CSSC Project

Corporate Sustainability Strategies in Support of Culture - Mediation, monitoring, visibility, advocacy, and knowledge sharing to improve the contribution of the private sector in favor of artists and cultural and creative industries.

Activity report

By **Lilian Richieri Hanania** and **Anne-Thida Norodom**

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The CSSC Project

The CSSC Project, **"Corporate Sustainability Strategies in Support of Culture**," was selected in March 2023 by Université Paris Cité (UPCité) as part of the STRATEX funding from the French government's *Investissements d'Avenir* Program as a project with high potential for commercial value or impact. It was officially launched on June 12, 2023 at UPCité's Centre Maurice Hauriou (CMH) for Public Law research (URP 1515).

The CSSC Project is led by Lilian Richieri Hanania, attorney, mediator, researcher and lecturer at Université Paris Cité, and Anne-Thida Norodom, Professor of Public Law at Université Paris Cité and Deputy Director of the Centre Maurice Hauriou.

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Main findings at the origin of the project

- Culture, cultural diversity, and cultural actors are driving forces behind the transformation of our societies and boost the pursuit of sustainable development goals.

- Companies are major agents of change in our societies, and their sustainability strategies (or sustainable development strategies) increasingly focus on diversity objectives, combined with equity and inclusion (DEI).

- The notion of cultural diversity as it emerges from international law is not clear enough for companies nor for the public at large, which does not allow for strategic positioning to promote it.

- The COVID-19 crisis has accentuated the need to seek innovative and supplementary support, both financial and non-financial, for artists and the cultural and creative industries.

Objectives

The CSSC Project aims to encourage the inclusion of culture and cultural diversity in corporate sustainability strategies by:

- Questioning and listening to identify the interests of both the private and the cultural sectors using project mediation techniques with a sample of:
  - companies, particularly those subject to sustainability reporting obligations,
  - cultural sector representatives, and
  - local governments with a clear interest in sustainable development, culture, and cultural diversity.

- Developing a reporting grid for the private sector ("CSSC Questionnaire"), accompanied by a rating methodology and guidelines integrated into a data collection platform. Based on an impartial rating system, this platform will make it possible to:
  - Produce useful reports for companies, in order to monitor progress over time and add value to it,
  - Make cultural diversity initiatives visible and comparable within companies (e.g., efforts in the fields of non-discrimination, inclusion, intercultural management and communication) as well as outside these companies, within their communities and towards artists, cultural institutions, associations, local and national governments, or international organizations,
  - Encourage and support the commitment of companies wishing to participate in the CSSC platform, by providing them with:
    - a list of good and best practices,
    - a space for inter-company collaboration to tackle common challenges, and
    - a place where private sector companies can meet pre-selected cultural projects whose main objective is cultural diversity.

- Developing a toolkit demonstrating the importance of cultural diversity for sustainable development, which can be easily consulted and applied by companies. This Toolkit clarifies key concepts and aims to gradually

encourage companies to invest increasingly more in cultural diversity, together with the data collection platform and the reports they can draw on.

Legal foundations derived from public international law

Within the framework of the CSSC Project, three main themes and the way they are addressed by international law were identified as deserving greater awareness among companies: the notion of cultural diversity, the link between cultural diversity and sustainable development, and respect for cultural rights.

The notion of cultural diversity

One of the findings of the project was the need to clarify the notion of cultural diversity for private sector companies, in order to promote a more global and coherent consideration of this notion in their sustainable development strategies.

Although the link between cultural diversity and sustainable development is clearly recognized by States at the international level, these notions may still be considered entirely separate by the general public and also by those in charge of diversity and sustainability within companies. Diversity and sustainability are often dealt with by different teams, working separately, despite a formal organizational link in some cases.

The CSSC Project aims to make the advances of international law in the field of cultural diversity more widely known, as well as easy to understand and apply concretely by private sector companies. While these companies generally have a keen interest in issues relating to human rights, labor law and sustainable development, there seems to be little awareness of the cultural dimension of the latter and how it is dealt with in international law.

The CSSC Project therefore draws on existing definitions in international law, and in particular the notion of **cultural diversity** established in Article 4.1 of the [2005 UNESCO Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions](). Cultural diversity refers to "*the **manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression**.*" It is a dynamic and evolving concept, based on transmission between and within groups. "*Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through **diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment**, whatever the means and technologies used.*" This international convention affirms that "*cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of humanity*" and recalls that it "*forms a **common heritage of humanity**,*" which must be celebrated and preserved for the benefit of all (Preamble).

When dealing with inequalities as part of their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies, companies are called upon to commit to fairly applying their policies, procedures and practices and recognizing the different needs of their employees, including in relation to their differences and similarities of geographical group,[1] color,

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[1] We prefer to use the term "geographical group" rather than "race," even though the latter is considered acceptable in a number of countries.

nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion and beliefs. As ISO 30415:2021 points out, "*Fostering a diverse and inclusive organizational culture can enable individuals and teams to thrive and do their best in conditions that enable effective collaboration and participation. Building fairer, more inclusive, socially responsible organizations can help people, regardless of identity, background or circumstance, to access work and develop knowledge, skills and abilities critical to their personal development and well-being*" (p. vi).

