



Cegos 2023 International CSR barometer

## **Corporate Social Responsibility: where do we stand?**

Mobilise, involve and train  
to increase commitment and action

As a worldwide leader in Learning & Development, the Cegos Group is committed to working with organisations and their teams to support the transformations linked to sustainable development.

Cegos therefore decided to conduct this international barometer dedicated to Corporate Social Responsibility, with a fourfold objective:

- to question CSR departments about the priorities and concrete actions they roll out in the field of sustainable development;
- to identify the stakeholders involved in their organisation's approach,
- to understand employees' perceptions and expectations of their company or organisation in terms of CSR,
- Identify avenues for progress, particularly in terms of skills development, to encourage commitment from all and make CSR policies more effective.

This barometer was carried out in May 2023 among 3,802 international employees and 556 international CSR Directors or Managers in 8 countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America (including 1,000 employees and 250 CSR managers in France).

As a reminder, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined by the European Commission as "the contribution of enterprises to sustainable development", which implies "the voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns into their business operations and their interaction with their stakeholders".

The aim is for organisations to have a positive impact on society as a whole, while remaining economically viable.



*This barometer shows that employees - whatever their country, profession or age - are now aware of the great challenges companies need to meet in terms of sustainable development.*

*They consider their organisations' CSR initiatives to be legitimate, but still insufficient to meet these challenges. Those who manage and roll out CSR in organisations often still struggle to involve all managers and employees in a process of change that must be played out collectively and which impacts all business lines.*

*Whereas they are often already committed at a personal level, employees are ready to do the same at work. They therefore expect their organisation to provide them with practical support, whatever their job, on the way to responsible performance.*

*Training is obviously an extraordinary driver of mobilization and transformation, and at Cegos we are on the front line alongside our clients to help them raising awareness of CSR, supporting and professionalising those who manage the process, helping managers to include these dimensions into their jobs, or supporting everyone in dealing with the impact of CSR in their day-to-day jobs and missions... Once again, taking action and revolution in practices will be based on skills development!*

