Business model supported by OSR: From CSR to OSR, the Hermes-OSR project experience

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Abstract:
Sub-contracting SME’s in the supply chain are more and more requested to implement a CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) approach and a certification, so that the ordering companies can claim a full CSR principle in their products, developments and services.

The Hermes-OSR project supported by the European Leonardo da Vinci programme is a vocational innovative training development project targeted to European sub-contracting SMEs. It developed a new approach and training of trainers solution for SMEs on how to deploy CSR principles using the innovative OSR concept, Open Social Responsibility. OSR includes the Environmental and Economic dimensions on top of CSR to ensure a sustainable implementation of CSR and to support new business relationships for the subcontracting SME’s and even new business model approaches. Once deployed, it helps changing relationships as well with the ordering company and starts developing collaborative relationships which could go up to joint innovation development instead of only providing a final product.

The Hermes-OSR project is piloted by ESCEM in France with the support of IAS (International Institute of Social Audit) and is deployed for sub-contracting SMEs in Bulgaria (with the support of BISLP, the Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy and with NBU, the New Bulgarian University), Portugal (with APG, the Portuguese Association of Human Resources; and with UAL, the Universidade Autonoma da Lisboa) and Romania (with the University of Craiova). A certification process is being as well defined jointly with FLA, the international Fair Labour Association, at the levels of training content, training organisations and auditors.

Several training sessions are implemented in each of these countries under 4 levels:

- Awareness rising (2 hours session) for SME managers, decision makers and intermediary actors in charge of economic development.
- Inception training of 2 to 3 days for SME managers and Human Resources responsible.
- Operators training: target of the SMEs workers and middle management. Duration 3 to 4 weeks in several sessions, with a specific action-training session for in situ application to prepare the global deployment of OSR in the company.
- Expert level training at MBA level. The target group are the responsible persons in charge of CSR and OSR specification and deployment in a company or in a group of companies.

The certification process is managed separately to the training to ensure independent approach.

Keywords: CSR, OSR, Corporate Social Responsibility, Open Social Responsibility, SME.