

# Accounting Translation of Corporate Social and Environmental Expenditures in Small and Medium Industry: What Evaluation Approach and what Accounting Scheme?

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## Abstract

The question remains whether societal reporting integrates the field of financial reporting. This old debate is repeated to scrutinize the case of African companies with strong cultural roots, which do not publish alternative societal documents to traditional financial reports. Through stakeholder theory (Jones and Wicks, 1999), this study aims to analyze the phenomenon, by describing the process of accounting recordings for social and environmental information (SEI) identified by the ISO 26 000 standard in an oil Company operating within OHADA Jurisdiction. The results indicate the presence of mandatory SEIs in the financial statements, which visibility depends on the pressure exerted by the State and the accounting regulations in force. Voluntary SEIs are not visible.

**Keywords:** Social and Environmental Information (SEI); financial reporting; Stakeholder Theory; ISO 26000.

## Introduction

Research in Social and Environmental responsibility (SER) has grown considerably in developing countries, especially in the last decade (Tang, 1998). Within OHADA<sup>1</sup> Jurisdiction in Africa, where several firms have invested in Sustainable Development (Ondoua Biwole & al., 2009), the documents disseminated are mainly those required by the current regulations and the OHADA accounting system (SYSCO) (Ngantchou, 2011).<sup>2</sup> Alternative documents (social and environmental) are very rare<sup>3</sup>, and the financial statements of these companies are not always easily accessible.

The corporate social and environmental accounting (CSEA) or "societal reporting" consists of dissemination of environmental and social information produced by companies to stakeholders simultaneously or independently of the financial surrender (Capron, 2003). It should get potential to promote equality, social justice, transparency and accountability by holding companies to account for their activities (Belal, 2008). Yet it remains difficult to understand CSEA practices in emerging economies through existing literature (Kisenyi and Gray, 1998). Differences in economic development, national, cultural and other differences have a strong influence on CSEA, in such a way that it would be risky to generalize the results of studies carried out on developed countries at the level of emerging or developing countries (Tsang, 1998).

But almost half a century after the beginning of scientific passion for SER, research seems to focus on two elements: the search for an adequate definition and theoretical models on the one hand; and the determination of the nature of the relationship between SER and business performance (Mullenbach and Rmadi, 2010). Seeking legitimacy (Islam and Deegan, 2008), Mimicry (Haider, 2010), Stakeholder pressure (Freeman, 1984, Phillips et al., 2003), creative accounting (Watts and Zimmerman, 1990) ... the reasons are many to justify the adoption of SER practices by companies, whenever no theoretical and consensual framework really prevails.

In this study, which is in continuation of the work of Haider, 2010, Ali and Rizwan, 2013 in seeking theoretical model of CSEA integrating contextual factors, we want to know why and how OHADA's developing countries disseminate SEI. It deals precisely with (identifying the determinants of SEI's publication in developing countries) understanding OHADA companies' motivations to disseminate such information, and describe the accounting treatment of SEI in these companies. Institutional theory (Ali and Rizwan, 2013) was used as theoretical framework. SEIs were identified in our case study through ISO 26000 new standards.

In the first part of this article, we review accounting issues of SER. Then, we discuss theoretical frameworks that were used to explain SEI dissemination by companies and show how the institutional theory allows integrating contextual values. The third part of this article describes the methodology implemented and

<sup>1</sup> Acronym of the Organization for Harmonization in Africa of Business Law

<sup>2</sup> The OHADA accounting framework has been in force in French-speaking African countries for a decade; it tends to appear as a compromise of the differences observed in the dominant accounting models: "continental accounting model" and "Anglo-Saxon accounting model". Depending on their size, companies are subject to an accounting system: the normal system, the alleged system and the minimum cash system. The required documents are the Balance Sheet, the Profit and Loss Account, the TAFIRE and the Annexed Statement.

<sup>3</sup> The consultation of websites of the various companies of our starting sample, as well as the interview with the head of the information, awareness and documentation services of the regional delegation of Ministry of Environment/ Littoral, revealed that the few companies that publish societal reports in Cameroon, are mainly the representations of European and American multinationals (ALUCAM, subsidiary D 'ALCAN, CIMENCAM Lafarge group, oil companies like TOTAL ...).

presents the findings. Results are finally discussed

## 1- Social Reporting: Origins, definitions and theoretical frameworks

The aim is not to go back to the debate on the definition of societal reporting, nor that of its various forms, but to have an overview of the state of research in this area, especially about the link between the two accountings - financial and societal -. We will note that there is no consensus because the phenomenon remains unclear and poorly defined. Moreover Stakeholder theory is then presented not in its classical form as defined by Freeman (1984), but under a "convergent" approach that may correspond to the context of the firm in Africa (Jones and Wicks, 1999; Riviere, 2006). Despite the criticisms made against this approach, we will see that it deals with relations between managers and stakeholders based on moral foundations, which brings it closer to the realities of African business, which is characterized by its strong cultural ink. (Kamdem, 2002).

