

New Trends in Corporate Social Responsibility Practice under the Background of Globalization

Wei Zhou

Wentworth College, university of York, York, UK

ABSTRACT

In the context of the deep integration of economic globalization and sustainable development, the practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has broken through the traditional public welfare category and become the core competitiveness of enterprise globalization. This article analyzes the five new trends of CSR under globalization based on international rule changes and corporate practices: the ESG system has shifted from voluntary initiatives to hard constraints, supply chain responsibility has extended to the entire chain, digital technology empowers responsibility management, local demand and global standards are coordinated and adapted, and cross-border entities jointly build a sustainable ecosystem. Research combines Lenovo Group's ESG system construction, BYD's supply chain carbon management, and State Grid's blockchain traceability to verify the positive correlation between CSR practices and long-term performance of enterprises. The results indicate that contemporary CSR has shifted from "passive compliance" to "active value creation", with standardization, intelligence, and collaboration becoming core features. This article provides a feasible responsibility path for global enterprises, helping them balance economic interests and social value to achieve high-quality development, while also providing practical references for the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the enterprise level. The data and cases are sourced from international organization reports, public documents of enterprises, and authoritative media to ensure authenticity and traceability.

KEYWORDS

Globalization; Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); ESG system; Supply Chain Responsibility; Digital Empowerment; Cross border Collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization breaks down the geographical boundaries of business operations, promotes the cross-border flow of goods, technology, and capital, but also brings global challenges such as climate change, ethical controversies in supply chains, and cultural differences. Traditional CSR practices mainly rely on charitable donations from a single region, lacking systematicity and sustainability, making it difficult to meet the diverse demands of the globalization era - investors pay attention to ESG rating risks, consumers tend to prefer "moral brands", and governments around the world legislate to strengthen corporate responsibility constraints. Such as the EU's "Green New Deal" and China's "Dual Carbon" goals, promoting CSR from being "optional" to "mandatory".

According to the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance (GSIA) 2024 report, the global ESG fund size will reach \$35.3 trillion in 2023, which intuitively reflects the market's emphasis on CSR; According to data from the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), as of 2024, over 15000 companies worldwide have joined UNGC, committing to adhering to ten principles including human rights, labor, and the environment. Among Chinese enterprises, Lenovo Group's global CSR layout

covers more than 180 countries. Hunan Construction Investment has innovated the "ecological community governance" model to protect sea turtles in the Mombasa highway project in Kenya, and the Georgia wind power project has reduced annual carbon dioxide emissions by 280000 tons, all reflecting the integration of CSR and globalization strategies [1].

This article is based on the above background, supported by real policies and enterprise cases, focusing on the research of five new trends in CSR practice. By analyzing the formation logic and path of trends such as ESG standardization and supply chain collaboration, the core laws of CSR under globalization are revealed, providing reference for enterprises to cope with changes in international rules, balance global standards and local demand, and contribute enterprise level solutions to promote the implementation of SDGs, ensuring the practicality and credibility of research.

2. STANDARDIZATION OF ESG SYSTEM: FROM SOFT INITIATIVES TO HARD CONSTRAINTS

In the context of globalization, the primary trend in CSR practice is for the ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) system to shift from voluntary initiatives to legally binding standardized requirements, becoming a "gateway" for companies to enter the global market. In the past, corporate ESG disclosure relied heavily on voluntary selection. For example, although the GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) standard was widely adopted, it lacked mandatory requirements, resulting in some companies' "selective disclosure" and insufficient data credibility [2]. Currently, major economies have incorporated ESG into mandatory constraints through legislation, promoting global standard coordination and addressing the issue of "standard fragmentation".

The EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) officially came into effect in January 2024, requiring large companies operating in the EU (including multinational subsidiaries) to disclose ESG information in accordance with ISSB (International Sustainability Standards Board) standards, covering more than 20 indicators such as carbon footprint, labor rights, and board diversity. Non compliant companies will face a fine of up to 5% of their turnover. After the implementation of CSRD, a multinational home appliance company will invest an additional 1.2 million yuan annually in 2023 to meet compliance requirements. After the new regulations are implemented, domestic reporting data can be directly used for EU disclosure, reducing cross-border compliance costs by about 60%.

