

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVEMENT IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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Abstract

This scientific endeavor is dedicated to the sustainable development of human resources at the organizational level. Thus, the sustainable development of human resources is approached by taking into account three dimensions: respect for human rights and social guarantees; health and safety; organizational social commitment. For each dimension are shown and described the main elements of sustainable development of human resources. To have a holistic approach to sustainable development of human resources at the organizational level are presented, for each dimension, a variety of indicators characterizing the problem.

In the present scientific approach, we aim to demonstrate that organizations are involved in the sustainable development of human resources regardless of the field of activity. In order to achieve the predefined objective we used as research methods - documentation and analysis. Research subjects served the top 40 companies listed on the Paris Stock Exchange under the CAC (Continuous Assisted Quotation) index.

Keywords: human resources, human resources management, sustainable development, human resources specialists, the sustainable management of human resources.

JEL Classification: J44; J71; M12; M51.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the sustainable development of human resources has been, and continues to be, an important concern both at national and organizational level. Major demographic changes at the European Union level, increasing the ageing of the working-age population and the great economic downturn in the first decade of the 21st century, have made sustainable human resources a major problem at the level of the European Union.

Sustainable development is a fundamental objective of the European Union, focused on the continuous improvement of the quality of life and the welfare of present and future generations. Currently, 95% of large US and European companies consider sustainable development a rather important issue [2]. The concern for the fate of future generations has become increasingly present in the development strategies of big companies.

While in the literature, the sustainable development is a term with more reference to environmental management, the social dimension of sustainable development has become increasingly important, as shown by increasing the number of publications Corporate Social Responsibility [9].

Many companies around the world are concerned about the sustainable development of human resources, or at least say it on their website and in sustainable development reports, but it's not always clear whether it is a marketing position or it really reflects, the reality within the organization [10]

In specialized literature dealing with sustainable development and human resources management issues, it is often asked to provide answers to the following questions:

How will human resources specialists succeed in attracting qualified and motivated workforce in the future?

How can the unwanted or negative effects of implementing or reducing human resources be prevented?

At present, the increasing process of globalization, increasing competition, teamwork, the development of information and communication technologies, increasing employment uncertainty, self-employment and self-sufficiency are identified as some of the causes of more intense work systems and flexible, which leads to negative outcomes for employees and exhaustion of human resources [8]. All these tendencies with less favorable effects on employees' health have prompted both the theorists and practitioners to pay more attention to the sustainable development of human resources.

2. Literature review

Organizations that operate in different contexts and fields of activity treat differently the sustainable development of human resources. In this case, both the risks to which employees are exposed and the conditions in which they work should be taken into account.

Sustainable development differs from traditional approaches to growth through simultaneous integration of considerations of economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection [10]. In relation to these aspects of sustainable development, the natural environment is closely linked to organizational activities, in the sense that it is continuously shaping and adapting to the organizational environment [4] [10] [12]. At the same time, Ahmad highlighted the role of human resources in terms of employee involvement in promoting practices such as carpooling, recycling and energy conservation [14].

Thomm and Zaugg define the sustainable management of human resources as "those conceptual approaches and long-term oriented activities aimed both socially and economically, aspects such as: recruitment, selection, development, use and dismissal of human resources [10]. At the same time, Müller-Christ and Remmer define the sustainable management of human resources as "what organizations should do in their environment in order to have long access to qualified human resources" [17].

One of the key responsibilities of human resources professionals is to provide employee support for the implementation of environmental initiatives [10]. At the same time, Jabbour and others highlight the importance of human resource management at different stages of the environmental management system [15].

Renwick and others have developed a theoretical model in which finds that policies on: recruitment, performance evaluation, performance management, staff training and development, employee relations, rewarding staff are considered important tools for aligning or approaching employees to environmental strategy of the organization [10].

Also, Gollan developed a model by which considers that there are five important elements that influence the sustainable development of human resources at the organizational level [13]. According to the author, the balance of life-work, organizational change, involvement and consultation of employees, career development and organizational learning, as well as organizational structure have a direct impact on the sustainable development of human resources. The given model defines the sustainable development of human resources as the capacity of organizations to create value, i.e. capacity and ability to regenerate value, namely to renew their wealth. Moreover, the author identifies four more important factors-human resources policies, leadership style, leadership, culture and traditions – in an attempt to achieve the sustainability of human resources at the organizational level and to assess their impact on employees' commitment and satisfaction, as well as on the organization's performance and profit.

