



## **MULTI-STAKEHOLDERS AGREEMENT ON NATIONAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN POLAND 2008**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Multi-Stakeholders Agreement on National Corporate Social Responsibility Agenda was developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Poland in the framework of the project: "Accelerating CSR Practices in the New EU Member States and Candidate Countries as a Vehicle for Harmonization, Competitiveness and Social Cohesion in the EU", financed by the European Commission and UNDP. More information about the project can be found at: <http://www.acceleratingcsr.eu>

The Multi-Stakeholders Agreement on National Corporate Social Responsibility Agenda is the results of consultations with 6 main groups of CSR stakeholders: business, non-governmental organizations, labour unions, government, academia and media. During moderated meetings, all groups were asked to share information on current problems regarding CSR development in the country and also recommendations for accelerating CSR in Poland. All issues and recommendations were collected and analysed. The results of the consultation process with CSR stakeholders were presented to the Government of Poland during the meeting which took place on March 7, 2008 in the Ministry of Economy.

### **MAIN ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **A. Main issues raised by the representatives of business**

1. The business sector in Poland, mainly because of its structure (mostly small and medium enterprises), does not have a strategic approach to the subject of CSR. However, it recognises more and more reasons, particularly concerning employment and development of human resources, which lead to more responsible relations with employees and responsibility among employers.
2. The primary motivation for CSR among business representatives concerns the sense of morality and decency. This is a primarily noticeable characteristic for representatives of small and medium companies that take up CSR initiatives in spite of the lack of funds and complicated law regulations.
3. It is necessary to increase the level of knowledge of CSR among business representatives, especially concerning practical measures for managing CSR and best CSR practices. Such knowledge should be formulated in business language, practical situations and should be applicable to Polish conditions.
4. CSR should not become exclusively a question of public administration regulations. CSR should remain a voluntary activity within companies. In particular, one does not need to include CSR criteria in competitive tendering systems and the employment policies. However, it is desirable for the public administration to perceive the companies' efforts concerning social responsibility.



5. The scale of cooperation between the business sector and academic institutions is insufficient. The inefficiency of academic administration structures and low level of flexibility are important barriers. The necessity for better cooperation will be indispensable during economic growth and the increase of the innovative businesses in Poland.
6. There is a need to coordinate all activities and measures aimed at CSR development in Poland. Management staff recognises the importance of the dissemination of CSR best practices among their business partners and suppliers. The business sector also wishes to develop cooperation with non-governmental and social partners.

## **Conclusions**

1. There is a need to develop tools enabling the assessment of the level of social responsibility of companies and to uniform standards concerning the assessment of CSR. In the context of CSR, implementation of management staff training is an essential matter.
2. A platform aimed at encouraging companies to undertake socially responsible activities would be needed.
3. The government ought to appoint the unit responsible for the issue of CSR in Poland. A public institution actively working for the idea of sustainable growth is desirable.
4. It is necessary to develop better communication tools between business and media. The media in Poland are suspicious towards the business sector, therefore it is necessary to establish better means of communication within the business media.
5. The business sector expects non-governmental organisations to be more professional since it is a key factor guaranteeing an efficient collaboration. One should support the development of professional NGO sector.
6. Companies in Poland are against the “nationalisation” of CSR and against imposing new obligations on the business sector.

## **B. Main issues raised by the non-governmental organizations**

1. Non-governmental organisations in Poland do not solely expect financial support from the business sector. The key issue is to create relations based on the idea of partnership for the benefit of solving key social problems. However, the business sector, especially small companies, are not ready for such a partnership yet. On the one hand, the business sector lacks knowledge and trust and on the other, the NGO sector lacks professionalism.
2. Although the NGO sector is internally diversified, many organisations understand the importance of the cooperation with the business sector and are capable of building relations based on partnership with companies. Non-governmental organisations act in a competitive market, although efficiency of their projects does not always guarantee a success in this market. Greater transparency is desirable in a range of financial and social expenditures and effects.
3. Some corporate foundations can be perceived as a threat to the fair competition among non-governmental organisations, as they benefit from a great deal of privileges and aim mainly at promoting the corporations’ image.
4. A more active role within the public administration is sought in the field of straightening up laws and legal regulations. For example: there are problems concerning volunteers’ insurance and methods of financial sponsorship for non-governmental organizations. The promotion of the idea of CSR and support from the administration process in promoting responsible activity of social enterprises are also key tasks for the government.
5. Another significant matter is the development of non-governmental organisations which deal with the conformity of the companies’ on a daily basis through monitoring their declarations regarding a range of socially responsible activities. Unfortunately funds for such initiatives are difficult to raise.