China is also accelerating the process of ESG standardization. The "Guidelines for Corporate ESG Disclosure" (GB/T 41881-2023) released in December 2023 explicitly require constituent companies of the Shanghai and Shenzhen 300 Index to disclose ESG reports from 2024 onwards, which must include environmental performance (such as energy consumption per unit of output), social responsibility (such as employee training duration), and governance structure (such as the proportion of independent directors). Lenovo Group's 2023 ESG report complies with ISSB, GRI, and Chinese national standards, making it one of the first multinational companies to disclose through the "three in one" approach. Its overseas revenue accounted for 77% in the 2024 fiscal year, a significant increase from 65% in 2019, confirming the supportive role of standardized ESG practices in global layout.

In addition, international organizations are promoting standard coordination. In 2024, UNGC and ISSB reached a cooperation agreement to integrate the ten principles of UNGC into the ISSB guidelines, enabling global enterprises to carry out ESG practices based on a unified framework. This trend of "hard constraints+unified standards" not only enhances the transparency and comparability of CSR practices, but also makes ESG a "universal language" for global competition among enterprises, avoiding trade barriers caused by differences in standards.

3. EXTENSION OF SUPPLY CHAIN RESPONSIBILITY: FROM CORE ENTERPRISES TO FULL CHAIN COLLABORATION

In traditional CSR practices, companies tend to focus on fulfilling their operational responsibilities, while globalization drives supply chains towards "cross-border and complex" development, making ethical and environmental issues at the end of the supply chain (such as raw material extraction and OEM production) a risk point for companies. Currently, CSR practices have shifted from "individual corporate responsibility" to "collective supply chain responsibility", with core enterprises establishing standards and providing support to promote collaborative responsibility between upstream and downstream enterprises, forming a "full chain responsibility management system".

BYD's power battery supply chain responsibility practice is representative. As a global leader in new energy vehicles, BYD will elevate ESG to the strategic level of the group in 2023 and launch the "Supply Chain ESG Management Specification", requiring more than a thousand global battery raw material suppliers (including Chilean lithium mines and Congolese cobalt mines) to meet carbon emission standards and labor rights requirements. To help suppliers meet standards, BYD promotes low-carbon transformation of the supply chain through technological output and collaborates with third-party organizations such as SGS for regular audits. The compliance rate of core suppliers has increased by more than 25 percentage points compared to 2022. This "standard+support+review" model helps power batteries meet EU access requirements, and sales in the European market will increase by 216% year-on-year in 2024, higher than the industry average.

Wal Mart in the retail industry also promotes the coordination of supply chain responsibilities. In 2023, Wal Mart will update the Code of Conduct for Global Suppliers, requiring global suppliers to achieve "zero child labor" and "fire safety compliance" and disclose their product carbon footprint. At the same time, it will introduce a decentralized knowledge map to build an ESG digital platform and provide free carbon accounting tools and labor training courses. As of the first half of 2024, the platform has covered over 30000 suppliers, and the completion rate of carbon footprint disclosure has increased by more than 30% compared to the initial launch. The coordination of supply chain responsibilities effectively enhances consumer trust, and its sales in the first quarter of 2024 increased by 11% year-on-year, which is in line with the sustainable consumption market.

According to the 2023 report by the United Nations Global Compact, over 55% of multinational corporations worldwide have established supply chain responsibility management systems, with "core enterprise leadership+upstream and downstream collaboration" accounting for over 70%. This trend indicates that supply chain responsibility has become a "risk firewall" and "value growth point" for enterprise globalization layout. Only by achieving full chain responsibility coordination can we ensure supply chain stability and brand reputation, and avoid global market trust crises caused by end of chain problems [3].

4. DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT: FROM MANUAL MANAGEMENT TO INTELLIGENT RESPONSIBILITY PRACTICE

Under globalization, the complexity and coverage of CSR practices have increased, and traditional manual recording and paper reporting methods are unable to meet the real-time and precision requirements. Currently, digital technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain have become the "core tools" of CSR, driving responsibility management from "post event statistics" to "real-time monitoring and precise traceability", achieving intelligent upgrades, which is an important new trend in CSR [4].

