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## COGITA

Corporate Social and  
Environmental Responsibility  
Through Public Policy



[www.cogitaproject.eu](http://www.cogitaproject.eu)

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**CORPORATE  
SOCIAL  
AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
RESPONSIBILITY  
THROUGH  
PUBLIC POLICY**

**COGITA** is an interregional project,  
bringing together 13 regions covering  
the whole of Europe and a budget of  
over €2.5M, which promotes social and  
environmental responsibility within  
SMEs across Europe.





## THE COGITA PROJECT

COGITA provides input to public policy by supporting the uptake of an integrated concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

*The European Commission defines CSR as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society. [...] To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders.” (Brussels, 25.10.2011, COM(2011) 681 final)*

CSR has become part of the debate on the role of companies in society, on challenges to the welfare state, on governance and socio-economic development. Many public authorities in Europe have recognised the potential of CSR and have placed it on their political agendas. However, the impact of CSR has been limited by a lack of coordination and a division of CSR into disconnected segments.

## OBJECTIVES

Within the context of promoting competitiveness through responsible behavior, COGITA’s overall objective is to improve public policies supporting the uptake of an integrated concept of CSR—combining social and environmental aspects—in SMEs.

Within this integrated concept, COGITA considers 5 subthemes:

- Raising CSR awareness and capacity building – how can public authorities help SMEs identify and implement their CSR strategies and practices?
- CSR in public procurement – how can public procurement policies and procedures leverage SMEs’ commitment to CSR?
- CSR criteria in public funding – how can public funding and related awarding criteria leverage SMEs’ commitment to CSR?
- Inter-firm collaboration and supply chains – how can public authorities support cooperation among SMEs and/or within supply chains to achieve effective CSR strategies and policies?
- Communication and branding – how can public authorities help SMEs communicate their CSR approach, efforts and achievements?

## OUTCOMES

COGITA combines interregional exchange with local stakeholder involvement, in order to ensure that the project is in line with local priorities.

COGITA develops tools to support public authorities in their efforts to promote CSR as means of encouraging competitiveness, growth and more and better jobs in SMEs.

The project activities and outcomes include:

- Exchange between partners on thematic and methodological concepts
- Feasibility check on integrated CSR approaches in 13 European regions for public authorities to support SMEs in adopting an integrated concept of CSR
- Recommendations on CSR policies and implementation plans for public authorities, based on the results of 3 years of exchange and networking
- Tools to support regional development within the field of CSR, including instruments emerging from an analysis of good practices and a CSR manual to guide others working within the field of public policy and CSR