



Press Release

New training concept facilitates access to sustainability reporting

Berlin (Germany), 27 May 2015 Undertakings now have an even easier way of accessing the sustainability strategy reporting process: the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) has developed a comprehensive training concept on how to use the Sustainability Code that will pave the way for small and medium-sized enterprises especially to prepare their reporting.

This is particularly relevant in light of the EU Directive that will require undertakings to disclose information on environmental, social, employee-related and anti-corruption matters as well as the respect of human rights.

“The EU Directive on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information will come into force from 2017 onwards,” says Marlehn Thieme, Chair of RNE. “This reporting requirement will also affect small and medium-sized enterprises that frequently have little to no experience with sustainability reporting. Our training concept is specifically designed to encourage these enterprises to take that first step that is coming anyway. By already preparing themselves for the new reporting requirements now and aligning their undertaking to the sustainability criteria, users can reap an early competitive edge and thus ensure corporate success.”

The Sustainability Code toolbox with modular components

The Sustainability Code is an instrument that undertakings can use to document for their stakeholders what efforts they are making in the field of sustainability. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) wishing to use the Code will find a manual for SMEs giving step-by-step instructions to ensure a successful start. The implementation process is now further enhanced by a toolbox that RNE has just finalized. From now on, the Code’s training partners can use the toolbox for their informative events and training courses.

As the toolbox is a set of modules on the Sustainability Code, it can be deployed either as a 90-minute presentation or a full-day training course as needed. The content is provided on presentation slides and can be edited to incorporate information pertinent to the user and can be customized to specific situations. Last but not least, the practical application of the Sustainability Code can be tested in three work sequences.

Expert training partners

Training on the Sustainability Code is available immediately through the Code’s partner organizations (<http://www.deutscher-nachhaltigkeitskodex.de/en/partners/training-partners.html>). The Code’s training partners have, for their part, undergone extensive training on the Sustainability Code and are ready to impart their knowledge to undertakings. Multipliers such as the chambers of industry and commerce, regional CSR networks as well as associations will receive a comprehensive information package on the training concept in June to enable them to hold information events for small and medium-sized enterprises in their region based around the toolbox. These can be held independently or in partnership with the Code’s training partners.

Upon request, the Sustainability Code team can provide interested parties with a list of regional training partners for holding seminars and information events. Where available, the team can also establish contact to undertakings in the region that already use the Code and can report on their practical experience.

The **Sustainability Code** promotes corporate social responsibility. Using 20 criteria, it measures the sustainability performance of national and international organizations and companies regardless of their size and legal structure. As of 2017, capital-market-oriented companies with more than 500 employees will be required to report on their sustainability activities. The EU Commission has praised the Sustainability Code as a suitable standard for fulfilling the reporting obligation. Its area of focus and uncomplicated handling also make the Code an ideal tool for small and medium-sized enterprises. <http://www.sustainabilitycode.org>

The **German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)** was first called into being by the German government in April 2001. The Council consists of 15 public figures. Its tasks comprise developing contributions to implement the National Sustainability Strategy, specifying concrete areas for action and projects, as well as making sustainability an important public issue. Federal Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel, is continuing the National Sustainability Strategy and appointed RNE for a further three years on 1 July 2013. <http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en>

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