However, the personal development and well-being of employees, as well as the resulting economic prosperity of companies, also fundamentally depend on the social context in which they operate. A commitment to cultural diversity within the company must go hand in hand with a social responsibility that is sensitive to the diversity of cultures and cultural expressions as they manifest themselves outside the company through artistic creation and the cultural and creative industries.

Cultural diversity and sustainable development

The importance of culture and cultural diversity for development, and in particular sustainable development, has been recognized by UNESCO for several decades.

The 1982 Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies already asserted that cultural identity must be expressed as a "*treasure that vitalizes mankind's possibilities of **self-fulfilment** by moving every people and every group to seek nurture in its past, to welcome contributions from outside that are compatible with its own characteristics, and so to continue the process of its own creation*" (§3). Since culture is about dialogue and exchange, cultural identity and cultural diversity are indissociable (§§4 and 5) and constitute fundamental elements to "*humanize development, the ultimate goal of which is the individual in his dignity as a human being and his responsibility to society*" (§11). Thus, "*[b]alanced development can only be ensured by making cultural factors an integral part of the strategies designed to achieve it*" (§16).

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted in November 2001, reiterates the role of cultural diversity as a "***key to sustainable human development***" (Article 11) and recalls that "*cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is **one of the roots of development**, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence*" (Article 3).

The 2005 UNESCO Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions recalls that cultural diversity is "*a **mainspring for sustainable development** for communities, peoples and nations*" and that it is "***indispensable for peace and security** at the local, national and international levels.*" (Preamble). The importance of the link between culture and development is also mentioned within its objectives (Article 1 (f)), as well as "*the complementarity of economic and cultural aspects of development*" (Article 2.5) and the principle that "***[t]he protection, promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity are an essential requirement for sustainable development** for the benefit of present and future generations*" (Article 2.6).

In 2015, when the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were established, the Declaration of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (pp. 3 et

seq.) affirmed the importance of non-discrimination and the aspiration to "**a world (...) of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity**" (§8) and the commitment "*to foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility*," recognizing that "*all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development*" (§36).

More recently, the document Culture for the 2030 Agenda, published by UNESCO in 2018, underlines "*the vast scope of culture's contribution to sustainable development*" (p. 1) and affirms that "*[n]o development is sustainable without considering culture*." The document identifies "5Ps" to which culture can contribute (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership) and gives some illustrations of such contribution: inclusion, participation, social cohesion, access to cultural life, artistic freedom, creativity and innovation, protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, resilience, transparency and balance in the exchange of cultural goods and services, enhancement of culture-based livelihoods, sense of identity and belonging, reconciliation, and reduction of inequalities (p. 7).

The 2019 Culture|2030 Indicators also recall that "*the experience of development projects and interventions has demonstrated the importance of local knowledge and community participation in order to achieve sustainable development - from health to education*" (p. 12). The document reiterates that "**[c]ulture contributes both as a sector of activity in itself and as an intrinsic component present in other sectors**. *While the safeguarding and promotion of culture represents an end in itself, it also contributes transversally to many of the SDGs — including those on sustainable cities, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, the environment, promoting gender equality, innovation and* **peaceful and inclusive societies**. *The role of culture can be addressed both as a* **driver that contributes directly to bringing about economic and social benefits**, *and also as an* **enabler that contributes to the effectiveness of development interventions**."

Although these various documents are often aimed primarily at States and their public policies, the concepts they define and the way they must be taken into account are equally applicable to all other strategies and initiatives aimed at sustainable development, whether they come from local governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations or private sector companies. They can only be effective if they are applied at the level of each of these actors. The expression of cultural diversity inside and outside the company should therefore be seen as a fundamental element of any sustainable development strategy and policy.

Respect for cultural rights

The same logic can be applied to human rights, an area in which corporate obligations are gradually being reinforced.[2] More specifically, cultural rights, and in particular the right to participate in cultural life, are often given little or very limited consideration (often in relation to indigenous peoples) in CSR/ESG or sustainability reporting by

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[2] While until now there have only been non-binding Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, a draft treaty on "Business and Human Rights" is currently under discussion, with the fourth updated draft published in July 2023. See the work of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

companies, despite the fact that several human rights legal instruments recognize the importance of cultural rights, and even that *"cultural diversity cannot be truly protected without the effective implementation of cultural rights"* (§4, Preamble, Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights, 1993).

For example, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone *"is entitled to realization (...) of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality."* (Article 22) and *"has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."* (Article 27.1).

The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes every person's right to freedom of expression, including the right to freedom of artistic expression (Article 19.2), and affirms that ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities *"shall not be denied the right (...) to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language"* (Article 27).

Finally, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights explicitly recognizes the right of everyone to take part in cultural life (Article 15.1). The scope of this right was clarified by General Comment No. 21 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of December 21, 2009, which states that *"while compliance with the Covenant is mainly the responsibility of States parties, all members of civil society - individuals, groups, communities, minorities, indigenous peoples, religious bodies, private organizations, **business** and civil society in general - **also have responsibilities in relation to the effective implementation of the right of everyone to take part in cultural life**"* (§73).

These responsibilities can take the form of respecting and actively promoting these cultural rights both within the company - human resources policies - and outside of it, by fostering an environment conducive to cultural expression, tolerance, and intercultural dialogue in all its diversity via the arts and cultural institutions. These two aspects - internal and external - are complementary and mutually enriching, and help to create economic prosperity for the company by encouraging open, collaborative working practices that respect differences, and consolidate the company's positive reputation among talent, customers and suppliers.