### 1.1 Origins and definitions of social reporting

Societal accounting (social and environmental accounting for Antheaume and Teller, 2001), better known in the field of research under the term "societal reporting"<sup>1</sup>, is conceived as an information system that makes it possible to evaluate the contribution of the company on its environment or reversely that of the environment on the company, be it negative or positive (Capron, 2000). In recent years, it has become a relevant area of research to study the different behaviors related to corporate social responsibility<sup>2</sup>.

Yet, the term "reporting" has been essentially related to financial accounting. According to Gray, Owen and Lavers (1996), societal reporting focuses on the financial description of specific economic events for a defined organization or reporting entity, in order to provide information to diverse users. But, according to them, it is a restricted vision of the interactions that could take place between the organization and its environment. Gray and Bebbington (2001) cited by Damak-Ayadi (2010) define three categories of reporting:

- Reporting in financial documents on economic activities;
- Reporting in other parts of annual reports or in independent reports on other aspects of the company's business (environmental and social);
- Reporting done by other external organizations

According to them, social and environmental reporting is the second type of reporting, which deals with different social and environmental events and is not limited to economic events. However, the diversity of terms used<sup>3</sup> and the many definitions proposed in the Anglo-Saxon and Francophone literature for social and environmental reporting could lead to confusion with other areas of accounting.

In French terminology, terms such as environmental accounting (Christophe, 1992), social and societal accounting (Capron, 2000), green accounting (Christophe, 1995), human resource accounting (Marquès 1977) and societal reporting (Capron and Quairel 2003, Giordano and Rivière, 2007) have been used to describe any form of accounting that extends to areas beyond financial accounting (Gray 2002).

Two sustainable development reporting axes are then identified in the literature. The first considers societal accounting as a complementary activity to financial accounting. Thus, it should obey to the same assumptions and perceptions as financial accounting. This view is further reinforced by the fact that, in practical terms, social and environmental information (SEI) is in most cases published, either voluntarily or compulsorily, in annual reports (Unerman, 2000 cited by Damak-Ayadi, 2010). This involves extending the area of traditional accounting that provides financial statements primarily to shareholders.

On the other hand, the second approach considers that social and environmental reporting "is the activity that enables the company to report to the various stakeholders about its activities and their impact on society and the environment" (Damak- Ayadi, 2004). Thus, this approach places the social and environmental reporting activity at the center of an issue on the role of information in an enterprise-society dialogue; societal reporting is considered as a separate accounting, whose actors, tools and theoretical bases differ from those of traditional accounting. Companies in this perspective, to justify their "responsible" nature, establish alternative documents to financial documents (social report, environmental assessment, audit of human resources ...), disseminated to all stakeholders<sup>4</sup>(Antheaume and Teller, 2001). This (dominant) approach is the subject of more abundant literature than the previous one.

The debate is unresolved, despite the widespread tendency of large Western companies to provide alternative societal documents to the annual balance sheets and reports, under pressure from governments and other bodies. This is the case of the law on New Economic Regulations implemented in France since 2002,

<sup>1</sup> « social » is relative to the employees of a company and "societal" to the society as a whole: "Societal is what is directed towards the whole society (collectivity) contrary to social which only targets the workers of the company" (Mullenbach, 2002)

<sup>2</sup> Integration of the objectives of sustainable development (development that allows the achievement of present objectives without compromising those of future generations) within the framework of the company (Brundland Report, 1987)

<sup>3</sup> Damak-Ayadi (2010) reviews the literature of the different terms used in the literature to define and characterize societal reporting.

<sup>4</sup> According to Freeman (1987), a stakeholder is anyone who is concerned with the success of the company in terms of social responsibility.

which requires listed companies to provide additional information on their consideration of sustainable development. In contrast, more and more companies are investing in the publication of societal documents in a completely voluntary way (social assessment, environmental assessment, sustainable development report, etc) (Damak-Ayadi, 2010).

Stakeholder pressure and cultural and moral considerations may play a major role in the adoption of responsible behavior, and may also influence the type and mode of information disclosure adopted.

## **2. Theoretical frameworks of research in corporate social and environmental accounting**

Several theoretical frameworks have been summoned in the literature to explain the reasons (motivations) why SEIs are disseminated by companies. This proliferation of theories leads to creating a real vagueness, since there is as yet no consensus on the explanatory power of these different theories. For Gray et al. (1995), the most important and difficult task in research in societal accounting is the choice of the theory that explains the diffusion of SEI, as the phenomenon is complex and cannot often be explained by a particular theory. To circumvent this difficulty, the authors most often use a large number of theories: Theory of legitimacy... We focus our attention on the theories most used in the literature. They are divided into two groups; the first group consisting of contractual and economic theories and the second group listing the socio-political and management theories. After presenting these different theories (2.1), we will try to identify the most sophisticated framework to explain the adoption of SER practices by companies in developing countries.

