



**Documentation of results for the EU Project:
“Zukunft Mittelstand!
Erfolgsfaktor Gesellschaftliches Engagement /
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)”**

01.05.2006 – 30.04.2008

**As part of the pan-European EU Programme:
“Mainstreaming CSR among SMEs”**

This project was conducted on behalf of the EU Commission
by GILDE GmbH.

May 2008

Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Project partners.....	5
III. Description of the activities and results	7
1. Primary analyses in Germany, France and Poland.....	7
1.1 Survey methodology in Germany, France and Poland.....	7
1.2 Synopsis of the most significant results in Germany.....	8
1.3 The major parallels / differences in results between countries	9
2. Best practice collection in Germany, France and Poland	10
3. Development and deployment of teaching material.....	112
4. Advising business development organisations	15
5. Advising SMEs	18
6. Evaluation of the project.....	19
7. Attachments.....	21

Attachments to the primary analyses

- a. Field research in Germany (in German)
- b. Field research in Germany (in English)
- c. Field research in France (in French)
- d. Field research in France (in English)
- e. Field research in Poland (in German)
- f. Field research in Poland (in English)
- g. Comparison of fieldwork from Germany, France and Poland (in German)
- h. Comparison of fieldwork in Germany, France and Poland (in English)

Attachments to the best practice collections

- a. Best practice collection from Germany (in German)
- b. Best practice collection from Germany (in English)
- c. Best practice collection from Poland (in English)
- d. Best practice collection from France (in French)
- e. Best practice collection from France (in English)

Attachments to teaching materials

- a. Case studies for university education (in German)
- b. Case studies for university education (in English)
- c. Case studies for vocational training (in German)

I. Introduction

As part of the EU Programme "Mainstreaming CSR among SMEs", in Germany the business development company GILDE from Detmold conducted the project entitled "*Zukunft Mittelstand! Erfolgsfaktor gesellschaftliches Engagement*" on behalf of the European Commission.