The role of the State

The study carried out as part of the CSSC Project showed that private companies, particularly those with an international presence, are increasingly recognizing the role of diversity and inclusion in the well-being, productivity, and creativity of their employees and, consequently, in the company's economic performance. While the cultural dimension of this diversity is still limited, some companies are taking an interest in it by increasingly looking at the geographical groups represented within their ranks.

On the other hand, this growing awareness of diversity and inclusion issues on the part of human resources teams is not necessarily accompanied by direct corporate action to support the cultural and creative sectors of the countries in which the company operates. In general, such action is still often dependent on existing legal frameworks,

which encourage or require the private sector to contribute to creation - for example, laws on sponsorship or, for companies in the audiovisual sector, the financing of independent works or works of national or regional origin in certain countries. Indeed, the representatives of the cultural sector who were consulted as part of this project feel that the State framework remains essential, despite the positive trend in the contribution of the private sector observed in some of the cases examined. The role of the State therefore remains fundamental, with private sector companies playing a complementary role in the enhancement and promotion of cultural diversity outside the company.

The CSSC Project's aim is in no way to relieve the State of its obligations in terms of guaranteeing cultural rights and cultural policy. On the contrary, the action of each actor (i.e., the State, local government, civil society, private enterprise, etc.) must be encouraged and well-articulated in the spirit of collaboration, mutual enrichment, and efficiency. The platform created as part of the CSSC Project aims not only to encourage the private sector to supplement, reinforce and make State action more effective, but also to provide States with up-to-date data on the efforts made by the private sector, enabling them to intervene more effectively, in a coherent and appropriate manner, and to identify opportunities for collaboration or partnership with certain companies. Of course, non-governmental organizations must also maintain their crucial role in influencing governments to strengthen public cultural policies and in raising awareness of the importance of cultural diversity.

What can companies do to promote cultural diversity?

Cultural diversity can be promoted by companies in a wide variety of manners. By way of illustration, and without being in any way exhaustive, a company can:

- In terms of internal diversity:

    o Implement policies and mechanisms to promote intercultural understanding,
    o Promote internal mechanisms for intercultural communication that foster respecting and valuing cultural differences,
    o Invest in teaching local or foreign languages within the company,

- In terms of external diversity:

    o Support the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and all cultural expressions conveyed through the arts,
    o Invest in teaching local or foreign languages in the community in which it operates,
    o Support the economic viability and vitality of cultural industries, artists and other cultural professionals,
    o Set up technical assistance and training programs to enable cultural professionals to better position themselves on the market, or to reduce the digital divide that makes it difficult to participate in cultural life online,

- o Promote entrepreneurship within the cultural sectors through capacity building, coaching in project management, management and business development,
- o Support cultural events and meetings of artists and other professionals in the cultural sectors,
- o Support non-governmental organizations promoting cultural integration, intercultural dialogue, and cultural minorities,
- o Establish dialogue processes with local cultural communities to limit any negative impact of its activities and produce more positive effects, enhancing the value of these communities,
- o Contribute to international funds supporting culture and cultural diversity, such as UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity,
- o Share what the company does best with artists, cultural institutions, cultural associations, etc.

The platform created as part of the CSSC Project will contain a more comprehensive list of examples of initiatives and best practices already identified and will also highlight concrete examples of good practices on its home page.

Methodology

In addition to documentary research, we employed tools commonly used in mediation in order to develop each of the CSSC Project components. These tools helped to prepare the questions used to identify current private sector initiatives contributing to cultural diversity, and to establish the rating grid to be deployed in the future CSSC platform.

Project Components

In order to achieve the main deliverables of the CSSC Project, i.e.:

- Development of a toolkit demonstrating the importance of cultural diversity for companies, which, together with the data collection platform and the production of monitoring reports, should gradually encourage them to invest increasingly more in cultural diversity,
- Creation of a rating methodology integrated to a data collection platform,
- Development of a questionnaire for the private sector, based on the rating methodology developed,
- Preparation of specifications for the creation of a platform prototype,

the following components have been developed:

1. Identification of elements to be promoted to companies to improve their understanding of the concept of cultural diversity.

In order to prepare **arguments** that clearly and succinctly set out goals for companies pursuing cultural diversity objectives (reflecting the concept of cultural diversity as it exists in international law) and demonstrate the link between cultural diversity and sustainability strategies, the project collected information on companies' understanding of the notion of cultural diversity from:

- Examples of sustainability or diversity and inclusion reports published and available online,
- Experiences of corporate foundations active in the field of culture, available online,
- Interviews with a sample of companies.

2. Development of criteria and a rating grid for cultural diversity initiatives

To develop **the criteria and rating grid** that will be used for the data collection platform, the project identified possible initiatives and actions on the part of companies and measured their impact on cultural diversity based on:

- International legal instruments on cultural diversity, in particular UNESCO declarations and conventions in the field of culture, as well as indicators developed within the framework of these instruments (*supra*),
- Sustainability or diversity and inclusion reports from private sector companies published and available online,
- Experiences of corporate foundations active in the field of culture, available online,
- Interviews with a sample of companies, representatives of the cultural sector and local authorities with a clear interest in sustainable development, culture, and cultural diversity (*infra*).