It is a complex exercise to explain the diffusion of SEI from a single theoretical framework. This is why many researchers have mobilized several theories in their work. In the light of the work of Phillips, Freeman and Wicks (2003), Giordano and Rivière (2008) completed by those of Andriof and Waddock (2002), one might be tempted to think that the theory of stakeholders is the most sophisticated to explain the diffusion of SEI by companies. However, this theory has its limits when it has to be applied to the case of emerging or developing countries, in particular because it does not integrate contextual variables such as culture, traditions, religion or the considerable impact of the family in these countries. This is why institutional theory (Mullenbach and Rmadi, 2010) is preferred because the resulting model (Ali and Rizwan, 2013) integrates, in addition to other cited theories, contextual factors.

Institutional theory explains the reasons for adapting certain practices / organizational structures in a given organizational area (Deegan, 2009 cited by Ali and Rizwan, 2013). Institutional theory has two dimensions, isomorphism and decoupling, <sup>1</sup>which explain why companies broadcast SEIs.

Isomorphism is defined as a process of constraint that forces a unit of the population to imitate other units that face the same environmental conditions. Isomorphism thus refers to the adoption of an institutional practice (such as the diffusion of SEI) by an organization (DiMaggio and Walter, 1983). Indeed, the diffusion of SEI is an organizational practice whereas the means by which this practice is adopted is a process of isomorphism. This isomorphism is a process influenced by the pressure of a multiplicity of stakeholders (institutional and professional pressures, for example).

There are three types of isomorphism: coercive, mimetic and normative (Deegan, 2009 cited by Ali and Rizwan, 2013).

Coercive isomorphism results from formal and informal pressures exerted on an organization by other organizations from which it is dependent, and by cultural beliefs specific to its environment. These pressures can be manifested by force, persuasion or invitation to join a coalition. In coercive isomorphism, the power of stakeholders plays a significant role that forces companies to adopt certain institutional practices such as the diffusion of SEIs.

The mimetic isomorphism is due to certain situations in the business environment, where in the absence of reference or guideline the company tries to become the model for other organizations. Other companies try to copy the best reporting practices to look like companies operating in the same environment.

Normative isomorphism comes from professionalism, which refers to the demands of the profession to adopt certain standards or certain institutional practices (such as SEI diffusion). The two main sources of normative pressure are educational networks and professional networks. In this type of isomorphism, culture and ethical values exert their influence on professionals to adopt certain institutional practices (Deegan, 2009 quoted by Ali and Rizwan, 2013). The normative group includes academics, environmental consultants, industry associations, government and professional organizations that use business ISEs.

After this brief presentation of the various theories mobilized to explain the phenomenon of SEIs diffusion by companies, we will now discuss the choice of the theory that best explains this phenomenon.

### **2.1 What unifying theoretical framework to study the diffusion of SEI?**

Institutional theory better explains the different types of pressure exerted by multiple stakeholders on the firm.

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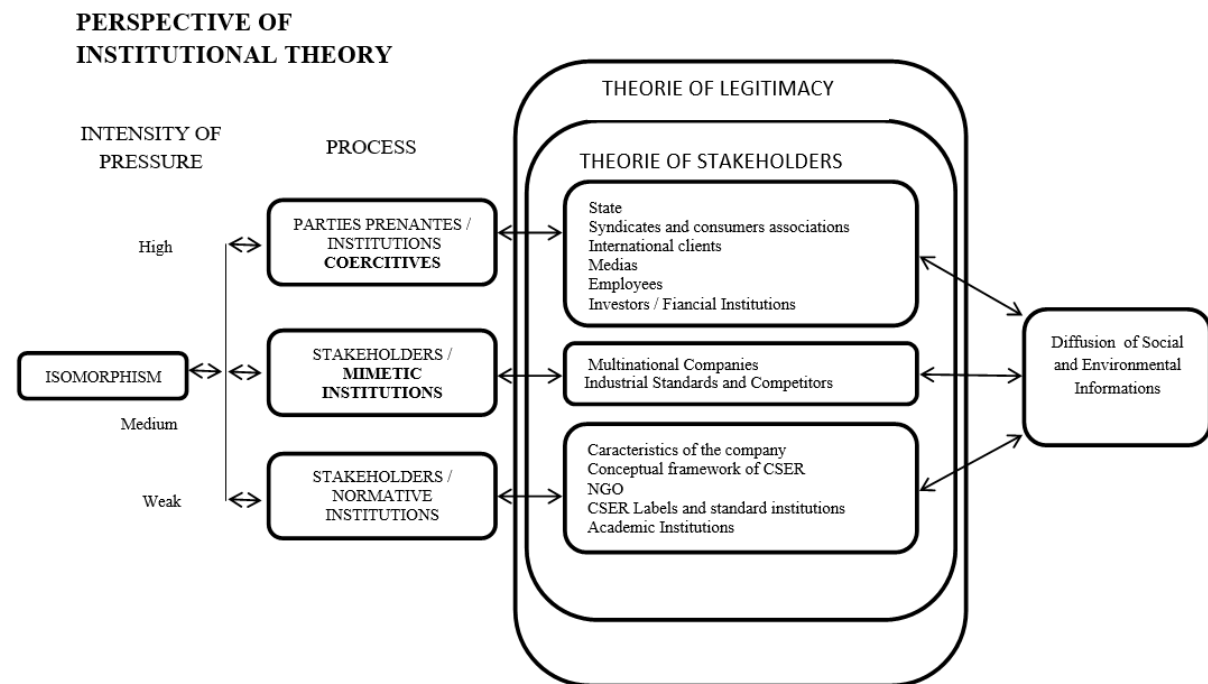
<sup>1</sup> Decoupling is not a particular focus in the literature, so we deliberately choose not to address it in this paper

