



NATIONAL
REFORM
PROGRAMME

EUROPE 2020



CSR

CORPORATE
SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY
IN POLAND



MINISTRY OF ECONOMY

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RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

WHILE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF BUSINESS ETHICS WERE PRESENT IN POLAND PRIOR TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR, AND WHILE MODERN CONCEPTUALISATIONS HAD EMERGED BY THE 1990s, THE DYNAMICALLY-DEVELOPING CSR IN POLAND ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE 21ST CENTURY IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE INFLUX OF A LARGE NUMBER OF FOREIGN INVESTORS.

Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, is attracting increasing attention among managers, businesses, investors and the national administration, gradually becoming an indicator of corporate governance and a priority where the formulation of a comprehensive strategy for a company's development is concerned.

The essence of the concept has been espoused by the media, which are helping to further popularise the issue among a wider circle of recipients, not only from the business sector.

A whole range of actions undertaken within that scope have contributed to a realisation of the significance of the **environmental, social and governance-related (ESG)** aspects to the pursuit of business activity, as well as to the sharing of good practice and the development of voluntary initiatives within the scope of sustainable development.

Considerable significance was attributed to the implementation by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of the project entitled "Policy framework of the Republic of Poland within the scope of corporate social responsibility. Analysis,

diagnosis, recommendations", this forming part of a broader undertaking entitled "Accelerating CSR Practices in the New EU Member States and Candidate Countries as a Vehicle for Harmonization, Competitiveness and Social Cohesion in the EU".

Thanks to the active participation of stakeholders, the key aspects as well as the substantive and operational framework for future public policy with respect to CSR in Poland have been identified, and recommendations following on from the project implemented on a regular basis.

„In an era of intensifying competition and ever more exacting requirements on the part of clients, the professional shaping of relations between firms and the business and social environment they operate in – as well as the building of credibility and a favourable reputation – are becoming key elements to the shaping of enterprises, competitive advantages, alongside matters of cost effectiveness and the quality of goods and services on offer”.

Rafał Baniak

Undersecretary of State
in the Ministry of Economy



COORDINATION OF MEASURES

DUE TO THE **HORIZONTAL AND COMPREHENSIVE** DIMENSIONS TO CSR, DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENTAL ADMINISTRATION BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING TASKS WITHIN PARTICULAR AREAS. BY VIRTUE OF REGULATION NO. 38 OF 8 MAY 2009, THE GROUP FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ISSUES, AS AN **AUXILIARY BODY UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER**, WAS APPOINTED TO ENSURE THE CONSISTENCY AND COORDINATION OF INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO POPULARISE CSR AT NATIONAL LEVEL.



A representative of the Minister responsible for issues of the economy and enjoying the rank of Under-Secretary of State, presides over the works of the Group, whose tasks include:

1

THE PROPOSING of solutions as to how to coordinate the activities of different public administration bodies when it comes to promoting and implementing CSR principles,

2

THE ANALYSIS and utilisation of other countries' CSR experiences, as well as the propagation of good practice, in particular instruments devised under the European Alliance for Corporate Social Responsibility framework,

3

THE CREATION of conditions facilitating communication and dialogue concerning CSR between administration, business, social partners and NGOs.

The Ministry of Economy runs a government website constituting, not only a specific knowledge centre on the latest CSR news, but also a platform for experience-sharing as regards concepts and directions underpinning the development of CSR.

WWW.CSR.GOV.PL

The Working Groups formed for the effective implementation of the Group's tasks deal with:

[The system for promoting CSR in Poland,](#)

[Responsible investments,](#)

[Education within the scope of CSR,](#)

[Sustainable consumption.](#)

The Group and its component Working Groups bring together representative experts from government, as well as business partners, social organisations, trade unions and academia.

STRATEGIC GOVERNMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The emphasis is being put on ESG aspects being incorporated, in relation to their subject matter, into different governmental strategies and programme documents. Recommendations prepared within the framework of the Group for Corporate Social Responsibility Issues will be used in the design of national strategic documents, notably:

[the Strategy for the Innovation and Effectiveness of the Economy,](#)

[the Strategy for the Development of Human Resources,](#)

[the Strategy for Energy Security and the Environment,](#)

[the Strategy for the Development of Social Capital,](#)

[the Strategy for Smart Administration.](#)

