The green territory has narrowed its borders in the recent years. Due to the economic difficulties, the companies that still allot dedicated funds are those pillared on social responsibility.

These companies are the avant-garde of things well-done in sustainability. They are the reason we decided to make a top of the green companies in Romania.

BY ALEXANDRU ARDELEAN

In 2006 - 2007, it was a fashion. In 2009, it seemed to turn into a trend. In 2012, it's a shade of reality. Green CSR has gone through many stages in Romania, being always conditioned by the financial power of the companies that have the courage to do it. And we are only talking about the private environment, because this is where CSR resides. The actions which fall within the Government's range of responsibility are part of the chapter of policies for State development and should make up a strategic direction for consolidation and growth.

We were writing 5 years ago that in our country the field of social responsibility in connection to the environment was working in 2 gears. One for the companies, who moved things and forced the State to undertake the necessary actions for development, and a second gear for the Government actions, always at half pace compared to what went on in society. In the meantime, we have crossed an extremely unfavorable economic time. We are now, today, in a different dimension of the field because green CSR was the first to "benefit" from fund-slashing.

This is why we thought about making this top, to see what has happened in the field and to see the ranking of the greenest companies in Romania. The research undertaken for the making of this top assessed, first of all, the way the companies that organize green campaigns are perceived by the public, that is the stakeholders. This is why the t op is even more useful to everybody, because we have a clear image of the way community members see the companies with green activities and their campaigns and it helps us understand what needs to be improved. For our purpose, we asked ISRA Center MR company to help us with our top.

> "Although research on green CSR campaigns is still at the beginning in Romania, ISRA Center has been actively involved in this type of strategic projects in the recent years"
>
> ALICE MIHAI, Business Development Director, ISRA Center

Out of all the CSR actions a company can undertake, green campaigns are the most visible and impactful because their actions can be easily noticed around us and have the potential to reach large communities and voluntarily mobilize a large number of people. "At Biz's invitation, ISRA Center was pleased to accept to get involved in this project that we thought was innovative for the Romanian market. As a field, the research on CSR campaigns and on their impact on a company's reputation is still at the beginning in Romania, and ISRA Center had the opportunity to get involved in such strategic projects for its clients, thus putting at their disposal all our expertise accumulated in this field", says Alice Mihai, Business Development Director for ISRA Center.

We wanted to assess the way people perceive various aspects related to the implication of th companies in Romania in green CSR. For this assessment, specific indicators were chosen to describe the intensity of the involvement effo in campaigns of environment responsibility. The components included in the Green Check Index (GCI) for this research are: credibility, differentiation, clarity, relevance and efficienc The main target of the research is the general population, because they are the end benefici of the companies' effort for green campaigns. We also wanted to learn about companies' standpoint on their level of involvement in green campaigns, precisely to nuance the results and to identify the difference between the actual actions undertaken by the compan and the perception of the population. After al

CSR actions lose a lot of their relevance in the absence of stakeholders' perceptions.

ATTENTION TO COMMUNITIES

For some companies, green CSR meant only a local adaptation of ampler campaigns organized at global level. But there are also companies which understood that this was not the way to give back to the community you are part of. Therefore, they created special campaigns adapted to Romanian realities and local needs.

ISRA Center research focused on the campaigns conducted by the companies present in Romania, but the influence of the global campaigns could not be neutralized as some of them benefitted from communication in our country as well. In addition, some of the companies with operations in Romania benefit from global coordination of their communication and PR strategies (including CSR).

This study had to also take into account the influence that the overall image and awareness of a company have on the CSR component of the company's reputation. To this respect, it may be possible that different elements of a brand be influenced by the fact that the brand has very high awareness and a very good image in consumers' minds. This is also the case of involvement in CSR, where there is a tendency to perceive a very well-known company, with a positive image, as being more actively involved in CSR, including in the green area.

