

TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

IRELAND'S NATIONAL PLAN ON
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2017-2020



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Foreword by Minister

Government has a shared vision of Ireland becoming a fairer Ireland, with a strong, sustainable economy, full employment and a better quality of life for all Irish citizens. Collaboration between industry, civil society and the public sector is key to achieving this vision.

I am delighted to launch Ireland's 2nd National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility 2017 – 2020 '*Towards Responsible Business*'. This Plan sets out a range of actions that will help to deliver our vision of an Ireland that is recognised as a Centre of Excellence for responsible and sustainable business practice through the adoption and implementation of best practice in CSR in enterprises and organisations.

I believe that the financial crisis and resulting economic crisis that we have come through served as a wake-up call to both businesses and Government. It is clear that placing Corporate Social Responsibility and responsible business practices at the core of what we do every day is not only good for business, but is essential to underpinning our current economic recovery and helping safeguard Ireland against future financial shocks.

Now that we are building the foundation of a growing economy, we have choices, businesses have choices. Developing the talent of our population is a national vision and businesses should build their capacity through their CSR activities to position themselves as an employer of choice to attract and retain talent, maximising their flow of skilled individuals. Increasingly, good CSR practices can provide a business with a competitive advantage.

Recent global challenges, such as the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, present Ireland with considerable economic challenges, and challenges for all businesses in Ireland. This National Plan demonstrates that fully integrating CSR into a business's core functions can act as a magnet and catalyst for talent and investment, increase market share, and make businesses more resilient to external shocks. Embedding good CSR practices can have a beneficial impact on both the competitiveness of individual enterprises and Ireland's national position on the international competitiveness rankings over the coming years.

The Government will continue to champion responsible business practices across all sectors and encourage enterprises to transform the way in which they impact on the marketplace, the workplace, the community, and the environment. By working together we will create a business environment that is comprehensively sustainable and a brighter future for all.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frances". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Frances Fitzgerald T.D.

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise and Innovation

Message from the Chairperson



Ireland has a long tradition of corporate social responsibility. Long before the term was coined, businesses were looking out for their staff and the communities in which they were located.

The Guinness family, over the centuries, funded medical facilities, provided community housing and opened public spaces in Dublin. It was altruistic, but it wasn't just altruism – they knew well that a contented, happy and more simply, a well-fed and healthy staff boosted productivity.

There was a multiplicity of motivation – all of it advancing the common good.

And today, that sense of giving back and acting in the common good still pervades: small businesses around the country support local clubs and charities and, through that, strengthen the communities that their businesses, and the jobs they sustain, rely on. Green technologies are being applied, not just to save on costs, but because businesses know that the environment we all share needs to be looked after.

Over the next three years, the Government is asking us – the business community – to work harder at putting our principles into effect. It is asking us to protect our environment; support our staff; procure and act ethically; and consider our role in the community.

The CSR Forum – which I have been asked to chair – will support the Government in sharing best practice approaches to our responsibilities and work to create opportunities from those actions. We will do this by outreach to the business community and by creating tools to support businesses on their CSR journey.

But the Forum will also be about delivery of tangible actions within the Plan, achieved through a new level of collaboration between the business community and Government Departments and Agencies. Each year, we will be undertaking a progress review of the implementation of Ireland's national plan on CSR. We will be asking what goals businesses have achieved, and how Government policy has encouraged and enabled more responsible business activity. The Plan will be further strengthened by a Work Programme for the Forum, which will be updated over time, as actions are delivered and new opportunities present themselves, to ensure the Plan remains relevant.

We will be inviting policy makers to understand CSR, and the benefits it can offer in developing business sustainability and creating a more robust economy, right across the country. We want CSR and responsible business to become the language of policy platforms concerning business.

And while this plan is heavily focused on business, its objectives and approaches equally apply to public service and indeed other organisations, such as charities and institutions. CSR is about going beyond compliance, and investing in, and committing to, our responsibilities to staff, customers, the environment and the community.

CSR is a boardroom issue; it's a competitiveness issue and it's crucial in building a more sustainable economy and society. We all have a role to play, and I am pleased to offer my public service to helping make that happen over the next three years.

Catherine Heaney

Chairperson of the CSR Stakeholder Forum

1. Vision, Aim and Strategic Goals

Vision

Our vision for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is that Ireland will be recognised as a Centre of Excellence for responsible and sustainable business practice through the adoption and implementation of best practice in CSR in enterprises and organisations.

Aim

The National Plan aims to build on the achievements of the first National Plan on CSR 2014—2016 and to further support businesses in Ireland to create sustainable jobs; embed responsible practices in the marketplace; embrace diversity and promote responsible workplaces; and encourage enterprises to consider their businesses' impacts on the environment. It also aims to align its goals with Government's objective, outlined in the 'Programme for a Partnership Government', of achieving 'a fair society based on a strong economy'.

Strategic Goals

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

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

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

Policy Alignment: Advocate and support relevant policy priorities across Government Departments and their agencies, specifically those which complement CSR, including implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, Business and Human Rights, Healthy Workplaces Framework, etc.

The CSR Stakeholder Forum

The implementation of the actions contained throughout the plan will be overseen by the CSR Stakeholder Forum, chaired by Catherine Heaney, founder and MD of DHR Communications.

The Plan will be further strengthened by a Work Programme for the Forum, which will be updated over time, as actions are delivered and new opportunities present themselves, to ensure the Plan remains relevant.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility in Context

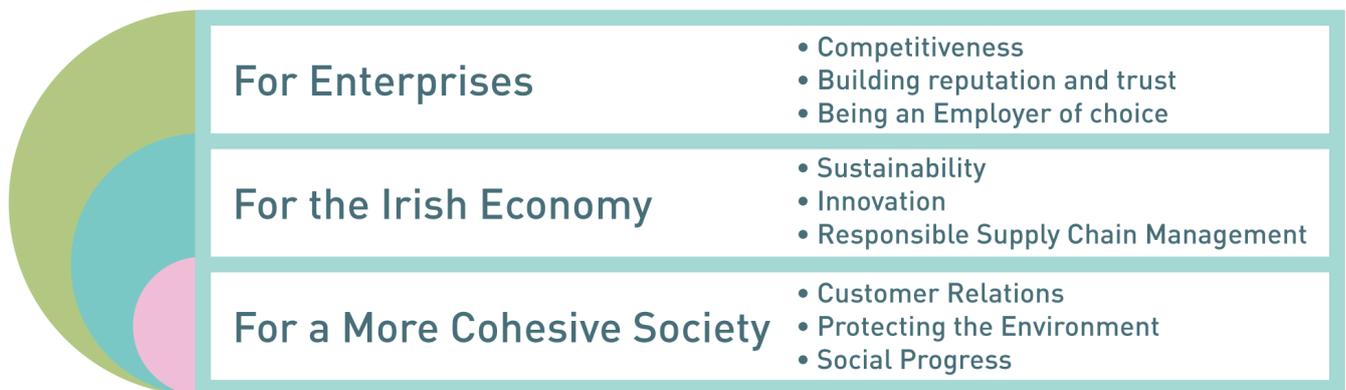
CSR is important for the sustainability, competitiveness and innovation of all businesses operating in Ireland and for Irish society as a whole. In this context, the European Commission defines Corporate Social Responsibility as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society”. The Commission will intensify its work on responsible business conduct and the CSR Stakeholder Forum will monitor this activity to ensure the Plan and work programme remain relevant to evolving trends.

In today's society, there is a growing awareness of the demand for responsible business behaviour. From issues relating to sustainability, ethics and respect for business and human rights to diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace, it has never been more important for businesses to recognise the impacts that they have on both their environment and the society in which they operate.

Businesses are stakeholders in their communities and often share common local concerns. They are ideally positioned to enhance their local business environment by investing time and energy into community projects. Active participation in CSR initiatives within the community will earn businesses respect and build businesses' brands while benefitting the people and the environment.

In today's competitive marketplace, CSR is of strategic significance to all businesses in Ireland. CSR has acquired an increasingly important role in corporate management practices and in corporate decision making.

In a UK Study “88% of consumers said they were more likely to buy from a company that supports and engages in activities to improve society.”¹



Why is CSR Important?

Corporate Social Responsibility is a term that covers a range of activities undertaken by organisations across Ireland and indeed the globe. Many businesses and organisations have adopted similar language, such as ‘responsible business practices’, ‘corporate sustainability’ or ‘sustainable business’.

It is important to remember that the language used is important as a communication tool and is adaptable, but the activities a business engages in and how it communicates or reports on these activities represent best practice. It is also important to remember that regardless of the label, one of the key

¹ Better Business Journey, UK Small Business Consortium, 2006

principles underlying corporate social responsibility is centred on the concept of creating shared value with all stakeholders.

The ability of Government to fund programmes for the betterment of society is dependent on businesses being tax compliant and playing their part in ensuring that funds are available to meet social and economic objectives of government. Beyond this, the Irish Government endorses the voluntary nature of CSR, while recognising that it has a role to play in encouraging and supporting the adoption of socially and environmentally responsible attitudes and practices by enterprise.

Although CSR activity is primarily industry-led and driven, the State has embedded CSR frameworks in various national legislation and regulations (see online version of this document for expanded appendices)².

On 16 June 2011, the UN Human Rights Council endorsed the “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework”. In the Summer of 2017, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) published Ireland’s 1st National Plan on Business and Human Rights 2017 – 2020.

Through this Plan and in collaboration with the CSR Stakeholder Forum, we aim to work across Government Departments and public bodies to progress these policies for the betterment of society as a whole.

The State can help raise the profile of CSR by encouraging its proliferation across industry, irrespective of size and sector. Encouraging industry to set business strategies to transform the way in which their business impacts in the marketplace, workplace, community and the environment will support the creation of a business environment that is comprehensively sustainable.

ACTIONS:

1	Support and promote Government policy in areas which enrich responsible business practices.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Identify existing and emerging Government programmes in areas relevant to corporate social responsibility.	CSR Forum, Dept. of Enterprise & Innovation (DEI), relevant Government Dept.s & Agencies
	Collaborate with relevant Government Departments to examine ways in which such policies can be supported.	CSR Forum, DEI, relevant Government Dept.s and Agencies
2	Collaborate with DFAT through the CSR Stakeholder Forum to communicate the National Plan on Business and Human Rights.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Encourage business representative bodies to support their companies in their efforts to develop human rights focused policies and reporting initiatives as appropriate to their size and nature.	DFAT, CSR Forum, DEI, Enterprise Ireland (EI), IDA Ireland

² A PDF with an expanded appendix can be downloaded from www.csrhub.ie and www.DEI.ie

3. The Evolution of CSR

3.1 Looking Back

In 2014, Government endorsed Ireland's first National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This Plan 'Good for Business, Good for the Community', set out a framework for good CSR practice in Ireland.

The main objective of Ireland's first National Plan on CSR was to raise awareness of the benefits of CSR to businesses and to all stakeholders in society. A lot of progress has been made in raising the profile of CSR over the last three years and the National Plan 2017 – 2020 aims to maintain and build on that progress while focussing on a number of specific areas for action.