The practice of blockchain green power management by State Grid Corporation of China is representative. As the world's largest power company, it needs to prove the clean energy property of electricity to overseas users in the "the Belt and Road" power project. Starting from 2023, a

blockchain based "energy chain" platform will be built to upload real-time data on wind power, photovoltaic power generation, carbon emissions, and other related data. As of 2024, the platform has connected over 12000 new energy power stations, increased the on chain volume of green power trading data by 300%, and generated revenue exceeding 500 million yuan. It also provides compliance support for the industry chain through international green power certification.

Alibaba's "Public Welfare Baby Digital Tracking System" embodies technological value. In the "Public Welfare Baby" project, merchants donate a portion of their funds for public welfare in each transaction. The traditional model is prone to trust issues due to the opaque flow of funds. The system, which will be launched in 2023, will make the donation flow and vouchers publicly available in real-time for consumers to check. According to the 2024 ESG report, the system attracted over 1.87 million merchants to participate, linked 470 million users, and donated a net of 290 million yuan, forming a transparent public welfare ecosystem.

An Internet enterprise cooperates with a public welfare organization in the "Green Shade Plan" to provide training support for primary and secondary schools in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan through the self-developed AI sports analysis system and "smart court", and also builds a "future sports fund" to link with user donations. 147 "digital sports instructors" were certified for the project, and the sports injury rate of students in the pilot school decreased by 43%. It was awarded the Best Case of CSR China Education List.

Behind this trend is the improvement of CSR efficiency and transparency through digitization. From energy traceability to public welfare tracking, technology not only solves the problem of global responsibility verification, but also promotes the transformation of CSR from "formalization" to "effectiveness", becoming the core support for enterprises to balance global operations and responsibilities.

5. LOCAL ADAPTATION: FROM GLOBAL STANDARDIZATION TO THE INTEGRATION OF "GLOBAL STANDARDS+LOCAL NEEDS"

Globalization is not a 'one size fits all' approach, as there are differences in cultural traditions, social needs, policies, and regulations among different countries. If companies only implement a unified CSR standard, it is easy to become 'out of place'. Currently, CSR practices have shifted from "global unified execution" to "deep integration of global standards and local needs". While complying with international rules, companies develop differentiated responsibility strategies for local issues in target markets, which is an important trend in CSR practices under globalization.

McDonald's' Green Restaurant+Local Supply Chain 'practice in China is representative. McDonald's global CSR strategy focuses on reducing packaging waste, but the Chinese market has a strong demand for localized supply chains. It practices a "global standard+local operation" model: in terms of environmental protection, it follows global plastic reduction rules and saves over 600 million plastic straws annually through the "straw free cup lid" design, which meets international environmental standards; At the supply chain level, we deeply connect with local demand. Currently, more than 90% of the ingredients in the Chinese market are purchased locally. In the past five years, we have invested over 12 billion yuan with joint suppliers to upgrade the "wheat chain" system. The smart industrial park built in Hubei has reduced carbon emissions by over 10000 tons annually through technologies such as rooftop photovoltaics, achieving both green transformation and driving local industrial upgrading. In addition, its "Hamburg University" has trained over 70000 students in eight years, which meets the needs of the Chinese job market and confirms the value of local adaptation.

The implementation of Starbucks' "Coffee Grower Support Program" in Yunnan further reflects this trend. Starbucks' global CSR standards require "ensuring the income and quality improvement of growers", while Yunnan coffee has faced the local problem of unstable quality. In 2012, Starbucks

established the first coffee grower support center in the Asia Pacific region in Pu'er, which not only adheres to global fair trade standards to ensure purchase prices, but also provides targeted technical training, resulting in an increase in Yunnan coffee qualification rate from 20% in 2012 to 80% today. Starting from 2024, Yunnan coffee beans have been included in every cup of Starbucks classic espresso in mainland China, and single origin coffee beans are sold to the global market, achieving "local upgrading to support global layout" [5].

This trend indicates that CSR practices under globalization need to balance "internationalization" and "localization". The deep cultivation of McDonald's supply chain and the empowerment of Starbucks' origin prove that only by embedding international rules into local demand can CSR truly take root and lay the foundation for the company's global brand building.

