Abstract

Social enterprises have always stressed economic and social sustainability, whereas business and environmental aspects have lagged behind. Yet, the special form of ecologically oriented work-integration social enterprises (ECO-WISE) adds to socio-economic and ecological sustainability; they integrate people furthest from the labour market by providing them with green jobs that require labour rather than know-how. ECO-WISE report specifically to the authorities they get funding from. As public funding has become highly competitive, ECO-WISE could need support in implementing sustainability performance reporting to address other entities than their typical stakeholders. At the University of Graz, a transdisciplinary research project involving eight ECO-WISE acting in the reuse sector in the Austrian province of Styria investigates ways to adapt sustainability tools to help ECO-WISE with reporting on their sustainability performance in a stakeholder-oriented way. This article presents criteria and specifications for a sustainability-reporting instrument customised to the needs of ECO-WISE. We then devise a sustainability-reporting instrument for ECO-WISE. Starting from the Global Reporting Initiative-quasi-standard, we draw on quality instruments stressing social aspects of social enterprises (e.g. the official Austrian “Quality Label for Social Enterprises”). Particularly, we turn to the expertise of our partnering ECO-WISE concerning the social sustainability aspects of their work.