**Benoit Felix,**  
Chairman of the Cegos Group



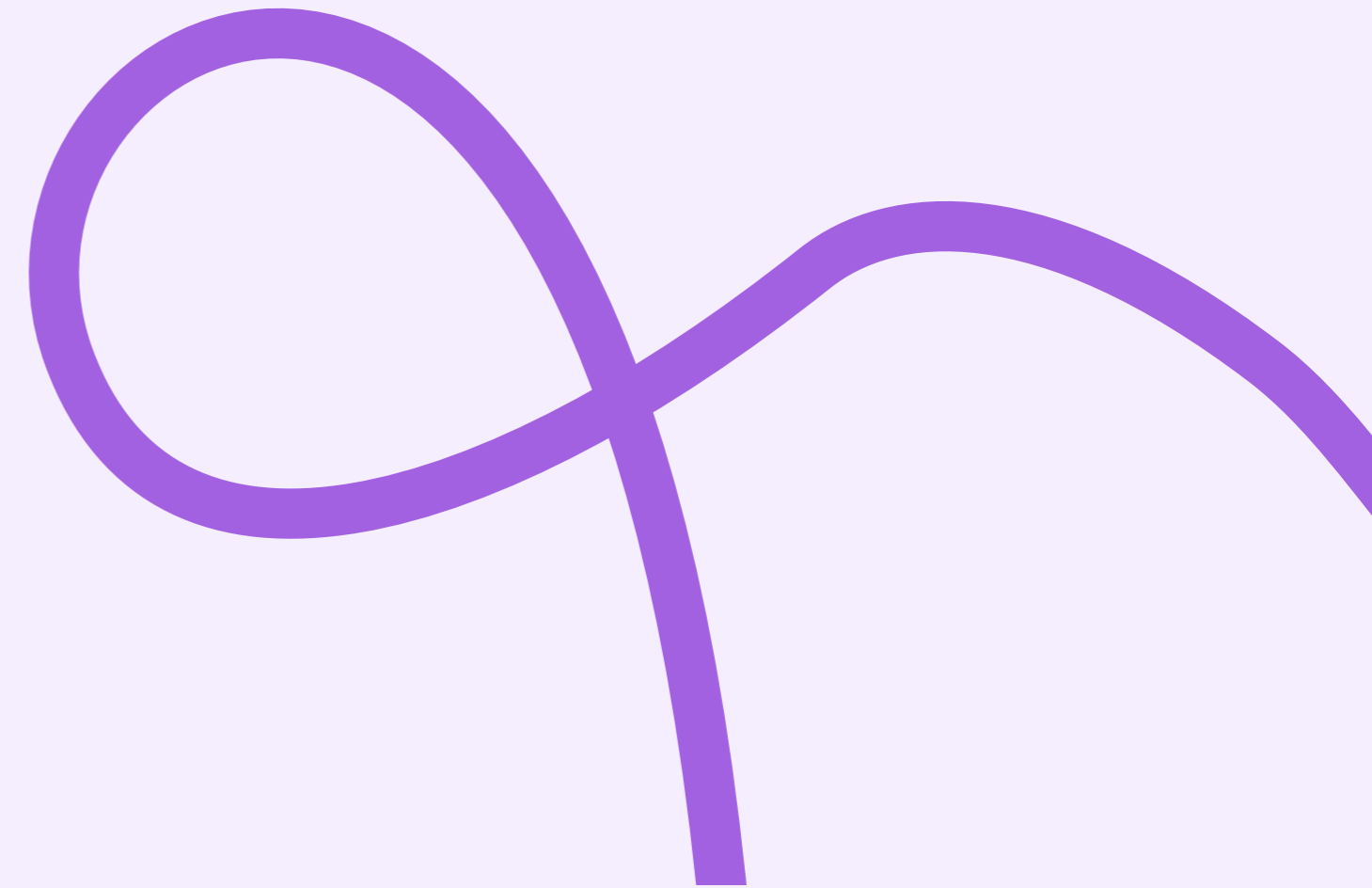
# Key figures

## Corporate Social Responsibility: commitment and convictions, but only half-hearted involvement

- 73% of international employees are aware of CSR.
- 46% do not know what it actually means and 37% do not know whether their company has a dedicated CSR function.
- According to 85% of employees and 98% of CSR managers, CSR is a major challenge for companies.
- 59% of employees declare themselves to be "promoters" or even "militant" in this area, compared to 31% who are "indifferent".
- It is also a source of professional motivation for more than 6 out of 10 employees.
- For 71% of employees, CSR is a source of confidence in the future of the organisation.
- And yet, more than half of employees are not directly involved or do not feel involved in the company's CSR policy, while CSR managers face a number of difficulties in implementing their actions.

## Organisations are under pressure with ever-increasing internal expectations on CSR

- 77% of international employees acknowledge their company's commitment to CSR, even though 33% of them believe that this is a forced commitment.
- Employees rate this commitment at 6.1 out of 10, compared with 8.1 for CSR managers.
- Only 33% of employees believe that this commitment meets the major global challenges facing us today (climate change, diversity and inclusion, energy efficiency, etc.).
- 55% of them expect their company to make a stronger commitment to meeting these challenges, and 38% even consider the CSR initiatives implemented by their organisation to be ineffective.
- For 72% of employees, their direct manager is not committed to the topic of CSR.
- Only 28% of them consider their direct managers to be active (24%) or transformer (4%) in this area.