The research focused on year 2011, with the amendment that campaigns conducted in previous years may create a bias concerning the general perception, as temporal limits are difficult to outline when it comes to aspects related to the awareness and evaluation of certain topics. The year of reference was 2011, with the mention that there could be influences of the print left on population's awareness and perception by the campaigns conducted in the previous years. In addition, there are also cases of on-going campaigns for which an exact level of involvement (budgets, persons involved, resources, etc.) is difficult to estimate at a specific moment. We also have to take into account the fact that there are green campaigns initiated by various organizations or associations that several companies can get involved in, such examples being: "Let's do it, Romania!" or "Plantam fapte bune/ We are planting good deeds".

GREEN CHECK INDEX (GCI) COMPONENTS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR THIS RESEARCH ARE:

CREDIBILITY	how authentic and genuine the green messages that a company sends to its audience are
DIFFERENTIATION	how much differentiation the efforts of a company in the green area are perceived to offer by comparison to other companies
RELEVANCE	the extent to which the green campaigns conducted by companies are important for the target audience
CLARITY	the degree to which the message transmitted by a company's green campaigns is easy to understand
EFFICIENCY	the extent to which the green campaigns conducted succeed in achieving their stated goals
FREQUENCY OF INVOLVEMENT	how often a company gets involved in green campaigns
LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT	how a company generally gets involved in a green campaign

COMPANIES, ON CALL

The companies selected to be included in the study are among the largest companies in Romania (are part of top 200 highest turnover companies) and consequently have a very high awareness among the general population. High awareness has in fact been one of the basic screening criteria for the companies included in the study, as companies with lower awareness would have been somewhat difficult to assess by the general population.

Almost all the 1.111 respondents know the companies selected for the research, and the level of awareness is very high. BCR and Coca-Cola are known by 98% of the respondents, Orange, Romtelecom, Cosmote, Petrom, Rompetrol, Carrefour are known by 96% of the interviewees. Next on the list are Danone (95%), McDonald's and Dacia (94%), Raiffeisen and Avon are at a tie with 92%. Tarom and Bergenbier are known by 91%. Samsung is known by 89%, Lukoil by 88%, Vodafone and Panasonic by 87%, and Renault by 86% of the research participants.

Even if in terms of awareness the companies included in the research register percentages over 90%, we cannot say the same thing about the awareness of their involvement in projects of social responsibility related to environment protection and ecology.

Only 21% of the persons interviewed are aware of companies who got involved in 2011 in green CSR. Only 2% of the respondents mention specific green CSR campaigns. It is important to mention that these persons know, on average, two companies involved in green CSR (number which can be estimated as high given that almost 80% of the population is unaware of companies involved in such campaigns).

In addition, the study has shown that the persons who are aware of green CSR campaigns have a well outlined profile: young persons, with higher education and high incomes, who live particularly in small urban areas; this proves that green CSR campaigns were conducted and had an impact especially in small communities. Among these, Petrom is the company with the highest awareness for green CSR, followed at considerable distance by Cosmote and Vodafone.

