

RESPONSIBLE HOUSING ROADMAP

for CSR development in public, cooperative
and social housing in Europe



Responsible Housing

This document is the result of a cooperation between **DELPHIS**, a French network of social housing companies with strong expertise in CSR, **Housing Europe**, the European federation of public, cooperative and social housing, and the **International Union of Tenants**. It builds on a survey and a series of interviews conducted in 2013 among housing providers, their federations and tenant representatives, and on the work of the European Responsible Housing Stakeholder Forum, set up in the frame of the European Responsible Housing Initiative.

It complements two other key documents co-produced with the European Responsible Housing Stakeholder Forum: the European Declaration on Responsible Housing and the Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct, for housing providers.

Authors:

Charlotte Limousin, DELPHIS

Alice Pittini, Housing Europe

The authors want to thank for their review and constructive feedback:

Alexander Luijten (AEDES), Therese Berg (SABO), Birgitte Faester (BL), Catherine Hluszko (USH), Heidrun Feigelfeld (Urban expert), Philip Stein (Urban expert), Philippe Leroy (Logéal Immobilière), Dieter Emig (bauverein AG).

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PREAMBLE	4
CSR: THE VIEW OF HOUSING FEDERATIONS.....	5
GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR CSR IN THE SECTOR.....	8
1) Key CSR issues	8
2) Key stakeholders	11
3) Implementation process.....	13
KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING YEARS.....	14
1) Awareness-raising and leadership.....	14
2) Stakeholder dialogue and partnerships	15
3) Operational support	16
4) Transparency and accountability	17
5) Impact and shared value assessment.....	18
6) Visibility and recognition	19
HOUSING EUROPE CSR STRATEGY	21
1) Awareness-raising and leadership.....	21
2) Stakeholders’ dialogue and partnership	22
3) Operational support	22
4) Transparency and accountability	23
5) Impact and shared value assessment.....	23
6) Visibility and recognition	24

PREAMBLE



Marc Calon,
Housing Europe President

The public, cooperative and social housing sector has an opportunity to lead the way towards a more responsible, sustainable and inclusive economy and society, which truly contribute to people's well-being and empowerment. It can be a key driver of Europe 2020.

As providers of a service of general interest, often relying on public support and/or owned by public bodies, public, cooperative and social housing providers have to meet particularly high expectations. They have a special responsibility towards their residents but also the wider society, in particular in terms of good governance, accountability and "good use of money".

Together with its key stakeholders, Housing Europe therefore calls for and encourages Responsible Housing, as a form of fair and ethical housing

production and management which:

- provides quality, affordable housing for households in need;
- provides energy-efficient and low environmental impact housing;
- contributes to social inclusion, social mix, local development and attractiveness;
- relies on long-term relations with concerned stakeholders, based on mutual respect and accountability;
- and takes an active part in collective local development dynamics to maximize the creation of long-term shared value, for communities, residents and local actors.

Responsible Housing can only be achieved through a joint effort, from housing organisations and their partners.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a formidable catalyst to help housing providers work effectively towards this common goal, and maximize their contribution to local sustainable development. It is a great opportunity for public, cooperative and social housing providers to re-affirm their core values and reinforce their mission-driven perspective.

In the frame of the European Responsible Housing Initiative, Housing Europe, the International Union of Tenants, DELPHIS and the European Responsible Housing Stakeholder Forum have together committed in a European Declaration on Responsible Housing to promote CSR in the housing sector in Europe, at their respective level.

They have agreed on a Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct for housing providers, which identifies key CSR principles and objectives to be integrated into their strategies and practices.

Housing federations can play a significant role in developing CSR, helping their members implement CSR and increasing the visibility of the sector's commitment. This Roadmap is designed to provide them with some guidance.

It sets out an overall framework of the sector's challenges and main stakeholders, based on a shared understanding of CSR. It then identifies key priorities to develop CSR within the sector, as well as examples of actions that can be taken by federations at regional, national or European level.

CSR is about addressing society's needs and challenges. It is, by nature, a changing concept. This roadmap should therefore be seen as a living document, to be reviewed and adjusted regularly, following the sector's and society's evolutions.

CSR: THE VIEW OF HOUSING FEDERATIONS

Public, cooperative and social housing stands at the heart of sustainable development challenges:

- its very core mission, providing decent and affordable housing relates **to one of the major concerns of today's society**. Housing is recognized as a right in a number of international human rights instruments and in the EU Charter of fundamental rights, and is a determining factor on people's lives and well-being. Public, cooperative and social housing providers are also key local community anchors, as contributors to local social mix, social cohesion and integration.

- **construction and housing** have significant and long-lasting impacts on the environment, locally and globally. It is one of the greatest potential for increased energy efficiency in the EU. Through their regular contact with tenants/residents, public, cooperative and social housing providers can also play a role in awareness-raising and accompanying change towards more sustainable practices.

- as highlighted in a number of recent studies in various EU countries, public, cooperative and social housing providers **also have a significant economic impact**, through their investments and maintenance expenditures. This increases their potential influence and responsibility with regard to how they spend and how they behave on markets and with their suppliers. This has to be conciliated with a particular duty in terms of sound financial management to ensure limited housing costs for their tenants and optimal use of public resources, where housing providers receive public support. Lastly, whereas speculation on housing markets was a major trigger of the recent crisis, public, cooperative and social housing providers **are not driven by short-term maximisation of financial returns and invest sustainably in housing and communities**.

Many housing providers already tackle sustainable development issues, but they don't necessarily do it in a holistic and strategic way. This can result in a lack of balance and overall coherence, missed opportunities or limited lasting impact.