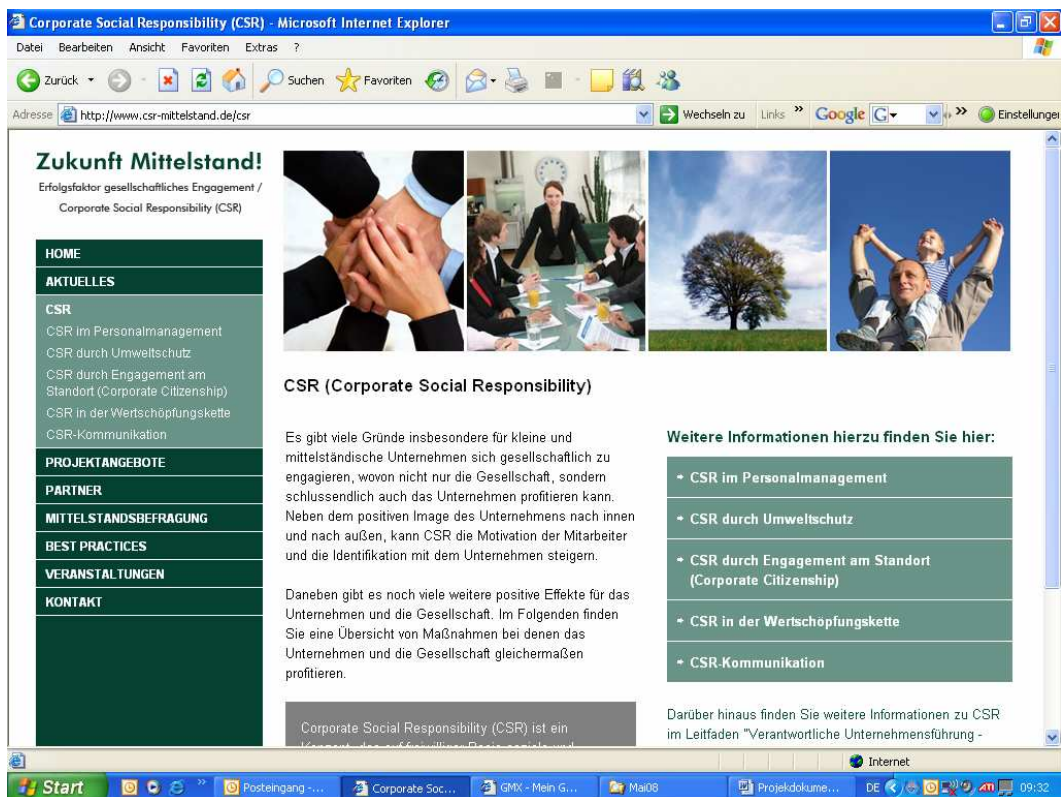
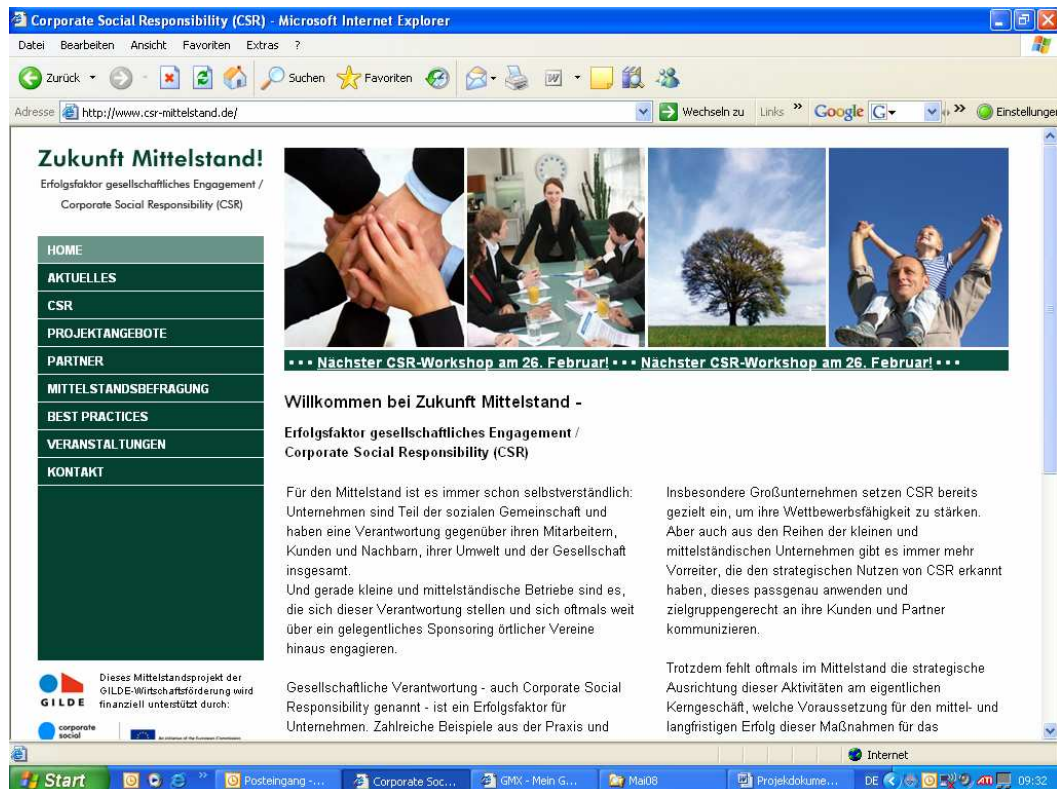
The aim of the project was to make opinion leaders as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) aware of and qualified for CSR.

This included:

- Raising CSR competency in business development organisations in workshops
- Supporting SMEs in implementing CSR strategies through workshops and individual counselling
- Recording, editing and publication of best practice examples of CSR among SMEs
- Development of teaching materials for tertiary education and vocational training
- Field research carried out in Germany, France and Poland on the status of CSR in SMEs
- Communication of CSR and project results throughout Germany

All the project results are presented in summarised form in this report.

The results are also published online at www.csr-mittelstand.de.