TOP GREEN COMPANIES

PETROM	1 PETROM	The top is ruled by Petrom, which has very high performance on the chapters of credibility, clarity, relevance and efficiency, and benefits from the highest awareness of its involvement in green CSR campaigns. Practically, Petrom holds 18% of the total awareness created around green campaigns, being 8 points ahead of the next company in the top.
COSMOTE	2 COSMOTE	Cosmote has a higher overall evaluation than Petrom does, the company performances being high on credibility, clarity, relevance and efficiency. Respondents estimate that Cosmote organization has a high frequency in initiating green campaigns but the company scores only 10% when it comes to the awareness of the campaigns it initiates.
vodafone	3 VODAFONE	In general population's eyes, Vodafone stands out through a very good level of involvement frequency, clarity of the message transmitted and involvement efficiency (achieving the goals set). 10% is the score the company registers for the awareness of its green campaigns. All these results rank the company 3rd in our top.
Carrefour	4 CARREFOUR	Carrefour succeeds in standing out through a high credibility of the campaigns initiated, with good clarity of the message conveyed. It loses points when it comes to points of difference, relevance and efficiency. However, research participants appreciate the frequency of initiation of green campaigns, and the level of awareness of the campaigns the company conducts is 8%.
Coca-Cola	5 COCA-COLA	Coca-Cola has the highest level of credibility and good results on the efficiency with which it gets involved in green campaigns. Unfortunately, the company does not succeed in getting a better score at differentiation level. The level of awareness of the company's campaigns is 8%.
ROMPETROL	6 ROMPETROL	Rompetrol obtains very high scores for the clarity of the messages of its campaigns. Campaigns credibility is another strong point of the company. Rompetrol loses points when it comes to campaigns efficiency. 7% is the level of awareness for the campaigns conducted.
AVON	7 AVON	Avon scores very high on the efficiency of the campaigns conducted, and obtains good results on the clarity of the message transmitted. The percentages gathered for credibility, differentiation and relevance are also good. Unfortunately, the company loses points for the awareness of its campaigns, registering only 7%.
orange	8 ORANGE	The general evaluation of the green campaigns initiated by Orange has good results, especially on efficiency and message clarity. The differentiation in the case of Orange has to suffer, respondents considering that it doesn't stand out among the other companies. Results are not that great for green campaigns awareness either, the company registering only 6%.
BCR	9 BCR	BCR has one of the best results on the clarity of the message conveyed during the campaigns initiated but also on the campaigns efficiency. Relevance and credibility among the population are also high. Just like other companies, BCR loses points when it comes to standing out from other companies and the level of green campaigns awareness is only 4%.

i'm lovin' it	10 MC DONALD'S	McDonald's scores a very high percentage on clarity and a high percentage on campaigns credibility. But it loses points for the efficiency of the green campaigns it initiates. The level of awareness of the campaigns conducted is not very high, only 4%.
P&G	11 P&G	Procter & Gamble (P&G) has a high rate of message clarity and obtains very good percentages for the relevance of the campaigns it organizes and good percentages for their credibility. As far as awareness is concerned, the company still has work to do, only 4% of the respondents being aware of the campaigns initiated by P&G.
DANONE	12 DANONE	Danone obtains very good results on message clarity and good results on message relevance, and its campaigns have a high level of credibility. Differentiation and efficiency are the points the company needs to focus on in the future. The level of awareness of Danone green campaigns is only 4%.
DACIA	13 DACIA	Dacia also has a low awareness of the green campaigns it conducts, only 4%. On the other hand, the company gathers a very high score on the message clarity of its campaigns. Credibility, efficiency and differentiation are points the company needs to focus more on.
ROMTELECOM	14 ROMTELECOM	Romtelecom campaigns are not well known either, their level of awareness being only 3%. But the credibility of the campaigns that the telecom provider conducts is very high. Other aspects the company scores high on are clarity, relevance and efficiency. Differentiation is a point which needs attention from the company.
MOL	15 MOL	Mol registers very high percentages for most of the chapters analyzed. Its campaigns obtain the best credibility score out of all the campaigns in the top. The only chapter that costs the company points is differentiation. The level of awareness of the green campaigns set up by Mol is among the lowest, only 3%.

Companies' potential was calculated by multiplying the percentage of those who know each company which got involved in green CSR campaigns by the total percentage of those who know companies which got involved in such campaigns.
The top of companies was calculated by multiplying the potential of each company by the general evaluation x frequency of campaigns' initiation.

METHODOLOGY

General population target: 1.111 interviews with persons aged 20 to 60 from the urban area (50.000+). The sample is representative for the target population, layered on region and degree of urbanization; the screening of the units in the sample was random, from 3 to 3, without repetition; the sampling error is ±2,9%. The questionnaire was included in an Omnibus study applied by means of the face-to-face PAPI method, at respondent's home. Data were collected in February 17-29, 2012.