As a comprehensive sustainability management framework, **Corporate Social Responsibility** is a powerful tool for housing providers **to uphold their values and renew their organisations to fully embed these challenges into their strategies and enhance their positive impact on society and local communities**, as:

- **housing producers and managers** (with a responsibility towards residents, responsibility for their products and services);
- **local players, anchored in the community** (with a responsibility towards local communities and society);
- **organizations, employers and contractors** (with a responsibility towards stakeholders, responsibility for their processes, behavior and interactions).

There is no one single way to fulfill its Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR must be translated into practice by each organisation, according to its context, culture and strategy.

Yet, to help organisations understand CSR and define their own CSR policy, some key guiding principles have been defined together with public, cooperative and social housing providers and federations, which complement the 2011 European Commission's definition.

KEY MESSAGE #1:

CSR is about a way of doing business: it is about what we do, as well as how we do it. CSR is not disconnected from the core activity. It translates into the final product delivered but also into the policies, processes and practices behind it. Transparency, accountability and dialogue are key elements of CSR, but CSR is not only an issue of communication.

KEY MESSAGE #2:

CSR is about managing the activity's impacts on society, communities, the environment and organisation's stakeholders, throughout the value chain. It seeks to balance social, environmental and economic objectives and impacts.

KEY MESSAGE #3:

CSR relies on particular ethics, values and beliefs targeted towards the general interest. This is not contradictory with seeking sound financial performance: rather, CSR is a means to support the organisation's sustainability through a pro-active, prospective and strategic approach to the organisation's activity and challenges. It enables broader risk-management and improved reputation, and fosters innovation.

KEY MESSAGE #4:

CSR is about seeking stakeholders' satisfaction, supporting their empowerment and developing partnerships. It implies moving from a self-centered approach to an open one, to conciliate different stakeholders' interests and expectations, and receive new ideas and innovations from the field. It relies on a "people-centered" culture and management.

The European Commission's definition of CSR:
"The responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society". "To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns in to their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders, with the aim of: maximising the creation of shared value for their owners/shareholders and for their other stakeholders and society at large; identifying, preventing and mitigating their possible adverse impacts."

(COM(2011) 681 : A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility)

KEY MESSAGE #5:

CSR, in particular in the housing sector, implies a local or regional approach, based on the particular needs and context of communities, within the broader European and national background (in particular the national housing system and related regulation). Therefore, there cannot be one single form of CSR.

KEY MESSAGE #6:

CSR is an “intrinsically-driven” approach, based on an organization’s choice and strategy. CSR implies relying on goodwill and innovation to maximise the creation of shared value within the existing regulation, and going beyond regulation where relevant and possible.

KEY MESSAGE #7:

CSR is about a “360° perspective” on the organisation’s activity and impact. As such, it covers 5 main dimensions closely linked to the three pillars of sustainable development:

1. Economic responsibility and sustainability
2. Local social sustainability, with a particular emphasis on tenants and residents
3. Environmental sustainability
4. Good governance and fair relations with stakeholders
5. Responsible human resources management (as an employer)

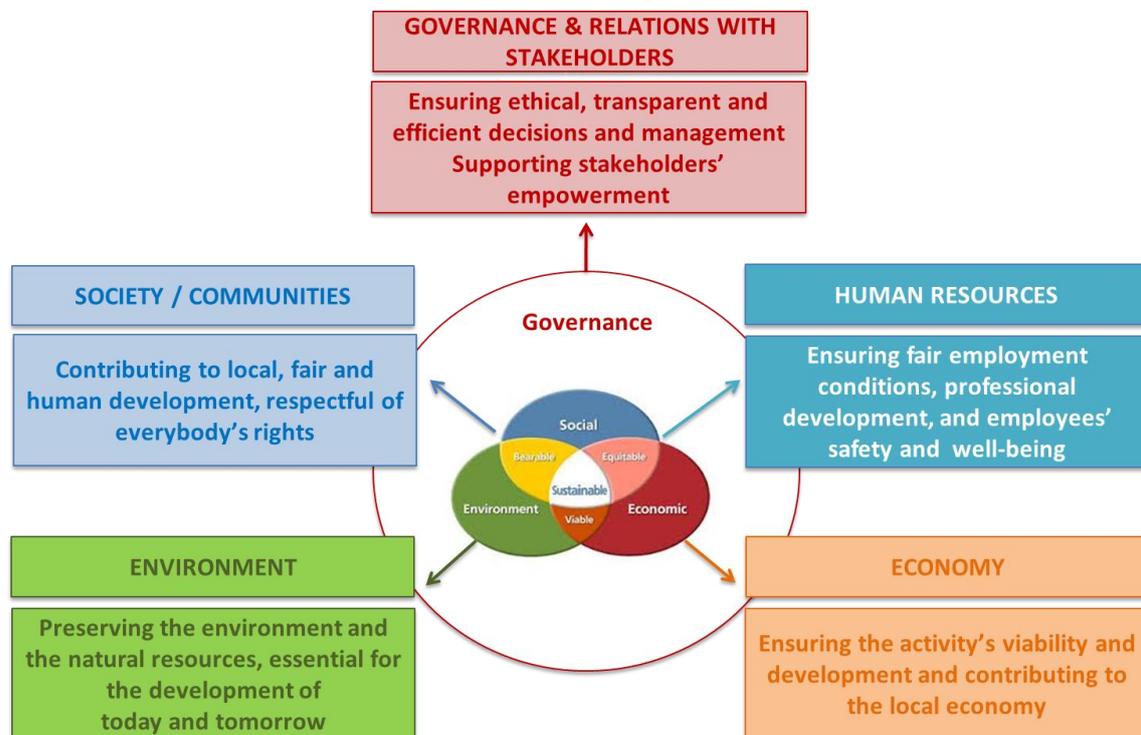


Figure 1 - CSR as contribution to sustainable development (source: DELPHIS / EURHO-GR®)

GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR CSR IN THE SECTOR

This is not intended as a prescriptive framework, but rather as a common basis to help housing organisations identify their own priorities, based on the national and local contexts. It is meant to be as comprehensive as possible, to provide an overall mapping of possible issues and stakeholders.