This theory has two branches: isomorphism and decoupling (Deegan and Jeffry, 2006 and Deegan, 2009 cited by Ali and Rizwan, 2013). The diffusion of SEI is a practice, while the process by which a firm adopts practices similar to those of firms operating in the same place (all developing countries) is called the isomorphism process.

The adoption of SEI dissemination practices by companies in developing countries is influenced by a number of stakeholders such as: State, Trade Unions, Consumer Associations, International Buyers, Media, Employees, Investors, Companies Multinationals, Competitors, NGOs, Standards Bodies and Academic Institutions (Ali and Rizwan, 2013).

Contrarily to the theory of stakeholders which classifies stakeholders into two groups (according to their proximity: close stakeholders and diffuse stakeholders), the institutional theory classifies their power in three groups respectively: coercive (state, trade unions, consumer associations, international buyers, media, employees and investors), mimetic (multinational companies, competitors) and normative (SER networks, NGOs, standardization bodies and academic institutions).

Normative groups exert normative pressure on firms in developing countries to encourage them to diffuse SEIs, but cannot economically impact them; it is up to each company to integrate or not the recommendations of these stakeholders. On the other hand, stakeholders such as the State, Shareholders, Employees, International Clients and the media can exert coercive pressure on companies in developing countries; they have the power to economically constrain these companies. Finally, other stakeholders such as multinationals and competing firms create mimicking pressure on companies in developing countries (Ali and Rizwan, 2013). The model from that theory could be illustrated as follows



**Source :** Adapted from Ali & Rizwan (2013)

### 3. Presentation of case study and methodology

First of all, the relevance of the case study is underlined. Then the methodology is precised and discussed.

#### 3.1 Presentation of case study

BOCOM PETROLEUM S.A is an oil distribution company that has obtained approval for the distribution of oil products on the Cameroonian national market, export to CEMAC countries and maritime bunkering. Created in 2007, it had at the time of the study a workforce of 09 (nine) oil distribution stations, spreaded in 03 of the 10 regions of Cameroon. But this workforce continues to evolve, and now covers almost all the ten regions of the country.

BOCOM PETROLEUM SA is a member of the BOCOM group, which consists of 04 (four) companies:

- BOCOM INTERNATIONAL (specialized in the incineration of waste);
- BOCOM RECYCLING (specialized in recycling and waste treatment);
- BOCOM INDUSTRY (for manufacturing and marketing of industrial parts) and finally;
- BOCOM PETROLEUM, the latest member of the group, for the distribution of petroleum products.

BOCOM PETROLEUM has a staff of 57 permanent employees, and realizes an annual turnover higher than

1.000.000.000 FCFA (1 billion), which classifies this organization in the category of large companies.

The CEO of the BOCOM group and also General Manager of BOCOM PETROLEUM SA describes how the circuit works: "The idea came from the fact that I'm the one, through my BOCOM group, who do the maintenance in almost all the stations-services of the country. Maintenance, which means the protection of the environment. This is how I got the idea of entering this sector. And besides, we are in a biofuel project. I thought that by creating my own stations, I can equip them with a bio fuel pump. (...)The project is under study. The engineers are on it. From one moment to the next, we will start selling organic fuel at BOCOM service stations

### 3.2 Empirical study: why and how?

After literature review carried out prior to this study, a major difficulty arises. Indeed, the problems of social reporting affect several areas, including financial accounting, management accounting, sociology, law, but especially that of environmental sciences (Capron, 2000). That's why we went to the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection (departmental delegation of the Littoral), where we met the head of the department of information, awareness and documentation.

An interview with her allowed us to better understand the various laws in force on the protection of the environment in Cameroon. This interview was decisive for the realization of this study because it enabled us to identify the companies which constituted our sample. It is the Cameroonian companies that make sustainable development a major focus of their development policy - incineration of waste and effluents; frequent completion of environmental audits; respect for collective agreements etc. -.

Our initial sample consisted of the following companies, almost all of which have powerful waste incinerators, or which use subcontractors for the treatment of their waste; these are: ALUCAM; NESTLE-CAMEROON; LAQUINTINIE HOSPITAL DE DOUALA; GENERAL HOSPITAL OF DOUALA; CIMENCAM and BOCOM.