A key achievement was the establishment of a CSR Stakeholder Forum in June 2014 (see Appendix 3). The Forum, chaired by industry, meets every quarter, with sub-groups meeting on a more regular basis, to address particular areas of focus. Together with DEI, the CSR Forum has been a driver behind the delivery of a number of CSR initiatives aimed at raising awareness and supporting SMEs in particular.

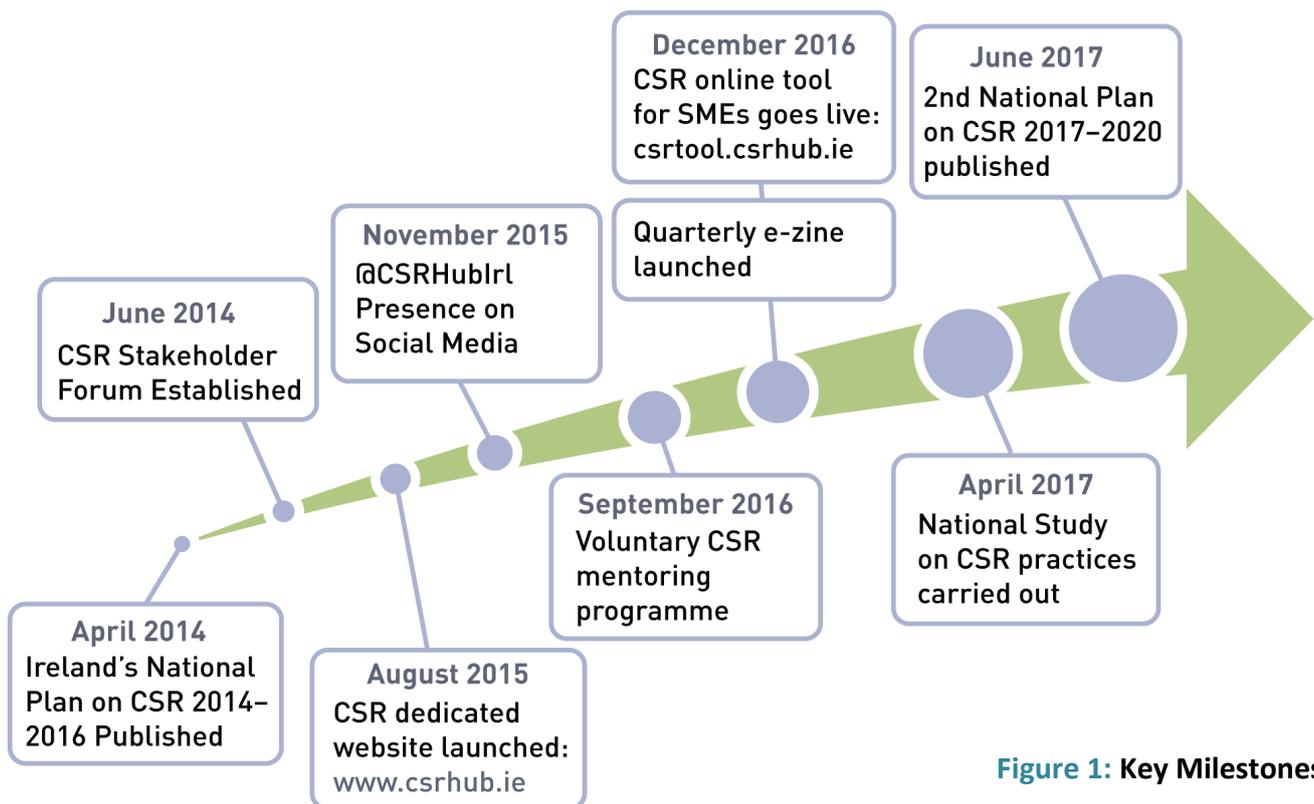


Figure 1: Key Milestones.

Some of these initiatives include a CSR Volunteer Mentoring Programme that will prove most valuable to SMEs, a CSR Tool for SMEs, and a website dedicated to CSR in Ireland.

In the continuing effort to raise awareness of CSR in Ireland, DEI and the Forum promote best practice CSR, news and events via social media and through the publication of a quarterly e-zine.

3.2 Moving Forward

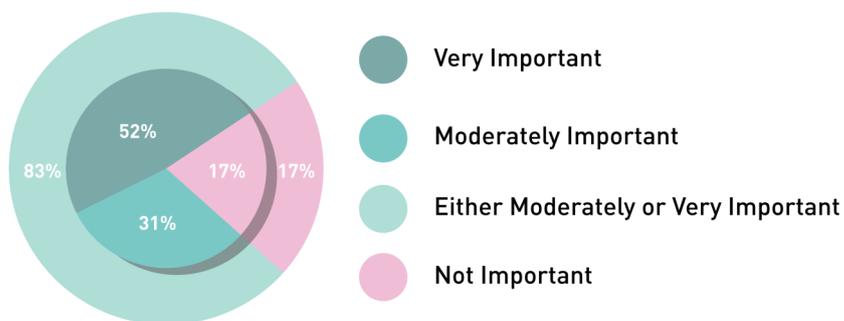
Evolving and emerging international trends in the area of sustainability and responsible business practices will be monitored, ensuring that Ireland is on target to becoming a 'Centre of Excellence for responsible and sustainable business practices'. The graphic below outlines some examples of current and planned national policies which complement the aims of this National Plan.



Figure 2: A Shared Vision

To inform the development of the new National Plan, in early 2017 the Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI) commissioned a baseline assessment study of Corporate Social Responsibility activities in Ireland, covering almost 1400 businesses.

Perceived Importance of CSR in Ireland



A Key Finding from this report is that there is a growing awareness amongst businesses in Ireland of Corporate Social Responsibility.

When asked about 'the importance of CSR to business', **84% of business view CSR as either "very important" (31%) or "moderately important" (52%)³**

³ DEI – Indicative Baseline Assessment Study of CSR Activity in Ireland 2017 (1370 businesses responded)

This 'Towards Responsible Business' National Plan highlights the potential of CSR in improving the competitiveness of enterprises and building their reputation, while at the same time bringing benefits to the wider community through various social, economic and environmental initiatives .

Sustainable growth resulting in deeper stakeholder engagement, attracting and retaining the right talent and a competitive advantage is critical to the success of any organisation.

In our current business environment, consumers want to deal with companies that have ethical principles, investors want to work with organisations that act responsibly throughout their whole supply chain and all stakeholders want to interact with a business that shares their values.

With a greater emphasis on global challenges and issues, the market in Ireland is constantly evolving. Customers are more conscious than ever of the ethical record of companies, how they source their products and the contributions they make to the local community.

Consumer and investor concerns about corporate behaviour across all CSR Dimensions can be a compelling factor in determining what is in a business's best interests in terms of their impact on market share, in attracting and maintaining talent and in creating their competitive advantage.

'90% of Irish food and drink exports are verified under Origin Green, Ireland's national sustainability programme'⁴

Today's employees are looking to work for reputable and sustainable organisations that share their values, and contribute to the betterment of the local community and to society as a whole.

Many businesses in Ireland are adapting and responding to the ever changing business environment through increased use of responsible business practices. The Actions in this National Plan will support businesses of all sizes and sectors to adopt such practice in their efforts '*Towards Responsible Business*'.

The following actions are aimed at ensuring the National Plan remains relevant to the changing business environment, and driving further engagement in CSR.

Key Findings of Baseline Study of CSR in Ireland⁵



of businesses are engaged in CSR activities relating to customer relations



of businesses reported that senior management commitment to CSR is important



of businesses view CSR as important



said that their business encourages employees to engage in CSR activities

⁴ <http://www.origingreen.ie/resilience/>

⁵ DEI – Indicative Baseline Assessment Study of CSR Activity in Ireland 2017 (1370 businesses responded)

ACTIONS:

3	Monitor best practice and evolving trends in CSR and benchmark activity through relevant tools and studies.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Complete a mapping exercise to fully quantify the scale of CSR activity, evolving best practice and emerging trends amongst businesses in Ireland.	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
	Utilise the CSR on-line tool for SMEs to monitor the level of awareness of CSR, its implementation and management.	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
4	Continue to increase awareness of CSR, its value to businesses and to society as a whole.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Establish a panel of CSR Ambassadors to speak at business events around the country.	CSR Forum, Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
	Encourage relevant Government Departments to reflect responsible business practices in their national policies and strategies, where appropriate.	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI), CSR Forum
	Collaborate with Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland in promoting the benefits of CSR to their client companies.	CSR Forum, Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
	Continue to moderate the CSRHub website with fresh relevant content, to post news and events via social media and publish the quarterly CSR e-zine	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI), CSR Forum
5	Develop a CSR Award – Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Create a programme to identify and reward levels of CSR activity amongst individual organisations .	CSR Forum, DEI
6	Develop a Work Programme to Implement the actions contained throughout the Plan.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Develop a Work Programme to advocate, drive and support the actions in the Plan with a view to complementing efforts by other organisations.	CSR Forum, DEI

4. CSR and the Impact of Leadership

The commitment of our business leaders to placing CSR at the heart of their business strategy is the cornerstone to successful and sustainable responsible growth in Ireland.

Embracing CSR remains a valuable asset to all, and businesses large and small should reap the benefits of its positive impact through increased market share, attraction and retention of talent and improved productivity. Mainstreaming responsible business practices into business strategies can help a business become more resilient.

Business leaders should align their CSR model to the Sustainable Development Goals (see Chapter 7) to ensure their business participates in a socially fair, inclusive, environmentally secure and economically prosperous world, better prepared for national and global challenges in the future.

Responsible environmental and social policies that go above and beyond legal requirements are already an integral part of business strategies of many enterprises today. These enterprises are making a valuable contribution to meeting societal challenges.

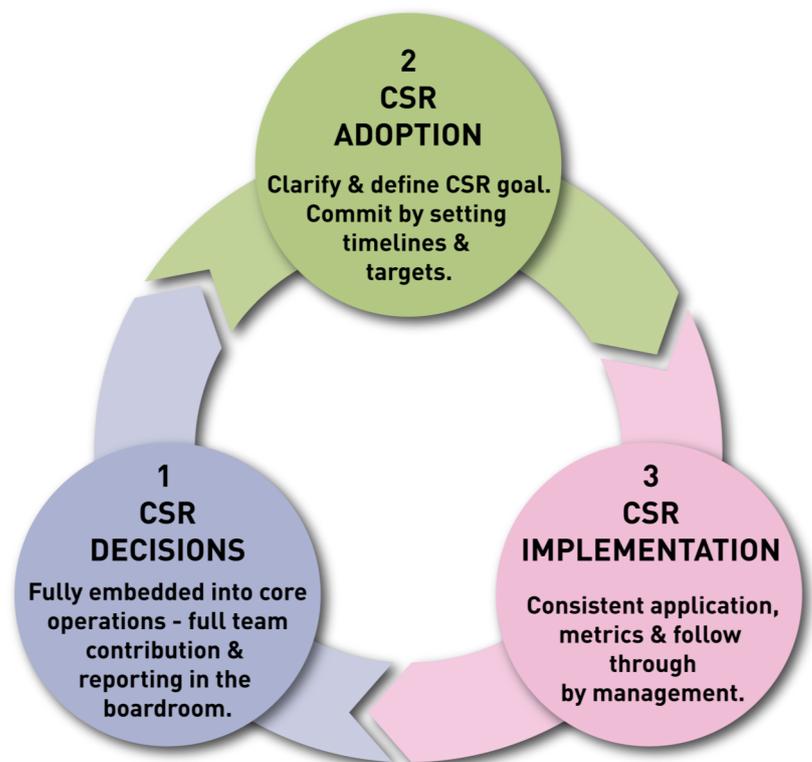


Figure 4: How to Embed CSR into your Business

Awareness and knowledge of CSR at the top makes sustainable business sense. Through the following action this concept will be reinforced.