A number of topics are linked to the European Union’s agenda and EU policies. However, housing systems and policies, housing funding schemes and labour and environmental regulation vary across European countries -and within them-, as do social, economic and environmental issues. Housing providers’ governance structure, resources and means of action also differ across significantly. Their CSR policies shall adjust to national and local needs, and their specific constraints and opportunities.

1) Key CSR issues

These issues have been jointly identified with the European Responsible Housing Forum, housing federations and housing experts. Most challenges are common to all countries, but their magnitude may vary according to the national housing model, housing providers’ mission and the local socio-economic context.

Besides this comprehensive inventory, common “general commitments” have been outlined within the sector’s “Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct”, open to signature to all housing providers willing to demonstrate their CSR engagement.

Priorities and specific goals are however to be set by each individual organisation, taking into account its context and strategy.

The ISO 26 000 standard

The ISO 26 000 standard is an international Social Responsibility framework published by the International Organisation for Standardization. It provides general guidance on CSR, around 7 “Core subjects” and 7 principles. To date, only few European public, cooperative and social housing providers use it, as it is very generic and thus not readily applicable for them. Linkages between the proposed five main dimensions and ISO 26 000 core subjects and are mentioned in the table below.

<p>Economic responsibility and sustainability (ISO 26000: Fair operating practices)</p>	<p>Sustainable investment and management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficient use of money, to minimize costs for tenants and ensure the organization’s viability - Reinvestment of (part or all) profits in the activity / community - Increased, sustainable and diversified access to funding - Long-term investment in housing - Responsible stock and rental management to limit housing vacancies, and associated financial losses and impact on communities’ attractiveness
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	<p>Responsible procurement and support to the economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of responsible behaviors throughout the supply chain (working conditions, social and environmental impacts) - Increased community impact (local employment and economic development) through procurement and partnerships - Support to innovation, through the experimentation and dissemination of new building and maintenance techniques, technologies, materials, and the participation to local networks and clusters - Support to local enterprises and employment through increased access to housing for employees and workers
<p>Local social sustainability (ISO 26000: Community involvement and development / Consumer Issues)</p>	<p>For tenants/residents: access to housing, housing conditions, quality of life and social empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - housing affordability (in a context of increased housing costs and rising poverty) - decent and safe housing conditions, including healthy interiors and safe surroundings - security of tenure and prevention of housing loss, both for tenants and home-owners - cost-effective housing services - diversification of needs, due to demographic trends (ageing), new social patterns (later marriage, longer studies, divorces...) and vulnerabilities - fair access to housing and related services, through a transparent housing allocation process that supports social local social mix <p>At collective / community-level: communities' attractiveness and sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement in the community and collective spaces (scope not limited to housing provision) - urban requalification, community regeneration and stability - social cohesion through social inclusion, social mix and fight against segregation, as well as support to employment, together with relevant partners - support to diversity and prevention of discriminations
<p>Environmental sustainability (ISO 26000: Environment)</p>	<p>Energy consumption and climate change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buildings' energy performance, which impacts housing costs - Greenhouse gas emissions - Related awareness-raising, capacity-building and behavior change <p>Other environmental issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water consumption - Sustainable used of materials - Domestic waste production and management - Common green spaces

<p>Good governance and fair relations to stakeholders (ISO 26000: Organizational governance and Key principles*)</p>	<p>Internal governance and management system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership in business ethics: ensuring the highest standards in terms of ethical behavior and respect for fundamental rights - Diversity and gender equality in decision-making bodies <p>Transparency and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparent decision-making processes - Adequate information and knowledge sharing with governance bodies and interested parties - Accountability towards stakeholders and society on decisions, actions and impacts <p>Stakeholder engagement and reinforced partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality dialogue with stakeholders, beyond formal legal obligations - Stakeholders' capacity and opportunities for greater participation and involvement, based on clear roles and responsibilities - Support to institutional and structured participation of tenants, and their greater access to knowledge and information
<p>Responsible human resources management (ISO 26000: Labor practices and Human rights)</p>	<p>Employment for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair access to employment and opportunities to all, including support to employment for those facing particular vulnerability - Promotion of diversity and gender equality - Fair employment conditions - Prevention of discrimination in the workplace <p>Professional development and change management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training, mentoring and lifelong learning opportunities - Support to staff, in particular managers, through reorganization and organizational change - Staff's engagement, in a context of management and organizational change, uncertainty and new challenges to address <p>Well-being at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health and safety, in particular for staff confronted to physical work and/or difficult situations - Work-life balance <p>Where providers face a shortage of skilled workforce, CSR can help attract qualified and motivated staff.</p>

* The 7 fundamental CSR principles stated by the ISO 26 000 standard are the following: Accountability; Transparency; Ethical behavior; Respect for stakeholder interests; Respect for the rule of law; Respect for international norms of behavior; Respect for human rights.

2) Key stakeholders

Stakeholders are actors **who are impacted by housing organizations’ activities, and/or who influence (or can influence) their decisions and actions**. Stakeholders are both targets and co-enablers of organizations’ CSR. They are key partners for the success and full impact of housing providers’ CSR actions.