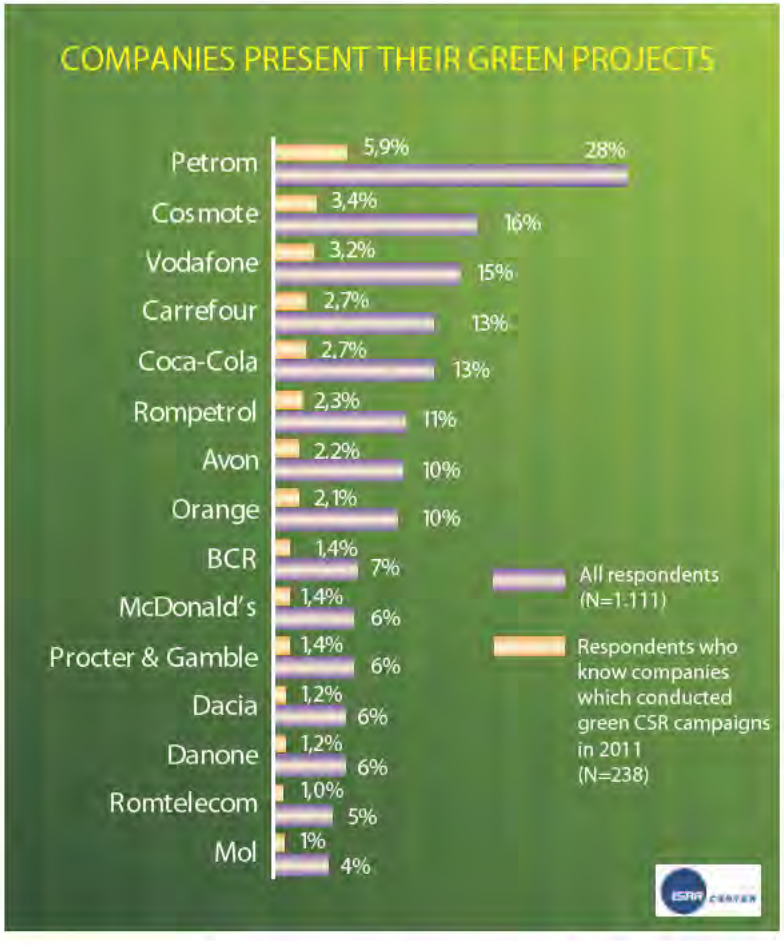
Companies target: Based on a desk research, the companies involved in green CSR were selected from the top 200 companies with the highest turnover in Romania. In addition, companies with the potential to be known by the general population due to their products and services were selected, crossing out companies such as those in the industrial field, import-export or distribution. This way, a list of 44 companies was created, which were contacted by phone for an invitation to answer the questionnaire especially designed for them. The targets for answering the questionnaire were persons in the PR, corporate communication or even CSR departments (where such departments existed).
The questions were related to the number of green CSR projects conducted in 2011 and to other details about the objectives and resources involved in these campaigns. Out of the 44 companies contacted, 22 answered ISRA Center questionnaire in February-March 2012.

But since the respondents base was too narrow for a cumulated analysis of these answers, the decision was made to use them to compare companies' answers to population's perception, thus formulating comments for each company in the top, based on the answers in the questionnaire.

It is worth mentioning the absence of banks (except BCR) from this top, but also of the cars manufacturing companies, in contrast with the companies in the telco and oil industries. What the study has revealed is that 79% of the population is unaware of any green CSR project, and out of the 21% who know companies involved in green activities, 91% have superficial awareness and little information, being difficult for them to name or describe the campaigns they know about.

ALL SORTS OF CAMPAIGNS

Green campaigns generally have one major goal: to lead to a healthier, longer- lasting environment that we all benefit from. The main types of campaigns that the organizations included in ISRA Center research got involved in were related to recycling, ecologization, afforestation, green spaces cleaning, rivers cleaning, encouragement of environment protection behavior, encouragement of rational resources consumption and of renewable energy consumption and reduction of pollution.



