

## Working Group 1: Tackling Key Challenges in CSR Tool Development and Implementation

### ? Where do you see the main challenges in the CSR tool implementation process?

- **Difficulty to follow-up with clients.** There is a large deficit and a constant gap between the CSR consulting and the actual implementation process. Consultants are not paid for and do not dispose of the authority to follow-up or monitor the processes that happen after they have left. The question is how to move from consultancy to implementation and how to measure the latter.
- **Disconnect of communication between headquarter and country offices.** There is often a huge gap between the headquarters desire and request to adopt a human rights compliance assessment, and the respective knowledge of country office managers. In many cases country managers lack interest, particularly when they are not involved right from the beginning.
- **Magnitude of codes.** The quantity of competing codes of conduct and CSR approaches poses a practical challenge to companies and consulting institutions.
- **Alignment with other approaches.** A CSR approach does not necessarily align with other organisations' approaches offering e.g. technical support. This contributes to a certain level of "chaos" on the ground that makes it difficult to promote a human rights oriented approach at work.
- **Conflicting interests of consultants.** Profit paid consultants are limited to an incremental approach, which implies that they might not be able to address certain issues or to push the company too far because it is their client. At the same time, consultants have a vital interest to thoroughly implement human and labour rights standards.
- **Audit weariness.** There exists a tension between advising certain behaviours and wanting to see those practices at least taken on board. Classical CSR approaches call their follow-up mechanisms "audits", contemporary consultancies rather talk about "consulting visits".
- **Five systematic problems that exist in all CSR assessment tools:**
  - The problem of measurement of the factual impact of CSR consultancies.
  - The finding of workplace issues through monitoring and auditing is not sustainable because companies cannot afford to pay that forever.
  - The problem of internalising human rights issues – it is questionable whether the classical way of CSR reporting about human rights compliance is the right way, or whether non-reporting might be a better way for companies to trigger an internal learning process.
  - The issue of getting corporations think systemically about their supply chain and consider it an integral part of their CSR requirements.
  - The need to put workers at the centre of the discussion. In this context, it is recommended to shift CSR issues from the human resources department to the production department in order to ensure long term sustainability through integration into the production process.