The level of “statutory” stakeholder engagement (in particular tenants’ participation and relations to local authorities) varies across countries. However, even when compulsory, the quality, depth and constructiveness of stakeholder dialogue and engagement (in particular on CSR issues) vary across organizations.

Not all stakeholders are equally strategic for housing providers, depending on the degree of impact (of providers on stakeholders or conversely), of interdependence, and on the frequency of interactions. Besides, stakeholders are not equally concerned by all CSR topics. Stakeholders’ prioritization and analysis, globally and per CSR topic, is therefore an important step for effective dialogue and partnerships.

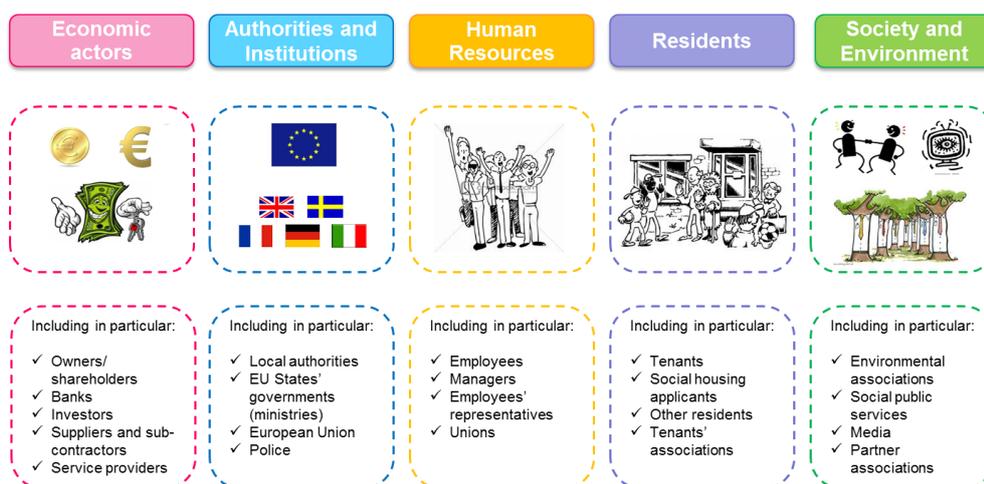


Figure 2 - Housing providers' main stakeholder groups, per type of actors (Source: DELPHIS)

Contractual and legal stakeholders:

The following stakeholders have a contractual and/or legally-binding relationship with housing providers and are directly connected to their core mission:

Stakeholders	How are they concerned by CSR?
Owners / shareholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the strategy and main orientations Financial interest in the organization When public owners or public shareholders: need to justify and demonstrate the organization’s impact and added value for society / the community
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essential because they are the “vectors” of the organization’s CSR on a daily basis Directly concerned by CSR topics related to human resources and labor practices
Service users and their representatives (such as tenants associations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main targets and beneficiaries of housing providers’ action: housing providers’ decisions shall aim at responding to their needs and expectations Directly impacted by housing organizations’ choices and actions Direct view on housing conditions and services Open to contribute to CSR actions targeting residents and communities, help maximize outreach and impact

Stakeholders	How are they concerned by CSR?
Local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Main contractors and partners of housing providers ○ Define local urban and housing policies and possibilities through approval procedures etc. ○ Involved in dwelling allocations ○ Define and implement communities' social cohesion projects and deliver services which relate to housing providers' CSR (ageing, employment, social inclusion...); ○ In some countries: financial contributors to social housing ○ Accountability and transparency issues (towards authorities, citizens, taxpayers)
Governments and housing regulators at regional, national and European levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define housing policies ○ Define the regulation which determines providers' scope of action, legal obligations, funding system... and therefore providers' ability to engage in CSR ○ Accountability and transparency issues (towards authorities, citizens, taxpayers)
Funding providers: Public bodies, financial institutions, private funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact on housing providers' access to funding and resources ○ Integration of CSR criteria in funding decisions (risk management / incentives): need for transparency on / demonstration of CSR objectives and impacts ○ When public funds: need to justify and demonstrate the organization's impact and added value for society / the community
Suppliers, sub-contractors and utility providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact on the cost and quality of final products and services ○ Joint opportunities for innovation, technical improvement ○ "Extended producer responsibility": ensuring suppliers' respect for human, social, environmental legal requirements and limiting their adverse impact ○ Opportunities to support "responsible practices" throughout the supply chain

Cooperation and "contextual" stakeholders

These stakeholders do not always maintain a permanent, contract-based relationship with housing providers, but, as part of providers' "ecosystem", they can have a significant positive or negative impact on their action:

Social services providers / Third sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opportunities for joint action/projects with housing providers ○ Quality and availability of social services impact on communities, tenants, and can indirectly affect housing providers' activity and outcomes
Public services providers, in particular: public transport, educational sector, safety services...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact on residents' quality of life ○ Impact on housing providers' districts' attractiveness ○ Opportunities for joint action/projects with housing providers
NGOs, NPOs, local / community-based associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opportunities for joint projects and actions ○ Support (financial, human, material) to local associations contribute to communities' social sustainability and development ○ Conversely: local associations can oppose specific projects, and therefore impede housing providers' action ○ Local organisations play a key role in sports, cultural, arts... activities which contribute to local social development and social cohesion
Private companies (and foundations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opportunities for partnerships and in particular financial and/or in-kind support (volunteering, materials...), in the frame of their own CSR programs
Universities / research / experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technological and social research and innovation needed to address complex issues (environment, health and safety, ageing-related needs, social issues...) ○ Opportunities for partnerships on research and innovation programs ○ Housing providers can provide "experimentation fields" and in return benefit from research outcomes
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can impact positively or negatively on housing providers' and the sector's image, and therefore on their "social acceptability" ○ Opportunities to relay CSR initiatives, reduce social housing stigmatization and stereotypes

3) Implementation process

To be effective, CSR implementation must rely on strategic planning, with **set objectives, clear roles and responsibilities and an action plan.**

It is a step-by-step process, based on a continuous improvement approach, requiring **regular monitoring and evaluation** to identify opportunities for progress.