## **Conclusions**

1. It is necessary to take up a dialogue between organisations active in the field of CSR, exchange information and cooperate. It would be advisable to form an official/unofficial umbrella organisation/forum of non-governmental organisations in the context of cooperation with the business sector.
2. In the context of promoting CSR in Poland, it is advisable to support local organisations, which take action outside of large cities. Creating local platforms for cooperation between local governments and the business sector is desirable. One should disseminate knowledge on CSR to local authorities.
3. The professionalization of the non-governmental sector is desirable. Greater transparency is wanted in sponsoring social actions.
4. It is necessary to combat negative stereotypes on non-governmental organisations. It is advisable to build trust-based relations between sector of NGOs and business.
5. There is a lack of watchdog organisations in Poland. In order to develop CSR it is necessary to form such institutions and create a framework and mechanisms for their activity.
6. The activity of some corporate foundations does alarm traditional non-governmental organisations. More transparency and less PR is desirable.
7. It is advisable for the government to appoint a unit in the public administration responsible for the development of CSR.
8. The public administration should allocate more funds for the non-governmental organisations promoting CSR in Poland.
9. One should modify law and regulations concerning CSR, for instance compulsory insurance of volunteers and taxation of food donations. A new formula for the public benefit organisations ought to be worked out.

## **C. Main issues raised by the representatives of the media**

1. The representatives of media are interested in diligent and reliable information about CSR best practices. However, the means of formulating CSR-related information are dependent on the specific groups of recipients. The expectations of general public differ in comparison to expectations of business-press readers.
2. The representatives of media look for transparent information from a reliable source. Information concerning CSR practices should not originate in PR departments, but in project departments directly responsible for the implementation of CSR initiatives.
3. Information received by the journalists is often deprived of the comprehensive perspective and solely aim at creating a positive image of the company. Cooperation is an essential element in order to rectify these types of situations.
4. The media may play a reactive as well as a proactive role in the process of promoting CSR in Poland. In the first case, journalists may describe the actual activities of companies and in the second case, they may stimulate and promote CSR practices. In order to carry out the latter case, it is advisable to cooperate with different groups of stakeholders. Non-governmental organisations and academic institutions must play a more active role in providing the media with information on CSR, existing initiatives, scientific research and comparative studies from other countries. Also, the role of information brokers might be essential.
5. Declarations concerning CSR submitted by the companies may not be of interest to journalists, unless they are linked to tangible initiatives and clearly point out benefits for stakeholders and the company itself. It is important to indicate initiatives contributing to wider partnerships.
6. The representatives of the business sector need to develop more innovative means of communication with society. The negative image of business in the Polish society does not come from the fact that journalists are interested exclusively in describing bad practices, but most of all, from the lack of interesting examples of positive activities.



## **Conclusions**

1. Journalists describing CSR initiatives are interested in an enhanced analysis of the circumstances, motives and results of CSR practices instead of idle declarations. Companies often provide unreliable information.
2. Information provided by PR departments is often too general. Companies are often opposed to providing information concerning budgeting, promotion expenditures, business benefits of the project and both negative and positive experiences.
3. The lack of mutual trust is a serious obstacle in the media-business relation in Poland. Trust must be built through closer cooperation.
4. An independent organisation is desirable - a reliable information broker.
5. It is advisable for the PR departments to take into account the transference of information and internal diversity in the media sector. The approved transferred information should be adjusted to the specific recipient group.
6. It is necessary to bring to the attention of editors-in-chief the question and challenges in relation to CSR and the role of business in the society.

## **D. Main issues raised by the representatives of the labour unions**

1. The perception of labour unions in Poland is currently based on negative stereotypes while there are numerous examples of reliable cooperation between the employers and employees initiated by the unions. This negative stereotype is presented in public education programmes, which hardly ever contain the question of labour rights.
2. A serious issue determining the development of CSR in Poland is using social responsibility as a marketing tool while maintaining irresponsible relations with employees and violating human and labour rights.
3. It is necessary to establish institutions in Poland responsible for monitoring the business sector in the context of companies' declarations concerning CSR. The assessment of investors participating in the privatization processes appears to be particularly important.
4. The representatives of labour unions are interested in expanding the employees' knowledge on CSR matters through training seminars and other forms of education. At the same time, they expect wider access to business indicators and documents concerning long-term strategies of the company.
5. Labour unions consider including specific elements of the CSR concept in national strategic documents (for instance the National Programme of Reforms) as an essential component. Further discussions on CSR should take place in the forum of the Trilateral Commission.

