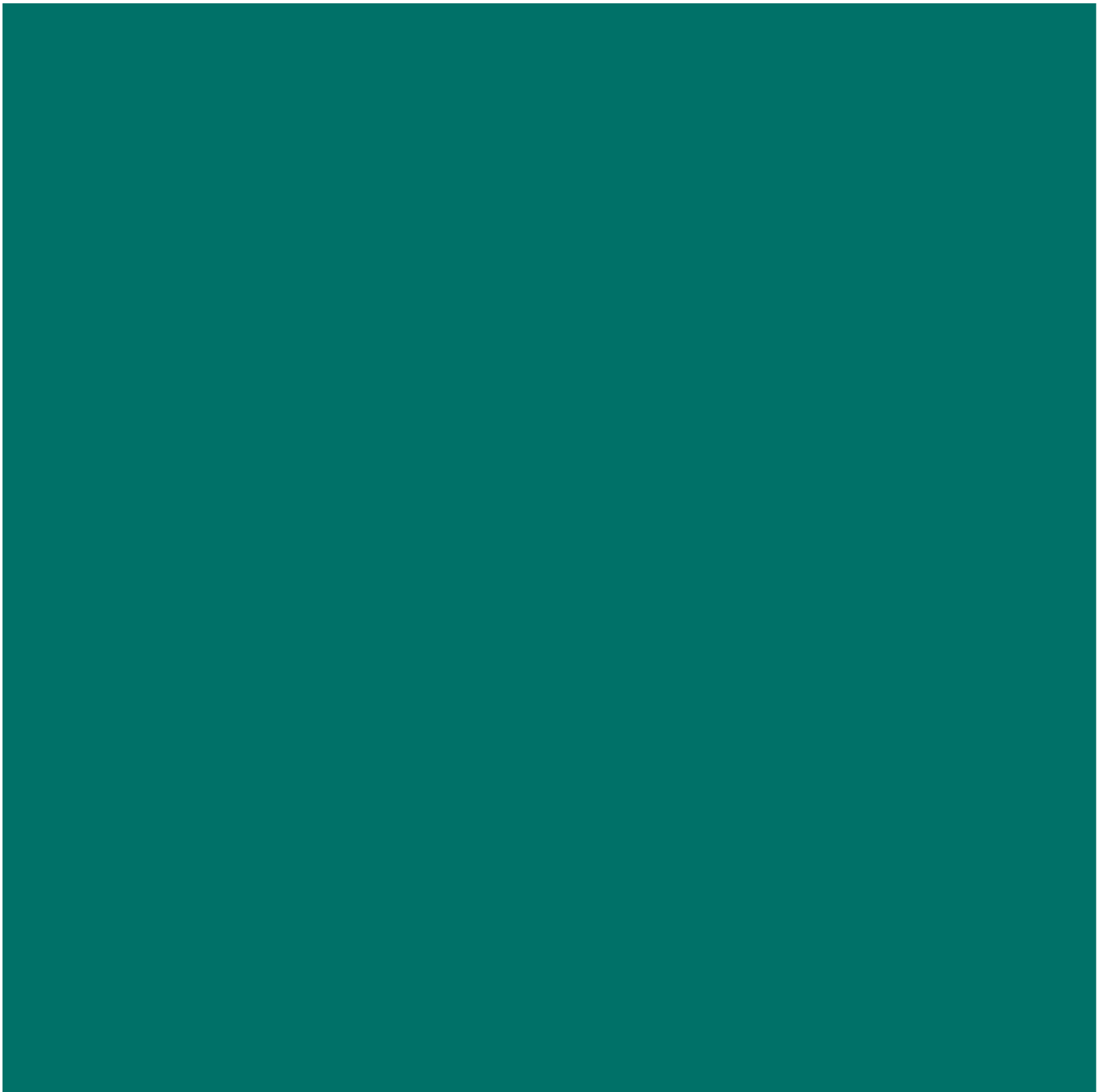


# Guidelines for Sida's support to Corporate Social Responsibility





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# 1. Introduction

The guidelines set out in this position paper have been developed in accordance with the Swedish Government's letter of appropriation for 2004, in which it requested Sida to establish guidelines for its continued involvement in corporate social responsibility (CSR). They draw on the fact-finding study published in March 2004, *How Sida Promotes Responsible Business Practices*, which illustrates how Sida is already contributing towards corporate responsibility in many different ways. These guidelines also draw on the findings from the international meeting on development cooperation and CSR that Sida co-hosted with the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in March 2004 in Stockholm; and on feedback from the external hearing in January 2005 to discuss an initial draft of these guidelines.