Leitch and others consider empowering employees to be important to give them both the opportunity and the responsibility to take concrete steps to identify problems in the professional environment that affect the quality of the service / product offered to customers [16].

According to Argyris, "Without vision, no strategy can be achieved without capable and responsible employees" [1]. Moreover, responsible employees are not only preferable but also essential for the implementation of the organizational objective - ensuring economic and environmental reliability [11], [14]. In the opinion of Argyris, employees with a high degree of

employability are more motivated and willing to participate in the process of good environmental practice. Good practices of employee engagement in environmental activities, as well as their planning, are keys to management in terms of pollution. However, management initiatives without employee involvement can be considered as unnecessary.

Consideration of human resources management as part of organizational sustainability is justified because:

- (a) The human resource is a function which presents a greater potential for the inclusion of the postulates of sustainability at the organizational level [18];
- (b) Modern management of human resources and sustainable organizations requires long-term attention and actions that extrapolate the search for an exclusive economic performance [19];
- (c) Stimulating organizational sustainability is the current human resource management paradigm [3];
- (d) The modern management of human resources must be effective to meet the needs of all stakeholders of a company [6].

The sustainable development approach as part of the organizational strategy, sooner or later, will become relevant to strategic human resource management within organizations [5]. At the same time, many organizations consider important sustainable development for human resource management as they contribute to several objectives: [10]

- Attracting and maintaining talents, being recognized as a good employer;
- Maintaining the safety and health of employees;
- Making investments in long-term human resources for skills development and lifelong learning;
- Support of employees in terms of work balance-life and balance of work-family;
- Aging workforce management;
- The development of employee confidence and employer confidence, as well as the creation of sustainable working relationships;
- Manifesting the promotion of corporate social responsibility towards employees and the community in which the organization operates;
- Maintaining a high level of the quality of life of employees and the community.

3. Indicators that characterize the sustainable development of human resources

The concerns of the organization, in general, and its human resources subdivision, in particular, about the sustainable development of human resources, are oriented towards:

- respecting employees' social rights and guarantees;
- work organization and employee health;
- the organization's social commitment.

In addition to the fact that actions taken to respect employees' rights, occupational safety and health, and social engagement contribute to the sustainable development of human resources, this makes the organization recognized as a good employer on the labor market and, at the same time, employees in the organization, avoiding the increased fluctuation of staff, a phenomenon that has unfavorable economic implications.

The sustainable development of human resources in terms of respect for employees' rights and guarantees should be analyzed from the point of ensuring equal opportunities for all employees. Ensuring equal opportunities requires the organization to offer equal opportunities to all employees, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, family status, etc. According to the Law of the Republic of Moldova on ensuring equality, the following actions of the employer are considered discriminatory:

- Placement of employment notices with the indication of conditions and criteria which exclude or favor certain persons;
- Unfounded refusal of employment of the person;

- Unfounded refusal of admission of persons to professional qualification courses;
- Unequal remuneration for the same type and/or volume of work;
- Differentiated and unfounded distribution of work tasks, resulting from the granting of less favorable status to persons;
- Harassment.

The analysis of the sustainable development of human resources in terms of respecting the fundamental rights of employees can be reflected by several indicators (Table 1).

Table no 1. Indicators that characterize the sustainable development of human resources at the organizational level in terms of respecting fundamental human rights

Nr	Indicators
1.	Number of employees with special needs.
2.	Share of employees with special needs in total employees.
3.	Number of employees of retirement age in the total number of employees.
4.	Share of pensioners in the total number of employees.
5.	Share of people up to 20 years of age in total employees.
6.	Share of employees of different ethnic groups in total employees.
7.	Number of employees with fixed-term employment contract
8.	Share of employees with fixed-term employment contracts in total employees.
9.	The ratio of men's and women's wages to organizational levels, by different age groups.
10.	Total number of incidents related to employee discrimination.
11.	The ratio between the number of incidents related to discrimination and the total number of employees.
12.	The ratio between the number of incidents related to discrimination and the number of employees being discriminated against.