MOREOVER, BY VIRTUE OF **REGULATION NO. 141 OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF 15 DECEMBER 2008, THE GROUP FOR SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS AS REGARDS SOCIAL ECONOMY** WAS APPOINTED, TO WORK ON THE DEVISING OF POLICY IN THIS SPHERE, I.A. VIA THE FORMULATION OF PROPOSALS ON LEGAL-INSTITUTIONAL SOLUTIONS FOR ENTITIES OPERATING THERE. TASKS IMPLEMENTED ARE COMPLEMENTARY TO THE ACTIVITY OF THE GROUP FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ISSUES, ATTENTION ABOVE ALL BEING DRAWN TO THE NEED FOR CIVIL SOCIETY CULTURE TO DEVELOP, WHILE CITIZENS ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY SAFEGUARDED AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CSR IS NOT A MATTER CONFINED TO LARGE ENTERPRISES ALONE. NUMEROUS INITIATIVES POPULARISING CSR IN THE SME SECTOR ARE CONTRIBUTING TO AN AWARENESS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE ATTACHED TO ESG ASPECTS OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY, AS WELL AS THE SHARING OF GOOD PRACTICE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. MOREOVER, SMEs ARE OFTEN SEEN TO TAKE AD-HOC ACTION, THEREBY MANIFESTING THE SO-CALLED UNCONSCIOUS CSR.

In 2008, the Ministry of Economy responded to the needs of SMEs by commissioning a CSR guide entitled **“Sustainable business, a guide for small and medium-sized enterprises”**. The aim here was to compile knowledge on available CSR tools and practices that can contribute to competitive advantage. In working on the guide, the contractors (**Det Norske Veritas** and **CentrumCSR.pl**) co-operated with Polish managers

to ensure that the CSR guidelines are genuinely relevant to Polish realities. The guide promotes a systemic approach to management in the areas of social responsibility, i.a. in compliance with **ISO 26000** assumptions.

RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION

Poland i.a. participates in the implementation of the ERDF-supported project Sustainable Production through Innovation in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Baltic Sea Region, SPIN. The aim here is to promote innovative solutions for sustainable development, including eco-innovation, environmental technologies and CSR.

More at: www.spin-project.eu

Moreover, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) is implementing a research project entitled Sustainable production models in the activity of SMEs - a proposal for systemic solutions

supporting the implementation of sustainable production models in SMEs, under Sub-measure 2.1.4 Human Capital Operation Programme. The aim of the project is to provide suggestions, recommendations and proposals as regards systemic solutions that support implementation of sustainable production patterns in SMEs, these comprising legislative and institutional instruments, as well as a direct support system.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE POLISH ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION (WWW.FPDS.PL)

Clean Business Clubs (16 currently bringing together 500 SMEs from all over Poland) ensure access to information on environment protection through the Ecological Information Centre, consultancy with regard to environment protection issues, ecological audits of companies, assistance for a company in establishing its environmental policy, the possibility of participation in seminars and workshops, subscription to the monthly issued by the Programme (the "Clean Business Bulletin"), and the possibility of participating in partner projects and the company network of the [Clean Business Programme](#).

The National "Clean Business Awards" competition organised under the honorary patronage of the Ministries of the Environment, Economy and Regional Development is targeted at SMEs using innovative, environmentally- and economically-sound technical, technological and organisational solutions.

The awards are granted in the categories of energy, water and waste management, the innovative process, innovative products, goods and service in tourism, image and international cooperation.

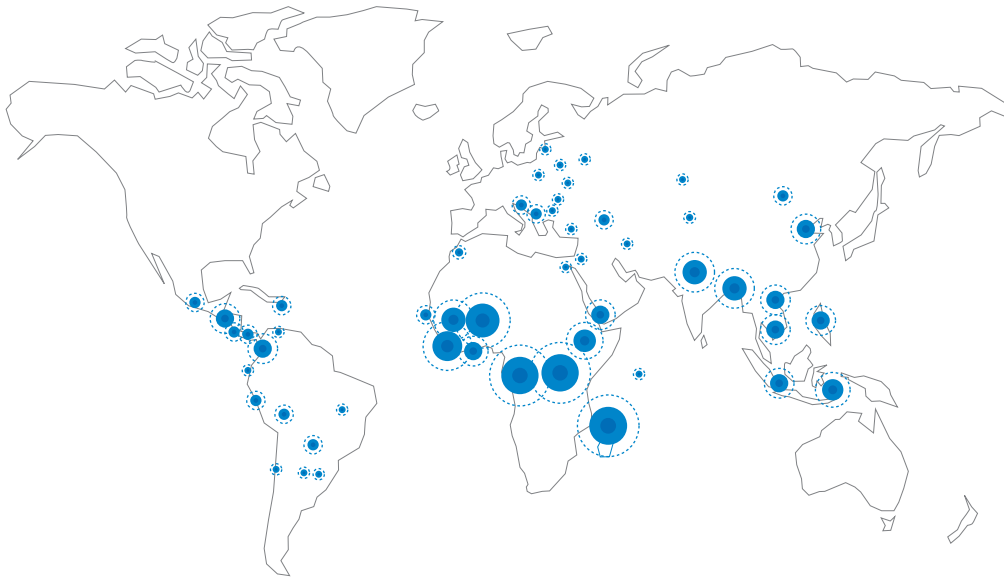
ISO 26000 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The essential characteristic of social responsibility is the willingness of an organization to incorporate social and environmental considerations in its decision making and be accountable for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment. This implies both transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development, is in compliance with applicable law and is consistent with international norms of behaviour. It also implies that social responsibility is integrated throughout the organization, is practised in its relationships and takes into account the interests of stakeholders.