7	Arrange a CSR Leaders Breakfast Forum.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	The Department and the CSR Stakeholder Forum will hold an annual meeting of the leaders of Forum member organisations to reinforce the concept of best practice through leadership.	DEI, CSR Forum



L-R Tadhg Lucey, CSR Director at BAM Ireland; Dil Wickremasinghe, Newstalk and host of the CSR Awards launch; Ian Talbot, Chief Executive of Chambers Ireland

Chambers Ireland CEO, Mr Ian Talbot says:

“Chambers Ireland is proud of our ongoing role in promoting best practice in CSR to the business community. We are particularly proud of the recent work our CSR Policy Council has undertaken to support CSR amongst SMEs. We will continue to participate as an active member of the CSR Stakeholder Forum to increase awareness of CSR and develop and promote Ireland’s National Plan on CSR.”

Chambers Ireland

The **Chambers Ireland** Corporate Social Responsibility Awards were established in 2004 to recognise the work being carried out by businesses in Ireland to improve the lives of their employees and to enhance the civic environment in which they operate.

This is a unique competition that offers the business community a chance to promote their efforts in CSR and gain recognition for best practice. The awards are presented in a variety of categories covering all areas of CSR.



Responsible business practices should be promoted by business, not only to highlight the positive impacts they are making but also to demonstrate how other businesses can engage in such activity. The CSR Forum encourages all businesses operating in Ireland to promote their CSR activity and celebrate recognition of this activity through applying for awards such as the Chambers Ireland annual CSR Awards. (For further information on awards and supports, see Appendix II). Action 8 aims to develop further these existing awards.

8 Collaborate with Chambers Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government to emphasis the increased need to expand the categories in the annual Chambers CSR Awards.

Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
Promote the Chambers CSR Awards and encourage businesses to apply.	Chambers Ireland, CSR Forum, DEI
Examine and identify further areas of excellence that could be showcased in the Chambers CSR Awards, such as ‘CSR excellence in the Public Service’, ‘Healthy Workplace CSR’, and alignment with the SDGs.	Chambers Ireland, D/Housing, Planning, and Local Government, CSR Forum, DEI

5. Being a Responsible Business

Many businesses across Ireland are embedding sustainable and responsible business practices without identifying such practices under the CSR banner. However, by identifying and communicating their CSR strategies, they would demonstrate their commitment to acting responsibly, supporting their employees, protecting the environment, suppliers and customers, and integrating with their local community. This would help to build reputation, customer loyalty, attract and retain talent and save money while protecting our planet.

It's Your Business - Protect It!

Your Business's Values	Good governance supports a culture of behaviour with integrity and ethical values
Your Business's Purpose	Responsible business practices should be embedded into your overall business purpose with clearly defined, responsible targets and measures
Your Business's Performance	Defined operations should be linked to the impact your business has on the environment, your stakeholders, and on society as a whole, to achieve efficient business management.
Your Business's People	Developing your employees and understanding that an appropriate balance of skills knowledge within your organisation is an important business decision in terms of attracting and retaining talent.
Your Business's Relationships	A focus on the increasing customer demands for ethical products and services, and accountability and transparency pressures from investors and other stakeholders is vital to the viability of your business in today's market.
Your Business's Role in Society	Recognising that your business's relationship to the community in which you operate is a critical factor in your ability to operate effectively.
Your Business's Contribution to the Economy	Making vital contributions to ensure that Ireland is best positioned to attract foreign direct investment and by acting responsibly Ireland maintains its reputation as being a great place in which to do business.

5.1 CSR for SMEs and Micro Enterprises

The term Corporate Social Responsibility can seem off-putting to a lot of smaller businesses, as it is often seen as something only done by large corporates. However, it has huge benefits for SMEs and micro enterprises too. Acting in a way that shows a level of care for staff, community and customers is a good start to a strong CSR ethos.

With this Plan we aspire to communicate that the size of a company is not a factor in the ability of a business to make a positive impact in the world.



of Ireland's enterprise base is SMEs and micro enterprises ⁶

⁶ DEI – Indicative Baseline Assessment Study of CSR Activity in Ireland 2017 (1370 businesses responded)

'54% of SMEs understood enough about the term and the nature of CSR to be able to state that they were engaged in it'⁷

In December 2016, the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Pat Breen T.D., launched the CSR online tool for SMEs <http://csrtool.csrhub.ie/>. This on-line tool is an initiative of the CSR Forum in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise and Innovation to provide support to SMEs and micro enterprises who want to understand more about CSR. It also helps them to recognise that many of the activities they already engage in represent best practice in CSR.

One of our aims in relation to SMEs and micro enterprises in Ireland is to increase the level of awareness of existing supports and resources on CSR practices and to demonstrate that CSR is good for business, through new business won, by attracting and retaining talent, by saving money on energy, and by being an integral part of the community.

ISME

According to Neil McDonnell, CEO of ISME, the association for Irish Small and Medium Enterprises:



“It is likely that you already engage in elements of CSR, such as being environmentally friendly; offering staff training and development; sponsoring local clubs; donating to charities raffles and schools; volunteering your own time and allowing staff to volunteer on company time, or employing a person with a disability.”

If you are not yet active in CSR, or you want to expand your responsible business practices, ISME encourage you to think local and utilise the experience and skills of your people and your business. Choose a partner charity or project and decide what resources and time you can give. Get staff involved and make it a motivating team effort for all to enjoy.

A carefully implemented CSR programme can promote and strengthen your business, as well as making a positive contribution to your workforce, your stakeholders, the environment and the community within which you operate.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND

Business in the Community (BITCI) provide a service 'Responsible Business for SMEs' a dedicated programme to support business owners of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to understand what it means to be a responsible business and why it is important in today's competitive environment.

BITCI's advice is to 'pick something that is important to your business. A bite-sized approach allows you to be focused and responsive to changes. By improving and communicating a simple message about your responsible business practices you can enhance your company's reputation and tap into the market of talent'.

Further details: <http://www.bitc.ie/smes/smes-resources-and-tools/>

⁷ ISME CSR Report 2015

It is important for all businesses to understand that when customers and investors see responsible behaviour and good stakeholder engagement this can lead to building trust and enhancing reputation which is crucial to the success of a small business. Responsible business practices should be a part of the culture of your business, no matter how small. Embedding responsible practices is achievable and worthwhile.



Case Study: Buckley Kiely & Co.

This Cork based accounting and business consulting practice reckons there are no limits to what can be achieved when people get together in the true spirit of giving!

“We have a great team here at Buckley Kiely and getting together for charitable events, raising funds, or supporting each other in many ways, has led us to achieving great things – and enjoying ourselves in the process. Nothing beats that “feel good” feeling, that sense of achievement and the camaraderie engendered by group participation in events to help others. ”⁸

A focus for the Plan ‘Towards Responsible Business 2017 - 2020, as set out in Action 9 below, is to build on the awareness-raising, which took place under Ireland’s first National Plan 2014 – 2016.

9	Encourage more micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to raise their competitiveness through improved CSR engagement.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Generate a repository of case studies for website and publications, e.g. CSR quarterly e-zine	CSR Forum, DEI, ISME, BITCI, Chambers Ireland
	Develop a ‘CSR How-to-Guide’ for SMEs and micro enterprises	CSR Forum, DEI, ISME, BITCI, Chambers Ireland
	Provide information on practical measures to implement resource efficiency	CSR Forum, DEI, Green Business/EPA
	Develop and encourage consortium initiatives for SMEs	ISME, CSR Forum, DEI, Chambers Ireland, BITCI

5.2 CSR for Large Corporates

For larger companies CSR has become a critical part of how they do business as it is embedded as a core mechanism by which they can ensure their business is sustainable. It can act as a risk management tool, and aids transparency, in particular, through non-financial reporting.

⁸ <http://www.buckleykiely.ie/corporate-social-responsibility/> - accessed 08/06/2017

Sustainability reporting has become more and more commonplace for larger companies and the Non-Financial Reporting Directive⁹ places an obligation on certain large companies to report on non-financial information.

Many larger companies have dedicated CSR or Sustainability Managers and have a programme of CSR activities. For larger companies, CSR advice and support is available from business representative organisations such as Chambers Ireland and Business in the Community (BITCI), who are members of the CSR Stakeholder Forum.



The “Business Working Responsibly” Quality Mark

A key organisation that can help larger companies on their sustainability journey is **Business in the Community Ireland** (BITCI). BITCI is a key driver of CSR in Ireland, as a network of companies involved in CSR activities. BITCI is a key member of the CSR Stakeholder Forum. BITCI developed and operates the “Business Working Responsibly” quality mark, which is based on the international standard ISO 26000 and independently audited by NSAI. 25 companies have achieved the ‘Business Working Responsibly’ Mark.¹⁰

According to Tina Roche, CEO of BITCI: “achieving this Mark is a viable test of excellence in CSR and showcases an organisation as best in class.”

Further info: <http://www.bitci.ie>



Case Study: Deloitte

Deloitte.



“Increasingly, we get asked about our CSR practices. The BITCI Mark helps us to tell that story.

“CSR is central to Deloitte’s purpose. Organisations that are clear in their purpose achieve more. Our purpose is to be a quality provider of services in the Irish market, one that does its best for its clients, its people and the wider community, and one that can stand over everything it does.”

– Brendan Jennings, Managing Partner at **Deloitte Ireland**.

Larger companies with well-established sustainable business practices should, as a further step in the evolution of CSR, model or benchmark their CSR activities using internationally recognised CSR guidelines and principles such as:

- OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises
- The Sustainable Development Goals
- The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- Non-Financial Reporting Directive
- ISO26000

⁹ Directive 2014/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 amending Directive 2013/34/EU

¹⁰ As of June 2017

ACTION:

10	Work to increase recognition among large businesses of the value of sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility in boosting employment, attracting and retaining talent and their impact on wider society.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Encourage businesses to report their CSR activity in their Annual Reports, publications, business media and websites.	CSR Forum, DEI
	Raise awareness of, and encourage participation in the National CSR Voluntary Mentorship Programme by large businesses (see Action 13).	CSR Forum, DEI, IDA, Enterprise Ireland

6. The 4 Core Dimensions of CSR



The Environment

Reducing, reusing or recycling resources to minimise negative environmental impacts.