Source: Developed by the author based [5].

The responsibility of human resources managers and specialists in occupational health is to monitor and assess the degree to which it is provided to employees and to develop appropriate measures to prevent morbidity at work [2; p. 81].

Promoting health in the professional environment is an activity carried out by various programs to help employees maintain an optimal state of health through awareness of the importance of the problem and the adoption of beneficial changes in style and in the work environment.

At the same time, we can see that more and more global organizations are focusing their efforts through the human resources function in order to create a balance between maximizing productivity and the risk of employee exhaustion, which can generate professional errors, resulting in additional financial costs or resignations.

By generalizing the issue of health and safety at work, a number of indicators are presented in Table 2.

Table no. 2. Indicators that characterize the sustainable development of human resources at the organizational level through the organization of work and health of employees

Nr	Indicators
1.	Number of part-time employees.
2.	Share of part-time employees in total employees.
3.	Number of employees with flexible work schedule.
4.	The share of fatal accidents at work in total work accidents.
5.	Rate of professional morbidity.
6.	Number of non-medical rehabilitation staff (psychological counseling, sanatorium treatment, etc.).
7.	Number of insured employees whose risk of injury is increased.
8.	Number of employees benefiting from protective equipment.
9.	Number of employees benefiting from reduced working hours due to harmful working conditions.
10.	Number of employees benefiting from additional leave due to harmful working conditions.
11.	Number of employees working in damaging conditions.
12.	Number of jobs adjusted to health and safety requirements.
13.	Number of employees who participated in training programs in the field of health and safety at work.

Source: Developed by the author based [5].

The social commitment of organizations to the sustainable development of human resources has a broad scope, ranging from services provided to employees and ending with social responsibility towards young people. The social argument in favor of employee services is the most convincing, but there are also arguments of an economic nature. Stimulating committed commitments and improving employees' morale may not produce effects that can, or do not, lead to real growth in labor productivity. In any case, both senior management and human resource specialists need to be aware that even if social services do not provide greater individual performance, they limit their reduction. The fame that an organization takes care of its own employees is another practical argument in favor of social services. Care for employees reinforces the public's perception of being a good employer, which allows them to recruit staff with higher performances. Employee welfare does not necessarily lead to increased professional performance, but can increase engagement, which would lead to retaining valuable employees, reducing personnel fluctuation, and improving the quality of work.

The sustainable development of human resources through the social commitment of the organization can be reflected by the analysis of several indicators (Table 3).

Table no. 3. Indicators that characterize the sustainable development of human resources at the organizational level in terms of social commitment

Nr	Indicators
1.	Average salary growth rate at organizational level.
2.	The ratio between the average organizational salary and the average salary for the economy.
3.	Number of employees who benefited from bonuses during the year.
4.	Number of employees who benefited from vocational training programs during the year
5.	Share of employees who benefited from vocational training programs in total employees.
6.	Share of employees aged over 55 in the total number of people trained during the year.
7.	Number of employees who received professional training in the first year of activity in the organization.
8.	Share of employees who received vocational training in the first year of activity in the total number of trained persons.
9.	Number of employee claims registered during the year.
10.	Number of people promoted during the year.
11.	Share of women in the total number of people promoted during the year.
12.	Number of labor conflicts registered during the year.
13.	Number of trainee students trained in the organization during the internship.
14.	Share of trainee students in total employees.
15.	Share of graduates of education institutions in the total number of employed persons during the calendar year.

Source: Developed by the author based [5].

4. Applied methodology

In order to assess the organizations' level of involvement in the sustainable development of human resources, the top 40 companies listed on the Paris Stock Exchange, according to the CAC (Continuous Assisted Quotation) index, were surveyed. The CAC 40 is a free float market capitalization weighted index that reflects the performance of the 40 largest and most widely traded shares listed on Euronext Paris, and is the most widely used indicator of the Paris stock market. For this, the annual integrated activity reports for 2016 were analyzed and placed on the official websites of those companies. Annex no. 1 presents the electronic addresses where the integrated annual activity reports of the first 40 companies listed on the Paris Stock Exchange were consulted.

The structure of the top 40 companies listed on the Paris Stock Exchange, according to the CAC index, is shown in Figure 1.