In order to take the differences between companies into account, as these could have an impact on the type and magnitude of their contribution to cultural diversity, the rating grid considers the company's size - number of employees, sales, balance sheet - and whether it belongs to a cultural sector (e.g., online audiovisual content distribution platforms) or another specific business sector.

3. Questionnaire design and guidelines

In order to develop a **questionnaire** for companies wishing to submit their data to the platform, the project produced **a reporting grid and guidelines** for its use (presentation of the rating methodology, clarification of key concepts and categories used), by setting out questions in a format inspired by international reporting standards and providing for "Yes" or "No" answers, with the option for companies to explain or detail each of their responses.

The aim of this questionnaire is both to enable as many diverse initiatives as possible to be valued separately and cumulatively, and to propose categories of initiatives that remain sufficiently broad to cover the varying and evolving efforts of companies. It is intended to be developed over time, as the platform is used and as more companies commit to cultural diversity.

During and after the development of the platform prototype, the rating methodology will be tested by our four pilot companies, chosen for their availability and interest in the project.

Tools

Interviews with companies, local authorities and representatives of the cultural sector were prepared using the "Appreciative Inquiry" method, a proven resource in project mediation, and the "Principled Negotiation" method, commonly used in mediation in general (conflict, preventive and project mediation).

Indeed, since the CSSC Project aims to encourage a greater contribution from the private sector to cultural diversity, while highlighting every effort and initiative in this direction, the Appreciative Inquiry approach seemed particularly appropriate. This approach is based on the premise that human systems, individuals, organizations, and communities grow and change in the direction of what they study.[3] It aims to focus on positive endeavors to encourage sustainable commitment, cooperation, and new partnerships. Questions have thus been prepared focusing less on problem analysis than on strengths, successes, values, ideals, and productive possibilities for the future, assuming that questioning is in itself a transformative process.

In turn, principled negotiation[4] is a negotiation technique commonly used in mediation to clarify the interests of the parties involved. It aims to identify what is truly important to each party[5] and follows four fundamental principles[6]:

- It is necessary to distinguish between people and problems, allowing problems to be dealt with collaboratively once conflicts between people/organizational representatives have been dealt with separately.
- What must be targeted is the interests, the real needs of the parties, their concerns, the reasons why they are asking for something and taking certain positions.
- It is necessary (and possible) to imagine mutually beneficial solutions, which can lead to highly creative results.
- The joint construction of solutions or operating mechanisms for the future is achieved through the application of objective criteria.

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[3] See, for example, Diana Whitney & Amanda Trosten-Bloom, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry*, 2010, Kindle.

[4] V. Roger Fischer, William Ury & Bruce Patton (ed.), *Getting to Yes - Negotiating and Agreement Without Giving In*, 1st edition 1981, London: Random House Business Books, 2012, and William Ury, *Getting Past No - Negotiating in Difficult Situations*, revised ed., New York: Bantam Books, 1993.

[5] "The difference between positions and interests is clearly seen in the well-known parable of two children arguing over an orange (Fischer, Ury, Patton, 2012, pp. 58-59). When they agree to cut up the orange so that each gets half, one of the children eats his half of the fruit and throws away the peel, while the other throws away the flesh of the fruit and uses the peel to make a cake. Obviously, this simple sharing solution was not the most intelligent or effective. Indeed, position-based solutions often blind conflicting parties from outcomes that could be better for all." V. Lilian Richieri Hanania, "La négociation raisonnée ("interest-based negotiation" or "principled negotiation")," *Revista Mediação & Justiça*, vol. 1, n. 2, Special Edition January/July 2021, pp. 49-65, (free translation) http://www.mediacaoejustica.com.br/revista/index.php/revista_01/issue/view/4.

[6] *Ibid*. pp. 53-59.

Identifying initiatives and rating

Two sets of questions were prepared to confirm (or refute) the adoption of **cultural diversity initiatives** by companies, and to identify initiatives and/or best practices that could be used to progressively improve the questions and, consequently, the reporting questionnaire used by the future platform ("CSSC Questionnaire").

These questions were designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data are more immediately measurable and comparable, making it possible to describe how culture is taken into account in practice, and to assess the performance of the companies under consideration in a more objective way, less likely to be impacted by potential biases in the future platform. Qualitative data enriches quantitative data by making it possible to deepen the understanding of the latter, contextualize them and continuously improve the methodology and the CSSC Questionnaire.

In fact, the aim of the CSSC Questionnaire is not only to get a picture of the extent to which companies are taking culture into account in their sustainable development strategies at any given time, but also to make the role that culture can play more visible and, consequently, to encourage companies to integrate culture more fully into their sustainable development strategies and internal policies simply by having to reflect on the questions. The data collected may also serve to better inform public policies and the action of certain international organizations such as UNESCO, which is very active in the reflection on, and data collection and analysis of, best practices in culture and sustainable development (for example, with its Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda, published in 2019).

The first series of questions sent to the companies interviewed aimed to (i) clarify the notion of cultural diversity as understood by companies; (ii) identify the elements to be highlighted and the best ways to present this concept to the private sector in order to encourage the inclusion of cultural diversity in their sustainable development strategies; (iii) understand the companies' sustainable development strategies; (iv) identify the strengths of the companies interviewed and reflect on their current or potential contribution to the cultural sectors; (v) identify goals for the companies pursuing cultural diversity objectives; (vi) identify as many inspiring types of initiative (in terms of their creativity or impact) as possible, which could then feed into the CSSC Questionnaire.