The Community

Your interaction with your local community partners and organisations.



The Workplace

Supporting and engaging with your employees.



The Marketplace

The responsible commercial decisions your company makes in dealing with suppliers and customers.

Corporate social responsibility seeks to add value to an organisation's activities by ensuring that they have a positive impact on society, the environment and the economy.

The core CSR Dimensions set out above are recognised in Ireland and internationally as a reference of best practice CSR. These four Dimensions include legislative and other regulatory requirements applicable in Ireland. They also examine and identify areas where enterprises can go beyond their statutory requirements to support the Workplace, Marketplace, Environment and the Community in which they operate.

46% of SMEs who took part in the CSR On-line Tool for SMEs report that they actively promote work-life balance opportunities for their staff¹¹

Effective and carefully implemented CSR policies and procedures can have very beneficial impacts and measurable gains. The resources and money invested in CSR and carefully implemented CSR policies can help sustain your business.

Embedding CSR policies under each of these Dimensions can actively contribute to delivering on many of the Sustainable Development Goals which were agreed in 2015. (See Chapter 7).

¹¹ As of May 2017—<http://csrtool.csrhub.ie/>

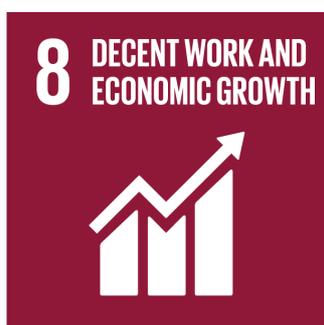


6.1 The Workplace Dimension

CSR in the Workplace includes issues such as equality, diversity, skills and employee engagement. A more diverse workplace involves engaging with sections of society which are under-represented in the employee base.

Key to the success of a business is investing in and valuing the people working within it. To help attract and retain talent, employers should set and implement CSR goals that promote the retention and development of their staff.

Workplace CSR and the Sustainable Development Goals



Workplace CSR covers a wide range of innovative best practice initiatives including flexible working arrangements, staff consultation and active management of equality and diversity measures. The CSR Forum will work with relevant Government departments, agencies and with industry to support and promote the integration of workplace CSR best practice.

11	Identify and examine ways in which workplace related Government policies outlined in Action 1 can be supported and promoted through business.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Encourage businesses to support youth employment and develop or partner with relevant organisations to enhance youth employment opportunities	BITCI, CSR Forum, D/ Enterprise and Social Protection (DESP), D/Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), D/ Education & Skills, DEI
	Promote health and wellbeing as a core value of the workplace	D/Health, CSR Forum, DEI
	Encourage business to develop strategies to integrate diversity and to promote gender equality at all levels in the workplace and for the employment of people with disabilities.	CSR Forum, DEI, DJE, DESP
	Support Migrant Integration and Employment by inviting the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE) to present to the CSR Forum.	D/Justice, CSR Forum, DEI
	Promote employment programmes such as the BITCI led EPIC programme funded by DJE.	BITCI, CSR Forum, DEI, DJE
	Encourage businesses in Ireland to recognise the benefits of employing older workers and to strengthen their intergenerational policies.	CSR Forum, DEI



6.2 The Marketplace Dimension

Marketplace CSR involves how an organisation interacts with its customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

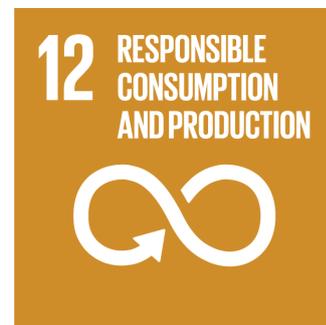
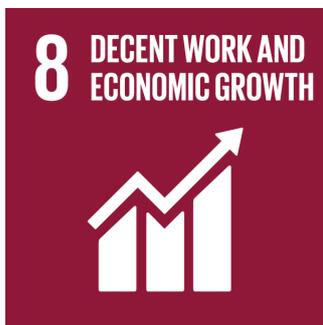
Creating and selling products that meet customers' expectations, engaging in responsible procurement and paying your suppliers on time will build and maintain customer loyalty and promote your brand in the realm of business. Businesses need to engage in responsible supply chain management, in particular those businesses at the top of the supply chain. These responsible business practices go a long way to ensuring that stakeholders will want to engage with your business, further building your reputation.

Corporate Social Responsibility matters to a business's bottom line. Operating responsibly, while taking care of business and successfully managing risks, distinguishes a business from its competitors.

Mainstreaming CSR strategies into day-to-day operations is a win-win for business and will deliver long-term benefits that boost the bottom line while also enhancing local communities.

57% of the manufacturing industry in Ireland reported responsible supply chain management¹²

Marketplace CSR and the Sustainable Development Goals



Through the following actions, businesses can build their reputation and gain trusting relationships with their stakeholders.

12	Support and promote Government policy in areas which enrich responsible business practices in the Marketplace.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Promote the benefits of signing up to the Prompt Payment Code - supporting your suppliers and the local economy.	DEI, CSR Forum

¹² DEI – Indicative Baseline Assessment Study of CSR Activity in Ireland 2017 (1370 businesses responded)

13	Implement National CSR Voluntary Mentorship Programme.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Establish a panel of trained mentors across a range of business skills to mentor start-ups & existing SMEs and micro enterprises, assisting them with business growth and to realise the benefits of responsible business growth.	CSR Forum, DEI, IDA, EI, IDA, Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)
14	Encourage businesses to report CSR activity in their Annual Reports and other publications to communicate these initiatives to their stakeholders thereby building reputation and gaining trust in the marketplace.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Highlight benefits of openness in building stakeholder trust and loyalty to all businesses in all sectors and of all sizes.	CSR Forum, DEI
	Inform large business (500+) of the terms of the Non-Financial Reporting directive.	DEI, CSR Forum
	Inform large business (500+) of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Corporations.	DEI, CSR Forum



6.3 The Environment Dimension

Integrating environmentally sustainable activities across sectors is a key responsible area for economic growth. In a world of finite resources it has never been so important for businesses to evolve to ensure they become sustainably competitive. This requires all organisations across Ireland to become more resource efficient in how they operate their business in order to minimise any negative impact on the environment.

Ireland has pioneered national economic initiatives which have changed consumer behaviour and prevented waste such as the plastic bag levy. Businesses need to include environment considerations at the centre of decision making. They need to consider the circular economy and waste management when developing their business strategies.

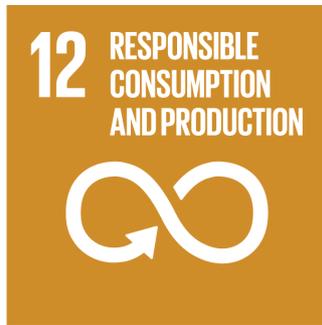
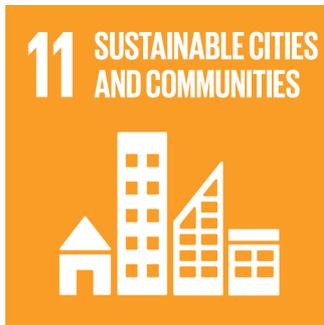
Having a business focus on energy, packaging waste and water usage should be central to strategic planning for all businesses in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint, thus ensuring that industry can make an overall positive impact on the environment.

Businesses will find that making environmental changes around their premises and their operational procedures will also have a positive financial impact for the business. Reducing the amount of paper and packaging used, being energy efficient and reusing or recycling where possible can lessen the overall spend on materials, supplies and energy bills.

60% of SMEs who took the CSR on-line tool for SMEs reported their company chooses goods & services that reduce the use of resources for the least environmental impact.¹³

¹³ As of May 2017—<http://csrtool.csrhub.ie/>

Environment CSR and the Sustainable Development Goals



Businesses should aim not only to minimise the negative impact on the environment but to contribute in a positive manner to sustainable development. We aim to support businesses operating in Ireland in reducing their carbon footprint through the following action.

15	Work to increase the recognition of the impact of business operations on the environment and to encourage businesses to mitigate their negative impacts.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Support and promote environmental policy.	Green Business, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), D/ Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE), CSR Forum, Bord Bia
	Encourage businesses to implement resource efficiencies.	Green Business/EPA, DCCAE, CSR Forum
	Promote the European Commission's Circular Economy Package which helps businesses make the transition to a stronger and more circular economy where resources are used in a more sustainable way.	CSR Forum, BITCI, DEI



6.4 The Community Dimension

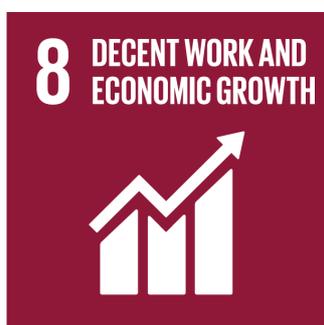
When enterprises visibly invest in their communities, they become a place where people want to work. Community based CSR activity can generate economic and social vibrancy in the local area.

Business activities in the community play an important role in local development and can often create job opportunities for people, including for those with a disability or socially disadvantaged people.

CSR in the Community presents many opportunities for organisations to work with the community and to establish successful partnerships to benefit the local community and its people. Large corporates can offer initiatives such as pro bono services, sponsorships and donations, while small-medium and micro enterprises have a unique set of traits that can blend with their respective communities, creating a more personal relationship with shared values.

This mutually beneficial relationship between enterprises in Ireland and their local communities illustrates CSR at work: businesses can give back to their local communities and in turn the communities will support the business as loyal customers, employees and stakeholders with a vested interest in supporting its growth and success.

Community CSR and the Sustainable Development Goals



Through the following action, the CSR Forum aims to highlight the benefits of developing partnerships in the community, whether with other businesses, charities, clubs or groups.

16	Encourage businesses to build their CSR capacity in the Community.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Promote health and wellbeing partnership initiatives between businesses and their local community.	CSR Forum, DEI, D/Health
	Highlight best practice case studies to showcase partnerships between businesses and their communities.	CSR Forum, DEI
	Support the Social Innovation Fund Ireland by inviting them to speak to the CSR Stakeholder Forum.	CSR Forum, DEI

7. The Sustainable Development Goals

Our planet faces considerable economic, social and environmental challenges. On September 25th, 2015, 193 countries agreed and adopted a set of goals as part of a new global sustainable development agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) define global priorities for 2030 and represent an opportunity to put the world on a sustainable path. There are 17 goals in total, each with a number of targets, totalling 169 targets across the 17 goals.



The Goals cover the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. They aim to address inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialization, oceans, ecosystems, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice.

Government, the business sector, as well as civil society and the public, all have an important role to play in delivering the global goals for Sustainable Development. In Ireland, a whole of Government approach is being taken in delivering these goals, with the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment having lead responsibility for the promotion and oversight of national implementation of the SDGs across Government. Relevant Government Departments and relevant public bodies will engage with businesses and stakeholder to achieve and deliver the SDGs for Ireland.

Successful implementation of the global goals across all sectors, will support Ireland's objective to deliver a high-skilled, competitive economy that benefits people throughout Ireland. It will also support delivery of our ambition that Ireland will be recognised as a Centre of Excellence for responsible and sustainable business practice.