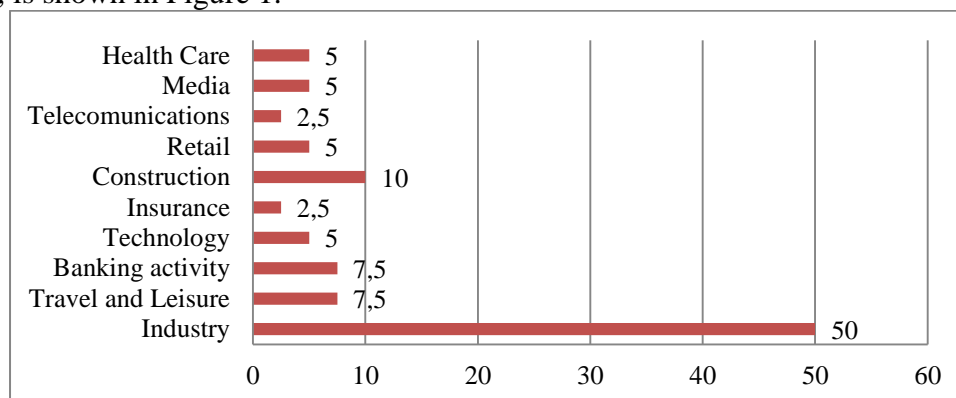


Figure no. 1. The structure of companies by field of activity

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of the conducted research.

The integrated annual reports of the listed companies include information on all aspects of the company's business, including human resources. Taking into consideration the issue that concerns us in the present scientific approach, we analyzed the reports of activity in order to determine to what extent the sustainable development of human resources in the respective companies is reflected in the existence of distinct compartments. We also focused on the idea put forward by Ehnert (2009) that reflecting the sustainable development of human resources would be a marketing element for companies. Based on the analysis, we found that there are no separate human resources in the annual activity reports of the research companies, and in those companies where there are such compartments, their name is different (Figure 2).

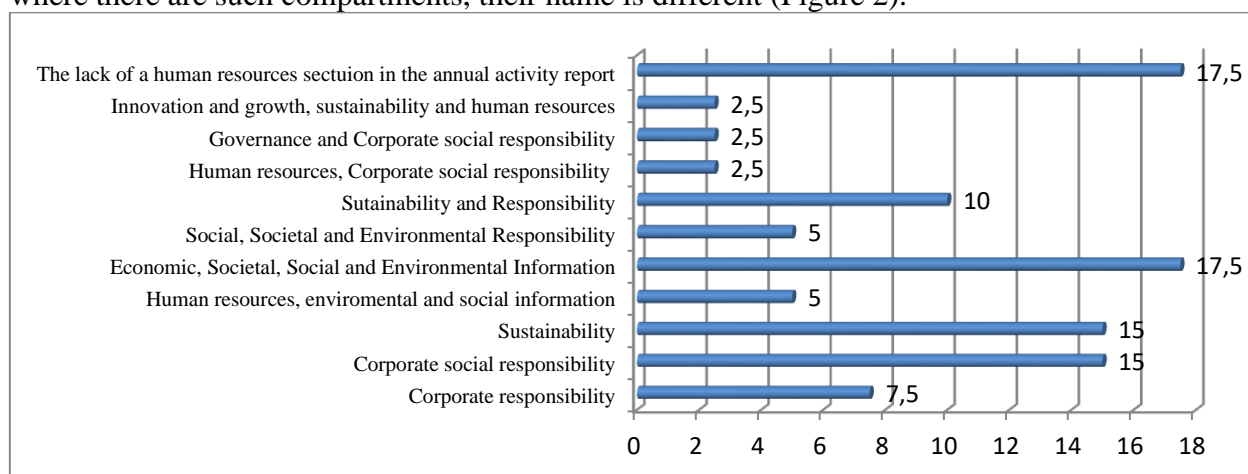


Figure no. 2. The presence of human resources compartments in companies' annual activity reports

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of the conducted research.

From Figure 2, we find that in most corporate activity reports there is a human resources department, including their sustainable development. Although the given compartment has different names (following the research we have identified 10 names of that compartment) some of the information presented refers to the employees of the company and their sustainable development. In companies where corporate sustainability is viewed as a corporate social responsibility, the department is called Corporate Social Responsibility (15%), in other companies - Sustainability (15%).