## Communicating, training and supporting to increase the effectiveness of CSR policies

- CSR Managers consider that employees are well informed about their company or organisation's CSR approach (average of 8) yet the feeling is very different among employees (5.7).
- 82% of CSR managers claim that their organisation offers training on the subject, whereas only 38% of employees declare to be aware of this.
- Among employees who have already received CSR training, only 7% have taken a course on how to integrate CSR into their job.
- Employees want training in health, safety and quality of life at work, as well as environmental issues (impact reduction, regulations). In fact, these are the training courses that are most frequently delivered by companies/organisations.
- More than one employee in two expects further action and support to become more involved within the company.
- For 55% of employees, their organisation should support local managers to help them better embody and steer CSR issues with their teams.

# Corporate Social Responsibility: commitment and convictions yet only half-hearted involvement

CSR, which is defined as the contribution of enterprises to sustainable development, reflects issues that now cut across the whole of society, at an international level.

Companies and public organisations alike must now review their development models and practices in order to have a positive impact on society.

CSR is also increasingly standardised: in addition to the many labels and certifications that already exist at local or international level, European regulations have been strengthened by the *Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive*, which requires an ever-increasing number of companies to provide in-depth, harmonised reporting on sustainable issues.

It is against this backdrop that Cegos has chosen to question both those who manage CSR within organisations... and all employees about their perceptions and expectations in this area.

73%

of employees say they are familiar with the concept of CSR.

46%

of them do not know what it actually means.



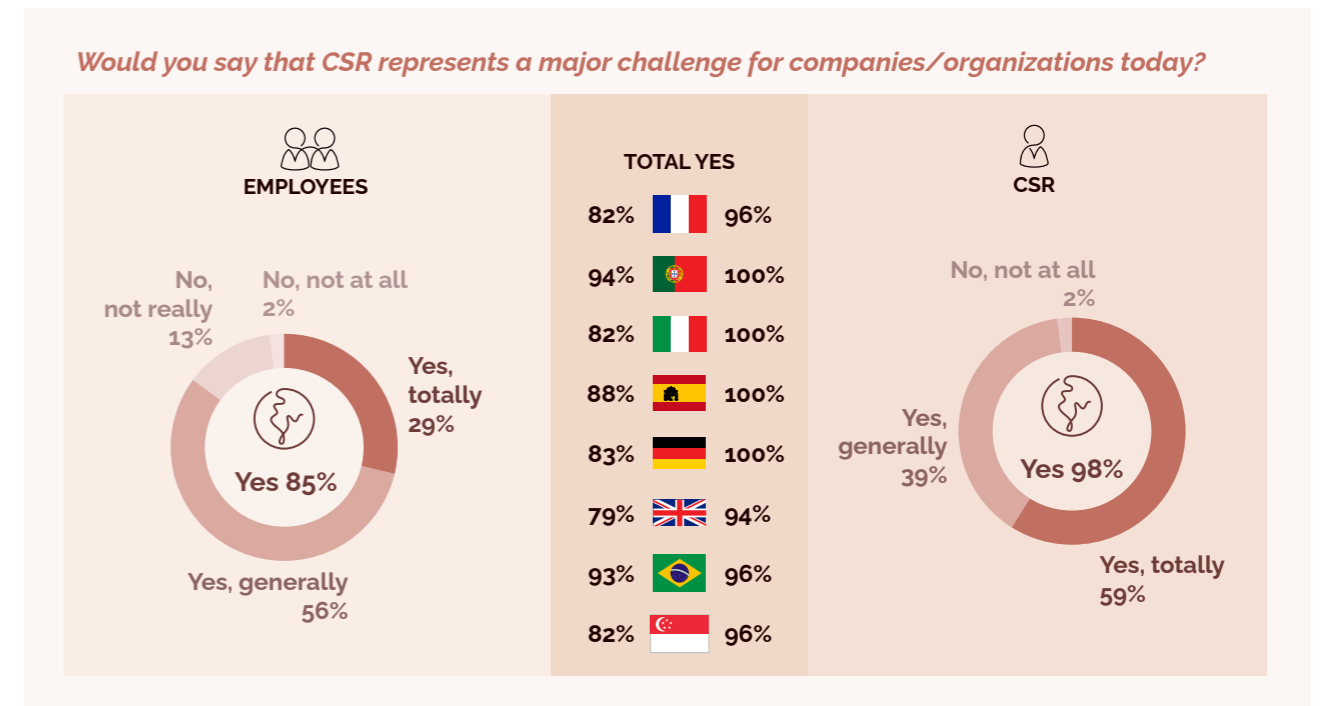
## CSR is poorly understood by employees, yet it is seen as a major challenge, a vehicle for mobilisation, professional motivation and confidence in the future