These companies were chosen from among others for their relative proximity. But, given the design and especially the time required to carry out a good case study, we have chosen to refocus all our efforts towards a unique case. BOCOM is the first company that responded to our request; which allowed us to start our investigations very early. We initially chose to conduct our study in its subsidiary BOCOM RECYCLING, but the authorization was granted to us rather for BOCOM PETROLEUM, which is concerned as well by the objectives of sustainable development as BOCOM RECYCLING.

This choice has eased our task, because BOCOM RECYCLING, through its activity (recycling and incineration of waste) necessarily incorporates societal data in its financial statements; it would be very difficult to apprehend its voluntary participation in sustainable development. Indeed, as a service provider, its portfolio consists mainly of companies that want to treat their waste.

In addition, given the danger of its powerful incinerators for surrounding communities, it is under great pressure from the public authorities, by conducting an audit every six months on its facilities<sup>1</sup>. These specificities could have introduced a lot of bias in our study. The choice of BOCOM PETROLEUM thus proves to be beneficial, because it allows us to carry out an equally rich study, avoiding the aforementioned biases.

The recent birth of this company, its strategic bet for environmental and societal orientations, as well as the nature of its activities makes it a favorable and informative ground for the implementation of sustainable development strategies. In addition, our various professional and academic readings show that BOCOM PETROLEUM can be considered as a typical company on these issues

The position of Complete Observer<sup>2</sup> was used during the first three months of the study (May-June-July), which allowed the realization and the analysis of the various interviews, avoiding personal bias related to any link with the research object. Subsequently, to be certain about the data collected during the first observation phase, we adopted the Participant posture that observes (from September to October), which allowed us to participate in the accounting process; this was possible thanks to the acceptance of an application for a professional internship addressed to the company in May.

To ensure the reliability of the research in this study, we have implemented data triangulation. To this extent, we compared the data from the various interviews we conducted to have an idea of the reality. Moreover, in order not to base our analysis solely on the statements collected, checks via websites, newspapers and internal documents were consulted, especially data concerning respect for people and the environment.

For the analysis of our data, we used the thematic analysis method. To this extent, we have reduced the data

<sup>1</sup> This information is collected in an interview with the head of the BOCOM RECYCLING environment department, in his office, located in the industrial area of Bonaberi / Douala

<sup>2</sup> Several positions are possible for the technique of observation (Giordano, 2003):

Full participant: the researcher is employed by the firm studied (ethnography)

Participant who observes: integration into the community of the group with researcher status

Participating observer: no participation in group activities

Full observer: no direct contact with research subjects

collected, by associating them according to their proximity, to the seven themes of sustainable development enunciated by the ISO 26000 standard. Thereafter, in order to establish our thematic analysis grids, the themes were reduced to four, following the study conducted by Ernst and Ernst (1978) and taken up by Zeghal and Ahmed (1990).

#### 4- Analysis of ISE treatment in BOCOM PETROLEUM accounting

The results from the various interviews, observations, websites, financial documents, are presented in this section. In accordance with the themes prescribed by the ISO 26000 approach, and according to the specificities of the case study, it will be successively presented the SEIs relating to the respect of the environment and the protection of the consumers (representing the investment of BOCOM PETROLEUM in the environmental aspect of CSER), then SEIs related to the contribution of the company to the development of surrounding communities, and relations and working conditions with employees (the social aspect of CSER).

#### 4.1 The accounting treatment of SEIs for the protection of the environment

SEIs related to environmental considerations are stimulated primarily by BOCOM PETROLEUM's external stakeholders, including the state and local communities. They are grouped into two themes; first, the theme "environment", then the theme "consumer protection"

##### 4.1.1 Environment

The search for information on environmental management, in the traditional financial statements of the company BOCOM PETROLEUM, made it possible to list the following elements:

- The waste

The company generates a lot of waste, including used petroleum derivatives (oil, oil filters, fuel filters, and fuel residues). Special tanks for the collection of waste flowing into the ground make it possible to control the threshold of waste. When the proportion of waste reaches a critical level, they are sucked up by the expertise of BOCOM RECYCLING, and incinerated or recycled in the special facilities of the latter. The risk of pollution is, if necessary, almost zero.

- Impact studies and environmental audits

An impact study is carried out prior to the implementation of each new agency (industrial plant or petroleum product distribution station), in accordance with the provisions of the MINEP (Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection). "Environmental audits" are rare; they intervene at times to check the conformity of the installations and the system of conservation of waste. These studies are carried out by the company, under the control of the Ministry of Mines and Energy, and the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection, according to protocols provided by regulations in force.