The fact that the organizations mentioned in the research are involved in the sustainable development of human resources is evidenced by the information contained in the annual activity reports. In the process of processing the information in the annual reports we have the intention to structure it according to certain criteria or variables that reflect the sustainable development of human resources. Thus, the criteria and / or variables have been identified according to the indicators presented in Tables 1-3. The criteria and / or variables identified in the Annual Activity Reports demonstrate the involvement of organizations in the sustainable development of human resources. Criteria and / or variables have been grouped according to the indicators presented or close to them taking into account the fact that a series of indicators reflecting the sustainable development of human resources in terms of respecting human rights were presented in Table 1, we identified a multitude of criteria and / or variables that would characterize them and demonstrate that the research organizations are concerned about the issue in question (Figure 3).

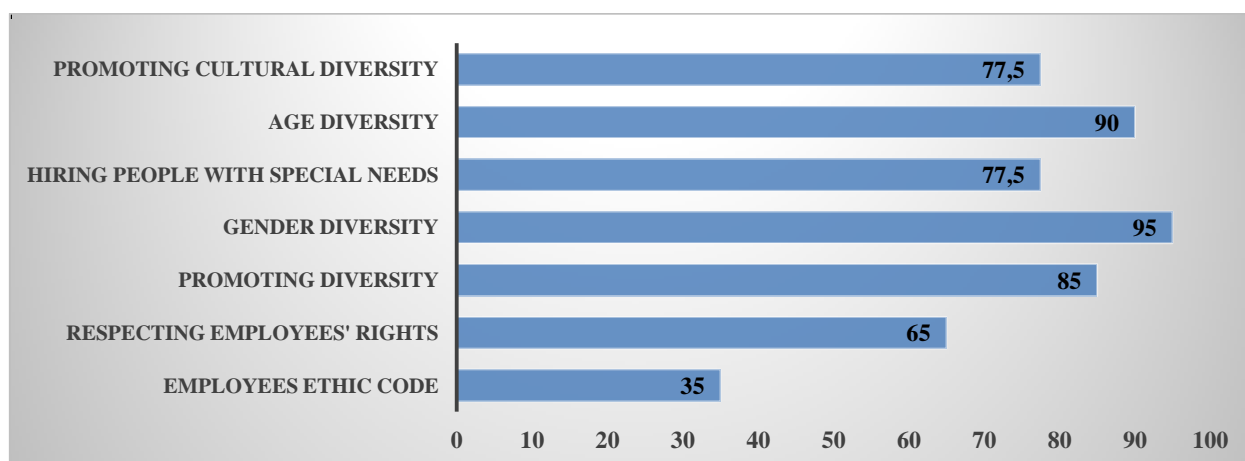


Figure no. 3. Presence of criteria and / or variables reflecting the sustainable development of human resources through respect for fundamental human rights

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of the conducted research.

Figure 3 shows that organizations, through the variables and / or criteria reflected in the activity reports, are involved in the process of sustainable human resources development throughout the respect for human rights. Most organizations provide information on respecting employees' rights and ensuring equal opportunities, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, etc.

The second set of criteria and / or variables included in the research refers to the sustainable development of human resources through the organization of work and health of employees (Figure 4). The variables and / or criteria contained in this section tend to reflect some of the indicators outlined in Table 2.