## 2. Points of departure

The Swedish “Policy for Global Development” applies to all policy areas and the goal of Swedish development cooperation is to help create conditions that will enable poor people to improve their lives. Sustainable poverty reduction requires high rates of economic growth; the private sector is being widely recognised as the main engine for growth. Sweden is committed to the meeting of the Millennium Development Goals, and these goals can only be met if the potential contributions from the private sector are fully mobilised.

The *Guidelines for Sida’s Support to Private Sector Development*, adopted in June 2004, attach special importance to the social and environmental responsibilities of the corporate sector. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, a responsible business sector benefits society through:

- generating growth and thereby reducing poverty;
- providing training and capacity-building for its staff;
- increasing health and safety by producing safer products and services;
- encouraging adherence to high labour standards;
- spreading high international business standards.

Secondly, indigenous businesses in developing countries need to meet high international business standards in order to maintain or gain entry into a global market.

# 3. Defining corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has increasingly become a term used to describe the positive ways in which the private sector can affect the societies in which it operates (Appendix 1). It typically refers to activities undertaken by a company voluntarily, in addition to compliance with the national law. A commonly used definition of CSR is that it is: "...the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development - working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life".<sup>1</sup>

CSR is defined slightly different by different stakeholders. Sida has chosen to build its work on the basic principles of the Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The Global Compact is based on ten principles as regards human rights, environment, labour standards and corruption, basically drawn from the UN Declaration on Human Rights, the ILO Declaration 1998 (based on the eight main ILO conventions), the conclusions of the Brundtland Commission on Environmental Protection and the UN Convention against Corruption 2003 (Box 1). These principles form a basis for defining Sida's role in relation to CSR.

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<sup>1</sup> "Public Sector roles in Strengthening Corporate Social Responsibility: Taking Stock"; Halina Ward; 2004

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**Box 1: The Global Compact's ten principles**

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The Global Compact asks companies to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment, and anti-corruption:

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**Human rights:**

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- Principles 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principles 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

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**Labour standards:**

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- Principles 3 : Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principles 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- Principles 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and
- Principles 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

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**Environment**

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- Principles 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principles 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principles 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

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**Anti-corruption**

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- Principle 10: Businesses should work against all forms of corruption, including extortion and bribery.

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Source: Global Compact's web-site (<http://www.unglobalcompact.org>)



# 4. The role of Sida in the field of CSR

The CSR message is primarily about how business within the frame of its normal operations can have a beneficial impact on the societies and environments where it works. Donors may in various ways contribute to the creation of environments in which such developments are promoted. In this way, the promotion of corporate social responsibility could be seen as a part of Sida's wider efforts to support private sector development, social development and the respect for human rights. The support of, for example, a local business association is likely not only to enhance business activities, but also lead to more responsible business practices. On other occasions, the promotion of responsible business practices may have little to do with private sector development, and have stronger ties with other policy areas, for example HIV/AIDS, or environmental protection.

Sida has an important role in promoting CSR through:

- facilitating the creation of an enabling environment, including structures of good governance, for responsible business practices,
- directly supporting activities seeking to promote and ensure corporate responsibility,
- ensuring that the potential for the private sector to contribute to development is harnessed,
- using its convening power as a donor to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues and partnerships,
- endorsing good practices and participating in international policy initiatives on CSR,
- promoting capacity building through support to training, research and technical assistance.

These guidelines apply to all business entities, private or public, operating in the market place. The focus on size and/or ownership structure depends on the geographic and thematic context of Sida's work.

From a development perspective it is particularly important to focus on the actions of the corporate sector in poor countries in which legal and regulatory frameworks are weak and where there is a lack of well-developed monitoring systems. Sida considers it important that CSR is not seen as a substitute for legal regulation. Thus, one role for Sida could be to offer advice, support and capacity to its partner governments to

facilitate the creation of environments conducive to good business practices. This would ensure that, over time, the internationally agreed principles (notably core labour standards) that form the content of CSR are enshrined in national laws.

