

## Focus Group 1: Getting Started with A CSR Policy

### ? How to start with a CSR business policy?

- **Ask yourself questions.** Throughout the whole development process of a CSR policy there are three main structuring questions that a company needs to consider: What *must* we do? What *should* we do? What should we *avoid*?
- **Step 1: Analyze your situation and learn from others.** In the first stage of developing a CSR policy a company must analyze its operations, stakeholders and specific challenges, and then gain a basic understanding of what its policy should cover. The company should define the goals and the principles of its policy. A good starting point is to draw inspiration from sectoral initiatives and to study the CSR policies of companies that face similar challenges. The group did not arrive at a consensus whether at this point in time a company should position itself within a defined human rights standard (e.g. by using the UDHR as a framework of reference) or just commit to general principles of decency.
- **Step 2: Policy creation, choice of tools, stakeholder dialogue.** The next stage is characterised by the creation of a CSR policy and relevant sub-policies. At this point, a company should consider signing up to a CSR process partner (e.g. Global Compact, BLIHR) which offers support in choosing the right tools and in tool implementation. Internal and external communication, gaining a clear picture of the process, and trainings for the lower levels of management are important at this stage. A serious stakeholder dialogue also belongs to this phase, which can be challenging depending on the dominant problems and already existing issues in different sectors.
- **Step 3: Policy implementation.** Effective implementation depends on setting targets (e.g. employee satisfaction), turning policies into processes and results and ensuring that these processes are embedded in the company. This stage contains several challenges: internally it is important to have all departments on board. The company must make sure that the effective policy reaches the "shop-floor". A company should also ask itself whether its policy guarantees comprehensive legal compliance including national standards and whether it is taking into account other country-contexts where legal standards might be lower. Internal audits and employee surveys are important for a constant flow of information, which in turn allow for evaluation of the policy's effectiveness and open the door for improvement.

### ? What challenges do human rights consultants face in their practical work with companies?

- **Language matters.** Many companies will not respond to the "human rights language". Therefore, it is important to consider the sectoral and/or regional activities of a company and explain how human rights matter in a specific context.
- **Lack of a business case.** This constitutes a broad challenge, which all consultants face and which still needs further consideration.