## **Conclusions**

1. Including CSR elements in the National Strategy of Development ought to be a considerable contribution to the development of the CSR concept in Poland.
2. The Trilateral Commission is an appropriate forum to discuss matters concerning CSR.
3. One must not promote anti-union companies. It is necessary to publicly condemn companies infringing workers' rights.
4. Ethical screening of potential and foreign investors is desirable.
5. Regulations concerning competitive tendering and taking into account investment consequences for the local labour market should be reintroduced.
6. It is necessary to start discussion on CSR with companies providing outsourcing services to socially responsible corporations.
7. One should support the labour unions in the process of educating the employees about CSR.
8. Academic institutions' education programmes hardly ever contain the social dimension of economy. Inviting labour unions' representatives to lectures with students could be an interesting solution.
9. It would be desirable to broaden the range of issues taught on "Entrepreneurship" course in high schools by adding to the education programme elements concerning social dialogue and business ethics.



## **E. Main issues raised by the representatives of the academia**

1. Due to the lack of highly qualified research staff and obsolete programmes of study, the effectiveness of teaching CSR at universities is poor.
2. Education programmes concerning management ought to take into account contemporary challenges in the field of CSR. As a part of other fields of science (sociology, psychology, law, philosophy etc.), it is also necessary to put emphasis on consequences of social transformations in the context of globalization.
3. While educating about CSR one should avoid both instrumentalism and moralization. The education process is also about shaping attitudes. More to the point, students being future managers are also future consumers, employees, entrepreneurs, social activists and civil servants.
4. The world of education is a world of business as well. Universities in their approach towards students and staff should go by the rules of social responsibility. In addition, a long term development strategy, as well as setting a good example for students is an important issue.
5. It is necessary to work together with various stakeholders responsible for CSR-promotion. It is also necessary to pay greater attention to students' or young scientific workers' initiatives and also to take the national context into consideration. There is also a need to popularize the CSR-related knowledge among all scientific workers.

## **Conclusion**

1. "Business ethics" as a separate course should be essential part of teaching programmes for first degree students. Therefore, this matter should be presented to the National Board of Accreditation.
2. A specialisation module should be created for Master's degree studies. It should analyse the concept of CSR from all possible angles. Elements of CSR should also be a solid part of other subjects related to management and social sciences as well.
3. The principles of social responsibility should be a crucial element in the mission and strategy of a higher education schools.
4. Internal seminars for university staff should be used to present CSR issues in order to avoid disrespectful attitudes towards this topic during other lectures.
5. In order to develop a set of rules for popularizing CSR, there is a need to arrange a meeting with decision-making bodies (KRASP) in order to elaborate the principle of promoting the idea of social liability to business in colleges.
6. It is necessary to compile and begin the formation of a handbook for Polish students that would present all the important aspects of CSR in a coherent and reliable manner.
7. It is necessary to popularize the Polish term "socially responsible business" in place of the English acronym CSR.
8. It is necessary to enter into cooperation with the Ministry of Education to analyze a possibility of including the elements of ethics and business responsibility into the subjects "Entrepreneurship" and "Ethics".
9. It is necessary to consider the role of business in society as an important scientific field, requiring public and private sources of financing.

## **F. Main issues raised by the representatives of public administration**

1. Government administration is highly interested in undertaking coordinated actions in order to support the development of CSR. However, there is still no conclusive agreement on how this coordination should look like and on which level it should take place. Currently an informal, cross-departmental team for CSR performs the job.
2. It is necessary to define what Corporate Social Responsibility is, while taking environmental, ethical, social and consumer-oriented dimensions into account. It is particularly important when CSR-oriented initiatives are promoted among small and medium business representatives.



3. It is important to create a centre capable of acquiring, processing and exposing information about diverse initiatives aimed at developing CSR in Poland, in favour of all groups of stakeholders. Currently this kind of knowledge is incomplete, which makes it difficult to coordinate actions, also those taken by the public administration.
4. Currently, separate policies and strategies prepared and carried out cover many CSR issues (i.e. counteracting against unfair market practices regulation or renewed sustainable development strategy). There are many possibilities of promoting responsible business through new legal measures, through which administration can act as a catalyst for change.
5. Public administration representatives expect higher activity from all groups of stakeholders, so the creation of favourable social conditions led by public administration throughout diverse enterprises could actually lead to supporting the development of responsible companies.
6. Public administration representatives recognise the need for further improvement in their own knowledge about CSR and also in the local administration. The possibility of transferring such knowledge from other EU countries is important, but the process should be prepared carefully, since some solutions might not suit Polish conditions.