Accountability, stakeholder dialogue and engagement are to be considered at each stage.

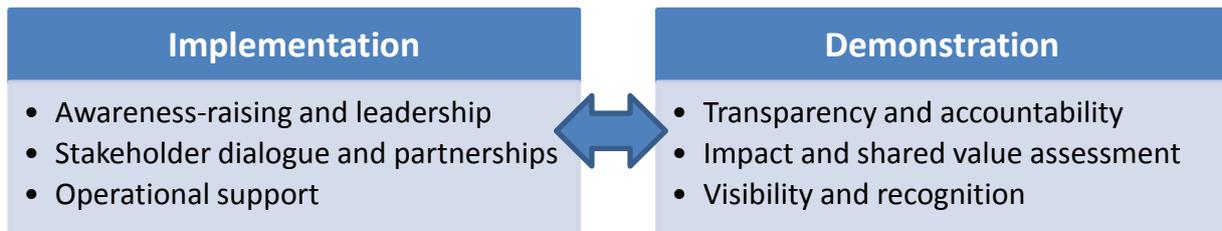


Figure 3 - CSR implementation and continuous improvement (Source: DELPHIS)

KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING YEARS

Housing federations can play a key role in developing and strengthening CSR in the sector. To that aim, **six priorities** have been identified, as well as, for each of them, possible actions at European and national levels.

The six priorities relate to two complementary pillars:



1) Awareness-raising and leadership

Background: CSR remains diversely understood (often limited to social or environmental aspects, or to reporting and communication). It is still often not perceived as a strategic and management issue.

Objective: promote Responsible Housing and a common understanding of CSR within the sector.

Possible actions:

- Awareness-raising events and conferences, and references to CSR and Responsible Housing within professional events (on general or specific topics)
- Regular articles and publications in sector-related media (magazines, websites, blogs).
- Dissemination and promotion of ERHIN’s documents: European Declaration on Responsible Housing, Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct, Roadmap
- Developing awareness-raising tools: brochures, videos...
- Identifying a “CSR contact point” within federations to provide information and answer members’ questions
- Support to on-site awareness-raising to management and staff.

Lessons learnt and recommendations:

- Link CSR with the current context and sector’s priorities, highlighting how CSR helps address those challenges;
- Rely on examples, experience-sharing and testimonies from peers and stakeholders to create emulation;
- Highlight the positive returns of CSR for the company and its stakeholders (see Priority 5)

- Avoid injunctions and prescriptive approaches: highlight the diversity of ways and means to implement CSR;
- Combine awareness-raising on general CSR with awareness-raising on targeted topics related to CSR.
- At awareness-raising stage, costs for housing providers should be as limited as possible.

Examples:

- **Fédération des ESH** (France): active awareness-raising since 2009 (events, guides, training, annual survey...), with now around 30% of housing companies engaged in CSR
- **Institut Hlm pour la RSE** (France): clearly identified dedicated person, monthly articles in the professional review, promotion of CSR at the annual Housing Congress, dedicated website, participation to providers' internal seminars on CSR to provide a broader/sector perspective, awareness-raising with top managers, production of thematic studies (governance, CSR and territories)
- **BL** (Denmark): development of a tool for Housing Associations' Boards, to help them formalize their commitment and bring CSR on the agenda

2) Stakeholder dialogue and partnerships

Background: stakeholder dialogue is a way to identify and discuss each other's needs, constraints and responsibilities, so as to find optimal consensus and ensure stakeholders' acceptance of decisions and actions. Partnerships enable to pool skills, expertise and resources for greater effectiveness. Dialogue and framework partnerships at European, national and regional levels can lead the way and facilitate dialogue and partnerships at local level with local organizations.

Objective: strengthen cooperation with stakeholders and other sectors on CSR-related actions

Possible actions:

- Multi-stakeholder platforms, to discuss and monitor key CSR issues and expectations in the sector
- Framework partnerships with stakeholder federations and other national organisations (tenants, construction sector, financial sector, third sector, universities...) on specific CSR-related issues to support joint projects at national, regional or local levels

Examples:

- **Housing Europe:** European Responsible Housing Stakeholder Forum
- **Institut Hlm pour la RSE (France):** multistakholder Supervisory Board (tenant organisations, trade union representatives); Advisory Board including a wide range of members with various backgrounds
- **BL (Denmark):** partnership agreement with The Danish Construction Association on the establishment of internships and other training and employment initiatives

3) Operational support

Background: CSR is often seen as too conceptual and difficult to translate into concrete actions. Limited resources and lack of CSR expertise are major barriers to CSR implementation and development, especially for smaller organisations. There is a strong demand for operational tools and exchange of good practices. A number of tools do exist, but remains little used within the sector, due to lack of awareness.