Location in financial statements

An observation of the balance sheet of the company, as well as the income statement allows to find this financial information, especially concerning external stakeholders (pressure from the state, pressure from local authorities); Financial information on the incineration of waste, environmental audits are recorded in the profit and loss account "cost of mines inspections", a charge account created for this purpose, while the costs of maintenance, repairs, civil engineering, paint are recorded in the account relating to maintenance costs (account 624, OHADA chart of accounts). The impact on the balance sheet is seen in the accounts of third parties (account 40 ...) (accounts payable);

With regard to the environmental impact studies, the information is exclusively incorporated as "depreciation" and balance sheet in the current asset accounts, "suspense account".

Nature of the SEI	Name of the SEI	Location of the SEI in profit and Loss account	Location of the SEI in the balance sheet	Concerned stakeholder	Character of SEI
ENVIRONMENT	Treatment of waste	Maintenance fees	Third parties (Suppliers Liabilities/ personnel)	External stakeholders (State pressure ; local council's pressure)	Voluntary
	Environmental audit	Cost of mines inspection	Third parties (Suppliers Liabilities/ personnel)		Compulsory
	Study of environmental impact	Depreciations	Suspense account (Work in progress)		Compulsory

##### 4.1.2 Protection of the consumer

The information from the BOCOM case gives details of the company's commitment to sustainable development,

including good business practices recommended by the ISO 26000 standard.

- Product quality

The company's oil products come from SONARA (Cameroon's national refinery company), and arrive under sealed at BOCOM PETROLEUM petrol stations through a service provider. Once in the BOCOM PETROLEUM premises, the products are analyzed using a thermo-density meter by the quality department. In case of concern about the conformity of products, a sample is submitted to the expertise of HYDRAC, a company specialised in quality control. It may be a lack of conformity relating to the fuel density, its temperature or its color. The expertise of this company will make it possible to judge if the product is fit for consumption, or failing that if it represents a danger.

- Vehicle pollution

Sometimes the business activity causes damage to its customers. One case listed is fuel confusion at the time of distribution in BOCOM stations. It may be for example to deliver "super" to a vehicle that works rather with "diesel". Two cases of treatment are observed under these circumstances.

In the first case, the vehicle of the customer who has been damaged is drained. Subsequently the customer is compensated by a replenishment of his vehicle fuel.

In a second case, the client starts a complaint against the company and demands compensation for the harm he suffered. This option opens a series of legal transactions, which usually result in the payment of an indemnity to the client.

Location in financial statements

Information on customer pressure is also reflected in the company's balance sheet and profit and loss account.

The quality service experts are part of the staff of the company and are paid as such. The information on their expertise is reflected in the balance sheet through the personnel accounts and in the income statement under personnel charges.

In the case of additional expertise, HYDRAC is considered as a service provider; that's why this information is included in the balance sheet in the suppliers accounts (40 ...). It is included in the income statement as "Product Analysis Fee" (account 6328).

Vehicle pollution followed by emptying and replenishment decreases the existing stock (account 31). In the income statement, it represents "various losses".

The accounting posting differs when the customer fills a complaint. The payment of the damage is done in cash or by bank transfer, and is drowned in the balance sheet among the treasury operations (accounts 57/52). Its counterpart in the income statement is recorded in litigation costs (external services).

Nature of the SEI	Name of the SEI	Location of the SEI in profit and Loss account	Location of the SEI in the balance sheet	Concerned stakeholder	Character of SEI
ENVIRON MENT	Quality control	Personnel charges	Personnel	Client's pressure	Voluntary
	Conformity expertise	External services (Product analysis fees)	Third parties (Suppliers)		Compulsory
	Vehicle pollution	Diverse Losses	Other charges		Compulsory
	Pollution with payment of damages	External services (court fees)	Treasury (bank/cash)		Compulsory

**Table 2:** thematic grid on consumer protection

**3.2 Analysis of elements of sensitivity to the human condition**

The social aspect of CSER is not left out in the policy of this company. At first glance, actions in favor of surrounding communities are initiated to achieve social equilibrium and legitimation (Hogner, 1982). Then, the harmonious social climate informs about good governance practices within this company.

- Contribution to Local Development

The SEIs concerned here are the result of pressure from diffuse stakeholders, mainly pressure from local and surrounding authorities as well as from the state.

The societal information disseminated is considered in the income statement as "advertising costs" and in the Balance Sheet they are part of the third parties accounts.

Information on the construction of drinking water boreholes is included in the "donations" and is included as such in the income statement. In the balance sheet, they are found in cash accounts.

The drilling maintenance is done by the company. The recording is identical to that of waste incineration.

The donation of a pavilion to the local hospital is recorded in the balance sheet in a cash account and in the income statement under the heading "donations".

The staff of the different agencies is trained and paid by a service provider. The impact on the balance sheet is at the level of the accounts of third parties (subcontractors); in the income statement it appears in the "external services".