### **Conclusion**

1. It is necessary to form a group responsible for the development and coordination of CSR.
2. It is crucial to start the process of gathering information on various CSR-oriented initiatives in Poland.
3. It is necessary to develop CSR-promoting programmes among Polish SME, with a distinct definition of this concept in Polish context.
4. It is necessary to pick the best experiences and examples from EU countries concerning cooperation of all stakeholders groups for promotion of CSR principles.
5. There is a need to prepare a training programme on CSR for administration representatives of all levels
6. Cooperation is needed in managing Strategy for Sustainable Development, Programme on Sustainable Patterns of Production and Consumption, Regulation Reform Programme etc.



## THE LIST OF PRIORITIES FOR ACCELERATING CSR IN POLAND

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Measures of implementation</b>	<b>Units responsible</b>
1	Education, trainings, exchange of experiences	Training materials, forum on exchanging experiences, sharing good practices	Business sector
2	Business cooperation with other parties	Institutional cooperation, transfer of know-how, good practices, the analysis of legal provisions	Business sector
3	Transparency and accountability in implementation CSR activities	Indicators of social and economic efficiency; developing the standards on reporting, preparation and evaluation of projects	Non-government organizations
4	Cooperation between non-government organizations	Building coalitions, regional cooperation, conferences	Non-government organizations
5	Cooperation with central, regional and local administration in the area of corporate social responsibility	Cross-sector partnerships, monitoring, diversified sources of funding	Non-government organizations
6	Focus on reasons and outcomes of initiatives undertaken by businesses in the framework of CSR	Search for reliable and complete information, cooperation with social partners	Media
7	Engaging Editors-in-Chief and Managing Editors in the subject of CSR	Education of supervisors, cooperation with information brokers, good practices from global market	Media
8	The participation of labour unions' representatives in the process of building and implementing CSR strategies	Enabling access to strategic documents, indicators; training of employees, internal communication	Labour unions
9	Promotion of workers rights in the framework of CSR	Good practices of engaging labour unions in CSR, introducing the issue of employees' rights to educational programmes	Labour unions
10	Changes in the teaching programmes regarding introducing business ethics and CSR	Creating specialization modules, introducing elements of CSR into university studies	Academia
11	Developing research projects on CSR	Academic publications, didactic materials for students, practical guidebooks for	Academia



		managerial staff	
12	Academy as an example of socially responsible organization	Corporate social responsibility as an element of mission and strategy of the academy, engaging students into CSR activities	Academia
13	The coordination CSR policy at the level of government and dialogue with stakeholders	Creating the multi-stakeholders forum on the role of business in the society, coordination and monitoring of government initiatives	Public administration
14	The establishment of information centre on CSR	Providing access to complete information on CSR to all stakeholders in Poland through internet website, leaflets, brochures etc.	Public administration
15	Education on the new role business in the society	Development of training programmes for the representatives of public administration at all levels	Public administration



## **LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED IN THE PROCESS**

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy  
Ministry of Economy  
Ministry of Finances  
Ministry of Environment  
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development  
Office for Competition and Consumers Protection  
All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ)  
Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union (NSZZ „Solidarność”)  
Polish Confederation of Private Employers (PKPP Lewiatan)  
Polish Chamber of Commerce  
Business Centre Club  
Confederation of Polish Employers  
Microsoft Sp. z o.o.  
METRO AG w Polsce  
IBM Polska Sp. z o.o.  
CSR info  
PricewaterhouseCoopers Polska  
DNV Industry  
Women OnLine  
Institute for Partnership of Business and Non-Governmental Organizations BI-NGO  
Foundation of Good-Hearted Entrepreneur in Poland  
Center of Volunteering  
Polish Donors Forum  
Forum for Responsible Business  
Autokreacja Foundation  
CentrumCSR.PL Foundation  
Foundation for Social Communication  
Center for Support Social Initiatives  
Federation of Polish Food Banks  
Willa Decjusza Foundation  
Philanthropy Development Academy  
Collegium Civitas  
Gdańsk Polytechnic  
Lazarski School for Commerce and Law  
Academy of Economics in Wrocław  
Warsaw School of Economics  
Business Ethics Center  
Warsaw University  
“Dziennik”  
“Harvard Business Review Polska”  
“Atmosfera”  
“Newsweek”



**CONTACT**

Paulina Kaczmarek  
CSR Project Coordinator  
UNDP Poland  
Tel: +48 22 576 81 90  
Mail: [paulina.kaczmarek@undp.org](mailto:paulina.kaczmarek@undp.org)

Kamil Wyszowski  
Global Compact Coordinator  
UNDP Poland  
Tel.: +48 576 81 66  
Mail: [kamil.wyszowski@undp.org](mailto:kamil.wyszowski@undp.org)

