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Call For Papers SIDREA International Workshop (SIW)

Con il patrocinio



Non-Financial Information in Small and Medium Enterprises: Key Challenges and Future Perspectives

Università Politecnica delle Marche - Università Roma TRE

Ancona, School of Economics "G. Fuà", 13th June 2019

Non-Financial Information and Non-Financial Reporting, i.e. Non-Financial Disclosure (NFD), has been assuming a growing relevance within business strategies. This can be considered as a consequence of increasing awareness of the potential value within intangible assets (Dumay, 2016) and of the need to meet stakeholders' interests, which demand more and transparent information, in particular for social, environmental and governance issues (De Villiers & Maroun, 2018). In all, NFD can be seen as a way to move the focus of organizational disclosure from the value realization to the value creation issues.

In this context, several forms of NDF have been developed superseding the traditional financial reporting, unable to provide a complete image of the company and to catch its whole value (Simnett et al., 2009), and capturing the attention of a wide range of actors both internal and external to organizations (i.e. regulators, practitioners, managers etc.). While this emerging forms of reporting, such as Intellectual Capital Reporting, GRI Framework and the most recent <IR> Framework, seem to struggle for "supremacy" (de Villiers & Sharma, 2017) trying to find their way to legitimation, many unsolved criticalities remain calling for further research (de Villiers et al. 2017, Rinaldi et al. 2018). Under an internal perspective, key issues are mostly related to the ability of Accounting and Management Control Systems in gathering non-financial data,

performance measures and in identifying suitable KPIs and materiality threshold. Under an external perspective, key challenges are represented by the role of consultants, particularly in the assurance process, and the increasing users' distrust on nonfinancial disclosure for their decision-making process.

Some argue that most of the NFD frameworks reflect the own interest of large firms and, therefore, they have been developed considering their specific information production and consumption processes. Nevertheless, NFD appears to be particularly relevant also for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that play a vital role in the global economy, and they are widespread within the entrepreneurial and social context. More in-depth, on the one hand, SMEs can benefit from the adoption of non-financial information gaining easier access to financial resources, an improvement of competitive advantage and corporate reputation. Management can benefit from an adequate use of non-financial information for valuable planning and control processes and the internal decision-making processes. On the other hand, key issues concern how SMEs, with financial and human resource constraints, can effectively adopt Non-Financial reports for both internal and external purposes. In line with this, the European Legislator does not extend the adoption of Directive 2014/95/EU to the SMEs, which can comply with the Directive on a voluntary basis. Since *"a small business is not a little big business"* (Welsh and White, 1981), it could be difficult for SMEs in applying guidelines or directive designed for larger firms and in involving specialized accounting staff. Furthermore, SMEs own less formalized and sophisticated accounting tools that lead to barriers in collecting and to think up non-financial indicators. In summary, the adoption of NFD frameworks implies reflecting on their specificities and, in particular, on the actors (e.g. CEO, shareholders, CFO, consultants, etc.) involved in the implementation process, on the technical aspects (e.g. the choice of the disclosure framework, the way indicators are chosen and implemented, etc.) and on the effects (expected and actual) of this kind of disclosure.

The Workshop aims to address the opportunities, criticalities and the future perspectives in the emerging and consolidated forms of non-financial disclosure (e.g. Intangibles, Intellectual Capital, Sustainability and Integrated Reporting) and the connected critical issues such as the use of these reports, their audit, their practice, etc. We specifically call for papers that address these issues from SMEs' perspective and adoption.

The aim of the workshop is also to provide guidance and debate on research projects carried out by accounting and business economics researchers.

Participants of the SIW will have the opportunity to interact with foreign and Italian faculty members and to discuss with two of the most influential scholars on the themes addressed in the Workshop: **Prof. Léo-Paul Dana** and **Prof. Matti Skoog**. The two keynote speakers are two international experts on these issues, whose contribution for the development of these research streams is shown by the extensive quotations of their publications as well as by the role they play in prestigious international journal Boards. The aim of the participation of Prof. Skoog and Prof. Dana in this SIW is twofold. First, they will have two lectures, and they will act as discussants for the presented papers.

The Workshop will be held in English and it will include roundtable sessions aimed to foster a positive exchange of views. Participants will have the opportunity to interact with international delegates and local Italian faculty members.

Participants

Faculty members, post-doctoral researchers, and Ph.D. students are invited to submit their working papers and research proposals to be considered for presentation.

SIW organization

This SIW is organized by the Department of Management of Università Politecnica delle Marche and by the Dipartimento di Economia Aziendale of Roma Tre University.

Starting from 2014 the Departments mentioned above began to cooperate to organise SIW in the area of Intangibles, Intellectual Capital and, more recently, Integrated Reporting. The first SIW was held in Rome in 2014 on the following theme: “Critical issues in managing and disclosing Intellectual Capital, Social and Environmental Value”. The second was held in Ancona in 2015 on the following theme: “Managing and disclosing intellectual capital and other non-financial capitals: emerging issues”. The third was held in Rome in 2017 on the following theme: “Integrated Reporting and Non –Financial Information Assurance”. The fourth was held again in Rome on the theme “Qualitative research in intangibles, intellectual capital and integrated reporting: opportunities, criticalities and future perspectives” in synergy with the “17th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies”.

The 2019 workshop will take place in Ancona, at the School of Economics of the Università Politecnica delle Marche, P.le Martelli no. 8, on **June, 13th 2019**.

Scientific Committee

Prof. Maria Serena Chiucchi, Università Politecnica delle Marche

Prof. Paola Demartini, University of Roma TRE

Prof. Marco Giuliani, Università Politecnica delle Marche

Deadlines

Papers and research proposals must be written in English in order to be considered for presentation.

Please send your research proposal or working paper (pdf file) to Prof. Marco Giuliani (m.giuliani@univpm.it) no later than **May 24th, 2019**.

Acceptance will be communicated within **May 31st, 2019**.

Due to limited seating availability, registration is required, via e-mail m.giuliani@univpm.it no later than **June 7th, 2019**.

Details of the program will be available on the Sidrea Web site.

Workshop fees

SIW attendance is free of charge.