderate extent with participation in networks and the use of ethical screening criteria in the selection of financial operations standing out slightly above the rest and applied in a fifty per cent of the cases. Even to a lesser extent, CSR screening criteria are used in the selection of general suppliers, customer loyalty is fostered, and there is cooperation with other enterprises from the social economy.

When it comes to the principles of the social economy enterprises, we can conclude that the Balearic WISEs comply with the requirements of the non-profit-making and employment principles. In this respect, elements of solidarity-based responsibility are widely applied by these enterprises, together with elements of internal CSR. Elements of external CSR management inherent in the principles of equality, cooperation, environmental care and a commitment to local society are applied on a more moderate and low basis.

As for transparency criteria, an analysis of the information voluntarily reported by work integration social enterprises shows that more voluntary information is disclosed by larger local enterprises and by some large national ones. Almost all of them also take an active strategic approach, relevant CSR initiatives related to internal stakeholders and moderate initiatives related to external stakeholders. The disclosed information reflects the contents of the activity report and the financial information generally refers to sources of income and expenditure by type or by programme or activity. This covers over half the contents of the GRI's first application level.

Although the published information reflects an enterprise's non-profit-making status and the fact that people from disadvantaged groups are employed, references to commitments regarding other aspects of social responsibility are merely indicative. Relevant information about the integration of stakeholder expectations, environmental impacts or other negative externalities is not provided, and so not all aspects of social responsibility can be assessed.

The smaller enterprises fall into one of two situations with regard to the disclosure of information. Members of REAS dependent on public funding disclose less information than the financial and social data that they are required to draft by law, with this information covering up to one third of the contents of the GRI's level C. Consequently, it does not reflect elements of social responsibility.

In the case of all the other enterprises not attached to REAS and all the business companies, no voluntary information is disclosed of a financial, social or environmental nature. But we must state that in terms of their obligations in the field of financial and social reporting, the majority of the enterprises comply with the drafting and submission of annual accounts and the drafting of an activity report.

Enterprises that voluntarily disclose a higher amount of information were seen to be large organizations that take an active strategic approach to their stakeholders, although it cannot be concluded that size is always related to how much information is disclosed or to the type of strategic approach that is taken. In the case of small enterprises, dependence on the public authorities and membership of REAS play a key role in the timid disclosure of information of an even more superficial nature than that reported by large enterprises.

We are aware of the limitations of our study taking into consideration that only twelve out of a total of thirty-four WISEs took part in it. The efforts made in order to engage the whole universe of this collective in the study were considerable and took long. But the negative response to participate was reiterative and explicit. We would like to highlight that while the involvement of non-profit WISEs belonging to REAS was considerable (some 56 % of non-profit bodies participated), the participation of limited corporations was minimal, with 17 % response rate.

In this respect, our future research should be focused on qualitative methodology, such as case analysis and ethnographic methods that call for a deep and careful diagnosis of an organization's application of CRS initiatives and could reveal the real stakeholders' point of view related to their own involvement in the company's decision-making.

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