II. Project partners

In order to achieve a high quality project outcome and to reach SMEs all over Germany as far as possible, there was a need to network and collaborate with various opinion leaders. Therefore, we cooperated with the following project partners from the beginning:

- *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Partnerschaft in der Wirtschaft AGP e.V.*
AGP is a non-profit making society, which promotes the tangible and intangible participation of employees in businesses and has supported us with its expertise in qualifications, e.g. in workshops.
- The *Deutsche Angestellten Akademie (DAA)* is one of the most effective educational institutions in Germany. Cooperation with the DAA in the project was with DAA Dresden, which is responsible for the entire region of Saxony with a total of nine locations. The case studies developed in the project were deployed by the DAA as part of their further training activities.
- In cooperation with the *Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (FHM)* Bielefeld three case studies were developed and deployed for tertiary and vocational further education.
- Project partner *Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale* Dunkerque researched best practice examples in France for CSR with SMEs and conducted fieldwork.
- Project partner *Rudzki Inkubator Przedsiębiorczości Sp.z.o.o.*, Ruda Śląska researched best practice examples for CSR with SMEs in Poland and also conducted fieldwork.

In the course of the project we were joined by further cooperative partners, with whom there was ongoing or selective collaboration, e.g.:

- *Wirtschaftsjunioren Germany e.V.*

There was collaboration with both the umbrella organisation in Berlin as well as with individual units of young entrepreneurs locally.

- Chambers of commerce and industry (DIHK)

Collaboration was both with the umbrella organisation in Berlin (DIHK) as well as with individual units of the chambers of commerce and industry locally.

- *Bertelsmann Stiftung*, Gütersloh
- *Hertie Stiftung*, Frankfurt a.M.
- *Future e.V.*, Münster
- *Baum e.V.*, Hamburg
- *UPJ - Partner der Jugend*, Berlin
- CSM - Centre for Sustainability at the University of Lüneburg
- Technology centres
- Business development enterprises

III. Description of the activities and results

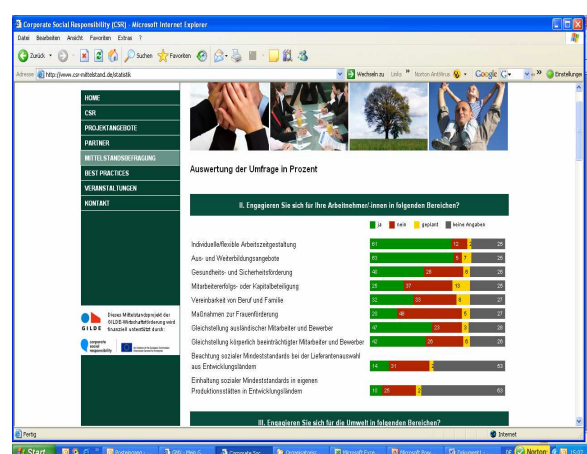
1. Primary analyses in Germany, France and Poland

Surveys of SMEs were conducted in Germany - and in cooperation with our project partners - in France and Poland. The following main issues were researched:

- Businesses' level of awareness of CSR
- CSR activities they have practised and planned themselves
- Interest in using CSR strategies
- Estimate of CSR's importance in relation to other business-relevant factors
- Determination of factors that stand in the way of employing CSR
- Determination of the positive effects of CSR
- The significance of image building due to CSR

1.1 Survey methodology in Germany, France and Poland

In Germany an online questionnaire was sent to proprietors and executives of small to medium sized enterprises with up to 500 employees via the *Wirtschaftsjunioren Germany* (WJD) and the *Marktplatz Mittelstand*. A total of 949 companies responded initially by clicking on the link from the newsletter to the questionnaire. Of these, 145 companies completed the questionnaire anonymously.



In France 561 companies were contacted by phone as part of a random sample. Of these firms, 116 said they were prepared to take part in the survey. The analysis took account of 81 companies, which had between 50 and 249 employees.

In Poland 28 companies, which had between 1 and 500 employees, were surveyed by phone and online questionnaire.

1.2 Synopsis of the most significant results from Germany:

- For more than half the SMEs (52%) CSR is already a familiar term.
- Just under a third (28%) of SMEs have already dealt with CSR.
- 75% of SMEs think CSR will gain in significance in the medium to long term.
- Only 22 percent of SMEs believe CSR is not worth it from a business perspective.
- The main arguments for CSR are image improvement 86%, employee motivation 72% and advantages in recruiting new employees 61%.

The results of the surveys in Germany, France and Poland were compared with each other. However, in a comparison of results in each country, the different panel structures for the three samples should be taken into consideration.

