

Corporate Social Responsibility

'Balancing people, planet and profit'



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Fact sheet from the portfolio of the Department of Trade and Industry version January 2008

Status

End of 2007: government vision on CSR was submitted to the Lower Chamber of Parliament.

Facts and figures

- Internationally, the Netherlands score reasonably well on CSR in terms of the large enterprises listed on the AEX stock exchange. Many CSR initiatives have been developed in the SME sector, big business and the international business sector.
- However, MVO has not gained widespread acceptance. The trickle-down effect to the rank and file has not yet taken place, although opportunities for acceleration are available.

Period

2001-2011

Parties involved

Trade and Industry and other departments of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV); the Ministries of Economic Affairs (EZ), Foreign Affairs/ Development Cooperation (BUZA/OS), Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Social Affairs and Employment (SZW); CSR Netherlands, LEI, sector organisations and companies

More information

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agriculture, nature
and food quality

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is caring for the social impact of a company's operations. This approach generates long-term gain for businesses and society.

Context

In 2000 the Social and Economic Council (SER) issued a set of recommendations on social enterprise and the role of the public and private sectors and civil society organisations. These recommendations served as an impulse to the national corporate social responsibility policy. The government has committed itself to work with others to bring CSR to full maturity "by playing a stimulating and facilitating role defined in the most concrete and ambitious terms". Subsequent governments through to 2006 have adopted this objective. In 2006/2007, the government policy for 2001-2006 came under review. On the basis of that evaluation and various consultations in the field, a new government memorandum is being drawn up. The CSR policy is being coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ). The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) promotes CSR for the agro sector.

Effects

The evaluation showed that there appears to be a break in the trend in recent years, allowing businesses to be more open to discussing CSR. A great deal has been achieved in CSR in terms of familiarity and awareness, but CSR has not yet gained widespread acceptance.

Particular aspects

In order to help companies to implement CSR in their management, the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI) developed a digital sustainability scan. After completing the sustainability scan, the entrepreneur sees a list of possible improvements. In addition, the LEI developed a Sustainability Portal, a collection of links to websites offering information, resources, examples and subsidies related to sustainable enterprise.

Challenges

The international aspect of CSR deserves more attention. Amongst others, the Ministry co-commissioned the development of CSR toolkits for emerging markets. The CSR toolkits offer some guidelines to the Dutch business sector (particularly the SME sector) with business relations in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia and South Africa. The toolkits present experiences and examples. The main focus is on CSR issues specific to these countries and possible solutions that may create opportunities for an entrepreneur.

Compatibility with Ministry policy

The Ministry makes a powerful contribution to sustainable development via the policy theme of corporate social responsibility. The sustainable use of natural resources (planet), human welfare (people) and a lively economy (profit) is a priority.

Benefits

CSR enhances the competitive position of the Dutch agro sector and contributes to a sustainable society.