6. CROSS BORDER COLLABORATION: FROM ENTERPRISES WORKING ALONE TO MULTIPLE ENTITIES JOINTLY BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM

The CSR challenges under globalization, such as climate change and global poverty, are complex and systemic, and cannot be solved solely by individual enterprises. At present, CSR practices have shifted from "enterprises fighting alone" to "cross-border collaboration among multiple entities such as government, enterprises, NGOs, and communities", building a sustainable ecosystem through resource integration and complementary advantages, which is a key new trend.

The practice of the "the Belt and Road" Green Development International Alliance is of benchmarking significance. This alliance is jointly initiated by the National Development and Reform Commission of China and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), covering numerous multinational corporations, national government departments, and NGOs (such as WWF). The Alliance focuses on the environmental protection responsibility of the "the Belt and Road" project: the government signs the green investment agreement to clarify the standards; China State Construction Engineering Corporation collaborates with WWF to protect mangrove forests in Pakistan's highway project; WWF provides technical training; Community participation in supervision and employment. The number of green projects promoted in 2024 has significantly increased compared to 2022, with carbon emissions reduced by 40% compared to traditional projects, driving a large number of employment opportunities along the route [6].

The water conservation projects of Unilever and WWF demonstrate cross-border value. In the face of global water scarcity, the two sides will carry out global cooperation in 2023: WWF will provide monitoring technology and policy support to assess the water resource risks of Unilever's global factories; Unilever has invested over 100 million euros in "water recycling" projects in India, Brazil, and other places, and has partnered with communities to build sewage treatment facilities; Also guide consumers to save water. By 2024, Unilever's global factory water reuse rate will increase to over 80%, and the compliance rate of domestic water in cooperative communities in India will significantly improve.

The rural revitalization plans of Ping An China and the China Poverty Alleviation Foundation are equally typical. In 2023, the two sides jointly launched a plan: Ping An will invest hundreds of millions of yuan in "smart agriculture platform" technology, the poverty alleviation foundation will be responsible for implementation, the local government will provide policy support, and farmers will participate in production. After one year of implementation, multiple industrial bases will be built to increase farmers' income, and the smart platform will help farmers reduce production losses by 30%.

The World Economic Forum's 2024 Annual Report on Transforming Industrial Clusters points out that cross-border collaboration is the key to addressing complex CSR challenges. This trend indicates

that only by integrating diverse subject resources and capabilities can we build a sustainable and responsible ecosystem, achieving the effect of "1+1>2".

7. CONCLUSION

In the context of globalization, corporate social responsibility practices have shifted from traditional "public welfare subsidiary" to "strategic core", forming five distinct new trends: the ESG system has been upgraded from a soft initiative to a hard constraint, and standardization and compliance have become the "entry tickets" for corporate globalization; Supply chain responsibility breaks through the boundaries of core enterprises, and full chain collaborative management becomes the key to risk prevention and control; Digital technology empowers responsibility management, enhances efficiency and transparency; Deep integration of local adaptation and global standards to assist in the implementation of CSR; Cross border collaboration to build a diverse ecosystem and address systemic challenges.

These trends essentially shift the responsibility from "passive response" to "active value creation" - ESG standardization opens the door to the global market, supply chain collaboration stabilizes the industrial chain, digitalization reduces fulfillment costs, local adaptation enhances brand recognition, and cross-border collaboration expands influence. BYD's practice of establishing supplier ESG ratings and requiring SA8000 certification, as well as State Grid's promotion of green power management through digital technology, all confirm that compliance with CSR can achieve a win-win situation of "economic benefits and social value".

Global enterprises need to strengthen their "strategic CSR" thinking: integrate ESG into development strategies, establish a "full chain+digital" management system, balance global standards and local needs, and participate in cross-border collaboration. The government and international organizations should promote standard coordination to reduce trade barriers, and NGOs and communities should play a supervisory role.

The achievement of the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be achieved without the participation of businesses. The new trend of CSR promotes the allocation of resources towards "green, fair, and inclusive", and will be further upgraded in the future, becoming an important force in promoting global sustainable development and contributing corporate wisdom to solving global problems.

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