Objective: strengthen housing providers' capacity to implement CSR

Possible actions:

- Training opportunities
- Access to concrete information on existing CSR-related tools and services (consultants, resource-centers, networks...)
 - Good practices and tools database/resource center
 - Experience-sharing events/meetings
 - A "sector-based CSR network" to discuss "good practices" and share lessons learnt
 - Supply / identification of match-funding for CSR projects
 - Wider dissemination of EU-funded projects on the different CSR dimensions

Lessons learnt and recommendations:

- Focus on sector-based tools (if available) or tools that have been previously experimented by housing providers, to ensure their relevance and feasibility
- Include feedback on "failures" or difficulties in experience-sharing events, so as to foster improvement and effective replication
- Highlight the diversity of possible tools rather than imposing one particular tool

Examples:

- **Resource centers:** Responsible Housing Website (Europe); Website of the Institut Hlm pour la RSE (France); NHF Investing in communities on-line knowledge hub (England)
- **Networks:** Eurhonet CSR Topic Group (Europe); DELPHIS CSR network (France); CSR network of the Institut Hlm pour la RSE (France)
- **Sector-based tools:** EURHO-GR® reporting framework (Eurhonet, Europe); Toolkit on partnerships with suppliers (BL, Denmark); Introduction to CSR implementation (Fédération des ESH, France); Self-assessment tool (Institut Hlm pour la RSE, France); website collecting tools for community workers (BL, Denmark)
- **Training:** training sessions on CSR and accountability (Fédération des ESH, France)

4) Transparency and accountability

Background: Transparency and accountability are major expectations from sector's key stakeholders, in particular owners and shareholders, local governments and residents. Increased information on organisations' overall performance, including social and environmental aspects, will be increasingly needed to secure funding. Regulation on non-financial reporting is tightening in Europe, reflecting a growing demand for greater accountability on social, economic and environmental issues from private and public organizations.

Objective: reinforce housing organisations' communication on the five dimensions of CSR

Possible actions:

- Information on existing CSR reporting and accountability tools and frameworks as well as innovative reporting and accountability practices
- Increased visibility of CSR reports and other information documents published within the sector
- Identification of key information and performance indicators relevant to the various stakeholders
- "Regulatory watch" and information on non-financial reporting requirements

Lessons learnt and recommendations:

- focus on key indicators that are significant for stakeholders and housing organisations;
- most international CSR reporting and accountability tools, mainly designed by/for large multinational firms, are not operational for small and medium organisations, and do not adequately reflect public, cooperative and social providers' core mission;

- due to “greenwashing” observed in several business sectors, CSR reports’ credibility is becoming a growing concern and must be reinforced;
- transparency and accountability should not be limited to once-a-year CSR reports but also include other forms of communication, such as regular information and meetings with stakeholders.

Examples:

- **Responsible Housing website:** CSR reports database
- **Eurhonet:** EURHO-GR reports
- **BL (Denmark):** Website for community workers, where they can share their social masterplans and show their progress against set objectives.

5) Impact and shared value assessment

Background: Evaluating results and impacts is a key step in CSR implementation: internally, to enable further improvement and innovation; and externally, for accountability purposes (see also Priority 2) and to better demonstrate the added value of CSR and Responsible Housing, in a context of severe budget restrictions. Better understanding and measurement of its benefits for society, stakeholders and the company itself is also crucial to promote CSR (see also Priority 1) and help target investment to Responsible Housing (see Priority 6), as well as improving the sector’s image. Research in this field, in the public, cooperative and social housing sector, is still in its early development and should be further supported.

Objective: develop and disseminate adequate assessment methods, jointly accepted by practitioners and their partners

Possible actions:

- Dissemination of existing evaluation methods and tools
- Dedicated working group at European and national levels to exchange and build on existing studies and tools
 - Joint experimental projects on impact assessment with key interested parties at European and national levels, in particular the public and financial sectors
 - Experience sharing with other third sector organisations working on impact assessment and evaluation

Lessons learnt and recommendations:

- Integrate monitoring and evaluation into the CSR management process to ensure that it is effectively carried out and used to improve practices

- Assess results through both quantitative indicators and qualitative evaluation (including, where relevant, stakeholders' feedback)
- Although extremely complex, monetisation of social and environmental impacts is increasingly used to highlight their significance as well as induced socio-economic outcomes; it helps evaluate cost-effectiveness, and relate investment with associated returns (for the different stakeholders involved); however, some key outcomes of CSR and public, cooperative and social housing cannot be monetized
- Adopt a step-by-step and practical approach to impact assessment: focus on some key impacts and expand the scope progressively. Co-production of tools is a means to ensure their operability.

Examples of studies on impact assessment in the housing sector:

- **USH - DELPHIS** (France): "Measuring local value creation" study
- **SABO** (Sweden): "Social value assessment" study
- **NHF** (England): Neighbourhood Audit report measures the scale, range and scope of housing associations' community investment
- **Housing department of the Bilbao municipality** (Spain): study on the economic and social/environmental impact of local urban renewal and housing refurbishment programme
- **CHC** (Wales): annual report estimating the wider economic impact of Welsh Housing Associations, Welsh Economy Research Unit at Cardiff University

6) Visibility and recognition

***Background:** Housing providers' effort in CSR remains today little known and recognized. Increased recognition and incentives are needed to promote further development of CSR and overcome skepticism and resources-related barriers. External recognition is also an important driver to staff's engagement. Lastly, at sector-level, increased visibility on CSR initiatives will help re-affirm and highlight the sector's commitment and reduce its "stigmatization".*

Objective: be identified as a leading sector in CSR at European-level and increase recognition of housing providers' commitment to CSR

Possible actions:

- Information on existing visibility and recognition schemes (awards, labels...)
- Develop visibility and public recognition schemes within the sector (Awards)
- Increase sector-level external communication on Responsible Housing and providers' CSR actions and initiatives (press, social media...)
- Explore, together with concerned stakeholders, opportunities for CSR-related incentives, in particular in terms of funding and investment criteria (Socially Responsible Investment, Social impact bonds, etc.)

