

## SMEs CSR ACTIVITY UNRECOGNISED

- **Awareness of the term 'CSR' and benefits to business must be promoted.**
- **All survey respondents active in CSR.**
- **94% of SMEs donate money to charity.**

ISME, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

**ISME, the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association, released the results of its 'SMEs and CSR' survey today (6<sup>th</sup> July) which assessed the level of SME engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in 2015. The Association found that all respondents were active in CSR, despite the fact that only 54% were aware that their activities could be classified as CSR.**

According to ISME CEO, Mark Fielding, **'Irish SMEs are actively making a difference in their local community. This contribution tends to go unacknowledged and is usually appreciated only by the direct beneficiaries because, unlike 'big business', SMEs don't feel the need to publicise their good deeds. This has led to the widespread belief that CSR is something only multinationals do but, as our survey found, the vast majority of SMEs are highly engaged in CSR.'**

"Although 46% of SMEs believed they either didn't know or were not active in CSR, everyone surveyed is involved in activities that are classed as 'CSR'. Thus, the primary challenge is not to increase levels of CSR but to increase awareness, acknowledge and encourage its practice, so that SMEs know what it entails."

The main findings of the survey are:

- The term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' or 'CSR' is not well known or understood amongst SMEs even at a basic level.
- All survey respondents in 2015 were active in some form of CSR.
- Only 54% understood enough about the term and the nature of CSR to be able to state that they were engaged in it.
- 94% of SMEs donate money to charity.
- 94% have waste reduction programmes.
- 92% have a recycling programme.
- 92% are committed to the responsible business practice of paying promptly.
- 84% actively support the learning and development of their employees.
- 39% of SMEs have a charity partner (up from 35% in 2013).
- 70% of respondents who answered 'no' were active in all areas of CSR mentioned.
- 80% of respondents who answered 'don't know' were active in all areas of CSR mentioned.

"Government and society must give more recognition to SME achievements in CSR and encourage them to be more active through a bottom-up approach, awareness raising actions and dedicated tools. It must be emphasised that SMEs should not be categorised as simply 'bonsai' versions of large multinational businesses, when it comes to CSR issues."

**"Separate and distinct programmes and initiatives should be initiated and encouraged for SMEs, if only to ensure that the SME local involvement is not drowned out by the PR 'roar' of the larger businesses,"** concluded Fielding.

ENDS.

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**Note to Editors:**

*ISME is the only independent voice of Small & Medium business in Ireland, representing in excess of 9,500 members across all sectors. The Association is owned and run by owner managers and is independent of big business, government and unions; the TRUE voice of the Irish SME.*  
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