1.3 The major parallels and differences in results between countries:

Comparison of employee commitment: In all three countries the education and further training of employees has the highest priority.

Comparison of commitment to the environment: In all three countries the reduction of energy consumption and recycling management are ranked among the three most important issues, plus in Poland and Germany measures to reduce the consumption of resources. And in France the development of environmentally friendly products / services is ranked first.

Comparison of commitment to society: In a comparison of the three countries France, Poland and Germany show very different levels of commitment to society. While in France support for education and sport comes first, in Poland it is the avoidance of bribery and corruption and basic principles for the ethically responsible marketing of products and services. In Germany social institutions and educational initiatives receive support most frequently.

Comparison of relevance of CSR in SMEs: In all three countries most companies say that CSR is important for their business. In Poland it is 65 percent, in Germany 67 percent and in France 69 percent.

Comparison of reasons to introduce CSR: In all three countries image is cited as the main reason to introduce CSR. In Poland and Germany employee motivation comes second and in France the political requirements.

2. Best practice collection in Germany, France and Poland

Part of the basis for successfully qualifying was the communication and availability of best practice examples in medium sized enterprises, which have already deployed CSR successfully.

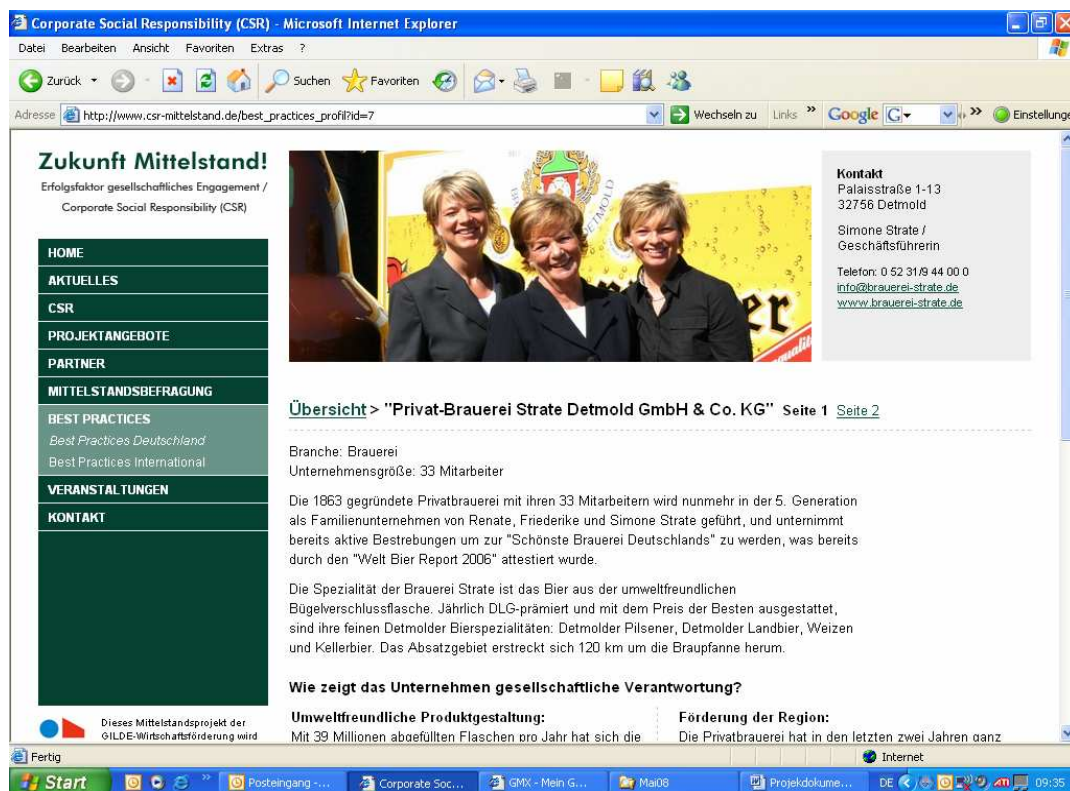
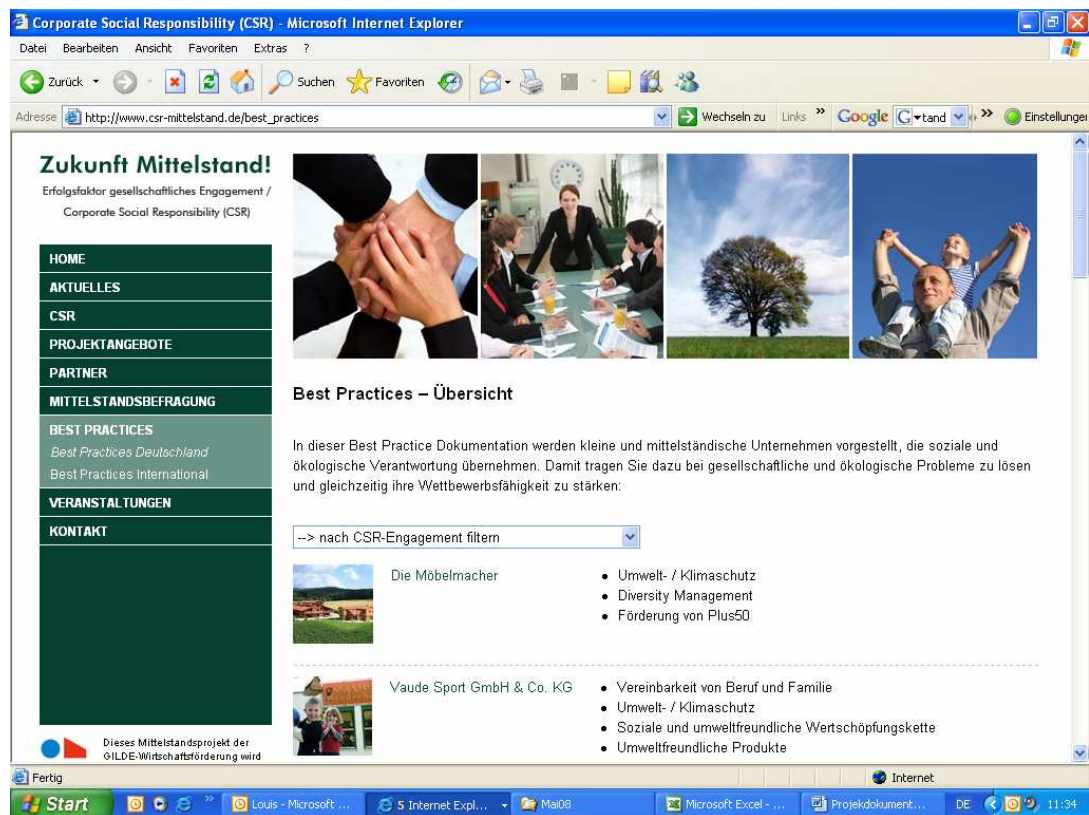
As such, a secondary data analysis was conducted and documented in Germany, France and Poland.

