Methods and Instruments

Private Sector Cooperation

The project at a glance
In an effort to address the lack of adequate CSR related support structures as well as the proliferation of standard systems in India, the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), which was initiated by the Foreign Trade Association (FTA), and the non-governmental organisation Social Accountability International (SAI) which is dedicated to developing socially responsible standards, have joined forces with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The project was initiated as a Development Partnership with the Private Sector, which is co-financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Background
The international Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement has made headway in developing and implementing systems that enable companies to produce efficiently with high quality while complying with social and ecological standards systems and ethical norms. Major emerging economies such as India have an ever-growing interest in facilitating the adoption of voluntary standards systems. In India, the CSR movement is spearheaded by strong national leaders, often large industrial companies which advocate for sustainable development as well as actively integrating CSR standards and management systems. However, the current proliferation of standard initiatives often causes a burden for suppliers and producers, as they increasingly have to comply with the various requirements of compliance standards that all address the same or similar topics. This leads to a certain audit and implementation fatigue, potential for inefficiencies, and high costs from redundancies.

This is compounded by the fact that the CSR support structures currently available in India vary widely in quality, consistency and comparability. Particularly small and medium-sized companies are often prevented from standard implementation, as the services offered are often too expensive for them to afford and sometimes do not meet with their needs, as the systems are mainly export-oriented with little impact on the domestic markets.

Goal
The project aims at scaling up current CSR initiatives in India, by developing local enabling and qualifying structures which are harmonized, correspond with local conditions, and are affordable for companies. The project duration is three years, starting from April 2010 until April 2013.

Approach
The project will initiate a multi-stakeholder approach, inviting key Indian CSR stakeholders to provide input and expertise on the services that are required by the local industry. This input will feed into the development of a national CSR Expertise Centre whose purpose will be to provide CSR-related services, information, guidance and training to Indian manufacturers and key stakeholders. Its main aim is to support coordination and linkages among CSR initiatives and to foster the mainstreaming of CSR among the Indian industry. To this end, local trainers will be qualified to provide CSR-related services via the CSR Expertise Centre and on an independent basis. In order to develop a modular training toolbox to respond with tailor-made approaches to specific needs, the project will pilot different training and advice programmes for some 150 Indian producers and suppliers. The experience gained during the pilot trainings will be fed into the final portfolio to be offered by the CSR Expertise Centre.

The approach will enable Indian producers and suppliers, from large to small, to access relevant and affordable CSR related training and advice beyond the conclusion of this Development Partnership with the Private Sector
project. This in turn will put them in a strong position to implement credible CSR policies, and improve their social, ecological and ethical performance accordingly.

Participants

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Working efficiently, effectively and in a spirit of partnership, GIZ supports people and societies in developing, transition and industrialised countries in shaping their own futures and improving living conditions. Established on 1 January 2011, GIZ brings together under one roof the long-standing expertise of the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED) gGmbH (German development service), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH (German technical cooperation) and InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany. As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. GIZ also engaged in international education work around the globe.

Website: www.giz.de/en/

Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) (Foreign Trade Association – FTA)

BSCI was formed in March 2003 by the FTA, an association for European commerce specialised in international trade issues, as part of the association’s effort to establish a common platform in response to the proliferation of various different codes of conduct and monitoring systems and to lay the groundwork for a common monitoring system for improving social compliance. BSCI has over 500 corporate members representing some of the largest retailers in Europe. Website: www.bsci-intl.org

Social Accountability International (SAI)

SAI is a non-governmental, multi-stakeholder organisation dedicated to improving workplaces and communities by developing and implementing socially responsible standards. SAI convenes key stakeholders to develop consensus-based voluntary standards, conducts cost-benefit research, accredits auditors, provides training and technical assistance, and assists corporations in improving social compliance in their supply chains. In 1997, SAI launched SA8000 (Social Accountability 8000) – a voluntary standard for workplaces, based on International Organisation and United Nations conventions – which is currently used by businesses and governments around the world and is recognised as one of the strongest workplace standards. SAI currently has over 300,000 individuals employed in 458 SA8000 certified facilities throughout India.

Website: www.sa-intl.org

Apart from the project partners, GIZ, BSCI and SAI, other stakeholders are invited to join in order to provide their knowledge and experience to the project and contribute towards the rollout of the project activities.

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