Nature of the SEI	Nom de l'ISE	Localisation de l'ISE dans le compte de résultat	Localisation de l'ISE dans le bilan	Partie prenante concernée	Caractère de l'ISE
<i>Contribution to local development</i>	External communication	Advertising fees	Third parties (suppliers liabilities)	Disseminated third parties (local councils)	voluntary
	Donations /drilling	Donations	Treasury(cash/bank)		voluntary
	Forage/entretien	Maintenance fees	Third parties (suppliers liabilities/Personnel)		voluntary
	Donations / pavilion (hospital)	External services (donations)	Treasury(cash/bank)		voluntary
	Hiring	External services	Third parties (suppliers liabilities/Subcontractors )		voluntary

**Table 3:** thematic grid on the contribution to local development)

**- Relations and Conditions of Work**

The interviews reveal that no employee of the company belongs to a union; this reflects a good relationship between the company and its contractual stakeholders (Gray et al., 1996) and is a sign of good governance. In addition, the company has never been subject to staff strikes and resignation cases are extremely rare. Moreover, all BOCOM PETROLEUM permanent staff benefit from an insurance contract for the prevention of sickness and accidents at work. The maximum amount of this allowance depends on the rank and position of responsibility held in the company. The average work schedule is forty hours a week.

**Location in financial statements**

Information relating to insurance benefits is shown in the balance sheet in personnel accounts or social organizations; and in the profit and loss account, they form an integral part of the expenses of the staff or external services.

Nature of the SEI	Nom de l'ISE	Localisation de l'ISE dans le compte de résultat	Localisation de l'ISE dans le bilan	Type d'ISE	Partie prenante concernée	Caractère de l'ISE
<b>Relations and Working conditions</b>	Diverse indemnities	Personnel fees / External services	Third parties/Service suppliers	Financial	Contractual third parties (personnel)	Compulsory / Voluntary

**Table 4:** thematic grid on relationships and working conditions

**5- Strategic orientation of societal communications of BOCOM**

Societal information, particularly social and environmental information is not highlighted, despite its presence in the financial statements. It is most often integrated and forgotten in accounts that are not always adapted. This is the case, for example, of the recording the costs of waste treatment, which are drowned and forgotten among accounts that do not directly concern societal problems; CSER operations must be visible, to reflect the consideration of sustainable development goals (Gray et al., 1995a).

Consumer protection information, through phased compliance checks, ensures the safety of delivered products for marketing and consumption. The company is no longer in a classical logic of profit-seeking, but in a logic of sustainability or respect for the three dimensions of "sustainability" (environmental, economic and social), (Njomgang C., 2005).

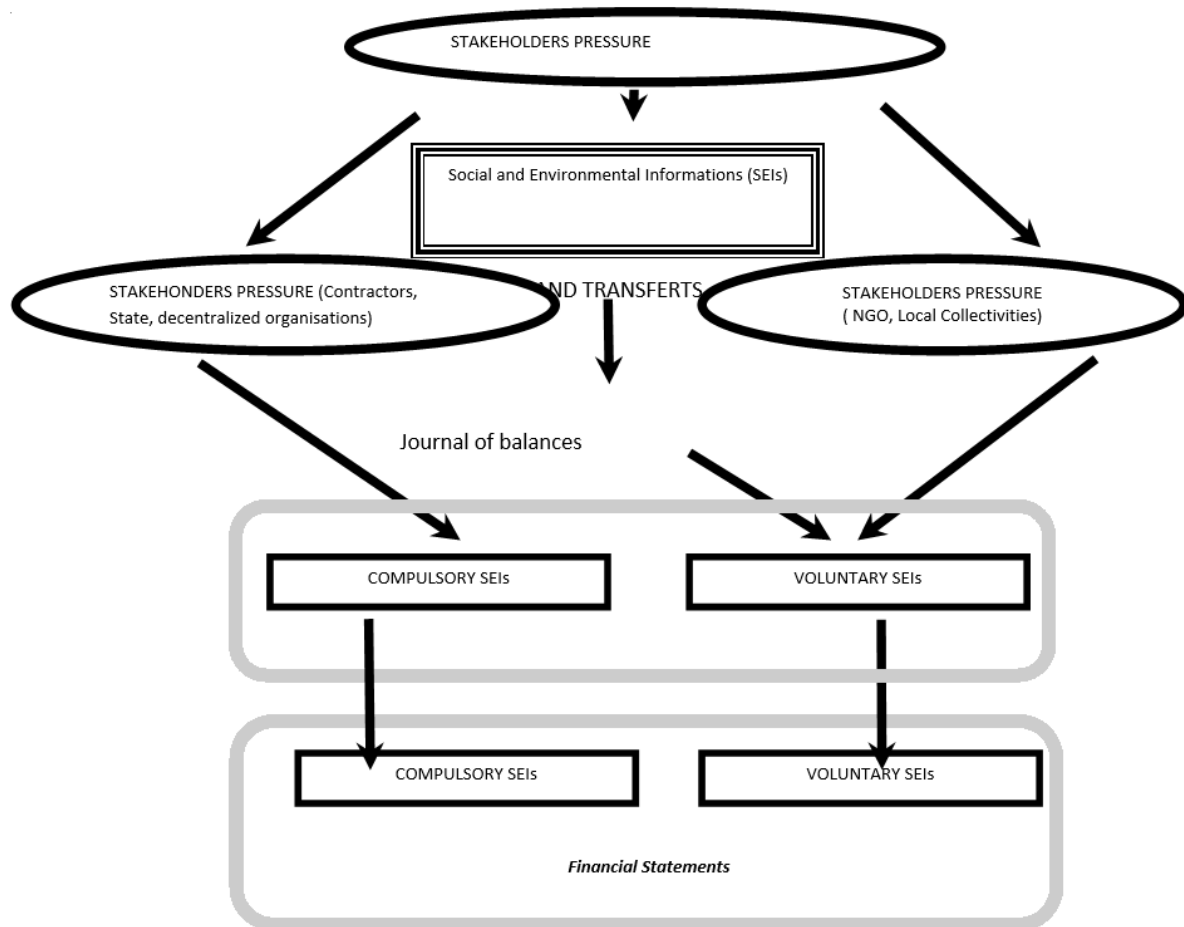
However, the clumsy integration of SEIs into the financial statements usually leads to forgetting accounts incorporating unusual transactions. For illustration, given its unusual nature, information on damages caused to customers as a result of fuel confusion was not found at the time of the study. It took a few extra days and the help of all department accountants to trace the route of this information.

