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Corporate Social Responsibility from a Business Perspective

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) stands for the socially and ecologically responsible actions of businesses geared towards fulfilling the fundamental idea of creating lasting and sustainable economic activity. In the long run economic success can only be achieved in a stable and productive society. This insight is not new, but may well be the reason why corporations are increasingly looking to Corporate Social Responsibility for answers, in particular in the context of a globalized economy. A growing number of enterprises are expanding their approach from a purely compliance and sponsoring-driven culture to a more active Corporate Social Responsibility strategy. In this respect, companies see CSR as an opportunity and requirement for economic success.

Responsible management creates win-win situations for society and businesses. For sustainability is the common foundation, on which states and responsible companies base their actions: markets grow, wherever poverty diminishes. Where corporations can rely on a qualified and motivated workforce, productivity and competitiveness increase. In places where the environment is protected, resources can grow back and the supply-related risks will decrease. In short: Swiss corporations already assume their social responsibility in many different ways. The role of the states lies in ensuring favorable conditions (in particular at the ILO, OECD, UN level) and in supporting enterprises in their effort to assume responsibility, particularly in countries with weak governance structures.

The goal of this publication is to show how business understands and lives social responsibility and what it contributes to the sustainable development of society. This publication should also foster an understanding for the complexity of the challenges that have to be tackled in the CSR context. The opportunities as well as the limits of Corporate Social Responsibility will be highlighted. And finally, the necessity of stakeholder cooperation for reaching sustainable results will be emphasized. The key concern of companies is to be perceived as partners in the efforts of facing the societal challenges of our times.