Most companies are perceived by the research participants as being involved in campaigns related to waste recycling and collection. There are also specific cases of companies about which there is the perception that they get involved more in compensatory environment campaigns, given their activity. Such examples are the companies in the fuels industry, Petrom, Rompetrol and Mol, associated with ecologization campaigns to a great extent. Following the same algorithm, Dacia is associated with campaigns to lower pollution level. Coca-Cola, P&G and Romtelecom are also associated, to quite a great extent, with ecologization campaigns (afforestation, cleaning of green spaces, cleaning of rivers). Rompetrol has the highest level of association with education campaigns (encouragement of environment protection behavior). Danone is perceived as having good involvement in campaigns related to the decrease of pollution level and has the highest level of association with campaigns which encourage the rational consumption of resources.

The campaigns would remain unknown if there weren't any sources of information to make them public, so that those whom these campaigns address find out about them.

And we are not talking here about image or PR exercises, but only about information, so that the stakeholders know that the respective companies are social players in their communities and that they respect and help those communities.

This way, the TV remains the main source of information, but the internet potential of becoming an important source of information on green CSR shouldn't be ignored.

What is very important for companies is the way they organize their communication management for these campaigns as population's perception can be easily influenced by tertiary factors. This way, in Petrom case, although there is a dedicated website for "Tara lui Andrei/ Andrei's Country", none of the persons aware of Petrom's involvement in green CSR campaigns has mentioned the internet as source of information. Dacia, Romtelecom and Vodafone succeed in best conveying the information on their green campaigns by means of the internet. It is interesting to notice that in the case of McDonald's and P&G the population has mentioned the presence of the information on the products as one of the main sources of information on this topic (after the TV).

THE GREEN CHAMPIONS

The 15 companies that reached the top are companies that know how to use all the resources at their disposal so as to be real social players in the communities they are part of.

In the first part of top-making process, an aggregate index for the general evaluation of companies' involvement in green campaigns was created based on the following indicators: credibility, differentiation, clarity, relevance, efficiency. In the second stage, this index was weighted with the perception on the frequency of green campaigns initiation. The index resulted was correlated with the awareness of the implication in green campaigns, resulting thus a top which takes into account three main dimensions: evaluation of the way of involvement, involvement frequency and awareness of involvement (the extent to which the campaign has managed to make itself heard in the community) in green CSR campaigns.

The top 5 companies have obtained high performances in their green campaigns.
The top is definitely ruled by Petrom. Even if it has the same evaluation of the way of involvement in green CSR campaigns as other companies, it has a high awareness (the highest number of persons who know this company gets involved in green CSR campaigns), which propels it first in our top.
"Tara lui Andrei/ Andrei's Country" campaign has the most numerous spontaneous mentions when it comes to the general population giving examples of campaigns. 82% of those who know Petrom green campaigns have heard of them from TV and what is interesting to mention is that none of the people who are aware of the campaigns have not learnt about them from the internet. The majority (49%) know that Petrom has got involved more in ecologization campaigns.
Cosmote is ranked 2nd, with very good results for the perception on the frequency of involvement in green campaigns. Cosmote representatives state that in 2011 there were seven green campaigns that the company was involved in. Although the fields of involvement are diverse (recycling, encouragement of rational resources consumption, internal behavior environment protection, ecologization), Cosmote is most associated with recycling campaigns (51%). In numbers, green CSR projects endorsed by Cosmote in 2011 involved, according to the company, 1.200 employees, 3.000.000 coworkers & clients and 2.000 volunteers from outside the company.
3rd rank is occupied by another telco company: Vodafone, which stands out, in the general population's view, due to a very high level of involvement frequency, due to the clarity of the message conveyed and involvement efficiency (reaching objectives). In 2011, the company initiated 10 green campaigns, out of which 3 were internal (encouragement of environment protection among employees).
Last year, Vodafone got the most involved in campaigns like: waste cleaning and recycling (including electronic waste), reduction of paper consumption and effective use of resources. The efforts made for recycling campaigns have also had an impact on the population, 46% noticing that Vodafone conducts this type of campaigns. The campaigns involved all Vodafone employees and clients, and the budget allotted was 150.000 Euros. The main source of information about Vodafone green campaigns is still the TV, but the company also has a good level of presence on the internet in terms of source of information (23%).
4th rank is occupied by Carrefour, which has a very high level of message clarity and good results on involvement credibility. The company is particularly associated with campaigns of waste collection and recycling (53%) but also with ecologization campaigns to some extent (23%). As sources of information on Carrefour green campaigns, in addition to the TV, the population also mentioned newspapers and magazines in quite significant percentages (33%) and notifications written on packagings or sent to the client together with other materials (20%), the company being one of the few that inform on green campaigns by means of its products or services (together with McDonald's and Procter & Gamble).
Coca-Cola is ranked 5th, having the highest level of credibility (together with Mol) and good results when it comes to efficiency of their green campaigns. The population considers that there was a higher involvement of Coca-Cola in recycling (57%) or ecologization (50%) campaigns.
The campaigns initiated by the company are known from TV (77%) or from newspapers and magazines (13%). According to its representatives, the company gets