Some companies responded in writing, others during a meeting - face-to-face or by videoconference. The answers to this first series of questions enabled us to improve the draft argumentation on the importance of the private sector's contribution to culture (shared and tested with the pilot companies), and also to better detail the second series of questions, much more focused on the concrete identification of initiatives (with closed questions, "Yes" or "No" answers) and their rating.

This second series of questions, which ultimately constitutes the CSSC Questionnaire, has been integrated into an Excel document, making it possible to rate each response and set out the operating and rating principles for the future platform. It aims to (i) collect data on concrete private sector initiatives; (ii) assess their impact; and (iii) apply the rating grid.

For companies that had published extensively on their initiatives, the answers to both sets of questions were carried out, wholly or partially (i.e., combined with interviews), by members of the CSSC Project team on the basis of information contained in these companies' most recent activity reports, sustainability reports, diversity and inclusion reports, or their websites, in order to improve the rating grid and test its operation.

Subsequently, the private sector initiatives commonly identified were cross-referenced and compared with the best practices experienced and the needs expressed by the cultural sectors representatives interviewed, as well as those indicated by the local authorities interviewed. While the aim of the project and the future platform is to highlight and encourage all initiatives adopted, even when they may be considered small steps towards a greater contribution to cultural diversity, initiatives considered easily achievable by companies, because of their frequency and most corresponding to the needs expressed by the cultural sectors, were rated higher than the others.

Thus, the following initiatives were considered "high-impact initiatives" in favor of artists and cultural sectors due to the demand and interest for these practices on the part of the latter:

- Support actions:

    o Support, either financially or through the sharing of skills, products or services linked to the company's core activities (e.g., training in project, budget and team management),
    o Support (including financial support) for the work of cultural professionals who are under-represented in the market and not yet well known to the public, whether they are young or experienced artists,
    o Provision of spaces and facilities to increase the visibility of artistic work,
    o Promoting or facilitating access to culture for the widest possible audience,

- Promotion actions:

    o Promoting cultural diversity through awareness-raising initiatives on the role of art and artists in society, not only intended for employees (e.g., regular paid opportunities to organize exhibitions, workshops or training courses, mention of the artist's work in the company newsletter), but also for society in general, including young people and other companies (using the collaborative space on the CSSC platform can also be encouraged for this purpose),
    o Recognizing and promoting the value of local cultural communities through awareness-raising training for employees, and recruiting employees from these communities,

- Actions to strengthen links with artists:

  o Participating in meetings and workshops organized by the cultural and creative industries to better understand them and their needs,
  o Promoting spaces and events for exchanges, encounters, and solidarity between artists,
  o Creation, within the company, of a team dedicated to relations with artists and to the artistic projects they support,
  o Transparency in the publication of calls for projects and selection procedures for greater confidence on the part of cultural actors.

Naturally, the **rating grid** is intended to evolve over the years, as the platform develops and as the companies' concrete contribution to cultural diversity evolves and progresses. Any change in methodology will be clearly justified and explained to any company wishing to submit its data to the platform.

Obstacles, opportunities and solutions found

Some of the obstacles encountered during the project required modifying the approach and schedule initially planned. In addition to the difficulties associated with recruitment by UPCité, a major difficulty was identifying the relevant contacts within companies. Contacts via LinkedIn or contact forms on company websites were unsuccessful. Interviews with companies were only possible after members of the project team made personal contacts.

Another challenge was to maintain the connection with these companies once they had been contacted, since their contribution obviously depended not only on their interest in the project, but also on their availability. In addition to seeking out additional companies, the interviews were constantly adapted to the availability of the people we spoke to, sometimes focusing on areas that seemed to merit further investigation after studying the documents and information available online.

Finally, a survey of the cultural sector in French and English was created on Lime Survey, a tool required by UPCité. Users wishing to take part in the survey encountered many issues when dealing with this tool, and their responses are currently unusable. Interviews and meetings with representatives of the cultural sectors therefore had to be organized to obtain data enabling us to identify their interests and needs. The technical difficulties encountered in using Lime Survey made us lose time and weakened the contacts we had been able to establish with representatives of the cultural sector at the start of the project.

Among the opportunities that arose in the course of the project, the CSSC Project team was offered the chance to work with students from UPCité's Graduate School of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science. It is planned that a first platform prototype will be developed by License 3 students between January and May 2024, before being enhanced and complexified during transfer of the project to the market. This opportunity led us to bring some of our deadlines forward and, consequently, to devote more working time to the CSSC Project, so that specifications for the development of a prototype could be ready by November 2023.

Companies and cultural sectors studied

In order to develop the methodology for highlighting and rating initiatives via a web platform, the CSSC Project initially aimed to study a sample of 20 companies between mid-June and November 2023. In total, 22 companies were studied (in alphabetical order): BNP Paribas, C&A, Carrefour, COFACE, Danone, Dassault Aviation, Dassault Systèmes, Google, Heineken, Heinz, Iberdrola, L'Oréal, La Maison Dupuis, Lacoste, Lefebvre-Sarrut, Michelin, Natura, Nestlé, Nexans, Schlumberger, Warner Bros. Discovery and Yext. These companies were chosen for their diversity in terms of size, sector, structure of contribution to cultural diversity - existence or not of a corporate foundation and priority areas for said foundation when it existed - and ease of identification of a contact person from the network of CSSC Project team members.