Although 73% of employees say they are familiar with the concept of CSR, 46% of them do not know what it actually means CSR spontaneously brings to their mind social impact (41%), ethics (37%) and quality of life at work (36%).

It's worth noting that French employees stand out from their counterparts, placing greater emphasis on the environment (45%), followed by quality of life at work (40%) and social impact (34%).

The CSR function needs to raise its profile, as 37% of respondents do not know whether their company has one (47% in companies with over 2,000 employees).

However, awareness is growing as 85% of employees and 98% of CSR managers believe that CSR is a major issue for companies.



Furthermore, CSR knows how to mobilise teams, with 59% of international employees declaring themselves to be "promoters" (53%) or even "militant" (6%) of CSR-related issues, with an over-representation of executives, managers and 18-30 y.o.

It should be noted, however, that 31% say they are "indifferent" to these issues, particularly

among non-graduates or those with little academic qualifications.

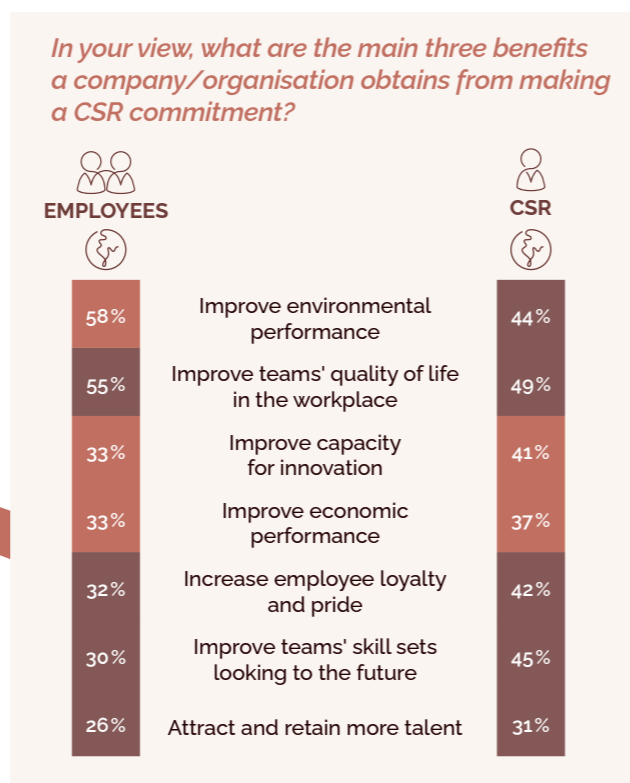
As the quest for meaning is getting stronger, CSR is also a lever for professional motivation for 63% of employees and, in the longer term, a source of confidence in the future of the organisation for 71% of them (79% among 18-30 y.o).



### At the heart of the priority action areas: quality of life at work and environmental issues

Employees and CSR managers agree that improving environmental performance (58%, 44% respectively) and quality of life at work (55%, 49%) stand among the main benefits for organisations in making a commitment to CSR.

CSR managers also highlight improved skills (45%) and a greater capacity for innovation (41%).



When asked what the three priority areas for action should be if their company or organisation were to make a stronger commitment to CSR, **employees** are most in favour of what impacts their day-to-day lives:

- Quality of life at work (41%),
- Health and safety at work (32%),
- Reduction of environmental impact (28%).

**CSR managers give priority to environmental issues:**

- Reducing climate/carbon impact (49%),
- Energy transition (47%),
- Reduction of environmental impact (44%).