Certain operations which are subject to a particular treatment are on the other hand found with ease. These are exceptional transactions, which are subject to rehabilitation or incorporation into special accounts. One can note here the creation of an "expenses and mine inspection" account, to record all operations related to environmental impact studies.

The process of accounting for SEIs can be represented by the following schema:



Figure 2: SEI accounting recoding process



This description presents three phases that should be defined and explained through the chosen theoretical base.

**Phase 1:** Under the influence of various stakeholders, the company adopts a socially responsible attitude, manifested by strategic decisions that have an impact on its sustainability - The impact can be quantifiable in a monetary way or not. Quantitative financial information, like the various environmental costs (for example the cost of an environmental impact study), is incorporated into the company's accounts. Non-financial qualitative and quantitative information is not taken into account.

**Phase 2:** the information retained in the previous phase is assigned to different accounts according to their nature:  
 - Compulsory information, that is to say information that comes from the pressure of the State and the decentralized and local councils (environmental audits) are integrated in accounts created for this purpose (example of the account "charges and mines inspection" created to accommodate all information on environmental audits). Some voluntary information is also highlighted; this is the information resulting from pressure from other stakeholders whose treatment is provided by the accounting system (eg insurance benefits); Other information of a voluntary nature is included in general accounts that do not allow visibility (for example, information on vehicle pollution included in the "other charges" account in the income statement, or information on the expertise of the conformity of products, integrated in the balance sheet in the accounts of service providers.)

**Phase 3:** the information showed in the financial statements, are presented either with special denominations (case of the obligatory information) or drowned in generic accounts, not perceptible with the simple observation of the summaries (case of the large proportion of voluntary SEIs).

At the level of the balances, voluntary SEIs are incorporated in accounts which do not make it possible to identify them with the mere look of the financial statements. The consequence at the level of the end of year financial statements (balance sheet, income statement) is that they are no longer visible. The reality is not the same for compulsory SEIs, which do not undergo significant changes.

In terms of the theories mobilized, this diagram explains the case of a company that has a stakeholder concern (normative approach), but which pays greater attention to the stakeholders who exert the most pressure on it (instrumental approach). . This is why visibility is given to all information about them (state, decentralized

agencies and international organizations).

### Conclusion

The purpose of this work was to seek to understand why and how companies in developing countries disseminate SEIs. To answer this question, we described through a case study, the process of recordings for SEIs in a company in the OHADA space, committed to sustainable development. Institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991) puts the convergent theory of stakeholders in perspective with the normative accounting theories (static and dynamic approach), and allowed us at the theoretical level to mobilize a framework adapted to the analysis of the companies in a context of strong cultural inception. It appears that financial statements documents integrate SEI allowing to treat corporate social responsibility. However, these social and environmental information (SEI) are most often embedded in accounts that do not facilitate their visibility. Some among them, because of their special character, are integrated into accounts with new names. Qualitative or generic SEIs have not been identified in the company's financial reports. Anyway this SEI identification in financial statements that fall under the traditional reporting shows the closeness between these two types of accounting. This suggests that as system of thought supported by Ramanathan (1976), that societal reporting is a branch of traditional accounting, which makes it possible to understand and evaluate the impact of SEIs. The main limitations of this work are related to the temporal constraints that we have been confronted with, because the case studies take a long time to understand a phenomenon. Other shortcomings concern personal biases, which may have been inserted at the time of data collection and analysis. This study allows us to relaunch the theoretical debate on the true status of societal reporting. A study conducted on a larger sample of companies from various sectors of activity may refine results. But beyond studying the link between social accounting and classical accounting, would it not be equally important to study the relationship between societal performance and financial performance for African companies?

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