Sida is not the only actor in Sweden in the CSR arena. The initiative Global Responsibility of the Swedish Government, based within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, works on CSR issues in close cooperation with Swedish companies. The Global Compact Nordic Network (GCNN) was formed by participants from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden to discuss the implementation of the Global Compact principles. The Nordic Network has expanded its operations rapidly and holds regular meetings twice a year, forming working groups and organises other GC-specific activities.

Many Swedish companies are significant buyers of products from developing countries and for them respect of core labour standards is a critical issue when sourcing products. Generally, Swedish companies are also on the fore-front when it comes to following and implementing recommendations on the respect for human rights and environmental protection regulations<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on Swedish companies participating both in the Global Compact and in its Nordic Network, see the UN Global Compact website at [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

# 5. Key issues for Sida's promotion of responsible business practices

There are certain key aspects as to how Sida can promote the work of responsible business practices. These aspects are closely linked to the Global Compact principles.

The positive as well as negative impact private sector activities – in particular those of large multinationals – have on the respect of **human rights**, is a major facet of corporate social responsibility. Through development agencies joining forces with developing country governments, companies and NGOs, greater efforts can be made to ensure that private sector activities respect and promote human rights. Initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and the Swedish Government's *Global Responsibility* initiative are important in convening dialogues and facilitating the private sector in respecting and promoting human rights.

The implementation of the ILO **core labour standards** safeguarding freedom of association; the abolition of forced labour; non-discrimination; and preventing the worst forms of child labour, is important as part of responsible business practices. Gender aspects are prominent, especially in the ILO conventions on equal remuneration and on non-discrimination. Through its collaboration with organisations like the ILO, Sida has gained some experience in enabling companies to comply with the core conventions. Trade unions and, in particular, the international trade union federations have a critical role in providing competence and capacity to improve the working conditions in developing countries. Responsible business practice is of particular importance in countries where labour-intensive manufacturing takes place, for example of textiles and clothing. The application of high standards in the production of goods and services throughout the world is increasingly difficult because of competition from countries with very low wages and poor working conditions. Sida is in a good position to facilitate dialogue between governments and the private sector aimed at improving working conditions in partner countries.

**Environmental development** is an overarching goal of Sida's activities. Sida's Environmental Management System ensures that environmental aspects are considered in all of Sida's programmes, including those affecting the private sector. By building capacity in local institutions, by raising awareness and contributing to monitoring as well as an improved law enforcement, Sida can help to enable and ensure that the positive impact of private sector activities on environmental management is maximized and that their negative environmental impacts are

minimized. Agricultural activities, from large multinational operations to small-holder farmers, make up a significant part of private sector activities in many developing countries. These activities can have a considerable impact on the environment.

The role of the private sector in causing **corruption** and in fighting corruption is increasingly being recognised. With instruments such as the OECD's Anti-Bribery Convention and the adoption in 2003 of the UN Convention against Corruption, there is now a global legal framework for fighting corruption. Sida, as an active partner in the global struggle against corruption, should continue to spread awareness and understanding about the costs and risks of corruption. As a donor, Sida recognises its responsibility for the two sides of corruption; the demand and the supply side. Corruption is a serious developmental problem and Sida strives to raise awareness about that fact among all actors involved in Swedish development cooperation, in order to achieve the goals set out. Sida should also continue its work in strengthening partner countries' capacity to deal with the private sector's role in corruption.

The private sector has an important role when it comes to raising awareness and mitigating the effects of the *HIV/AIDS* epidemic. By adopting HIV/AIDS workplace policies and implementing training programmes, employers in collaboration with trade unions can address prevention, counselling and care, discrimination and other issues related to HIV/AIDS. *The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work* has gained international recognition for outlining fundamental principles and guidelines related to HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

In **conflict prone** areas, efforts have to be made to ensure that private sector activities do not contribute towards instability, poverty and high levels of corruption, but have a positive impact on stability and development in situations with a polarization of society on ethnic or religious grounds, and discrimination or marginalization of minority groups. Governments, NGOs and development agencies can maximise the potentially positive impact the private sector can have on conflict prevention and resolution through convening dialogues and engaging companies in confidence building and policy processes. The OECD/DAC Guidelines *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* clearly set out the role of business in conflict situations and the role of donors in promoting responsible business practices. These recommendations are being followed up through policy and operational work in different fora.