### Yet employee commitment remains limited within their company

Although CSR is emerging as a motivating concept, **more than half of employees hardly take action within the company:**

- 22% of them get informed about the subject without getting directly involved in the organisation's CSR policy;
- 32% do not feel particularly involved; this is particularly true among 46-60 y.o. (39%) and in companies with over 2,000 employees (38%).

**However, a significant part of employees (32%) say they take action at a personal level.**

This lack of involvement is perhaps fostered by the bunch of difficulties that CSR Managers seem to encounter in implementing their actions, whether it be establishing monitoring indicators (28%), evaluating the impact of the actions implemented (28%), having dedicated financial resources (28%) or reconciling short- and long-term objectives (28%). It should be noted that "the lack of involvement from senior management" is not mentioned as one of the main difficulties (21%).

**In France, CSR managers stand out from their counterparts, mentioning firstly the difficulty of having dedicated financial resources (30%),** followed by the difficulty of assessing the impact of actions (28%) and then the difficulty of involving employees in the CSR approach (28%).

**Carole Deschaintre, Offer & Expertise Manager, Quality-Security-Environment & Sustainable Development, Cegos Group, explains:**

"We can only be satisfied with the fact that CSR is now viewed as a major issue by employees: it is both a vehicle for mobilisation and professional motivation and a source of confidence in the future of their organisation.

There is a rising awareness with 85% of employees believing that CSR is a major issue for companies. However, there is still a way to go: to encourage their teams to take action, companies need to make further efforts to inform, communicate, train and mobilise employees around CSR".

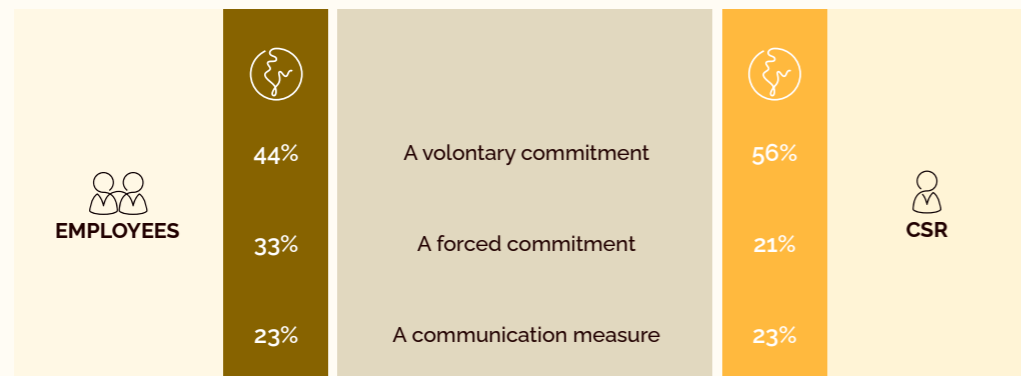
## Organisations are under pressure with ever-increasing internal expectations on CSR

While companies' commitment to CSR is now widely acknowledged, it needs to be stepped up to meet today's challenges and become more effective.

The good news is that **77% of employees and CSR managers now recognise their company's sincere commitment to CSR, compared with 23% who see it as a PR measure** (and only 19% of 18-30 y.o).

Even so, **33% of employees and 21% of CSR managers consider this commitment to be 'forced', because it is primarily a response to unavoidable regulatory requirements, an economic necessity or a challenge regarding attractiveness.**

*In your opinion, the commitment made by your company in term of CSR is...*



Employees take a fairly harsh view of their company's level of commitment (6.1 out of 10, compared with 8.1 for CSR managers) as well as of the actions implemented, that **38% of them consider to be ineffective.**

Employees are even more critical in France (5.7 vs. 7.8 for CSR managers), although slightly fewer of them (35%) consider the actions to be ineffective.