7.1 Aligning the SDGs with your Business's CSR Strategy

The United Nations Global Sustainability Index (UNGSi) will rank companies on their sustainability in a transparent manner. The criteria for the index will favour those companies who are working not only to limit the environmental and social footprint of their activities, but also to achieve a net positive impact - in other words those companies aiming to build valuable relationships with their customers, employees and other stakeholders.

Only 30-60% of a company's full value is disclosed in its annual report.¹⁴

In 2017 the UNGSi tracked the efforts of 100 top companies across the globe, on their contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. This tracking was based on the non-financial reporting disclosed in their Annual Reports and through the business media. The UNGSi tracked commitment to actions including climate change, gender equality, and their commitment to good health and wellbeing.

Aligning the SDGs to a business's CSR strategy will create transparency with customers, investors and civil society, and help businesses build their reputation on a domestic and international level.

The business activity, investment, and innovation of businesses operating in Ireland, from micro enterprises to multinationals, is a key driver of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation. Businesses should apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges and together businesses and Government will foster a dynamic and well-functioning business sector in Ireland. Alignment is the first step for businesses in playing their part in delivering the goals with a view to adopting them at a more strategic level, ultimately changing business models to drive their achievement.

However, it is extremely important to recognise that just because a company is not yet communicating on their CSR activities or their commitment to the SDGs, does not mean that they are not focused on responsible and sustainable business practices. Through Action 16 of this Plan 'Towards Responsible Business', the CSR Forum intends to support businesses in Ireland to communicate the responsible activities they engage in across their whole business model.

17	Encourage businesses to align their CSR strategy and activity to the Sustainable Development Goals	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Define the business case and market opportunities for business to drive the SDGs and gather relevant examples to encourage businesses to align the SDGs to their CSR strategies, displaying the potential positive impacts their business activities can make nationally and internationally for the betterment of society as a whole.	CSR Forum, DEI, BITCI, DCCAE

¹⁴ SDG Commitment Report 100, UN Global Sustainability Index Institute, 2017

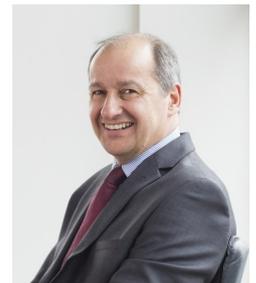


An Irish Case Study: What Sustainability Means at Musgrave

Musgrave believe that sustainability goes hand-in-hand with the overall health of the community. Recognising that within business, they have an opportunity and a responsibility to shape and influence positive change, they have aligned nine of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals relevant to their business to their Corporate Social Responsibility strategy. This action will ensure that they minimise their negative impacts and inspire their stakeholders.

“Sustainability is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹⁵

Mr Chris Martin, CEO, says “Through the implementation of consistent sustainability policies and clear targets, we have developed a robust business model that encourages healthier living and enriches the lives of our customers. We have an ambitious agenda to grow the business, an agenda which will continue to see sustainable business practices at its core.”



The Musgrave Food Academy initiative works with and nurtures small businesses throughout Ireland through their journey from start-up to getting their products on our shelves. In 2015, the programme moved up a gear and now supports over 600 local suppliers on all aspects of the food business, from branding and marketing to finance and market research .

Award winning commitment to sustainable business practice



Musgrave have achieved the BITCI ‘Business Working Responsibly Mark’, firmly establishing them as one of Ireland’s leading sustainable companies.



Musgrave was the first retail and wholesale company to have achieved the Bord Bia Origin Green Sustainability Standard. Musgrave is opening up new opportunities to build on the sustainability of the Irish supply chain from farm to fork.

¹⁵ <http://musgravesustainability.com/>

Table of Actions

1	Support and promote Government policy in areas which enrich responsible business practices.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Identify existing and emerging Government programmes in areas relevant to corporate social responsibility.	CSR Forum, Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI), relevant Government Departments and Agencies
	Collaborate with relevant Government Departments to examine ways in which such policies can be supported.	CSR Forum, DEI, relevant Government Departments and Agencies
2	Collaborate with DFAT through the CSR Stakeholder Forum to communicate the National Plan on Business and Human Rights.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Encourage business representative bodies to support their companies in their efforts to develop human rights focused policies and reporting initiatives as appropriate to their size and nature.	DFAT, CSR Forum, DEI, Enterprise Ireland (EI), IDA Ireland
3	Monitor best practice and evolving trends in CSR and benchmark activity through relevant tools and studies.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Complete a mapping exercise to fully quantify the scale of CSR activity, evolving best practice and emerging trends amongst businesses in Ireland.	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
	Utilise the CSR on-line tool for SMEs to monitor the level of awareness of CSR, its implementation and management.	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
4	Continue to increase awareness of CSR, its value to businesses and to society as a whole.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Establish a panel of CSR Ambassadors to speak at business events around the country.	CSR Forum, Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
	Encourage relevant Government Departments to reflect responsible business practices in their national policies and strategies, where appropriate.	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI), CSR Forum

4 (cont'd)	Continue to increase awareness of CSR, its value to businesses and to society as a whole	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Collaborate with Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland in promoting the benefits of CSR to their client companies.	CSR Forum, Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI)
	Continue to moderate the CSRHub website with fresh relevant content, to post news and events via social media and publish the quarterly CSR e-zine	Department of Enterprise and Innovation (DEI), CSR Forum
5	Develop a CSR Award – Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Create an assessment programme to identify and reward levels of CSR activity amongst individual organisations .	CSR Forum, DEI
6	Develop a Work Programme to Implement the actions contained throughout the Plan.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Develop a Work Programme to advocate, drive and support the actions in the Plan with a view to complementing efforts by other organisations.	CSR Forum, DEI
7	Arrange a CSR Leaders Breakfast Forum.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	The Department and the CSR Stakeholder Forum will hold an annual meeting of the leaders of Forum member organisations to reinforce the concept of best practice through leadership.	DEI, CSR Forum
8	Collaborate with Chambers Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government to emphasis the increased need to expand the categories in the annual Chambers CSR Awards.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Promote the Chambers CSR Awards and encourage businesses to apply.	Chambers Ireland, CSR Forum, DEI
	Examine and identify further areas of excellence that could be showcased in the Chambers CSR Awards, such as 'CSR excellence in the Public Service', 'Healthy Workplace CSR', and alignment with the SDGs.	Chambers Ireland, D/Housing, Planning, and Local Government, CSR Forum, DEI

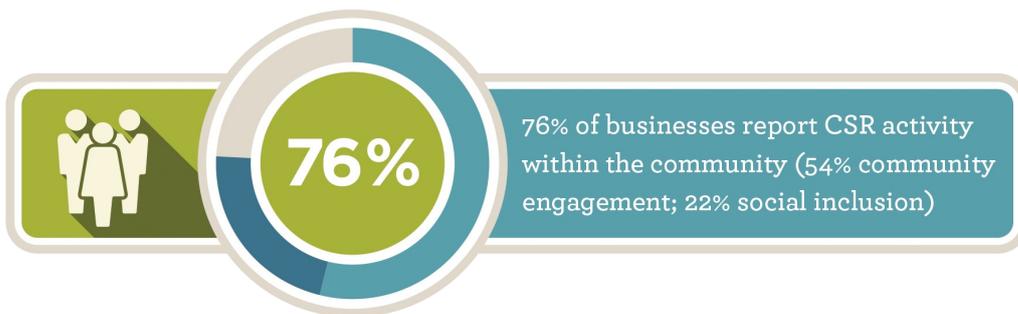
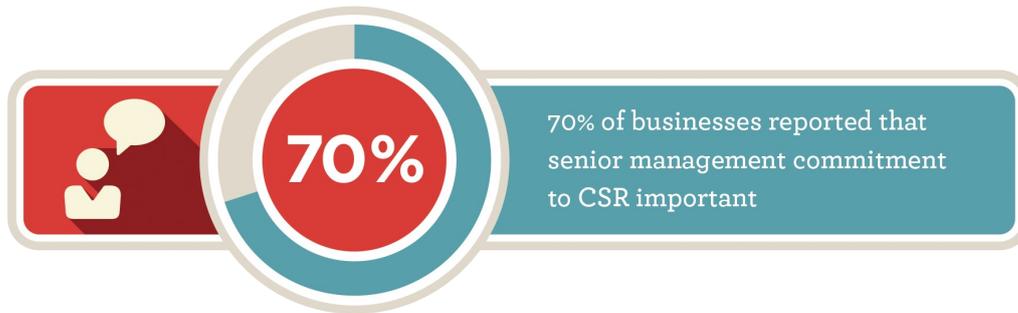
9	Encourage more micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to raise their competitiveness through improved CSR engagement.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Generate a repository of case studies for website and publications, e.g. CSR quarterly e-zine.	CSR Forum, DEI, ISME, BITCI, Chambers Ireland
	Develop a 'CSR How-to-Guide' for SMEs and micro enterprises.	CSR Forum, DEI, ISME, BITCI, Chambers Ireland
	Provide information on practical measures to implement resource efficiency	CSR Forum, DEI, Green Business/EPA
	Develop and encourage consortium initiatives for SMEs	ISME, CSR Forum, DEI, Chambers Ireland, BITCI
10	Work to increase recognition among large businesses of the value of sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility in boosting employment, attracting and retaining talent and their impact on wider society.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Encourage businesses to report their CSR activity in their Annual Reports, publications, business media and websites.	CSR Forum, DEI
	Raise awareness of, and encourage participation in the National CSR Voluntary Mentorship Programme by large businesses (see Action 12).	CSR Forum, DEI, IDA, Enterprise Ireland
11	Identify and examine ways in which workplace related Government policies outlined in Action 1 can be supported and promoted through business.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Encourage businesses to support youth employment and develop or partner with relevant organisations to enhance youth employment opportunities	BITCI, CSR Forum, D/Social Protection (DESP), D/Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), D/Education & Skills, DEI
	Promote health and wellbeing as a core value of the workplace	D/Health, CSR Forum, DEI
	Encourage business to develop strategies to integrate diversity and to promote gender equality at all levels in the workplace and for the employment of people with disabilities.	CSR Forum, DEI, DJE, DESP
	Support Migrant Integration and Employment by inviting the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE) to present to the CSR Forum.	D/Justice, CSR Forum, DEI

11 (cont'd)	Identify and examine ways in which workplace related Government policies outlined in Action 2 can be supported and promoted through business.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Promote employment programmes such as the BICI led EPIC programme funded by DJE.	BITCI, CSR Forum, DEI DJE
	Encourage businesses in Ireland to recognise the benefits of employing older workers and to strengthen their intergenerational policies.	CSR Forum, DEI
12	Support and promote Government policy in areas which enrich responsible business practices in the Marketplace.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Promote the benefits of signing up to the Prompt Payment Code - supporting your suppliers and the local economy.	DEI, CSR Forum
13	Implement National CSR Voluntary Mentorship Programme	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Establish a panel of trained mentors across a range of business skills to mentor start-ups and existing SMEs and micro enterprises, assisting them with business growth and to realise the benefits of responsible business.	DEI, EI, LEO, CSR Forum
14	Encourage businesses to report CSR activity in their Annual Reports and other publications to communicate these initiatives to their stakeholders thereby building reputation and gaining trust in the marketplace.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Highlight benefits of openness in building stakeholder trust and loyalty to all businesses in all sectors and of all sizes.	CSR Forum, DEI
	Inform large business (500+) of the terms of the Non-Financial Reporting directive.	DEI, CSR Forum
	Inform large business (500+) of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Corporations.	DEI, CSR Forum