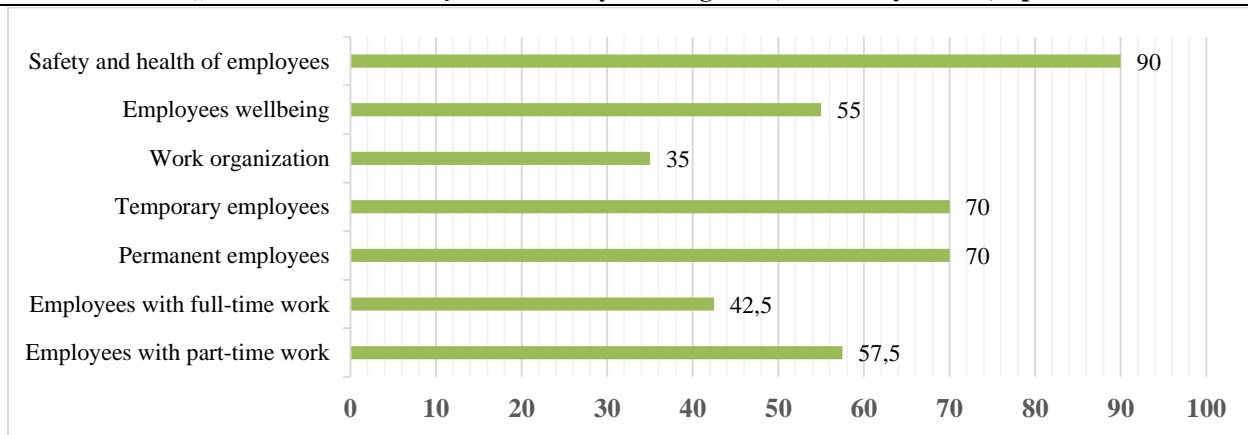


Figure no. 4. Presence of criteria and / or variables reflecting the sustainable development of human resources through the organization of work and health of employees

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of the conducted research.

Regarding the sustainable development of human resources through the organization of work and health of employees, the most common is the presence of the variable on the safety and health of employees - 90%. Also, 55% of organizations provide information on employees' well-being. As far as the variables relating to the organization of work are concerned, those in the activity reports are those concerning permanent and temporary employees.

The third set of criteria and / or variables on the sustainable development of human resources addresses the social commitment of organizations. The variables and / or criteria contained in this section tend to reflect some of the indicators in Table 3. Figure 5 shows the results of processing the information from the company's annual activity reports on social engagement.

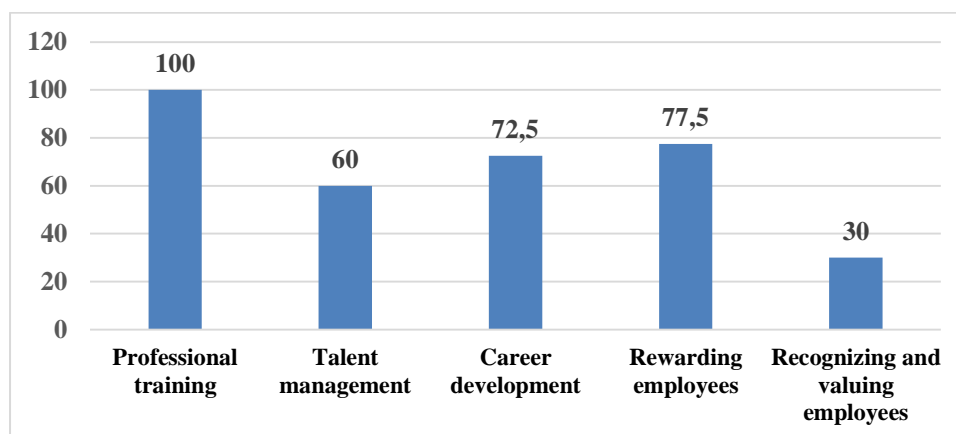


Figure no. 5. The presence of criteria and/or variables reflecting the sustainable development of human resources in terms of social commitment

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of the conducted research.

The results presented in Figure 3 demonstrate that organizations, through their proven social commitment, are concerned with the professional development of their employees. Thus, 100% of organizations provide information in the annual activity reports on employee training. To a lesser extent, information on talent management, career development and rewarding of employees is reflected.

5. Conclusions

Therefore, the sustainable development of human resources within organizations should be a desire and a concern of higher management that starts from the idea that each employee aspires to a standard of living, admissible to his professional environment. Therefore, human resources

specialists shouldn't be indifferent to employees' needs in terms of social welfare, but on the contrary they should analyze them, and depending on the economic possibilities of the organization, to come up with concrete proposals, which contributes to the growth of the standard of living in the professional environment.

In many cases, the sustainable development of human resources is perceived as a social responsibility from the companies the research carried out showed us that organizations have an obvious involvement in the sustainable development of human resources. The existence of separate compartments, in the annual activity reports of the largest 40 companies listed on the Paris Stock Exchange, on human resources and their sustainable development prove that they strive and carry out actions to achieve this objective.