As a result, **55% of employees expect their company or organisation to make a greater commitment to meeting the major global challenges of our time** (climate change, diversity and inclusion, energy sobriety, etc.).

It is interesting to note that of the **33% of employees who feel that their organisation's commitment is at the right level**, managers and 18-30 y.o. have a more positive view.



Direct management hardly plays its role to the full: 72% of employees point to its passivity and lack of involvement in CSR.

Even if companies "can and must do better" according to employees, they acknowledge the "significant" impact (51%) of their organisation's CSR approach on their day-to-day professional activity.

This impact is stronger among supervisors, 18-30 y.o. and companies with 50-99 employees.

Although this impact is concrete, it is not linked to direct management, which is still considered to be poorly involved in CSR by a large majority of international employees (72%).

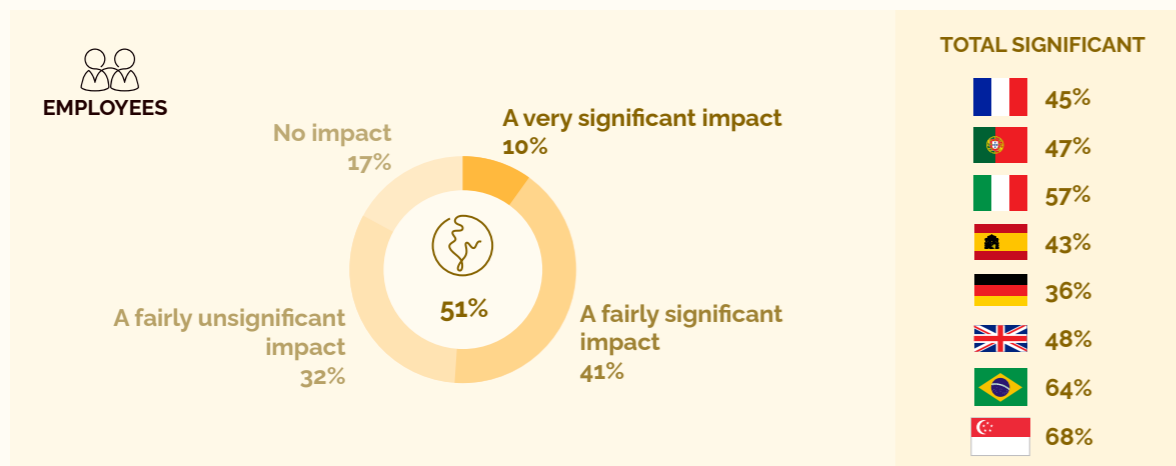
For instance, only 28% of employees view direct managers as playing a role (24%) or as genuine drivers (4%) in this area.



72%

of employees consider their direct management to be poorly involved in CSR.

To what extent do the CSR measures undertaken by your company have an impact on your professional activity on a day-to-day basis?



Catherine Jacquet, Projects Director, Cegos Group, adds:

"CSR is finally proving to be a key issue for companies as 77% of employees acknowledge organisations' commitment in this area. Employee expectations are rising as environmental and social issues become stronger at national and international levels.

This forces companies to go further on these issues and legitimises CSR as a vehicle for action. However, as sustainable development issues are not yet sufficiently central to business models in most organisations, managers find it difficult to get involved in these topics, which do not yet impact their day-to-day work.

This is going to be a major challenge in the years to come, given the changing regulations and the skills required to meet these challenges."

## Communicating, training and supporting to increase the effectiveness of CSR policies

First of all, a lack of communication seems to be hampering the effectiveness of CSR initiatives within companies.

**Despite its legitimacy, there is a lack of visibility and communications on CSR:**

Employees say they are poorly informed about their company's approach, with an average score of 5.7 out of 10.

This is not shared by CSR managers, who rate the level of information of employees at 8.

**There are also different perceptions on CSR training:**

82% of CSR Managers state that their organisation offers training on the subject, whereas only 38% of employees seem to be aware of it.