# 6. Sida's action plan for promoting responsible business practices

Sida's promotion of responsible business practices is often done through activities that may have main aims other than CSR. The link between each of Sida's operational areas and responsible business practices varies greatly. These guidelines should be considered as a complement to existing policies. They focus also on some measures Sida could usefully consider in order to help promote the creation of an enabling environment for responsible business practices in our partner countries.

The following action plan consists mainly of ongoing activities. A mapping of Sida's activities showed that Sida has been and is doing quite a lot in the sphere of CSR without calling it CSR. In some areas the action plan is aimed at a slightly higher level of ambition in order to have a more pronounced focus on CSR (e.g. within the Legal Department, JUR; the Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC and within the Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, INEC to organise workshops and seminars). Some of the initiatives listed below will be achieved during 2005; others will be on-going activities that will form part of Sida's longer-term work. The initiatives are of different types; some aim at "main-streaming" CSR, i.e. integrating consideration of CSR into Sida's existing processes and systems. Others are "CSR-specific" and targeted at leveraging Sida's specific expertise to push forward the CSR agenda.

## **Strengthen the CSR dimension during country strategy work**

- Identify potential CSR aspects for inclusion in the dialogue on sector analysis when developing country cooperation strategies, (Regional and Sector Departments and Embassies – *ongoing*).
- Consider the national/international perspective in countries where the (non-)application of CSR principles may have repercussions outside the country's borders (Regional and Sector Departments and Embassies – *ongoing*).
- Strengthen dialogue on CSR issues within the private sector, growth and poverty reduction debate at country level donor coordination meetings (Embassies and Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/ MARKET– *ongoing*).

## **Participate in relevant international policy initiatives**

- Remain actively engaged in international fora, and use them as platforms for international dialogue and awareness raising on the links between CSR and other relevant issues (Sector Departments and Department for Policy and Method, POM – *ongoing*).
- Within the framework of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, strengthen developing countries' capacity to participate in the current preparation phase of the new social responsibility standard being elaborated by the International Organization for Standardisation (Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – 2005).
- Continue support to international organisations such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to further the debate about corporate social responsibility (Department for Natural Resources and Environment, Division for Rural Development, NATUR/LUV – 2005).

## **Capacity building and knowledge sharing**

- Continue the dialogue and collaboration with the Swedish Government's initiative *Shared Responsibility* (Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – *ongoing*).
- In connection with, and as follow-up to the launch of these Guidelines, organise workshops and seminars aimed at raising awareness and building capacity among staff and external partners (Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET with other Sector and Regional Departments – 2005/2006).
- Assist efforts (through collaboration with local civil society) to increase awareness as to the business benefits of CSR implementation in our partner countries (Sector Departments and Embassies – *ongoing*).

## **Integrate relevant aspects of CSR into Sida activities**

- Incorporate information about promoting responsible business practices into Sida's in-house training activities on Environment, Human Rights, Corruption, PSD, HIV/AIDS, Gender issues, and Conflict, (respective Sector Departments and Department for Human Resources, PEO – 2005/2006).
- Initiate international and Swedish research on aspects of CSR in relevant areas; gradually develop knowledge on linkages between research and industry (Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC – 2005).
- Pronounce CSR more explicitly in Sida's work with human rights, the environment, PSD, HIV/AIDS, gender issues and conflict (Sector Departments – *ongoing*).
- Explore the possibility of including CSR issues in a Strategic Conflict Analysis, as part of a country or regional strategy process (Department for Cooperation with NGOs, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management, Division for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management, SEKA/HUM – 2005).
- Explore the possibility of including CSR issues into Sida's Strategic Environmental Assessments (Department for Natural Resources and Environment, Division for Environment Policy, NATUR/Environment – 2005).

- Highlight CSR aspects in the environmental debate and bring the issue to the attention of farmers' associations in our partner countries (Department for Natural Resources and Environment, Division for Rural Development, NATUR/LUV and Embassies – 2005).

### **Good governance, corruption and transparency**

- In Sida's overall work to curb corruption, specifically focus on the role of the private sector in causing and fighting corruption (Department for Policy and Method, POM and Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – *ongoing*).
- Support and cooperate with the UN Global Compact's local networks and with the local chapters of Transparency International (TI) to curb corruption (Department for Policy and Method, POM and Embassies – *ongoing*).

