



**An Roinn Gnó,  
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta**  
Department of Business,  
Enterprise and Innovation



# Corporate Social Responsibility for SMEs

Prepared by the Department of Business, Enterprise and  
Innovation, March 2020.

# WHAT IS CSR?

**The European Commission defines Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as ‘the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society’. CSR includes voluntary initiatives or practices that a business or organisation engages in which go ‘beyond compliance’.**

In today’s challenging business environment businesses need to drive their competitive advantage to succeed - but in a responsible manner. CSR is about going ‘beyond compliance’ and not just meeting regulation but exceeding it - making your business more competitive and resilient.

Businesses and organisations that embed CSR at the heart of their business can become more resilient by:

- Driving **sustainability**
- Attracting and retaining **talent**
- Fostering **social cohesion**
- Protecting the **environment**.

# ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

## 'Towards Responsible Business' Ireland's National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility 2017-2020.

Our **vision** for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is that Ireland will be recognised as a Centre of Excellence for responsible and sustainable business practice.

The National Plan **aims** to support businesses in Ireland to create sustainable jobs, embed responsible practices in the marketplace, embrace diversity in the workplace and encourage enterprises to consider their impacts on the environment.

Progress on the implementation of the National Plan is reported annually in the CSR Check. To date CSR Check 2018 and CSR Check 2019 have been published and available at [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie)



# CSR POLICY GOALS

# 1

## AWARENESS

Help employers and employees better understand the benefits of embedding CSR and responsible business practices into the day-to-day activities of businesses operating in Ireland.

# 2

## ACCESS

Support the development of effective CSR practices in business through accessible and appropriate information resources.

# 3

## SUPPORT

Support organisations by promoting and highlighting best practice CSR, CSR news and events.

# 4

## POLICY ALIGNMENT

Advocate and support relevant policy priorities across Government which complement CSR, including implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, Business and Human Rights and the Healthy Workplaces Framework.

## CSR Stakeholder Forum

is a business-led voluntary Forum which includes representatives from business, Government and civil society. It drives the implementation of the National Plan on CSR with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation as secretariat. The Forum is committed to supporting SMEs to adopt CSR into their core business. Forum members and minutes of all meetings can be viewed on [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie)

# SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

**Good CSR practice encourages businesses to go further and do more as they can see the win:win that an effective CSR strategy can achieve on an economic, societal and environmental basis.**

Sharing good practice is a way to highlight the value of CSR and motivate other companies, particularly SMEs into adopting a CSR strategy for their business. This culture of sharing, uniquely facilitated by the CSR Stakeholder Forum, seeks to transform how business operates in Ireland, and in return, the workplace, the marketplace, the community and the environment.

There are over 100 case studies from businesses and organisations available on [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie) that can be accessed or downloaded for free. The case studies provide insight and knowledge on how to get started or how to develop your CSR journey for your business.

Visit [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie) for more information.

# GET INVOLVED

## CSR NETWORK

The CSR Network is for businesses and organisations across Ireland active in CSR who want be part of a growing network to share and drive best practice CSR.

Network members receive regular updates, invitations to outreach events, CSR Forum events and the annual CEO/Leaders Breakfast. If you wish to share your CSR story, learn from your peers and become part of the CSR community please contact us at [csrhub@dbei.gov.ie](mailto:csrhub@dbei.gov.ie)



Membership is free and open to all businesses and organisations that are active in CSR and can provide a CSR case study for the [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie)

# SUPPORTING SMES

Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation



[supportingSMEs.gov.ie](http://supportingSMEs.gov.ie)

Government supports for your business

[supportingSMEs.gov.ie](http://supportingSMEs.gov.ie) is a Government initiative to help Irish start-ups and small businesses navigate the range of Government supports available to them. Complete the online questionnaire to understand what Government supports you are eligible for.

[supportingsmes.gov.ie](http://supportingsmes.gov.ie)



**Prompt  
Payment  
Code**

The **Prompt Payment Code** aims to improve overall business culture in Ireland by promoting fair and responsible business relationships and payment practices. Businesses that sign up to the Prompt Payment Code agree to pay their suppliers on time, as specified in their contracts. Becoming a signatory is easy – contact [promptpayment@dbei.gov.ie](mailto:promptpayment@dbei.gov.ie)

[dbei.gov.ie/PromptPayment](http://dbei.gov.ie/PromptPayment)

# GET STARTED

- **Log onto [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie)** - dedicated website for CSR resources
- **Follow [@csrhubirl](https://twitter.com/csrhubirl)** – for up to date information on CSR nationally and globally
- **Subscribe to the CSRhub newsletter** – keep informed on CSR trends, best practice case studies
- **Download the CSR Case Study template from [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie)** – start telling the story of your organisation and share it widely on [csrhub.ie](http://csrhub.ie)
- **Join the CSR Network** – meet your peers and drive CSR together
- **Email [csrhub@dbei.gov.ie](mailto:csrhub@dbei.gov.ie)** – with any queries you might have

For more information see  
[www.csrhub.ie](http://www.csrhub.ie)



# THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



## THE WORKPLACE

This is about how you support and engage your employees.



## THE ENVIRONMENT

This is about how you reduce, reuse or recycle resources to minimise negative environmental impacts.



## THE COMMUNITY

This is about how you interact with your local community partners and organisations.



## THE MARKETPLACE

This is about how your company makes responsible commercial decisions in dealing with suppliers and customers.

# Businesses are increasingly aligning their CSR Plans to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Further information on the SDGs can be found on [dcae.gov.ie](http://dcae.gov.ie)