LIST OF COMPANIES INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH

Avon	HP	Orange	Rompetrol
BCR	IBM	Panasonic	Romtelecom
Bergenbier	Kraft Foods	PepsiCo	Samsung
Carrefour	L'Oréal	Petrom	Siemens România
Coca-Cola	Lukoil	Philip Morris	Starbucks
Cosmote	McDonald's	Philips	Tarom
Dacia	Mega Image	Procter & Gamble	Toyota
Danone	Mercedes-Benz	Raiffeisen	Unilever
Enel	Metro Group	Renault	URBB
GDF Suez România	Mol	Rewe România	Ursus Breweries
Heineken	Nestlé	Romaqua Group	Vodafone

involved in campaigns dedicated especially to rational resources consumption (especially related to the resources involved in the production process), selective waste collection and endorsement of local communities development. Many of the projects are ongoing and are resumed every year, based on the impact they have, an exact number of campaigns for 2011 being difficult to estimate.

Companies encounter problems also related to the way the funds allotted to the NGOs they work with are spent, transparency and achievement of the goals set. At external level, the relationship with the authorities could also raise difficulties as, in some cases, the process of obtaining the necessary information or documents takes time. At internal level, there are also barriers related to the human resources

CHALLENGES IN GREEN

The problems that companies encounter when they decide to organize green campaigns are related to external as well as internal factors. Among the external problems are the identification of reliable collaborators that are able to fulfill campaign's requests (such as companies authorized in the field of waste recycling) or the overcome of barriers related to the development of "good habits" (population's education).

involved, the time necessary for preparing and supervising the campaigns and the necessity to have continuous communication with the target audiences.
Another aspect brought to discussion is the lack of receptiveness of the population but also of many press representatives related to environment protection campaigns. In some cases, companies have noticed a low interest in these activities among their own employees as well.
Companies also mention a low diversity of environment- and ecology-related needs.

There are types of projects that are recurrent, such as afforestations or waste collection, but there are few other options to get involved in, some companies feeling the need for a more diversified range of requests from the communities and organizations involved in this field.
There are also opinions stating that good organization and the use of professional consultants could prevent problems or possible difficulties when green CSR campaigns are initiated, one of the methods being to resort to local NGOs which can provide feedback related to the identification and proposal of the best ways to approach the situations specific to each community. In addition, working with specialized PR and communication agencies eases the process of campaigns organization and promotion.
The conclusion is that in Romania there isn't always a correlation between companies' real performance in the green field and what people understand and perceive in relation to these activities. For example, Rompetrol and Avon have low involvement in green campaigns and yet they are among the top 10 companies. Moreover, the perception of involvement in green campaigns is general and diffuse, aspect revealed by the very few associations made with examples of actual campaigns.
Thus, we could conclude that there is need for an increasingly sustained and strong communication in this field so as to help overcome the bias created by the company's general awareness and to help establish a direct connection between the company and the campaign launched.