



CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

SITUATION ANALYSIS ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
(CSR) ACTIVITIES ON SMEs - 2011

Executive Summary

Slovenia



Univerza v Mariboru

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Introduction

European Union has published a Green Paper in 2001 in order to foster a development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in many European countries, including Slovenia. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has established in 2005 an inter-ministry working group for the CSR. As a consequence a National report about the public policy regarding CSR has been published at the end of the year 2005 (Styrian Chamber of commerce, 2011). Indeed, our survey revealed several issues that could be improved in order to integrate the CSR into everyday activities of the SMEs.

1. Situation analysis of current CSR training offer

Current training offer regarding the CSR in Slovenia is quite narrow. It comprises 2 annual conferences. First is entitled "Corporate Social Responsibility" and organized by the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce, the second one is entitled as "CSR and challenges of our time", organized by the Institute for the development of CSR. On the other hand, CSR is also a topic within several conferences hold in Slovenia. All these conferences present an informal way of learning and could be included within the lifelong learning approach.

In order to get a deeper view into CSR training offers all the BSc programmes at all the four Universities in Slovenia have been analyzed. The results reveal that all the 4 universities offer courses including CSR issues, which are more environmentally oriented. No such a course as corporate social responsibility has been perceived at the BSc programmes. Furthermore, Slovenian VET programmes (17) have been analyzed, where again, environmentally oriented courses are in forefront. Furthermore, no specific course/trainings such as CSR has been perceived within the Slovenian VET programmes.

Training material of the university courses as well as courses at the VET institutions has been reviewed. Results revealed that the training material mostly consists of textbooks, and that the didactic-pedagogical method is frontal (where students are passive listeners). In some cases, exercises and seminars are added to the frontal didactic-pedagogical method. It is important to mention that no ICT material has been found, such as e-learning options.

The target groups at the university level are full-time students, while at the VET institutions are high-school students and elder population, who study besides work.

Results from our own analysis are in line with the results from the questionnaires distributed at within the universities, where CSR topics are integrated within the courses (e.g. sustainable water management, environmental management). One stand alone subject at the doctoral level is mentioned: Responsible entrepreneurship.

2. Analysis of needs of competences on CSR from SMEs' and VET institutions' perspective.

2.1. SMEs' perspective

Needs of the competences on CSR for SMEs are the following:

- Clarification of the term CSR
- Principles of the CSR
- Designing and integrating CSR into existing processes
- Mostly SMEs were interested in the environmental issues, organizational governance, labour practices, and consumer issues
- Virtual training and self-studying material

2.2. VET institutions perspective

Needs of the competences on CSR for the VET institutions:

- Virtual training material
- Comprehensive CSR course/training at the VET and BSc level

3. Gap analysis on CSR training offer and identified needs on SMEs

The gap analysis for Slovenia has been made, based on the surveys as well as own research of CSR in companies. The gap analysis covers the following issues: training offers, training materials, target groups, and SR topics offered to the SMEs.

- Training offers
More courses/trainings covering social/economic issues are needed in order to be integrated into already existing programmes or as standalone courses/trainings.
- Training materials
Training materials offered within the Slovenian CSR learning opportunities are not in line with the lifelong learning approach, using ICT. Most of the material consists of textbooks, while the most common didactical-pedagogic method is frontal. Furthermore, SMEs have no CSR lifelong learning opportunities that will suit them (e.g. ICT CSR learning).
- Target groups
It has been perceived that within the CSR topics the target groups are mostly students. Employees in the SMEs have no opportunity for additional learning, regarding the CSR. There exist 2 annual conferences, where employees could get additional skills and knowledge, but top managers are those, who usually attend the conferences.
- Topics offered to the SMEs

It has been perceived that all the topics covered within the ISO 26000 are relevant for the SMEs. Among them 2 topics are in the forefront: Organizational governance and environment.

4. Recommendations

Regarding the Slovenian survey recommendations are the following:

- ❑ Several statistics analyses in Slovenia have shown that companies investing in green technology, human resources, and other social responsibility issues have grown during the financial crisis for 30 % and more (e.g. Bisol company, producing the photovoltaic panels). Therefore, SR represents an option for further sustainable growth. SMEs need to be taught about SR and its positive influence in the future.
- ❑ SR topics should be represented to the SMEs in a way that suits those best, which is e-learning.
- ❑ SR trainings should give a specific focus on the environmental topics and organizational governance.
- ❑ The trainings should be designed not only for the top managers, but also for other employees.
- ❑ The introduction of the CSI tool should be expanded to all the interested stakeholders, not only SMEs, but also to the universities and VET institutions, where is a lack of e-tools.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
VET	Vocational and Educational Training
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NACE	Nomenclature générale des Activités économiques dans les Communautés Européennes
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
OHSAS	Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series
SA	Social Accountability (Standard)
BSCI	Business Social Compliance Initiative