

Public-Private Dialogue

Promoting Partnerships Through Corporate Social Responsibility in Ghana

by

Afua Gyamboa Amoako, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ghana

*Presented at the Public-Private Dialogue 2014 Workshop
(Frankfurt, March 3-6 2014)*

1 - Background and context

Ghana has come to recognize that there are major factors and key players who contribute to the socio-economic growth of a country. The Government of Ghana appreciates the critical role that partnerships with the private sector, as well as civil society, can play in promoting sustainable development. CSR has been identified as an instrument for promoting such partnerships. The need to have such a national policy was given much impetus by a NEPAD recommendation for the Government to provide leadership and guidance to clarify the concept and practice of CSR.

Currently in Ghana CSR practices are ad hoc and only provide a basic CSR framework which gives minimum standards for business performances. It has been observed that most Companies in Ghana see CSR as a philanthropic activity which is not sustainable due to the lack of guiding principles. Therefore the Ministry decided to adopt a more comprehensive dialogue approach to developing the policy with the aim of involving as much relevant stakeholders as possible at all levels, capture all issues, experiences and basic principles of CSR that would promote partnerships as well as sustainable development. A public-private-civil society dialogue commenced; and it is envisaged that this would be sustained during policy implementation.

2 - Partnerships, Structure and Process

In February 2013, the Ministry had discussions with GIZ to assist in providing technical and financial assistance in developing the policy because the latter's, on-going initiative of promoting strategic CSR with companies in Ghana through its Development Partnerships with the Private Sector Initiative with funding from the Africa Facility. The Facility is a fund

established by the German Government and implemented by GIZ in seven African Countries.

The Ministry is the main initiator of the process and derives its mandate from the Government to carve the policy because of:

- The absence of such a policy
- A need to provide guidance for all actors engaged in CSR
- A need to iron out uncertainties and misconceptions
- Moves to streamline CSR activities to ensure effective audit and accountability
- NEPAD’s (2005) African Peer Review Mechanism recommendation for a clear CSR concept for Ghana.

A policy formulation institution has been set up and a roadmap has been carefully crafted by a cross section of relevant stakeholders and loaded with dialogue sessions.

As earlier mentioned, several consultative and validation dialogue sessions have been held in each of the 10 regional capitals of Ghana. In each region a minimum of 60 representatives of the public and private sectors, civil society and traditional authorities constitute the platform of engagement. This was based on a mapping of key stakeholders including those affected by the reform and those with particular influence on its approval and implementation. Focal groupings such as the media, students etc., have also been constituted for engagements. So far a total of 1600 representatives have participated in the dialogue sessions (which also featured a questionnaire as one tool through which to obtain feedback) and more representatives are yet to be engaged. A select group of the Ghanaian Legislature will be engaged very soon. The Center for Corporate Responsibility of the University of Ghana Business School is leading the process.

Institutions & Roles

The overall institutional framework for the policy formulation process is set out in Table below.

TABLE 1: Institutions and Roles

| Institution | Role |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) | Process ownership Oversee entire process Provide counterpart funding Create enabling environment |
| GIZ | Capacity & Technical Support |
| Centre for the Cooperation with the | Technical Support |

| | |
|--|--|
| Private Sector in South Africa | |
| Liaison Group | Link Between Consultant, Technical Review Team, MoTI, GIZ, etc |
| Consulting Team | Lead the Technical Process |
| Private Sector, Civil Society, Traditional Authority, Media, etc | Provide Private inputs into the carving of the draft policy |

Description of Roles

Ministry of Trade & Industry (MoTI)

The process is being driven by the Ministry of Trade & Industry (MoTI), which acts as the chief representative of government and reform champion. Its main role is overseeing the entire process, provide counterpart funding, and create the enabling environment for the policy formulation process.

GIZ

The German Technical Cooperation Agency (GIZ) provides technical and financial support. It collaborates with MOTI to select and appoint consultants, participates in the process, and is a member of the liaison group.

Technical Review Team (TRT)

The TRT is a (how many) multidisciplinary group of technical experts assembled from all sectors by the Ministry to review deliverables and steer the process. Experts are drawn from several fields including private sector consultants and representatives of the Ministries of Finance and Trade. Members of the Team also serve as anchor points in their respective organizations; and their role during policy implementation would be much needed.

Liaison Group (LG)

The Liaison Group is made up of representatives from GIZ, MoTI and select members of the TRT. They do the ground work and serve as a link between the Ministry, the TRT and the consultant. Members of the group are mandated to participate in all dialogue sessions and report to TRT.

Consulting Team (CT)

The consulting team is made up of experts in CSR, partnerships, planning, policy formulation and legal experts, in consultation with the GIZ, which leads the technical process of developing the CSR Policy.

3 - Expected Results

The process is aimed at developing a nationally accepted CSR policy that would guide and promote the practice of strategic CSR and by so doing enhance a stronger partnership between the public and private sectors for sustainable development. This win-win partnership is expected to be achieved through:

- a. A functional Legal and Regulatory framework
- b. Efficient and well-coordinated institution that promote economic development
- c. A strategic communications plan that educates and creates awareness on the tenets of CSR
- d. A well-managed funding structure that commits both donors and government
- e. A monitoring and evaluation regime that stringently measures the impacts on the populace especially the vulnerable
- f. Gender mainstreaming and other cross-cutting issues.

Progress

It is to be noted that the CSR process is in progress and the draft document will soon be completed. So far, consultative and validation workshops have been held in all the regions of Ghana; the various thematic areas, definitions and action areas for the policy have been validated by all relevant stakeholders.

The regional consultative and validation platforms would be consolidated and promoted to be watch dogs for the implementation of policy actions.

The Ministry will use the policy to promote partnership initiatives with the private sector by establishing a secretariat to manage a pool fund. A budget line would be established for the secretariat to ensure the flow of public funds. The Secretariat would be mandated to leverage funding with the private sector, civil society as well as the traditional authority to fund development interventions that meet both public goals as well as commercial interest. It is envisaged that such partnerships would minimize mistrust and misunderstanding between the different sectors, a typical trait between the public and private sectors in Ghana. The establishment of a body or unit is being considered to track progress with and oversee implementation as with any policy containing numerous strategies and action points, it is implementation that will be the biggest challenge.

The policy is expected to go to Cabinet in May and an advocacy strategy is being prepared which will identify key messages and messengers as well as allies in the public and private sectors.