DIAGRAM DEPICTING LEVELS OF POVERTY IN THE WORLD

POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATIO AT \$1.25 A DAY (PPP) (% OF POPULATION)

Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty>



RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

A campaign of great significance for the market and for the popularisation of the concept of CSR in the supply chain is “Buy responsibly”, as run by the Polish Green Network.

The programme entails active civil education in connection with a public information campaign under which Regional Information and Educational Points are organised in 10 provinces. The project involved the preparation of educational materials, training and lectures focusing i.a. on the negative social consequences of globalisation, i.e. in the form of unequal profit redistribution between North and South, leading to social and economic

stratification and other challenges (famine, poverty and exclusion). In the light of the above, initiatives connected with the popularisation of the Fair Trade movement are also worth noting. The promotion of Fair Trade in Poland constitutes the focus of the Polish Fair Trade Coalition bringing together NGOs, companies and individuals. In this context, several conferences and meetings are organised to raise awareness and encourage debate.

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Poland played host to the COP 14 Conference (14th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC), along with the 4th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. These took place from 1-12 December 2008 in Poznań.

The two-week session was attended by nearly 8000 participants: more than 190 government delegations headed by Ministers for the Environment or Climate Change, international institutions, environmental, business, academia, NGOs, and the media.

The hosting of the event in Poland contributed to the raising of social awareness as regards climate change – as a result of educational and promotional campaigns, as well as increased interest of domestic media in this issue. Active participation of representatives of Polish entrepreneurs and local government resulted in numerous local-scale initiatives to address climate change.

With a view to solutions facilitating reduction in greenhouse gas emissions being promoted, the "Polish Product of the Future" Competition organised from 1997 by PARP (with the honorary patronage of the Prime Minister) has since 2002 offered the Special "eCO₂ Innovation" Award of

the Minister of Economy for the product showing the greatest potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Another great achievement of Poland has been the setting up of a consortium participated in by Polish institutions in higher education and scientific and business units, which were selected to create the European "Sustainable Energy" Community for Knowledge and Innovation.

Partners to the project include Polish academic and scientific centres, as well as the enterprises. Consortium members also include entities from Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Spain and The Netherlands.

Another important business initiative in Poland was the 2009 launching of the "Responsible Energy" platform, aimed at undertaking sectoral discussions on CSR. So far, two national conferences have been organised under this initiative. During the first in 2009 a Declaration on Sustainable Development in the Polish Power Sector was adopted.

REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE

EACH YEAR MORE AND MORE ENTERPRISES ADOPT INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING STANDARDS WITH THE AIM OF THE COMPANY'S STANDPOINT AS REGARDS THE CONCEPT AND ASSUMPTIONS OF CSR BEING PRESENTED REGULARLY.

THE GOVERNMENT EMPHASISES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BOTTOM-UP BUSINESS INITIATIVES AND A PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE FOR PROPER COMMUNICATING OF THE ACTIONS ENTERPRISES UNDERTAKE REGARDING CSR.

Suggestions on increasing transparency and the reliability of published information, as one element of the recommendation provided by working groups of the above Group, will be the basis upon which the Government will determine its further activity. The most recognisable standard among Polish enterprises as regards reporting are the international guidelines for sustainable reporting aimed at particular sectors (Global Reporting Initiative, GRI). A milestone in raising interest in sustainability reporting in Poland was the translating of the GRI guidelines into Polish by PwC, in co-operation with FOB. Moreover, the Minister of Economy presides over the chapter of the Polish Register of Cleaner Production and Responsible Entrepreneurship within the Association of the Polish Cleaner Production Movement, which is a register of entrepreneurs whose activity manifestly limits material, water and energy consumption within their business. Enterprises belonging to the above Association are also obliged to sign up to the Global Compact principles.