In Germany 25 company profiles were compiled, in Poland 18 and in France 28.

The data was published at www.csr-mittelstand.de/best-practices, at events and in other media, and set up in such a way that it can also be used when conducting qualification seminars, for consulting purposes or for use at conferences.

With all the examples it is possible to identify where the social and business benefits of these measures lie.

The following shows individual passages from the best practice collection in Germany:

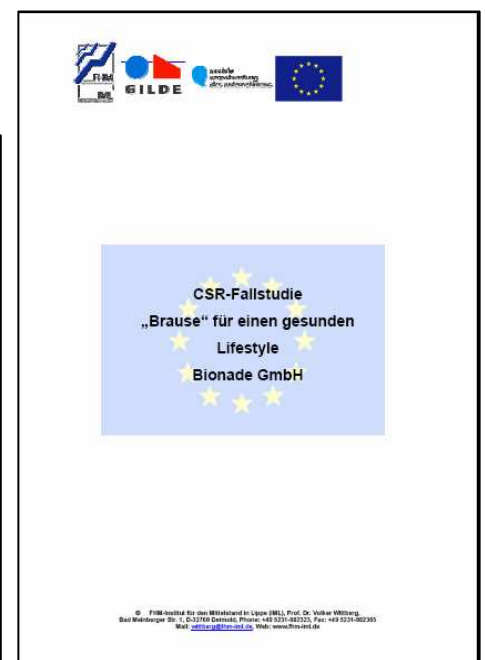


3. Development and use of teaching material

A further project aim was to achieve changes in behaviour among business owners, managerial staff and budding executives. By offering qualification schemes this aim was achieved. Teaching materials were developed in support, which were used in university courses. In addition, the materials were also deployed in qualification schemes in the context of vocational further training of potential executives and for the advisory services of business development agencies.