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Available at: <https://www.emeraldinsight.co.uk/doi/abs/10.1108/01443570110410865>.

Appendix 1

List of electronic addresses of the companies included in the research

1. www.accorhotels.group/-/media/Corporate/Home/.../ACCOR_DRF_2016_UK_MEL.pdf.
2. <https://www.airliquide.com/file/159046/download?token=NirTE2yj>.
3. <https://company.airbus.com/.../airbusgroup/.../Airbus-Annual-Report-2016/Airbus-RA-R...>
4. <http://www.arcelormittal-reports.com/reports/integrated-2016/pdf/full-integrated.pdf>.
5. https://atos.net/content/dam/global/reports-2016/downloads/Atos_RegistrationDocument_2016.pdf
6. https://www-axa-com.cdn.axa-contento-118412.eu/www-axa-com%2F268bab7a-2e78-4843-844a-fd3ad2d340bc_axa_reference_document_2016.pdf.
7. https://www-axa-com.cdn.axa-contento-118412.eu/www-axa-com%2F7b635d07-d9f9-4e48-8af2-231baafaf869_axsr016_gb.pdf
8. <https://www.companyreporting.com/sites/default/files/annual-report-index/bouygues-annual-report-2016.pdf>.
9. <http://annual-report.capgemini.com/2016/index-en.html>.
10. http://www.carrefour.com/sites/default/files/2016_registration_document_2.pdf.
11. http://danone-danonecom-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/user_upload/info_reglementees_NIV/Danone-DDR_2016-VEENG.pdf.
12. https://bvdatastore.engie.beevirtua.com/media/eaf1a783-f247-42f7-b7a2-ea48876a6b06/resource/4dd9d630-51e2-11e7-a19f-87071064eeb7/POD_ENGIE_document-reference-2016_en_rev01_work_ld.pdf.
13. https://www.essilor.com/essilor-content/uploads/2017/04/2016_Registration_Document_Essilor.pdf.
14. http://www.kering.com/sites/default/files/kerling_referencedocument2016.pdf.
15. https://financialreports.lafargeholcim.com/2016/downloads/en/pdf/entire_lhn_ar16.pdf.
16. <https://www.companyreporting.com/sites/default/files/annual-report-index/legrand-annual-report-2016.pdf>.
17. <https://www.companyreporting.com/sites/default/files/annual-report-index/loreal-annual-report-2016.pdf>.
18. http://digitalannualreport.lvmh.com/lvmh-assets/uploads/2017/03/lvmh_1702252_ra_gb_2016_245x300_mel-23072017.pdf.
19. https://www.google.ro/search?biw=1906&bih=948&ei=p00EWurWidHIwQL3-L_YBO&q=MICHELIN+annual+integrated+report+2016&oq=MICHELIN+annual+integrated+report+2016&gs_l=psy-ab.3...23829.23829.0.25890.1.1.0.0.0.111.111.0j1.1.0....0...1.1.64.psy-ab.0.0.0...0.GnuUif4zyjg.
20. https://www.orange.com/en/content/download/30106/838123/version/8/file/ORANGE_VA_2016.pdf.
21. https://www.unglobalcompact.org/system/attachments/cop_2017/425991/original/pr_rd_2016_2017_en.pdf?1507745274.
22. https://www.groupe-psa.com/content/uploads/2017/04/PSA2016_DRF_EN.pdf.
23. <http://www.publicisgroupe.com/download/25de28cfc21d1da6638d9944d5430adc>.
24. <https://group.renault.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/dr-2016-version-anglaise.pdf>.
25. <https://www.safran-group.com/file/download/safran-ddr2016-va.pdf>.
26. https://www.saint-gobain.com/sites/sgcom.master/files/ddr_2016_va.pdf.
27. http://en.sanofi.com/Images/49288_20-F_2016.pdf.
28. http://www.sanofi.com/Images/49287_Document_de_reference_2016.pdf.
29. <https://www.schneider-electric.com/ww/en/documents/finance/2017/03/2016-annual-report-tcm50-288816.pdf>.
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37. <https://www.veolia.com/sites/g/files/dvc181/f/assets/documents/2017/04/veolia-annual-sustainability-report-2016.pdf>.
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