THE BI-NGO INDEX (WWW.BI-NGO.PL)

This index from the opinion-forming Polish daily Rzeczpospolita reviews the state of Internet communication of the idea of social involvement among the 500 largest companies. The index is cre-

ated on the basis of an annual review of websites, and an analysis of the means of communicating the idea of the social involvement of companies, and co-operation between the business sector and NGOs with respect to leadership and the corporate policy on social involvement, the quality of the strategy of social involvement of the company, building relations with social partners, measuring effects and communicating.

BUSINESS FAIR PLAY (WWW.PRZEDSIEBIORSTWO.FAIRPLAY.PL)

The aim of the Business Fair Play programme, organised for 13 years, is to promote ethics in business. Verification of participating companies is implemented in two stages. Stage I verifies information provided in questionnaires in which entrepreneurs present their business activity in detail, answering several questions related to, i.a., relations with clients, contracting parties, employees and the local community. In stage II, the auditors of the appropriate substantive background conduct a certification audit at the companies, on the basis of information obtained from competent authorities i.a. US (the Tax Office), ZUS (the Social Insurance Institution), PIP (the National Labour Inspectorate), institutions, clients and contractors of the companies.

THE "APPROVED PARTNER" PROGRAMME (WWW.SOLIDNYPARTNER.PL)

The aim of the programme is promoting modern management methods and reliability and responsibility in business. The spheres reviewed include: reliability in conducting business activity; assessment of the company as employer and partner in business; management systems operative at the company and involvement with respect to the social environment, as well as care for the natural environment.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

IN POLAND, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT (SRI) IS FIRST AND FOREMOST SUPPORTED BY A SHARING OF GOOD PRACTICE ON THE INVESTMENT MARKET, AND BY SECTORAL SELF-REGULATORY MEASURES.

THE RESPECT INDEX

IN NOVEMBER 2009, THE WARSAW STOCK EXCHANGE LAUNCHED POLAND'S FIRST INDEX (AND ONE OF EUROPE'S FEW INDICES) OF SOCIALLY-RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES. THIS IS THE RESPECT INDEX, WHERE THE NAME REPRESENTS AN ACRONYM OF WORDS THAT REFLECT THE ESSENCE OF CSR, I.E. **RESPONSIBILITY, ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, PARTICIPATION, ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY AND TRANSPARENCY**. THE PRIMARY AIM OF THE INITIATIVE IS TO RAISE INVESTORS' INTEREST IN COMPANIES DEMONSTRATING EXCEPTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN CSR INITIATIVES. THE ANALYSIS COVERS **COMPANIES LISTED ON THE WARSAW STOCK EXCHANGE**, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF NEWCONNECT, FOREIGN AND DUAL-LISTED COMPANIES. THE COMPANIES INCLUDED IN THE INDEX ARE ANALYSED ACCORDING TO THE DEFINITION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, WHEREBY IT IS A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF DOING BUSINESS. IN ASSESSING THE ENTERPRISES, THE SHARE PRICES AND INCOME FROM DIVIDENDS AND RIGHTS ISSUES ARE UTILISED. CURRENTLY THE INDEX IS PERFORMING IN LINE WITH EXPECTATIONS, I.E. IS MORE STABLE AND LESS VOLATILE THAN OTHER INDICES, AT THE SAME TIME ENSURING A PROFITABLE RATE OF RETURN.

WWW.**ODPOWIEDZIALNEINWESTOWANIE**.PL

The portal is the first website in Poland aimed at broad education and promotion of the SRI concept, most especially among (investment and pension) fund managers and asset managers. It is designed to ensure: transparent communications, a building of knowledge and awareness, the promoting of best practices.

PROPAGATION OF CSR

IN THE POLISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Dissemination of knowledge on the principles of sustainable development is provided for in the Act on the Educational System, as well as the Regulation on core curricula¹. At the same time, the matter is reflected in projects and programmes concerning the development of teachers in respect of the promotion of entrepreneurship and knowledge on the economy.

The work to reform higher education i.a. acknowledges that institutions in higher education should heed CSR principles through active support for local communities. In recent years it has been possible to observe increasing interest in CSR issues in academic circles.

Above all, the availability of courses on business ethics and CSR is being enhanced at institutions of an economic and management-related profile. Polish higher education is making increasingly confident use of opportunities arising out of the EU co-financing of action in support of a popularization of knowledge on CSR principles. Post-graduate studies within the field of CSR, including courses co-financed from EU funds, are also being launched.