The teaching material was developed by the *Fachhochschule des Mittelstands Bielefeld (FHM)* based on the secondary research. The production resulted in three case studies. These best practice examples were selected for the case studies:

- Family-oriented personnel policy at VAUDE Sport GmbH & Co. KG
- Ethics and ecology - from fibre to dress at Hess Natur-Textilien GmbH
- "Soft drinks" for a healthy lifestyle at Bionade GmbH



The case studies enabled communication of:

- Various implementations of CSR

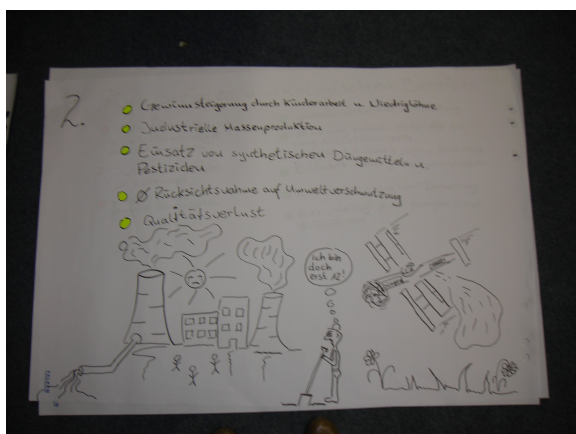
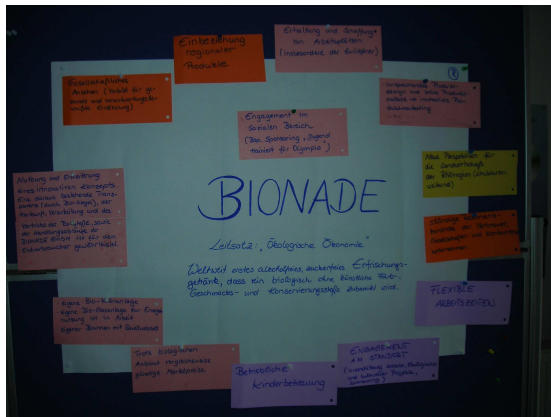
- What motivates SMEs to align themselves with CSR
- Best practice examples of CSR enterprises
- Strategies to introduce CSR.

By including the case studies in university courses this has made a major contribution to the communication of key qualifications for executives in future. The case studies have been included in a variety of courses, which are offered by the FHM. In addition, the case studies have been made available to numerous other tertiary education institutions.

The case studies produced for qualification at universities have been the basis for an additional learning opportunity, which is aimed at potential executives, who already have a tertiary qualification but are unemployed at present and are looking for a new career. In order to adapt the learning material for this group, it was edited in cooperation with the educational institution DAA.

In the context of vocational further training the case studies were deployed at seminars in Annaberg/Buchholz, Dresden, Leipzig and Hannover.

Impressions of the workshop at DAA Saxony:



4. Advising business development organisations

In the context of this project, business development organisations, in particular business development enterprises as well as start-up and technology centres were made aware of and qualified to deal with CSR.

The target among business development companies and start-up centres also included business development agencies in Ostwestfalen-Lippe OWL as well as the start-up and technology centres and chambers of commerce and industry based there.

In Giessen a workshop was also provided for opinion leaders in business and politics. The primary aim was to recruit regional decision makers for the CSR concept, in order to introduce it to the region through further programmes.

The business development organisations have achieved a more profound insight into the opportunities that SMEs can aim for in terms of CSR. Teaching materials on CSR have been made available to them, with which they can advise their clients, the SMEs themselves on developing and implementing CSR. Business development organisations have been qualified by this project and have therefore been able to broaden their qualifications profile.