Given that the CSSC Project has a global vocation and aims to identify and recognize the value of all forms of contribution to cultural diversity, priority was given to companies operating in multiple countries, due to (i) the obligation, for most of them, to publish non-financial or sustainability reports; (ii) the ease of access to their information (public reports and websites); (iii) the fact that the topic of cultural diversity is nowadays addressed more by large corporate groups than by smaller companies; and (iv) the diversity of realities these companies face in terms of culture.

Out of the 22 companies selected, 10 were interviewed after studying their online reports and information. Our contacts at these companies were based in France, the USA, the Netherlands, and Brazil. The remaining 12 companies were studied solely on the basis of their online reports and public information, as all attempts to contact them were unsuccessful due to difficulties in identifying the right contacts or lack of time/interest on their part.

Of the 10 companies interviewed, 4 chose to become **pilot companies** (**COFACE, Michelin, Yext, La Maison Dupuis**), as they wish to follow the project more closely until its transfer to the market. These companies devoted more time to answering questions, giving their opinion on the Toolkit, as well as on different versions of the CSSC Questionnaire, which will feed into the future platform. We are sincerely grateful to them.

In order to gather the views of the cultural sector, which is the direct or indirect beneficiary of private sector efforts in favor of culture and cultural diversity, interviews were conducted with 6 representatives of the cultural sector, starting with a robust representative of authors in France (audiovisual, music, publishing), an artist and designer with over 40 years' experience in Brazil, a renowned theater and television actress in Brazil, the institutional director of a private museum in São Paulo with extensive experience in the financing of culture by private companies, as well as an artist, professor and researcher in the performing arts who is very active in the organization and promotion of the dance sector in Brazil, and an independent audiovisual producer in Brazil, President of the Brazilian Center for Cultural Diversity. The aim was to confirm and complement the needs expressed by the cultural sector in countries from the South and from the North, so that the project's conclusions and the resulting platform would reflect a global perspective. At this stage of the project, we considered that the double geographical sample of France and Brazil is sufficient to confirm our working hypotheses. These may be tested on a larger sample in

subsequent phases of the project. The mediation between private sector initiatives and cultural sector needs is intended to continue, to allow for the progressive development of the CSSC Questionnaire and its rating grid.

Finally, a third-party perspective was also included through interviews with the cultural advisors of the cities of Saint-Cloud and Rouen in France, the mayor of the city of Araraquara in Brazil, and the heads of private sponsorship for the city of Buenos Aires in Argentina. The four cities were chosen for their manifest interest in promoting artists, culture, and cultural diversity. Several other cities were approached but did not respond to requests for contact.

Cultural diversity as understood by companies

The sustainability reports studied and interviews conducted suggest that companies tend to apprehend cultural diversity in two possible ways: on the one hand, diversity within the company, as represented by its employees (dealt with as part of "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" strategies), and on the other, the fostering of cultural diversity outside the company, in companies' relations with communities and the cultural and creative industries, considering the social impact of these companies (an aspect often linked to CSR/ESG).

The analysis of reports and responses received shows that many large companies are increasingly linking their CSR strategies to diversity, both inside and outside the company, which is encouraging in terms of inclusion of culture in sustainability strategies. However, this is not yet widespread. Moreover, where corporate foundations exist, this link may be less clear, and understanding the role of the arts, heritage and culture in promoting cultural diversity (i.e., outside the company) may seem less obvious to those responsible for diversity policies inside the company. Indeed, in such a case, corporate diversity may be dealt with by the Human Resources department independently of the work carried out by the foundation, with a possible opening towards arts and culture only occurring when artists are solicited to organize workshops, training courses or events within the company.

The comprehensive vision of the internal and external aspects of the private sector's contribution to cultural diversity proposed by the CSSC Project is thus an innovative and important factor for stronger collaboration between the people in charge of these two aspects within companies. Indeed, the link between diversity inside the company and diversity outside the company seems fundamental to promote a vision of the objectives of corporate contribution to culture and cultural diversity that is more comprehensive, strategic, favorable to cultural and creative industries, and likely to be more effective and efficient.

Cultural diversity within the company

The Diversity & Inclusion strategies examined as part of the CSSC Project seem to show a tendency for large companies to seek diversity around gender differences, sexual orientation, and disability. Cultural differences are often under-emphasized, and probably one of the most problematic aspects, not only in terms of the criteria a company chooses to consider when collecting employee data (e.g., racial or ethnic origin, language, religion, nationality), but also because of the particular circumstances of each country and the attention given to certain minorities or groups at a given time. The assessment of cultural diversity is therefore contextual and relative.

While some companies already take into account aspects of cultural diversity, such as religion (e.g., Google, which has installed "Wudumate sinks" for its employees in some of its Canadian locations - 2022 Diversity Annual Report, p. 50) or more general categories, sometimes linked to the notion of geographical group, such as "Asian," "Black/African," "Hispanic/Latinx," "Indigenous," "Middle Eastern or North African," and "White and European" (e.g., Google - 2022 Diversity Annual Report), the categories considered by each company are not uniform and may vary according to the country or region in which that company operates. So, while sustainability strategies are generally defined on a global level, diversity initiatives are tailored to local realities.