15	Work to increase the recognition of the impact of business operations on the environment and encourage businesses to mitigate their negative impacts.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Support and promote environmental policy.	Green Business, Environmental Protection Agency, CSR Forum, D/Communications, Climate Action & Environment, Bord Bia
	Encourage businesses to implement resource efficiencies.	Green Business/EPA, DCCA, CSR Forum
	Promote the European Commission's Circular Economy Package which helps businesses make the transition to a stronger and more circular economy where resources are used in a more sustainable way.	CSR Forum, BITCI, DEI
16	Encourage businesses to build their CSR capacity in the Community.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Promote health and wellbeing partnership initiatives between businesses and their local community.	CSR Forum, DEI, D/Health
	Highlight best practice case studies to showcase partnerships between businesses and their communities.	CSR Forum, DEI
	Support the Social Innovation Fund Ireland by inviting them to speak to the CSR Stakeholder Forum.	CSR Forum, DEI
17	Encourage businesses to align their CSR strategy and activity to the Sustainable Development Goals.	
	Steps Necessary for Delivery	Responsible Body
	Develop a template document to encourage businesses to align the SDGs to their CSR strategies, displaying the potential positive impacts their business activities can make nationally and internationally for the betterment of society as a whole.	CSR Forum, DEI, BITCI, DCCA

Appendix 1: Factsheet

Key Findings of Baseline Study of CSR in Ireland



Appendix 2: Awards and Supports

A number of CSR awards and supports are in operation at national level including:

Business in the Community's (BITCI) best practice database provides a series of free tools to help you on your responsible business journey. Should you require support in developing a comprehensive Responsible Business strategy, BITCI has various membership streams to explore.



Further details: <http://www.bitc.ie/>

The BITCI '**Business Working Responsibly**' Mark, is based on ISO 26000 and independently audited by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). The Mark provides comprehensive guidance for organisations on Corporate Social Responsibility.



Further details: <http://www.bitc.ie/csr-certification>

Chambers Ireland sponsors the annual CSR Awards to recognise the work being carried out by organisations operating in Ireland to improve the workplace for their employees and to enhance the environment within which they operate. Local Chambers also provide region specific awards for good CSR practices.



Further details: <http://www.chambers.ie/events/corporate-social-responsibility-awards>

The **Good Governance Awards** acknowledge, encourage and promote good governance practice in the area of annual reports. They also recognise and provide practical examples to other organisations and aim to support and encourage the use of annual reports and financial statements to showcase the embracement of and adherence to good governance.



Further details: <https://goodgovernanceawards.ie>

Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI) is funded by the Dept Housing, planning, and Local Government to match corporate investment in support of the most innovative solutions to critical social issues in Ireland. In the 2016 Programme for Government, €50m was allocated to an investment match fund. With corporate support, SIFI intend to double this figure and ignite real change in Ireland and enable the best social innovations to scale and maximise their impact.



Further details: <http://www.socialinnovation.ie>

Since 2004, **Social Entrepreneurs Ireland** have supported 204 social entrepreneurs, investing over €6.7m in projects that directly impacted the lives of 520,000 people.



Further details: <http://www.socialinnovation.ie>





The Workplace Dimension

National Workplace Wellbeing Awards recognise employers across the public and private sector that are excelling at promoting workplace wellbeing within their organisations. The awards are part of the National Workplace Wellbeing Day programme, an initiative of Food Drink Ireland that is supported by Ibec.



Further details: <http://www.fooddrinkireland.ie/Sectors/NHF/WWC.nsf/vPages/Home>

The **Healthy Workplace Framework** provides guidance, which can be adapted to any workplace setting, to help create and sustain healthy workplaces throughout Ireland. The development of the Healthy Workplace Framework is an initiative under the Healthy Ireland agenda and is being led by the Department of Health and the Department of Enterprise and Innovation in partnership with stakeholders.

Further details: <http://www.healthyireland.ie/health-initiatives/workplaces>

Healthy You: Early Intervention Programme a joint initiative between the Department of Health and the Department of Employment and Social Protection which supports more people to get back to work if they have an illness or disability. Success of this programme requires collaboration between employers, employees, health care providers, non-government organisations and Government Departments and services.



Further details:

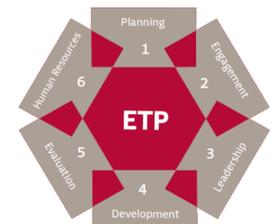
<https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/HealthyYouConsultationForumDublinCastle-19December2016.pdf>

The **30% Club Ireland** has a goal to achieve better gender balance at all levels in leading Irish businesses. The 30% Club believes that gender balance on boards and executive leadership not only encourages better leadership and governance, but further contributes to better all-round board performance, and ultimately increased corporate performance for both companies and their shareholders.



Further details: <https://30percentclub.org/about/chapters/ireland>

The National Standards Authority of Ireland's (NSAI) programme '**Excellence Through People**', provides a business improvement model for organisations to enhance performance and realise strategies through the management and development of their people. The focus of Excellence Through People is to get organisations to look at their people as a key source of competitive advantage. The scheme is available to all organisations.



Further details: <https://www.nsai.ie/ExcellenceThroughPeople.aspx>

The **EPIC** Programme and **Ready for Work**, two of BITCI Business Action on Employment initiatives for workplace diversity and inclusion, involve working with immigrants and people with high barriers to



employment to help them find jobs and access training and education.

Further details: <http://www.bitc.ie/who-we-work-with/job-seekers-and-referral-agencies>

The **Youth Guarantee** scheme is aimed at supporting and providing young people under the age of 25 with a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a short time of becoming unemployed.



Further details: <https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Youth-Guarantee-Ireland.aspx>

In 2014 **The Employment and Youth Activation Charter** was launched to encourage companies when recruiting to consider and support jobseekers who are currently on the Live Register. Signing up to the Charter can play an integral part in delivering on a company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda by enabling staff to link in and help create real and important opportunities for jobseekers.

Further details: <https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/The-Employment-and-Youth-Activation-Charter.aspx>

Feeding Ireland's Future is an initiative led by ECR Ireland in collaboration with the Department of Social Protection and Youthreach whereby retailers, suppliers and service providers to the Irish food and grocery sector give free pre-employment training to young unemployed people. Through CV workshops, interview preparation and interaction with experienced HR people, young people have the opportunity to find out exactly what employers are looking for in a job candidate.



Further details: <https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/ECR-Feeding-Irelands-Future-Video.aspx>

Skills for Work is a national programme aimed at providing training opportunities to help employees deal with the basic skills demands of the workplace. The initiative is funded by the Irish Government under the Department of Education and Skills, and delivered by the newly formed Education & Training Boards (ETB) across the country. The project is managed nationally by Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB.



Further details: <http://skillsforwork.ie/>

Work / Life Balance Day - reduce stress in the workplace and improve the quality of life of your workforce

Further details: <http://www.worklifebalance.ie/>

Job Shadow Day - captures the imagination of employers across Ireland who are working for inclusion



Further details: <http://www.iase.ie/>



The Marketplace Dimension

The **National Procurement and Supply Chain Awards** celebrate excellence in public and private procurement in Ireland and aim to encourage teams and individuals to constantly raise the bar, to innovate and maintain their commitment to achieving excellence in procurement in their day-to-day endeavours. They highlight the importance of best practice supply chain management and how these management disciplines are becoming board room level strategies for future growth and success.”

Further details:

<http://www.iipmm.ie/affiliations/national-procurement-and-supply-chain-awards.359.html>

The **Prompt Payment Code (PPC)** was developed by business for business with the aim of improving cash flow between businesses and moving towards a culture of prompt payment. The Code is supported by DEI, and driven by their partners, the Irish Institute of Credit Management (IICM), ISME, the Small Firms Association (SFA), the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), Chambers Ireland and The Banking & Payments Federation Ireland (BPF). By signing up to the PPC businesses are providing their suppliers with cash flow certainty which means businesses can build stronger relationships with their customers, confident that they will be paid on time.



Further details: <https://promptpayment.ie/>

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade launched Ireland's first **National Plan on Business and Human Rights** in the Summer of 2017, to promote responsible business practices at home and overseas by all Irish enterprises in line with Ireland's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights globally.



Further details:

<https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/human-rights/human-rights-in-ireland/national-plan-on-business-and-human-rights/>

The **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises** provide voluntary principles and standards for responsible business conduct consistent with applicable laws and internationally recognised standards.



Further details:

<https://www.DEI.ie/en/What-We-Do/Trade-Investment/Bilateral-Trade/OECD-Guidelines-for-Multinational-Enterprises/>

Recognising that SMEs are critical to the Irish economy, in 2013 the Office of Government Procurement and the Department of Enterprise and Innovation set up a High Level Group to enhance **SME Access to Public Procurement**.



Further details: <http://ogp.gov.ie/>



The Environment Dimension

The **Green Awards** are a benchmark for excellence for those demonstrating best green practice in Ireland. Apart from promoting responsible businesses, the awards are also aimed at promoting responsible consumption by making visible well performing businesses.



Further details: <http://www.greenawards.ie>

Origin Green is the only sustainability programme in the world operating on a national scale, uniting government, the private sector and food producers through Bord Bia, the Irish Food Board. Doing business with Ireland's Origin Green members means you are in partnership with those who have a proven commitment to sustainability. Verified Origin Green members include Musgrave, McDonalds, Sodexo, Lidl Ireland, Compass Ireland, and HM Host.



Further details: <http://www.origingreen.ie>

The **Sustainable Energy Awards** run by SEAI recognise and reward excellence in all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Be a part of an ambitious group of energy leaders working towards a low carbon energy future for Ireland. Awards are given in various categories, including 'Small Business'.



Further details: http://www.seai.ie/Your_Business/Sustainable_Energy_Awards

The **National Waste Prevention Programme** (NWPP) is led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in association with the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment. Oversight and direction for the programme comes through the National Waste Prevention Committee.



Further details: <http://www.epa.ie/waste/nwpp>

GreenBusiness.ie Green Business is a free resource efficiency service for SMEs in Ireland funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the NWPP.



Further details: <http://greenbusiness.ie>

GreenHospitality.ie is a resource for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism in Ireland providing advice, support, consultancy and a certification programme.



Further details: <http://greenhospitality.ie>

The **Green Teams National Programme** is designed to provide training and certification for staff who are involved in promoting good environmental and sustainability practice in their organisation.



Further details: <http://www.greenteams.ie>

SMILE Resource Exchange is a free service for businesses that encourages the exchanging of resources between its members to reduce waste going to landfill.



