

Fabrica Ethica

Fabrica Ethica is the regional program to promote and develop CSR in the regional economic system by the creation of several instruments. It is also the first strong action made by an Italian Region. The action began in 2000, with the new Regional Government and was first officially presented with the international convention of march 2002 “Fabrica Ethica”, that provided an excellent occasion for representatives from various Universities, Trade Unions, business organisations, and NGOs in Italy and Europe to share their opinions and CSR/ SA 8000 experiences.

1. Who is involved?

In June 2000 the **Tuscany regional government** launched its analysis on corporate social responsibility at the international level, in the sense of respect for human rights and for local community values and decided to encourage CSR by promoting SA 8000 certification (social accountability 8000), an international standard managed by SAI International, as an instrument recognisable all over the world. In taking this decision the Region thought to meet the expectations of **enterprises** (that ask for instruments universally recognised) and those of all the **others stakeholders**: NGOs, non for profit organisations, consumers, that ask for clear instruments.

2. The Drivers

The reasons to set up the programme were related to find the way to promote a different kind of growth, and to ensure that Tuscany continue to be a synonym of quality and beauty, of know-how based both on tradition and innovation. The economic system could be seriously threatened by current trends towards outsourcing and globalisation, as well as by total liberalisation where increased profits through cuts in costs can have dangerous effects on the environment and a negative social impact, with delocalisation in countries where human and workers' rights are often not respected and various forms of exploitation are tolerated.

3. The Strategy and Activities related CSR

The first action was providing for contributions to the Small-medium Enterprises, covering up to 50% of the costs involved to comply with SA 8000 requirements.

After this action the Region made initiatives to make people aware of this initiative and of the meaning of CSR through seminars and meetings in the Tuscany Region. An informative instrument is the internet site www.fabricaethica.it that describes the regional actions and is full of documents and links on this theme. Among the communicational instruments an advertisement has been prepared that will be transmitted on local TV and in the Cinemas. An important action is the constitution of the Ethical Regional Commission, that is a multistakeholder regional forum.

The last initiative was the international convention “CSR for an Europe of rights” that held in Florence on 29th and 30th of April 2004. All the steps and the action has been realised taking into account the European Union. Tuscany wrote its comment to the Green Paper, and since then it is always interested in the European policies on CSR.

4. The Challenges

Some problems derived from misunderstandings. Especially the National Ministry often said in interviews or in conferences that Tuscany obliges enterprises to get SA8000 certification, as a requirement to participate to call for tenders. This is not the case, because enterprises certified has, in some cases, just more scores.

5. The Results

The first result is the increasing of SA8000 certified Tuscan SMEs: Italy is the first country in the world with 97 enterprises and most of them (33) are Tuscan. Other results are related to the big number on people and entities that each day ask for information, or ask to collaborate with the regional office. Many agreements has been signed with local agencies and with other regions (for example Campania) to collaborate to the creation of an social sustainable development. UNI (the national organisation for standardisation) recently constituted a working group for the study of an standard on CSR and Tuscany is part of the group thanks to its experience. For the same reason it is part of the national multistakeholder forum on CSR created by the National Ministry of Welfare, that is working to the project SCR-SC.

Community benefits: A recognised socially responsible enterprise can have many benefits: workers are more involved in corporate targets (this could mean less turn-over); the commitment of the enterprise ensures a better level of dialogue with other stakeholders (NGOs, associations, trade unions, public administrations); enterprise becomes in this way a real promoter of local territorial development, and, in particular, a promoter of social inclusion (point 5 of SA 8000 is related to non-discrimination and inclusive actions). In this way SA certification becomes a crucial meeting point between the profit and no-profit sectors, in bringing business and ethics into close relationship. The benefits are also for the consumers that are more than

ever sensible to the social and environmental impact of the products they buy, as evidenced by recent boycotting campaigns organised at the international level against important multinational firms.

6. The Future

There are many projects to continue the work. The Regional offices are studying the possibility to prepare a Regional law on CSR, that recognise and enforce the role of CSR in the economic policies, and the role of the Ethical Commission. Another proposal is to give benefits on regional taxation for certified firms. We are also realising, in collaboration with a project financed by UE named "Made in the World" a survey on the certified tuscan enterprises.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE LOCAL AGENT

NAME	FABRICA ETHICA		
LEGAL STATUS	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	
	REGIONAL GOVERNMENT	X	CONSORTIUM
	PROVINCILA GOVERNMENT		NETWORK
	MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY		OTHER
	OTHER		
RELEVANT DEPARTMENT/S BODY/IES	Secretary Office of Regional Ministry for Industries, SMEs, Handcraft, innovation and promotion		
HEAD OF	LOCAL AUTHORITY		X
	DEPARTMENT		
	ACTIVITY ADMINISTRATOR		

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