

"The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits." Milton Friedan's credo, which has influenced whole management generations, seems to be out-of-date. Today, Corporate Social Responsibility is on the agenda of many corporations. Most of the Global Fortune 250 contribute to their social, economic and ecological environment (triple bottom line) and report about these contributions. The published reports feature differences in substance and form. This can lead to limitations in comparability and consequently to limitations in information. In response to this dilemma, international initiatives have been established to try and help companies implement CSR strategies and prepare CSR reports. Probably the most important initiative dedicated to reporting-support is the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). Already 77% of the G250 published their reports in accordance with GRI in 2008.

Nevertheless, the published reports feature many differences which can be partly attributed to the different national legislations in the four selected countries (AUS, CAN, UK, USA). These countries represent the Anglo-Saxon area in this paper. The UK government can be seen as relatively strict with British Corporations being required to publish annual CSR-reports. By contrast, the legislative bodies of the USA and Canada seem to be more tolerant and companies are only obliged to report about CSR-considerations if they exceed certain criteria with regards to company size and/or if the information is material. Observing current political actions the Australian legislative appears to be very committed (for instance they published a triple-bottom-line reporting guideline).

To draw a comparison between the CSR-reporting in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the USA a criteria checklist was designed. The criteria were chosen according to the GRI indicators and cover the three categories of social responsibility: social, economic and ecological. The investigation concentrates on the biggest companies of the oil & gas industry, the telecommunications industry and the banking-sector of the chosen countries. If a company reports all areas of social responsibility in accordance to the pre-determined criteria, it will earn a "+" and respectively 2 points. If the criteria is mentioned in the report but not in the required form, the company will receive a "~" and respectively 1 point. Finally, if the criteria is not even mentioned at all or simply inadequately reported, the company will receive a "-" and zero points. The following chart shows the consolidated results of the investigation for

each country. Consolidated results are the individual company results combined and then averaged to represent a result for that country.

| Criteria / Country | | USA | CAN | AUS | UK |
|--------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | Economic Performance | ~ - | ~ + | + | + |
| 2 | Indirect Economic Impact | + | + | + | ~ + |
| 3 | Expenditures for Environmental Protection | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ + |
| 4 | Energy Consumption | ~ - | ~ | + | + |
| 5 | Emissions | + | + | + | + |
| 6 | Diversity and Equal Opportunity | ~ | ~ - | ~ | ~ - |
| 7 | Investment and Procurement Practices | - | - | ~ - | + |
| 8 | Corruption | ~ - | ~ - | - | ~ - |
| Cumulative Score: | | 43 | 46 | 56 | 69 |

This result makes no claim to be complete because of the limited number of investigated companies. However it offers an insight into the reporting practices of Anglo-Saxon corporations and permits a first comparison between the four countries.

As you can see in the table above, CSR-Reporting is most developed in the UK and then surprisingly followed by Australia, which seems to be more developed than former surveys. Canada and the US are both relatively far away from the results of the UK and Australia. In Summary it can be said that companies in the surveyed countries, report extensively on the economic and ecological aspects of CSR but avoid reporting on the social aspects. This lack of reporting on the social aspects provides an initial opportunity for further development of CSR reporting. Additional opportunities for improvement may arise in the area of transparency and comparability. Today 56 % of the G250 companies seek external verification. Audited reports enjoy more credibility than non-audited, thus it is assumed that the number of published reports with external verification will increase.