Indeed, the "culture" aspect within diversity recognition is variable, due, among other things, to differences between country regulations. In countries such as the United States[7] or Brazil, for example, it seems to be increasingly common for companies to take an interest in their employees' diversity in terms of geographical group, religion, or sexual orientation, with a view to promoting diversity and inclusion. In France, however, the prohibition to discriminate on the basis of these criteria within the company (Articles L1221-6 and L1132-1 of the Labor Code) discourages in practice any attempt to collect employee data in this sense, even on an anonymized basis.

During interviews conducted as part of the CSSC Project, companies in France reacted differently on this point. Most of them expressed an interest in finding creative ways of legally obtaining such data (e.g., a voluntary, anonymized survey, which would be enriched over the years as employees become more aware of the importance of the survey), while others (fewer in number) assumed that this type of initiative could only be envisaged in other countries. It remains to be seen whether the lack of data due to such reluctance in France could ultimately prevent a better knowledge and understanding of real diversity in the workplace, and thus block the development of virtuous initiatives that promote cultural diversity and reduce bias and discrimination, as increasingly deployed in various American countries.

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[7] A recent ruling by the US Supreme Court considering that it is unconstitutional to take into account the "race" of applicants when admitting them to universities could reinforce the country's existing opposition to any positive discrimination in favor of certain geographical groups within the company. This could further complexify Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs in the country.

The methodology developed as part of the CSSC Project aims to enable companies to exploit the data they already have when responding to the CSSC Questionnaire, while raising awareness of the scope of the notion of "cultural diversity" and encouraging them to enrich and refine the categories used to measure the diversity of their employees, although creative solutions have to be found in some countries for the legal collection of such data. Defining the categories to be considered that would be representative of employee's culture or cultural diversity has thus been a major challenge in defining a uniform and comparable methodology that can be applied to companies with a global presence.

Four categories have been chosen to represent the cultural diversity of a company's employees: national or ethnic origins, geographical group they feel part of, religion and mother tongue. Quantitative questions to measure and compare the current diversity status of companies' human resources based on these categories have been included in the CSSC Questionnaire. The aim of these questions is to identify not only the number of different cultural origins of employees, but also what they represent in terms of percentage of the company's human resources, to make it possible to follow the evolution of this representation over the years.

Mechanisms for recruiting and for promoting cultural diversity within companies (e.g., training to reduce bias in recruitment and promotion, intercultural management training, etc.) complement their efforts in favor of diversity, and were considered as part of the project both for the preparation of the CSSC Questionnaire, and for the Toolkit on cultural diversity in corporate sustainability strategies.

Cultural diversity outside the company

Impact on cultural diversity outside the company can come from support (patronage or sponsorship)[8] for the economic viability and vitality of cultural industries, artists, and other cultural professionals, including support for cultural events and meetings of artists and other cultural sector professionals, or for associations or non-governmental organizations working for cultural integration, intercultural dialogue, and cultural minorities. Companies can also build a positive dialogue with local cultural communities, contribute to international funds in favor of culture and cultural diversity, and in general share what the company knows best (e.g., the goods or services it provides, the skills it has developed) with artists, cultural institutions, associations, and so on.

This aspect of their contribution to cultural diversity is sometimes addressed through the actions of corporate foundations, often legally independent of the company itself. Within the framework of the CSSC Project, we have chosen to consider that the actions of these foundations should be considered when highlighting and measuring the contribution of companies to cultural diversity. As the aim of the project is to recognize the value of all types of contribution, the fact that responsibility for certain

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[8] According to French law, in a sponsorship, a company provides financial support for an event, a person, a product or an organization, for advertising purposes. In the case of patronage, the company donates to an organization of general interest, without expecting equivalent consideration. (French Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty (2023), Quelle est la différence entre parrainage et mécénat?).

types of contribution is borne by legal entities distinct from the company should not be a reason to exclude these contributions when measuring its efforts.

Finally, some companies are also concerned about the diversity of their suppliers or business partners, which extends and projects the companies' internal diversity and inclusion strategies onto these suppliers and partners.

Rankings and other features to be developed

The platform's main feature, to be built over the coming months, is the **CSSC Questionnaire**, which incorporates the rating grid developed as part of the CSSC Project. This questionnaire enables companies wishing to submit their data to be rated and ranked according to their performance.

Each company wishing to submit its data to the platform will have a specific account or "**company profile**" enabling it to access a personal space in which it can enter its data each year by answering the questionnaire, generate reports according to the filters available, provide contact details if it wishes to be contacted by other companies or municipalities, and publish calls for projects.

"**Municipality profiles**" will also be created, in which municipalities can publish information on **high-impact projects** they select and for which they would like support from companies sensitive to cultural diversity concerns (e.g., financial sponsorship, capacity building, provision of space or resources, etc.). Indeed, interviews conducted with local authorities and representatives of the cultural sector revealed a strong need for stronger **links between cultural projects and companies** wishing to make a greater commitment to local cultural life. While the data collected by the platform already appears to be of interest to municipalities, facilitating their relationship with private companies could be crucial to the greater social and cultural impact of these companies' initiatives, especially for municipalities without dedicated staff to seek financial or non-financial collaborations with the private sector. An exchange space on the platform will be a useful additional feature to this end, enabling local governance bodies to publicize projects in need of support, selected according to precise criteria (and in particular the promotion of cultural diversity) for companies to consult. Companies may also opt to be contacted when they are looking for projects to support.