This lack of information, which is even stronger among employees aged 46-60 and non-managers, **may be linked to the poor involvement of direct managers** who are supposed to supervise the training of their teams and deliver information on this topic.

**The catalogue of CSR training courses already proposed by companies focuses on two main themes:** health, safety and quality of life at work on the one hand, and the environment on the other hand.



### What topics does the company cover in its existing CSR training courses?

| CSR | Top 5 « Yes, there is one »              |      |
|-----|--|------|
|     | Workplace health and safety              | 85 % |
|     | Environmental regulations                | 76 % |
|     | Quality of life in the workplace         | 73 % |
|     | Raising awareness about CSR fundamentals | 72 % |
|     | Reducing environmental impacts           | 72 % |

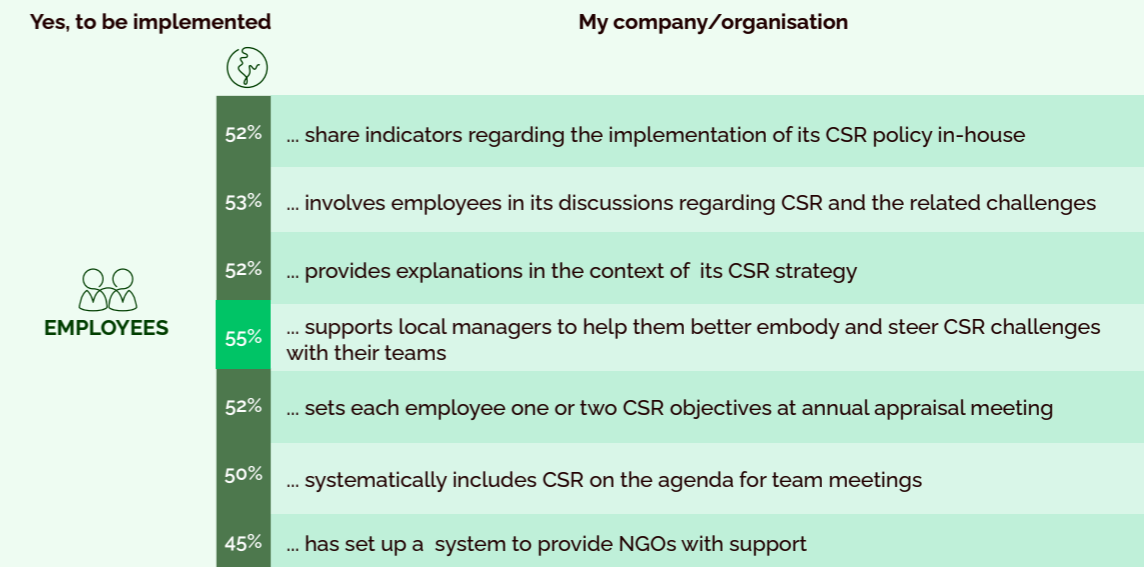
In addition to the training already in place, the top 5 training courses that are declared to be planned include managing psycho-social risk (25%), energy transition (23%), business ethics (21%), reporting CSR/ESG indicators (19%) and raising awareness about the fundamentals of CSR (19%), thereby echoing the priority areas for action identified by employees.





**Employees are waiting for concrete, visible action to get more involved**

*What actions should be implemented by your company/organisation to encourage you to get more involved in the CSR policy?*



More than one employee in two wants to be more involved in the company's thoughts on CSR and its challenges (53%), to have access to the indicators enabling the implementation of its CSR approach (52%) and to benefit from more education to explain the organisation's strategy in this area.

It should also be noted that 55% of them believe that local managers should be better supported in order to better embody and manage CSR issues with their teams. In fact, this action comes on the top of the list of actions to be implemented to increase the effectiveness of CSR policies, illustrating once again the key role of direct management in making the approach visible, understandable, acceptable and involving employees.