### **Workplace issues and HIV/AIDS**

- Within the Swedish strategy framework for the ILO, continue to support the ILO as the global point of reference for working life issues in a broad sense (this includes supporting partner countries in realising commitments made by ratifying labour conventions and the fight against HIV/AIDS in the world of work) (HIV Secretariat and Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – *ongoing*).
- Establish public private dialogues to raise awareness among the business sector in partner countries on the impact HIV/AIDS might have on their activities (HIV Secretariat and Embassies – 2005).
- Within our support to the Labour Market Dialogue Programme, further and develop the integration of CSR aspects, and encourage dialogue with industry organisations (Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – 2005).

### **Human rights and conflict zones**

- Continue to follow and participate in the international debate on the legal requirements of private companies to respect human rights (Department for Democracy and Social Development, Division for Democratic Governance, DESO/DESA – 2005).
- Continue dialogue and cooperation with multilateral organisations and NGOs working with codes of conduct and ethical issues related to business activities (Department for Democracy and Social Development, Division for Democratic Governance, DESO/DESA and Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – *ongoing*).
- Make efforts to ensure that the private sector is actively involved in projects aimed at peace building (Department for Cooperation with NGOs, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management, SEKA – 2005).

### **Specific private sector development interventions**

- Assess opportunities for socially responsible private investors to invest in developing countries. In particular, Sida will focus on the micro finance sector and with the aim of increasing long term stable capital



flows to emerging markets (Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET– 2005).

- Continue support to Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS) and Global Corporate Governance Forum (GCCF) in their efforts to facilitate reforms in developing countries on corporate ownership and CSR and create and spread good practice (Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – 2005).
- Through support for local NGOs, facilitate assistance to local SMEs with implementing CSR measures as a means to improve their competitiveness. (Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET and Embassies – *ongoing*).

### **Civil society organisations**

- Support local civil society engagement on CSR, through e.g. trade unions, TI and UN Global Compact local networks (Embassies, Department for Policy and Method, POM, and Sector Departments – *ongoing*).
- Support creation and dissemination of knowledge on CSR issues within civil society groups to enable them to have a voice in the debate (Sector Departments and Embassies – *ongoing*).
- Support training-of-trainer efforts to develop or consolidate a domestic pool of CSR professionals (Sector Departments and Embassies – *ongoing*).
- Sida has existing partnerships with NGOs operating in the field of conflict management. These relationships should be utilised to help integrate an awareness of conflict issues into Sida's support to private sector development activities (Department for Cooperation with NGOs, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management, Division for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management, SEKA/HUM and Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation, Division for Market Development, INEC/MARKET – 2005).

### **Procurements financed by Sida**

- Sida's Procurement Rule and Sida's Procurement Guidelines stipulate that Sida, cooperation partners and tenderers shall respect and safeguard human rights as defined in the International Labour Conventions (ILO) and also respect regulations regarding green procurement. This is already built into the Sida procurement process. Sida will make efforts to further develop the Global Compact principles in procurement procedures (Legal Department, JUR – 2005)



# Appendix 1: Defining Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR has become the term used to describe the positive ways in which the private sector may affect society. That a number of different definitions of CSR exist suggests that the term has yet to become universally understood and accepted. In its commonly used definition, the World Bank and the WBCSD (World Business Council on Sustainable Development) define CSR as “the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development – working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life, in ways that are both good for business and good for development.”

‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ is only one of a number of terms that are used almost inter-changeably to describe this phenomenon. Other expressions include: ‘corporate citizenship’, ‘corporate accountability’ and ‘corporate social investment’. As the term CSR often refers to more than the social impact of businesses, the shorter ‘corporate responsibility’ is increasingly used. A growing number of organisations, such as the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO), emphasise the need for all organisations, not just private ones, to act responsibly and therefore use the term ‘social responsibility’ (SR).

Whichever term one chooses to use, the issues that fall under the umbrella of ‘CSR’ are clear and include the following:

- ensuring that the private sector does not contribute to violations of human rights and promotes the respect of these rights;
- the respect of core labour standards;
- ensuring that local communities benefit from large companies’ operations in developing countries;
- responsible management of environmental impacts of a company’s operations, including emissions, waste and use of sustainable resources;
- avoidance of corruption and the increase in transparency in business practice;
- incorporation of social and environmental criteria in procurement decisions.