Where intermediation may not be achieved by a municipality, it will also be possible for the CSSC Project team to receive and **select projects** submitted directly by professionals in the cultural sector, based on indicated criteria. This pre-selection is intended to give the professionals involved greater credibility with companies and encourage support for cultural projects by artists who are not so well known to the public. Face-to-face or virtual meetings (i) to increase networking between companies wishing to collaborate on common challenges, and (ii) between companies and cultural sectors, were also identified as good practices for the project, associated with the use of the platform and allowing it to be promoted to new companies, local governments, and artists, and to keep it active.

Once projects have found support via the platform, they will feature in a list (with filtering options) indicating the artist and supporting company, with the possibility for

the CSSC team to add any positive feedback received from the artist and the company on each project, allowing them to be recognized on the platform. As the platform becomes more complex, feedback requests will be sent automatically and the company and artist will be able to rate each other at the end of a project, with a minimum of 3 stars out of 5 (if 1 or 2 stars, the *feedback is* simply not made visible).

The platform's **homepage** will provide information on the CSSC Project, the rating methodology and the platform's various functionalities. It will also showcase examples of **best practices**,[9] as well as **short quotes or videos from companies identified as top performers** according to the CSSC rating grid.

The **ranking** of companies wishing to submit their data to the platform, and their ability to measure their **progress over time**, was seen as important by most companies consulted. Only two companies expressed reservations about any new rankings, because of the work involved for the teams responsible for answering the CSSC Questionnaire. Indeed, these rankings, although new in the field of cultural diversity, would be added to existing ones for climate change, labor rights, gender equality, etc., which already require a great deal of effort to gather information internally.

The ability to compare with other companies of the same size (categories used by the French INSEE)[10] and/or of a given sector according to specific action themes (e.g. diversity inside or outside the company) seems an essential platform feature. The mid-June to December 2023 project phase focused on relatively simple Excel-based rankings, in line with the instructions received from UPCité's *UFR de Mathématiques et d'Informatique* (Mathematics and Computer Science Department) for the development of the platform prototype by students in artificial intelligence. More complex rankings will be developed during the transfer of the UPCité prototype to the market.

Later on, each company will be able to see its evolution over time (response to the CSSC questionnaire submitted annually) in each of the rating and ranking categories. In addition, the CSSC Project team will be able to obtain data processed by the platform and examine, for certain categories or initiatives identified, the overall trends of the companies that submitted their information (e.g., such a percentage of participating companies has a person dedicated to relations with the cultural sector; such a percentage invests in such a sector or in such a priority). The aim is to produce regular reports that can be used by interested companies, governments, and organizations.

Furthermore, since some of the companies studied are high performers in the field of diversity, equity and inclusion, but their external impact on the societies in which they operate, is less measured or not strategically addressed, in order not to devalue their efforts, different rankings were adopted, allowing companies to be better ranked in the

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[9] These best practices should, wherever possible, be accompanied by information on the context in which they have been implemented, the involvement of the private sector and, where applicable, of the State, and the benefits derived by cultural and creative industries and society (local communities or social groups).
[10] These categories will be explained and detailed on the platform so that they can be understood by companies submitting their data from countries other than France. They are intended to enable objective and fair comparison and rating.

areas in which they perform best (and although their overall ranking may be lower when the full potential of their contribution to culture is taken into account). Because of their direct link with culture outside the company, companies in the cultural sector are ranked separately in the "external diversity" category.

An additional action theme that was selected for a separate ranking due to the interest shown by some of the companies interviewed was that of the cultural diversity of employees recruited according to nationality, cultural background, religion, and geographical group, based on the availability of data in each country of operation. Indeed, some companies expressed an interest in having access to a database that would enable them to compare the diversity of their human resources with those of other companies of the same size and sector in specific countries, in order to measure their performance. When the project is transferred to the market, the platform's functionalities will be enhanced, so that access to the platform via each company's account will enable the submission of country-specific data on national origin and geographical groups of employees.

Another request, put forward by one of the companies interviewed and strongly supported by others, is to create a **space for discussion and/or collaboration between companies** to exchange best practices and tackle common challenges. In this collaborative space, there will also be an **inventory of the types of initiatives** encountered and listed by the platform, with a focus on **best practices** identified according to the needs expressed by the cultural sectors. The aim of this inventory is to encourage companies to adopt new initiatives that they consider simple to implement, with an impact on the platform's next ranking. Organizing regular gatherings on specific topics for companies of the same size from a given sector may also interest many companies wishing for greater collaboration. This suggestion will be taken into account by the future start-up that will host the platform.

Furthermore, some of the companies interviewed would be open not only to a ranking, but also to a **label**, **trophy** or **prize for "diverse" or "inclusive" enterprise**, awarded by a partner institution or by the CSSC team.

Finally, once the necessary funding and technology partner have been established, the platform will also offer the option of self-collecting certain information from company websites and published reports ("web scraping" for data extraction) and rating them based on the methodology developed. This option, supported by at least one company interviewed, will require additional work to reduce the risk of misinterpretation and to rate fairly, on the one hand, companies responding to the CSSC Questionnaire and, on the other, those whose data will be collected automatically by the platform itself. The use of artificial intelligence to collect information might solely be used to pre-fill the questionnaire, which would then be completed and fine-tuned by each participating company.