The popularisation of CSR in academic circles is also to be achieved through the Verba Veritatis competition, a common initiative of the Conference of Fi-

nancial Companies, Kozminski University and the Business Ethics Centre. As part of the contest, the jury chooses the best Master's and doctoral theses concerning business ethics as broadly conceived, including CSR.

A very popular among students is the "CSR case" contest, which involves analysis of a case study and the preparation of a proposal by which a given situation can be resolved. Contest winners also have the opportunity to take part in a paid internship in the FOB. The key initiators and organisers of the contest are the ambassadors of the Responsible Business League, The Young Manager Student Research Club from Bielsko-Biala and KN "BOSS" from Wrocław.

STUDENT INITIATIVES

Apart from a steadily more diverse offer of available courses, there has also been an increase in student initiatives in respect of CSR. In 2004, a project of the Responsible Business League (www.lob.org.pl) was initiated by the FOB (www.fob.org.pl), partners and student research clubs.

Furthermore, in co-operation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the FOB prepared lesson plans and teaching aids on CSR for students. A number of initiatives connected with education for sustainable development are also being undertaken.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE SENDZIMIR FOUNDATION IS IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME CALLED **“CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”**, WHICH INVOLVED TWELVE EDITIONS OF INTENSE THREE-WEEK WORKSHOPS AIMED AT STUDENTS OF VARIOUS FACULTIES.



The mission of the Sendzimir Foundation is to initiate and support educational, research and practical activities aiming at development of ecologically conscious civil society, and to the improvement of environmental quality. The Foundation promotes local, national and international initiatives that enhance the quality of life with respect to natural balance and rational use of natural resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

**THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC
PROCUREMENT IN POLAND
IS DECENTRALIZED.**

**THE AWARDING ENTITY MAY,
BUT IS NOT OBLIGED TO, APPLY
ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS
AND REQUIREMENTS, AND TAKE
INTO ACCOUNT SOCIAL ASPECTS
IN THE ORGANISED CONTRACT
AWARD PROCEEDINGS.**

So far, the most rapid development is taking place with regard to the so-called Green Public Procurement (GPP), which involves integration of environmental criteria and requirements with contract award procedures, as well as the search for solutions to minimize the negative impact of products and services on the environment throughout their life cycle.

Prepared by the Public Procurement Office and adopted in 2007, the **“National Action Plan on green public procurement for the period 2007-2009”** focused on action to better integrate environmental considerations into public procurement, to develop a market for environment friendly products and to expand the market for technologies for eco-industry.



On 14 June 2010, the Council of Ministers adopted a new three-year **“National Action Plan on sustainable public procurement for 2010-2012”** setting out the objectives, timing and system of coordination and monitoring of actions concerning both green and socially responsible procurement.

AT THE SAME TIME, A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES

BEING IMPLEMENTED SEEK TO CREATE IN POLAND A **MODERN SYSTEM** THAT WOULD GUARANTEE DISBURSEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS TO STIMULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INNOVATIVE ECONOMY, THIS GOAL BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY/ PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OFFICE DOCUMENT ENTITLED

“A NEW APPROACH TO PUBLIC PROCUREMENT. PROCUREMENT AND SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES, INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” (AS ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON 8 APRIL 2008).

AMONG OTHER THINGS, THIS DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR WIDER USE IN CONTRACT AWARD PROCEEDINGS TO BE MADE OF CRITERIA RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CSR.



MINISTRY OF ECONOMY

While the CSR concept has broadened markedly down the years (in comparison with what it was at the outset), it remains the subject of public debate. The essence of this new perception of CSR is best conveyed by reference to the ISO 26000 Social Responsibility standard. However, notwithstanding the steps already taken, CSR continues to feature a number of challenges that will need to be faced up to. Remaining crucial are further increases in transparency, as well as the building of more broad-based public support for the corporate social responsibility concept, this going hand in hand with the development of civil society. These matters are thrown into sharp relief in the new economic strategy entitled Europa 2020 – A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. In adopting this Strategy, the Member States have had as their aim the putting in place of stable foundations for economic growth that will allow society's aspirations as regards development to be achieved, while also ensuring the European Union's competitiveness in the circumstances of ongoing globalisation. Poland's National Programme of Reforms seeking to implement Europa 2020 (the KPR in Polish) constitutes an element in the system via which Poland's development policy is being pursued, the reforms it sets out (in combination with the pursuit of the long- and medium-term development strategies and the nine integrated domestic strategies) providing for a focus on priority areas where the country's socioeconomic development is concerned. .

www.csr.gov.pl