The environmental and social (including human rights) impact of oil, gas and mining companies, and the working conditions in labour-intensive

manufacturing, such as that of textiles, clothes and footwear, are two topics that have been prominent in the CSR debate.

However, many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) remain suspicious that companies are trying to portray an enhanced image of their activities. They are also concerned that the voluntary dimension of CSR promotes self-regulation as a substitute for legal regulation. Many NGOs have argued that the conduct of multinational corporations is too important to be left to voluntary standards, and that an international legal framework must be developed to govern their worldwide behaviour. Christian Aid for example, in its report *Behind the mask – the real face of corporate social responsibility*, defined CSR as "an entirely voluntary corporate-led initiative to promote self-regulation as a substitute for regulation at either national or international level". CSR is a catch-all term increasingly used by business, which encompasses the voluntary codes, principles and initiatives companies adopt in their general desire to confine corporate responsibility to self-regulation. Although Christian Aid would naturally welcome companies acting responsibly, its view is representative of a school of opinion that would like to see CSR codified into a global framework of law and regulation.

On the other hand many, particularly in the corporate sector, would argue that the sole responsibilities of businesses are to make profits and obey the law – "the business of business is business!" Taking on greater social and environmental responsibilities than those legally mandated is, according to this perspective, only likely to increase costs and reduce efficiency. Criticism has also been levelled at governments who argue in favour of CSR, as an attempt to offload social and environmental responsibilities to the private sector.

It is also important to note that although most of the CSR debate to date has tended to mainly refer to the behaviour of large multinational companies, and often to the impact of these companies in developing countries and emerging markets, attempts are increasingly being made to also focus on small and medium-sized enterprises.

# Appendix 2: The international framework – background

Creating an enabling environment for responsible business practices often requires governments, NGOs and the private sector to jointly create public policy partnerships. There are a growing number of policy initiatives that, in the absence of effective mandatory rules, have aimed to establish high international standards for corporate behaviour. International policy initiatives, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, seeking to establish greater transparency in governments with significant revenues from oil and gas, have typically been convened by governments. Development agencies can and do play an important role in ensuring that developing countries have the capacity to participate in and, in particular, implement these kinds of international standards.

The OECD's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are designed to ensure that the private sector based within the OECD also conforms to high international standards elsewhere. Under the Guidelines, OECD countries established a dispute resolution mechanism of 'National Contact Points'. Development agencies such as Sida can contribute towards creating a local enabling environment for responsible business practices through working with multinationals and local NGOs to create awareness about the OECD guidelines and improve local monitoring.

The UN Global Compact's 10 principles offers a platform, entirely based on internationally agreed declarations, for corporate social responsibility. It has a strong potential development dimension, in that it can form the basis for responsible private sector activities incorporating high standards regarding human rights, labour rights, the environment and anti-corruption. Its grounding in universally accepted UN declarations and conventions has enabled strong support in developing countries. Institutions in developing countries could usefully look into using the Compact to ensure the spread of responsible business practices locally. For more information on the UN Global Compact, its local networks around the world, publications and recent events, please refer to the website [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org).

The International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) decided in 2004 to develop an international standard giving guidelines for social responsibility. This would be analogous to its existing standards – for example ISO 14000 on environmental management. While it remains unclear whether this initiative will lead to a new internationally recognised definition of the social responsibilities of private companies, it is

important that any outcome cannot be used as a barrier to trade. Sida can make it possible, through capacity building and convening dialogues, for developing countries, trade unions and civil society organisations in these countries to be represented, and to actively participate in this preparation process before the new standards are adopted by ISO.

The coordination between governments and development agencies in their efforts to promote responsible business practices has been given little attention, although the private sector and NGOs are engaged in many initiatives aimed at understanding and furthering corporate social responsibility. There is a need for a more coordinated international approach by development agencies and their respective governments. The development agencies need to share their experiences. The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has so far not convened the donors in an effort to coordinate policies relating to responsible business practices specifically, although it has held joint meetings with other functions of the OECD to explore how it can address corporate behaviour in developing countries.



*Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.*



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