Lessons learnt and recommendations:

- Smaller organisations require greater support to engage in labels/awards schemes;
- Awards schemes are an opportunity to collect examples of good practices, thus supporting exchanges of good practices

Examples:

- **Housing Europe / ERHIN:** European Responsible Housing Awards
- **SABO** (Sweden): Sustainability awards
- **NHF** (England): Community Impact Awards
- **Fédération des ESH** (France): CSR Awards

HOUSING EUROPE CSR STRATEGY

As explained at the beginning of this Roadmap, public, cooperative and social housing stands at the heart of sustainable development challenges, and providers are driven by a social mission which gives a particular significance to their CSR. The concept has proved its utility as a sustainability management framework, which allows for increased impacts of housing organizations on communities and supports their innovation, progress and resilience.

As a follow-up to the ERHIN project, Housing Europe will therefore develop a strategy to support its members in their CSR strategy and in the broader exercise of showing their added value in terms of social, economic and environmental outputs.

This exercise fits in our organization's overall strategy to show how public, cooperative and social housing can contribute to addressing the main societal challenges of our time. Spreading and reinforcing CSR through in particular the exchange of tools and practices will support the continuous improvement of the sector. Besides, by fostering greater impact assessment and accountability, we firmly believe that it will contribute to our work to increase access to financing opportunities.

Building on the European Responsible Housing Initiative's deliverables, we want to consider how to better mainstream Responsible Housing throughout the different activities of the organization and integrate this approach within other ongoing and future projects. We will base our strategy on the priorities identified by this roadmap and propose concrete actions for each priority.

In particular:

1) *Awareness-raising and leadership*

- **We will promote the Joint Declaration and this Roadmap** through the Responsible housing website.

- **We will promote the Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct (CoC)** co-written with the European Responsible Housing Stakeholder Forum, by making it available on-line for interested housing providers to sign it, and will monitor its coverage. We will disseminate the Code and encourage its uptake through our member organizations, i.e. national federations of housing providers. To this goal we will develop a 'package' for federations including the code translated into 16 languages and instructions for housing providers on how to sign up to the Register.

- **We will set up an on-line "Responsible Housing Register"** where we will publish and update the list of CoC signatories (to create positive emulation) and encourage and support feedback by signatories on how they are implementing the Code, for example through CSR

reports, published in the dedicated section of the Responsible Housing website. We will also encourage signatories to submit their best practice examples and publish them on the website.

➤ **We will include CSR/Responsible housing topics within Housing Europe conferences**, to discuss emerging challenges, new concerns, innovative actions, and continue to instil “CSR thinking”.

2) Stakeholders’ dialogue and partnership

➤ As a follow-up to the Joint Declaration, **we will continue the fruitful cooperation established with organizations which took part to the European Responsible Housing Stakeholder Forum**, and enlarge this to other potentially relevant networks at the European level.

➤ **We will consider more systematically partnerships with these organisations** in the frame of research or operational projects led by Housing Europe, and invite more regularly these organisations to Housing Europe conferences and working committees.

➤ **With IUT and other stakeholders we will be working to promote our vision of Responsible Housing within the Commission**, with a view to support better integration of social, environmental and economic sustainability into EU policies which impact the work of housing providers. We will use the best practices collected and build upon those to make our case and to give concrete examples.

➤ **We will also integrate the principles of Responsible Housing as we ll as innovative project examples when working in partnership with other agencies/institutions dealing with housing policies**, such as for instance the OECD and UNECE. In particular, we are working on developing a training module for new member states who want to set up or reform the social housing sector, using the Code of Conduct as a basis.

3) Operational support

➤ **We will propose a strategic session on CSR**, which will include a thorough presentation of the Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct, Roadmap and European Declaration on Responsible Housing. During this session, federations will also be encouraged to present their CSR best practices and tools and exchange. The objective is for representatives from housing federations to be able to evaluate which project outputs and experiences from other countries are interesting for their members, and to create an informal network of people working specifically on CSR and sustainability issues within the federations.

➤ **We will encourage exchange on the different elements of CSR within Housing Europe newly established working committees, meeting at least twice per year:**

- Economic governance and financing
- Social affairs
- Urban affairs
- Energy efficiency and construction

➤ **We will maintain the project website for the next three years.** At the end of this period we will evaluate its effectiveness in raising awareness and disseminating good practices, and ways for improvement. For greater impact, we will seek to centralize all information and examples, including those collected through other projects, into a unified on-line repository”.

4) *Transparency and accountability*

➤ **We will carry out ‘Regulatory watch’ and information** to housing federations on EU level developments in terms of non-financial reporting requirements, such as the Directive relating to enterprises’ disclosure of non-financial and diversity information, the initiative on social impact measurement in the framework of EuSEF and EaSI regulation, and others.

➤ To show how these accountability principles and regulations are met by our members, **we will continue to publish on the Responsible Housing website the reports sent by housing providers, in particular the CoC signatories.** These will provide examples and inspiration for others, both in terms of non-financial reporting and of “CSR good practices”. The Website will also continue to gather and present relevant tools and standards that can be used as a basis for CSR reporting: GRI, EURHO-GR®, national federations’ frameworks...

5) *Impact and shared value assessment*

➤ Building on the work carried out by Housing Europe and some housing federations and organisations over the past two years, **we will strive to find funding so as to launch a pilot project measuring agreed ‘key performance indicators’** on the activities of social housing companies in different countries, that could help us better identifying the contribution of our members’ activities to social resilience and sustainability in the EU.

➤ Furthermore, **we will explore possible synergies with networks, universities and other research institutes on the issue of social impact measurement** and, if funding is available (such as for instance through Horizon 2020), we would like to join experimental projects on this issue with interested parties at European and national levels.