At the Best Practice Conference in Berlin (120 delegates), the concluding session in Bielefeld (130 delegates) and other CSR workshops the project results were presented in theory and practice. The CSR concept presented was conveyed and illustrated by best practice businesses to show how the concept can be successfully implemented in SMEs in practice. In addition, delegates had an opportunity to exchange views and learn from each other. A total of around 700 people took part in the events, the vast majority of whom were SMEs.

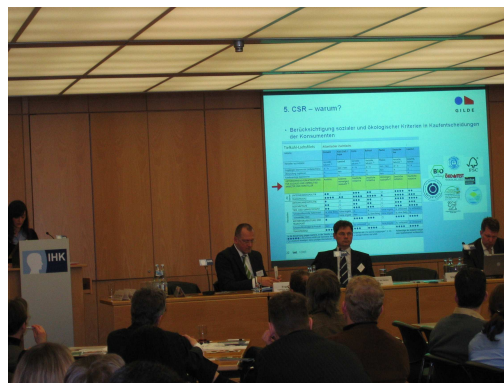
Impressions of the CSR event in Berlin on 17 April 2007:



Impressions of the CSR Workshop in Giessen on 19 September 2007:



Impressions of the CSR Workshop in Bielefeld on 26 February 08:



5. Advising SMEs

Businesses interested in CSR have been shown in numerous one-on-one interviews where CSR's strategic approach lies and what opportunities may emerge for their own companies by getting involved with CSR. These have been derived from stakeholder analyses and topics currently under discussion such as demographic change and climate change. This has enabled businesses to set their own goals and define specific activities that will lead to win-win situations for their own enterprise and society.

The companies have also been informed which CSR arrangements have already been put into practice in other medium sized enterprises and how CSR concepts can be implemented successfully. On request, contacts have been set up with already existing Best Practice companies so that SMEs have been able to exchange ideas business to business.

In addition, the companies have received very pragmatic support in building their CSR image and the use of marketing instruments they require.

One-on-one advice sessions have made it easier for SMEs to develop and implement their own CSR strategies.

6. Evaluating the project

In the course of this project, companies and opinion leaders as well as business development organisations, technology and start-up centres, industry associations, tertiary education institutions and qualifications agencies at home and abroad have been able to build and expand their CSR knowledge.

Thanks to this project educational institutions and universities have been able to extend their head start in information to do with CSR and use it to secure a better position in the market. With this project they have ensured their range of qualifications and therefore services is developing as required, which is a major precondition for being a successful market player in future as well. At the same time, the subject has been introduced to students, who are the next generation of executives and will include the social and ecological criteria in their management decisions.

Project partners organised in associations have with this project been able to achieve higher awareness among SMEs and have thus persuaded existing and other members to get involved with CSR. They have also obtained a positive response from their customers by expanding and adding CSR to their range of services.

Ultimately, the project has achieved sustained support from the SMEs involved. The companies that have successfully undertaken or developed a CSR strategy further as a result of the project, will do their utmost, even after the project funding ends, to stick to the path they have started on successfully and thus enhance their competitiveness.

It has been made clear to the major players, companies and opinion leaders that by aligning themselves with CSR tactical and strategic benefits arise, which compel them to act in accordance with CSR principles in order to go on being competitive. As such, the project activities have had a stimulating and motivating effect altogether on various target groups. By communicating this expertise to them they have been empowered to take further steps towards getting involved with CSR.

In addition, a targeted PR campaign has been run in various media and by partner organisations throughout Germany in support of CSR, which has made a contribution to raising general awareness of CSR in Germany.

All things considered, by networking with various opinion leaders from all over Germany, the broad impact of the project has been achieved to a great extent. The services provided, such as workshops, teaching materials and advice to the target groups of SMEs, universities, vocational further training agencies and opinion leaders have been very well received and successfully integrated.

All the project results have been made available to interested bodies such as business development enterprises, universities and other educational institutions. These should make it easier for opinion leaders and the users of advice and qualification facilities to get initially involved with the subject of CSR. They support both sides in developing their own CSR strategies and therefore serve to disseminate the appropriate strategic directions for businesses. The materials are also available to target groups after the project itself ends.

7. Attachments

Please direct any queries to:

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