Further details: <http://www.smileexchange.ie>



The Community Dimension

The **Community and Council Awards** presented by IPB Insurance and the Local Authorities Members Association (LAMA) recognise community and local authorities working together. Local Councillors nominate projects to bring national recognition to projects that may otherwise go unrecognised.



Further details: <http://lamaawards.org>

The Friendly Business Awards, supported by Bank of Ireland, is operated by **Junior Chamber International** (JCI). JCI recognise the pivotal role of small businesses in the community, and the Friendly Business Awards aim to celebrate the value these businesses bring to local communities every day.



Further details: <http://jciireland.ie/programs/national-programs/friendly-business-awards>

Business to Arts brokers, enables and supports partnership and collaboration between businesses, artists and cultural organisations; bringing the arts and artists into mutually beneficial relationships across society.



Further details: <http://www.businesstoarts.ie>

Food Cloud works across the community with farms, manufacturers and suppliers to redistribute surplus food, tackle food waste and help reduce CO2 emissions.



Further details: <https://food.cloud/>

The Charities Regulator is Ireland's national statutory regulator for charitable organisations which maintains a public register of charitable organisations operating in Ireland and ensures their compliance with the Charities Acts.



Further details: <http://www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie>

Further Information

The **Department of Enterprise and Innovation** developed and maintain the CSRHub website as a online hub of resources related to Corporate Social Responsibility in Ireland. Details of additional awards and supports as well as case studies and other useful information can be found on the site.



Further details: <http://www.csrhub.ie>

Appendix 3: Members of the CSR Stakeholder Forum

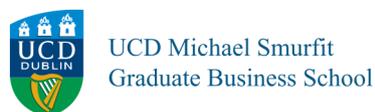
This CSR Stakeholder Forum was established in June 2014 to increase awareness of CSR, its value to businesses and to society as a whole, to inform further development of the CSR policy framework in Ireland, and to ensure that the National Plan on CSR remains relevant to evolving international best practice and thinking.

The Stakeholder Forum brings together representatives of the business sector, the public sector other key stakeholder and the wider community. It meets quarterly and is chaired by Catherine Heaney of DHR Communications.



Business to Arts
Developing Creative
Partnerships





Appendix 4: Legislation and National Policy

The Irish Government provides a regulatory framework which ensures that basic requirements in relation to employment law, environmental protection and fair trading are in place. In this context, the Government's support for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and responsible business practices is spread across a range of individual Government Departments and agencies.

This appendix introduces the Irish Government's activities across the CSR agenda, specifies the supporting Government department, and provides a link to any related websites.

Please note: this appendix is not included in the printed version of the plan.



The Workplace Dimension

Conditions of Employment	
Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<p>Statutory Obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of Wages Act, 1991 • National Minimum Wage Act, 2000 • Protection of Young Persons Employment Act, 1996 • Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994 • Industrial Relations Acts EC (Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 131 of 2003) • Employment Permits Act 2003 & 2006 • Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973 • Protection of Employees (Fixed Term) Work Act, 2003 • Protection of Employees (Part Time) Work Act, 2001 • Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 • European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003 • Disability Act, 2005 • Carer's Leave Act, 2001 • Public Sector Agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Supportive company HR policies ✓ Transparency in terms and conditions, reward practices, etc. ✓ Training and career development opportunities ✓ Company bonus and Pension Schemes ✓ Health related benefits ✓ Sports & Social benefits ✓ Workplace Innovation Programmes ✓ Participation in workplace improvement schemes, e.g. "Great Place to Work", "Excellence Through People" ✓ Best Practice Human Resource Management

Conditions of Employment (cont'd)

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Guidance Documents

- Code of Practice on Access to Part-Time Working (S.I. No. 8 of 2006)
- Code of Practice for Protecting Persons Employed in other People's Homes (S.I. No. 239 of 2007)
- Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work, 2007, Health & Safety Authority (HSA)
- Code of Practice 01/17 on Appointments to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service, Commission for Public

Equality & Diversity / Work Life Balance

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Statutory Obligations

- Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2011
- Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2015
- Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2015
- The Disability Act, 2005

Guidance Documents

- National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020: Creating a Better Society for All, Department of Justice and Equality
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015 – 2024
- Roadmap to Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Department of Justice and Equality, 2015
- Code of Practice, under the Disability Act 2005, on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies, National Disability Authority
- "Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach", the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, National Disability Authority
- Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future, Department of Justice and Equality

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Equality and Diversity policies e.g. employment targets for People with Disabilities (e.g. Target for Public Service Bodies to employ at least 3% of the workforce under Part 5 of the Disability Act, 2005)
- ✓ Proactive awareness programmes, initiatives and training on equality, diversity and human rights for staff and related stakeholders.
- ✓ Employment equality reviews and Action Plans.
- ✓ Positive action to cater for employees who have special needs.
- ✓ Equal pay audits
- ✓ Equality management committee
- ✓ Dignity at Work Charter
- ✓ Flexible working arrangements
- ✓ Proactive gender equality targets
- ✓ Recruitment and Selection Toolkit produced by The Public Appointments Service
- ✓ Use of different formats e.g. Braille, plain English, and languages to communicate with both internal and external customers.
- ✓ Job Shadow Day / National Supported Employment Week, Irish Association of Supported Employment

Equality & Diversity / Work Life Balance (cont'd)

Key Policy instruments and Guidance (cont'd)

Guidance Documents

- Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work, 2014, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- Achieving Equality in Intercultural Workplaces, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circulars on work-life balance arrangements
- Guides to Human Rights for the Civil and Public Service, Irish Human Rights Commission
- Employer Disability Information – Confidential Advice and Information for Employers on the Recruitment, Employment and Retention of People with Disabilities
www.employerdisabilityinfo.ie

Employee Health & Well Being

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Statutory Obligations

- Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Acts, 2005 and 2010
- Safe Pass Regulations

Guidance Documents

- Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work, 2007, Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
- Healthy Ireland – the Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025, Department of Health
- BeSMART.ie - Business electronic Safety Management and Risk assessment Tool (HSA)
- Workplace Health Toolkit for Small Businesses (HSA)
- Safe System of Work Plan (SSWP) for Construction
- Staying Fit for Farming, a health booklet for farmers (National Centre for Men's Health, Institute of Technology, Carlow) (HSA)

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Company Health and Safety policies
- ✓ Staff Wellbeing strategies and programmes, e.g. health screening
- ✓ Employee Support Services
- ✓ Flexible working arrangements
- ✓ Participation in award schemes, e.g. "Excellence Through People", "Better Place to Work"
- ✓ Agreed Company Strategy on dealing with bullying complaints
- ✓ HACCP – Food Safety Management System (Food Safety Authority of Ireland)
- ✓ National Workplace Wellbeing Day, An initiative of Food Drink Ireland (FDI)
- ✓ Resource Management policies, e.g. Walk to Work, Green Teams
- ✓ Safety Signs at a Place of Work (HSA)

Employee Consultation & Communication

Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<p>Statutory Obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees (Provision of Information and Consultation) Act, 2006 • Protection of Employment Act, 1977 – 2014 • Freedom of Information Act 2014 • Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 • Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015 (for Designated Public Officials) • Ethics in Public Office (Amendment) Regulations 2015 <p>Guidance Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Practice on Information and Consultation (S.I. No. 132 of 2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employee consultation and involvement e.g. Staff Consultation Fora & Partnership Committees ✓ Communication channels with staff e.g. Employee Handbooks, Intranet. ✓ Change management practices ✓ Organisation culture ✓ Trade Union / employee representative fora

Supporting and Promoting CSR

Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<p>Statutory Obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aarhus Convention Regulations <p>Guidance Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSR National Plan • Green Tenders – Action Plan on Green Public Procurement, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government • Ireland's Sustainable Development Policy Framework, Our Sustainable Future. • CSR Case Studies Database, Business in the Community Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implementation of Policies supporting sustainable business, e.g. www.greenbusiness.ie ✓ Participation in annual Chambers Ireland CSR Awards to highlight best practice ✓ Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) Working Responsibly Mark, an NSAI accredited standard which is based on ISO 26000

Regulation

Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National & EU Legislation across the 4 CSR Dimensions • Sectoral Regulators, e.g. ComReg, CER, Central Bank of Ireland • Cross-cutting Regulators, e.g. Data Protection Commissioner, Ombudsman, Equality Authority. CSR Case Studies Database, Business in the Community Ireland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Voluntary Codes of Conduct ✓ National Guidance documents and policies



The Marketplace Dimension

Customer Relations

Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<p>Statutory Obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003 • Variety of consumer legislation incl. Consumer Protection Act, 2007 and Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act, 1980 • Employment Equality Acts, 1998 - 2011 • Consumer Protection Code, 2012 • Equal Status Acts, 2000-2015 • Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2015 • Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2015 • Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011 • Companies Act, 2014 • Consumer Protection Act, 2007 • Finance Act, 2016 (re income tax, corporation tax and capital gains tax) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Customer Charters, Codes of Conduct ✓ Customer feedback mechanisms ✓ Staff training on consumer policies, including equality & diversity ✓ Equal status policy ✓ Use of different format (e.g. Braille, plain English) and languages to communicate with customers ✓ Providing reasonable accommodation for customers with disabilities ✓ Ensuring the diversity of the population is represented in market research, advertising etc. ✓ Equality audit and action plan ✓ Stakeholder consultation processes

Fair Operating Practices

Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<p>Statutory Obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Directors Obligations • EU Late Payments Directive • Prompt Payments Legislation • Tax and Duty Compliance • Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 • EU (Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes) Regulations, 2015 • Consumer Protection Act, 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Company ethics, mission statement and corporate culture ✓ Sign up to the Prompt Payment Code (www.promptpayment.ie) ✓ Corporate governance procedures, Codes of Conduct, Ethics Committee ✓ Company policies on fair competitive market practices ✓ Transparency reporting through Strategy Statements and reporting mechanisms e.g., Annual Reports ✓ Proactive disclosure of financial and non-financial information ✓ Proactive contribution of professional bodies such as the accountancy and legal professions on CSR issues (e.g. advice, seminars)

Product Quality & Information

Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<p>Statutory Obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Product Safety Directive 2001/95/EC (GPSD) • The REACH EU Regulation, 2006 on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, European Chemicals Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Internal quality management systems ✓ ISO 9000 Quality Management Systems ✓ Consumer Feedback mechanisms to identify and address issues ✓ Investment in Product R&D ✓ Active dissemination of quality related issues ✓ Origin Green Mark ✓ NSAI Irish Standard Mark ✓ Bord Bia Quality Assurance Mark (Q Mark) ✓ “Business Working Responsibly” Mark, Business in the Community Ireland



The Community Dimension

Employment Creation and Skills Development

Key Policy instruments and Guidance	Sample best practice CSR activities
<p>Guidance and Policy Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan for Jobs, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation • Education for Sustainability, The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland, 2014-2020, Department of Education and Skills • EU Youth Guarantee Initiative - EU Pact 4 Youth • Pathways to Work 2016-2020, Department of Social Protection (DSP) • Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015 - 2024 • Enterprise 2025 Report; Ireland's National Enterprise Policy 2015 – 2025 • Intreo Centres (DSP) • Jobs Plus Employer Incentive (DSP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pre-employment training programmes, e.g. Feeding Ireland's Future ✓ Regional Youth Services ✓ Chambers of Commerce Initiatives ✓ Foróige Entrepreneurship NFTE , Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship ✓ Employment assistance supports for people with disabilities e.g. the EmployAbility Service, the Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS), the Reasonable Accommodation Fund, and Disability Awareness Support Scheme. These Supports are available from the Department of Social Protection to enable companies to proactively assist in the participation and inclusion of people with a disability in the workforce.