➤ **We will also share experience on impact assessment and evaluation with other third sector organizations** at the European level, for instance by participating to the Social Platform taskforce on financing social services, which includes a focus on social impact measurement.

6) *Visibility and recognition*

The experience of collecting and jointly evaluating good practices for the European Responsible Housing Award was a very positive one. It clearly showed interest from the sector to participate to this kind of initiatives which can increase visibility of their actions. It was also an opportunity to raise awareness of existing practices and tools and to discuss concrete CSR practices with stakeholders.

➤ **We will therefore continue collecting outstanding examples from the sector and depending on funding availability we will consider having further editions of the awards.** Based on the example of the EHRIN Handbook, we will produce a bi-annual booklet collecting best practices in the housing sector across Europe.

➤ Through a dedicated section on the Responsible Housing website, **we will also give more visibility to similar awards organized by our members at the national level**, which we got to know about in the course of the project, or were set up following the example of the Responsible Housing Awards. We will publicize these awards' winners –and winning initiatives- so as to expand visibility and recognition to the European level.

➤ At the same time, to increase external visibility and to get more coverage, **we will link up with other existing international awards and encourage social housing providers to enter them**, such as, in particular, the European Social Innovation Competition, the European CSR Award Scheme, or the CEEP CSR Label, should it be maintained over time.

Greater recognition for Responsible Housing and housing providers' CSR should also reflect in increased funding opportunities, in particular from organisations and investors that are committed to social impact and socially responsible investment. This will, in turn, help foster Responsible Housing strategies.

➤ To that aim, building on social housing organisations' increased accountability and improved social impact assessment, **we will continue the dialogue with EIB and COEB on funding and investment criteria** (Socially Responsible Investment, ethical investment, etc.) **and investigate possible links between funds managers' CSR strategies and Responsible Housing** within the new framework of European Social Entrepreneurship Funds.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The actions listed above will be fully integrated into Housing Europe work and therefore jointly implemented by Housing Europe team members, based on their respective position and mission; the overall monitoring of the CSR strategy will be the responsibility Housing Europe Research Officer.

An annual review on activities and progress will be presented to Housing Europe executive Board, which will be responsible for approving actions to be taken each year along the 6 priorities.

Actions carried out and results will be reported each year in Housing Europe activity report, and will be presented and discussed with Housing Europe members during one of the annual conferences, so as to collect their needs and expectations, as well as inputs and suggestions for improvement.

This Roadmap must be seen as a living document, as sustainability issues as well as practices are constantly evolving. As such, it will be reviewed in 2017, to include new/emerging challenges and practices identified or developed over the years.

Roadmap Summary:

Priority	General Objective	Key actions	Monitoring indicators	Useful tools / documents
1. Awareness-raising and leadership	Promote Responsible Housing and a common understanding of CSR within the sector	1.1 Promotion and dissemination of the European Declaration on Responsible Housing and the CSR Roadmap 1.2. Promotion and dissemination of the Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct	- Number of signatories	- Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct - Responsible Housing Website
2. Stakeholder dialogue and partnerships	Strengthen cooperation with stakeholders and other sectors on CSR-related actions	2.1. Continuation of the dialogue with members of the European Responsible Housing Forum 2.2. Joint promotion, together with IUT and other stakeholders, of Responsible Housing towards the EU and international bodies (OECD, UNECE...)	- Number of meetings with Forum members including Responsible Housing issues - Number of joint initiatives with stakeholder organisations to promote Responsible Housing	- European Declaration on Responsible Housing
3. Operational support	Strengthen housing providers' capacity to implement CSR	3.1. Strategic session with representatives from housing federations 3.2. Coordination of 4 working committees 3.3. Maintaining and updating the Responsible Housing website and linking it with other thematic websites	- Number of participants to the strategic session - Number of meetings for each committee - Number of website's visitors	- Responsible Housing Website - CSR Roadmap - List of past / ongoing projects on sustainability issues
4. Transparency and accountability	Reinforce housing organisations' communication on the five dimensions of CSR	4.1 Regulatory watch on non-financial reporting 4.2 Publication of CSR reports produced by Social Housing providers	- Communication on non-financial reporting regulation and further updates	- EU Directive on non-financial reporting

Priority	General Objective	Key actions	Monitoring indicators	Useful tools / documents
5. Impact and shared value assessment	Develop and disseminate adequate assessment methods, jointly accepted by practitioners and their partners	5.1. Pilot project on key performance indicators (if available funding) 5.2. Establishment of linkages with networks, universities and research institutes working on social impact 5.3. Participation to experimental projects on impact assessment (if available funding) 5.4. Participation to the Social Platform taskforce on financing social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project's launch / project indicators - Inventory of networks, universities and research institutes working on social impact - Number of projects identified / projects indicators (if participation) - Number of Social Platform taskforce's meetings attended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSR Roadmap - <i>Rethinking Investment in Homes</i> publication
6. Visibility and recognition	Be identified as a leading sector in CSR at European-level and increase recognition of housing providers' commitment to CSR	6.1 Collection and publication of "good practices" 6.2. Continuation of the European Responsible Housing Awards (if available funding) 6.3. Promotion of similar awards competitions to housing federations and providers 6.4. Promotion of similar awards held by housing federations at national level 6.5. Investigation of funding opportunities for Responsible housing, based on CSR criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of publications / number of good practices collected - Number of awards editions / number of applications and participants - Number of housing providers applying for CSR-related awards / number of laureate housing providers - Number of national awards competitions publicized by Housing Europe - Memorandum on CSR-based funding opportunities for housing providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible Housing awards' publication - CSR Roadmap - Responsible Housing website - EU regulations / funding instruments



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