



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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A SYSTEM TO MEASURE CSR EXCELLENCE TO BE DEVELOPED FOR 5 EU MEMBER STATES

Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 22 January 2010 - The United Nations Development Programme will assist new European Union member states take better advantage of the private sector, thanks to a socially responsible business initiative. Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovak Republic will participate in the programme, which aims to measure and assess socially responsible businesses (also known as Corporate Social Responsibility-CSR). In the selected new EU member states, the project will help establish more socially responsible businesses, and help the countries make strides toward the business environment in existing EU countries.

“Our main objective is to develop evidence-based measurement tools that would enable both national Governments and also companies themselves to assess the tangible and intangible benefits of CSR, or investment in an enabling CSR environment at the country level”, said Lyra Jakuleviciene, Regional Project Leader for UNDP Lithuania.

According to Ms. Jakuleviciene, the project will provide needed tools for socially responsible business practices in the region. At the moment, new EU member states are in need of systems to measure and monitor CSR progress, and in need of a strategy to make clear that good CSR practices provide competitive advantages for companies.

There is a broad consensus in Europe about the definition of CSR, which is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. Such model of business performance is seen as a way for creating more innovative, competitive and sustainable business that benefits both business and society.

The project will be implemented by UNDP Offices in the selected countries. Project activities are expected to include the following:

- 1) Development of a country-level CSR performance measurement system to assess and monitor CSR excellence. This will include elaboration of a set of performance indicators and training of country representatives on practical implementation of CSR measurement tool.
- 2) Strengthening the ability of companies to assess their own CSR performance through development of a practical methodology, self-assessment tool and training of staff.

Funded by the European Commission, the project duration is 12 months. The total budget for the project is 204 150 EURO. The contribution from the European Commission is 186 538 EURO, with the remaining funds coming from the Government of Poland and UNDP.

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