Community Engagement

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Guidance Documents

- EU Social Business Initiative 2011
- Putting People First - Action Programme for effective Local Government 2012.

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Incorporation of modules on CSR in the curricula of business schools, universities and other education institutions.
- ✓ Peer group networking among large and small businesses at community level (e.g. Plato, Chambers of Commerce programmes).
- ✓ Stakeholder fora/partnerships with community and equality/social justice groups
- ✓ Outreach education programmes
- ✓ Pro-bono service schemes
- ✓ Company Newsletters, open days for local communities
- ✓ Involvement in community initiatives such as Tidy Towns
- ✓ Origin Green 'Social Sustainability' Clause

Social Inclusion

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Guidance Documents

- Updated National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2015 – 2017
- Office for Social Inclusion (Department of Social Protection)

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Social Inclusion Initiatives e.g. Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan, Office of Social Inclusion (www.socialinclusion.ie)
- ✓ RAPID Programme aims to improve the quality of life and access to opportunities in disadvantaged communities, POBAL (www.pobal.ie)
- ✓ Targeted social inclusion employment programmes, e.g. Ready for Work (Business in the Community Ireland) and the European Platform for Investing in Children.
- ✓ The EPIC Employment and Training Programme for Immigrants, Business in the Community Ireland
- ✓ Ready for Work Initiative supporting disadvantaged people to enter employment, Business in the Community Ireland
- ✓ Food Banks

Employee Involvement

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Guidance Documents

- Volunteer Ireland Factsheets & Guidelines

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Employee volunteering and secondment programmes
- ✓ Employee nomination of community groups for company support

Philanthropy & Sponsorship

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Statutory Obligations

- Charities Act, 2009

Guidance Documents

- Resources/Guidance from Philanthropy Ireland
- Report of the Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising 2012

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Charitable donations policies e.g. dedicated Charity partners
- ✓ Charitable funds and Awards schemes
- ✓ Facilitation of staff donations to charitable causes, e.g. through payroll & on-line platforms
- ✓ The One Percent Difference National Giving Campaign, Forum on Philanthropy
- ✓ Social Innovation Fund Ireland
- ✓ Subscribe to the free quarterly CSR Newsletter on www.csrhub.ie

Social Enterprise & Social Entrepreneurship

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Guidance Documents

- Impending Social Enterprise Strategy, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Report by European Commission Expert Group in Social Enterprise (GECES); Social Enterprises and the Social Economy Going Forward – October 2016
- European Commission's Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) e.g. EaSI Guarantee Instrument to increase access to finance for social enterprises, micro-enterprises and vulnerable groups.
- Forfás Report on Social Enterprise, 2012

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Young Social Innovators Programmes
- ✓ Business support for social entrepreneurs
- ✓ Social Entrepreneurship Ireland Awards
- ✓ Skills development programmes for local community groups
- ✓ Social Innovation Fund Ireland
- ✓ Crowd Funding
- ✓ Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) Programme (Foróige)
- ✓ Subscribe to the free quarterly CSR Newsletter on www.csrhub.ie



The Environment Dimension

Environmental Protection

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Sample best practice CSR activities

Statutory Obligations

- Environmental Liability Directive 2004
- Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2011
- S.I. 652 of 2016 – Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2016
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Licences/permits
- Access to Information on the Environment Regulations 2011
- Directive 2006/66/EC Batteries
- Waste Management Act 1996
- S.I. 282 of 2014 – EU (Packaging) Regulations 2014
- Aarhus Convention Regulations
- Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2015
- Chemicals Act (control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015
- Environmental Protection Agency (Advisory Committee) Regulations 2015

- ✓ Environmental Management Standards
- ✓ Transparency in reporting
- ✓ Responsible/sustainable supply chain policies
- ✓ Environmental awareness training
- ✓ Green Team initiatives
- ✓ Resource use efficiencies e.g. company policies on energy, water use, etc.
- ✓ Green Hospitality Programme and Awards www.greenhospitality.ie
- ✓ Environment Plan

Guidance Documents

- Our Sustainable Future, Ireland's sustainable development policy framework.
- Transforming our World, UN Agenda for Sustainable Development to 2030
- Living Well Within the Limits of Our Planet, 7th EU Environment Action Programme to 2020
- "Green Business" supports (www.greenbusiness.ie)
- Green Enterprise Grant Scheme (Environmental Protection Agency)
- Guidance documents from for example the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland www.seai.ie and the Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.ie
- Producer Responsibility Initiatives

Environmental Protection (cont'd)

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Guidance Documents

- Access to Information on Environment Guidelines (www.environ.ie)
- Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Climate Change and GHG emissions

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Statutory Obligations

- The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015
- EU Directives e.g. Renewable Energy, Emissions Trading Scheme, Energy Efficiency

Guidance Documents

- EU Commission Roadmap for a competitive low carbon economy by 2050
- The White Paper, "Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015 – 2030", Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
- Green Tenders – Action Plan on Green Public Procurement, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
- Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2012 – 2030, Environment Protection Agency
- EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework– Emissions Reduction Targets, Renewable Energy Targets, Energy Efficiency targets
- National Climate Adaptation Framework, 2012

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Transparency in disclosure of emissions
- ✓ Employee, Customer and supplier awareness initiatives
- ✓ Proactive policies on CO2 reduction
- ✓ Green Supply chains/logistics policies
- ✓ Promotion of behavioural change and energy efficiency measures

Respect for Biodiversity

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Guidance Documents

- EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020
- National Biodiversity Plan: "Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016", National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Draft National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021, National Parks and Wildlife Service

Sample best practice CSR activities

- ✓ Risk management policies incorporating respect for biodiversity
- ✓ Consultation processes with local stakeholders

Resource Efficiency – Water, Waste, Energy

Key Policy instruments and Guidance

Sample best practice CSR activities

Statutory Obligations

- Energy Act, 2016
- Waste Management (Food Waste) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Water Services Act, 2014
- EU Energy Efficiency Directive, 2012

Guidance Documents

- Ireland's Third National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) to 2020
- Our Sustainable Future – a Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland
- Green Tenders – Action Plan on Green Public Procurement, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
- Draft Bio Energy Plan, Oct 2014
- Third Progress Report – National Renewable Energy Action Plan

- ✓ Use of renewable energy for electricity, heating and transport
- ✓ Recycling centres
- ✓ Energy efficiency in buildings and transport e.g. eco-driving
- ✓ Resource use efficiencies e.g. policies on energy, water use
- ✓ Company resource use and targets
- ✓ Effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- ✓ Eco Design of Products
- ✓ Business Support Programmes e.g. The Accelerated Capital Allowance, Better Energy Finance, The Energy Efficiency Fund, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
- ✓ Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS), Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- ✓ Public Sector Energy Efficiency Strategy – 'Optimising Power@Work' is a OPW managed scheme, which aims to reduce public service energy emissions by 33% by 2020

International Guidelines on CSR

The European Commission encourages enterprises to base their approach to Corporate Social Responsibility on internationally recognised CSR guidelines and principles. This is especially the case for larger enterprises and for enterprises seeking to adopt a more formal approach to CSR. Five instruments together make up an evolving and increasingly coherent global framework for CSR.

OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

The [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#) are far reaching recommendations for responsible business conduct that 44 adhering governments, representing all regions of the world, encourage their enterprises to observe wherever they operate.

The 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact

[The UN Global Compact](#) asks companies to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption. Companies can sign up to the UN Global Compact, which subsequently commits them to submit a yearly communication on progress report.

ISO 26000 Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility



The [ISO 26000 guidance standard on social responsibility](#) is a voluntary international standard. It provides guidance rather than requirements, so it cannot be certified, unlike some other well-known ISO standards. It is aimed at all types of organisations, not just enterprises.

United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) define what governments and enterprises should do to avoid and address possible negative impacts on human rights by enterprises. Based on the UN Guiding Principles, the European Commission has been developing an introductory guide to human rights for small businesses, and guidance for 3 business sectors.

International Labour Organisation Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises on Social Policy (ILO Geneva, 2006)

This declaration offers guidelines to multinational enterprises, governments, and employers' and workers' organisations in such areas as employment, training, conditions of work and life, and industrial relations. This declaration is the only ILO text that is also addressed to enterprises. The [ILO provides a help-desk for enterprises on international labour standards](#).

Other Guidelines

In addition to these five core instruments, for questions related to reporting and transparency, enterprises frequently refer to [the Global Reporting Initiative](#) and to the [International Integrated Reporting Council](#).

Key CSR Resources

Irish Networks and Resources

[Business in the Community Ireland](#)

[Chambers Ireland](#)

Ireland's [CSR Hub](#) website (A CSR Stakeholder Forum Initiative)

[Online CSR Tool for SMEs](#)

EU CSR Strategy

A renewed [EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility](#)

[Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014 - 2020](#)

[CSR Europe Assessment Tools](#) (The European Business Network for Corporate Social Responsibility)

CSR and Competitiveness

[The RIMAS report](#) explores the links between CSR and Competitiveness in Europe's Industrial Sectors

Business and Human Rights

The [European Commission](#) endorses the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, produces guidelines for small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) and supports projects to pilot a multi-stakeholder approach to CSR in specific sectors

EU Resources for SMEs

EU Toolkit/Guide: [Tips and Tricks for Advisors of CSR for SMEs](#)

[Questionnaire to raise SME awareness of CSR](#)

[User Guide for European SMEs on ISO 26000](#) – Guidance on Social Responsibility (NORMAPME: European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium sized Enterprises for Standardisation)

[World Business Council for Sustainable Development](#)

CSR and Disability

[European Network for Corporate Social Responsibility and Disability](#)

Appendix 5: Glossary

BITCI	Business in the Community Ireland
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DCCA	Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DJE	Department of Justice & Equality
DEI	Department of Enterprise and Innovation
DESP	Department of Employment and Social Protection
EI	Enterprise Ireland
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
LAMA	Local Authority Members Association
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
NSAI	National Standards Authority of Ireland
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Towards Responsible Business: Ireland's National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility 2017—2020 was published in June 2017 by the Department of Enterprise and Innovation.

A PDF of this document with an expanded appendix outlining related legislation and national policies can be downloaded from www.csrhub.ie

The CSR Hub can be followed on Twitter [@CSRHubIrl](https://twitter.com/CSRHubIrl). The Dept of Enterprise and Innovation produce a quarterly email newsletter on CSR in Ireland that can be subscribed to through the CSRhub website.



An Roinn Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta
Department of Enterprise and Innovation





CSR

Towards Responsible
Business



An Roinn Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta
Department of Enterprise and Innovation