**CSR training is set to develop at all levels of the company and to be more integrated into business.**

Although almost 9 out of 10 employees claim to have received CSR-related training in the last three years, topics covered are still far off business and the field:

- 30% of employees have received very general training on CSR (major issues, the company's commitment, etc.);
- 48% of employees have received training on just one aspect of CSR, such as ethics, safety, responsible recruitment, etc;
- 18% have received training on all the major CSR issues;
- Only 7% had received training on how to integrate CSR into their job (17% of non-graduates).

To improve the effectiveness of the CSR policy, more than ¾ of employees believe that their company/organisation should set up specific training courses at all levels of the organisation.

They are in favour of training for executive managers (80%), local managers (79%), employees (78%) and in each business line (76%).

To become more involved in their company's CSR approach, employees express a greater interest in training related to quality of life at work (83%), health and safety at work (81%) and the various environmental issues (reducing environmental impact at 78%, reducing climate/carbon impact at 75% and environmental regulations at 75%).

Among employees who have received CSR-related training in the last three years, only 7% have benefited from a course on how to integrate CSR into their job.

**Catherine Jacquet, Projects Director, Cegos Group, adds:**

"To be transformative, CSR must not just be a matter for specialists: it must involve all the stakeholders of the organisation and expand throughout all the business and operational departments so that they change their practices over the long term.

Our study shows that only 7% of the employees who have already taken CSR-related training have been trained on how to integrate CSR into their day-to-day work. This is unfortunate given that employees are quite prepared to become more involved."

# Cegos at a glance

## A presence in Europe, Asia and Latin America

France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain,  
Switzerland, United Kingdom, China,  
Asia-Pacific, Brazil, Chile, Mexico.

## State-of-the-art training in many areas:

- Management & Leadership
- Sales & Customer Relationship
- Professional & Personal Efficiency
- Project Management
- Information Technology
- Marketing & Communication
- Sustainable Development & CSR...
- Finance
- Purchasing
- Human Resources
- Train the Trainer...

Operating in more than  
**50**  
countries through a network  
of partners and distributors

**1,400**  
employees and  
**+ 3,000**  
partner consultants

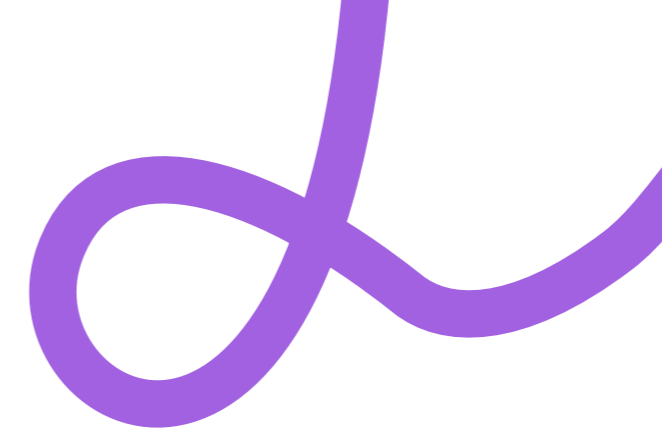
**+ 3,000**  
digital learning assets  
in more than  
**20**  
languages

**+250,000**  
people trained  
each year worldwide

**250 M€**  
in turnover

**20,000**  
corporate customers

**2.5 M**  
connected learners



## We support you on your way to CSR

Our mission is to train individuals and support organisations to help them meet their development challenges. We intend to do this in a responsible and sustainable way.

The Cegos Group is committed to Corporate Social Responsibility. A strategic priority, our CSR approach is built around 4 axes: environment, employer, society, and clients.

In this last area, and because CSR is now a major issue within organisations, we can support you in:

Raise your employees' and teams' awareness of CSR and familiarise them with the major issues at stake

Train and support your managers to help them change their practices



Train and support your teams for them to integrate CSR into their business lines

Train to accelerate change on specific major issues (diversity and inclusion, responsible leadership, etc.)





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