



## INSTITUTE of ECOLOGY and ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

### Position Statement - Corporate Responsibility

#### Summary

- IEEM recognizes Corporate Responsibility as an important concept that should be embraced and applied by all organizations.
- Corporate Responsibility is broadly defined as operating in a way that respects current and future environmental and social priorities.
- Corporate Responsibility should go beyond compliance, including applying the principles and approaches within the European Environmental Liability Directive, to all UK priority species and habitats as well as to national and internationally important sites of conservation interest.
- Within the UK, there are many opportunities for organizations to contribute to biodiversity conservation, and the social and environmental benefits that flow from it, through their day-to-day activities and through specific focused actions.
- There are also opportunities to promote the use of ecological quality as the basis for managing the environment and to ensure that effective tools and procedures are developed and are in place to do this.
- IEEM is committed to support best practice approaches to Corporate Responsibility and provide guidance on ecology and environmental management to practitioners, decision-makers and policy-makers.

#### The Contribution of Corporate Responsibility

The topic of Corporate Responsibility has become increasingly prominent over recent years. Undertaking business in a responsible way embraces a commitment to sustainability, that is, operating in a way that respects current and future environmental and social priorities. Corporate Responsibility has been promoted to the private sector in terms of 'licence to operate' and of 'risk management'. Many private sector companies have developed Corporate Responsibility policies and programmes, often based on philanthropy but some going further in terms of developing sustainability strategies. Frequently referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility, it now has a much wider interpretation, embracing environment and governance, including accountability and transparency. The term generally refers to a collection of policies and practices linked to relationships with key stakeholders; values; compliance with legal requirements; and, respect for people, communities and the environment. It is the commitment of an organization to contribute to sustainable development to improve the quality of life of stakeholders. Originally focused on the private sector, the concept is increasingly being adopted and implemented by NGOs and the public sector.

With a key focus being on environmental impact, Corporate Responsibility cuts across much of what IEEM advocates in terms of standards and professionalism. Many IEEM members work on issues that relate to Corporate Responsibility and so they are in a position of influence in ensuring best practice.

#### Issues, Opportunities and Concerns.

Corporate Responsibility should be a component of every organization's operational plans. Key issues for organizations who take Corporate Responsibility seriously are:

- Ensuring compliance with legislation, which is becoming higher profile as European Directives are implemented within the UK.
- Going beyond compliance – for instance, by embracing fully the intent of the EU Directive on Environmental Liability.
- Keeping pace with increasing demand for Corporate Responsibility - The development of the EU's policy on Corporate Responsibility; and, the possible implementation of reporting standards in the UK through a 'Business Review' process, requiring companies to report on non-financial, as well as financial, key performance indicators.
- Following best practice approaches to Corporate Responsibility, including: compliance with regulatory frameworks; following established guidelines and codes; stakeholder participation; establishing process (reporting) and performance (doing) standards; public reporting; and independent audit/certification.
- Delivering focused actions that contribute to UK biodiversity targets.

### **Contributing to UK Biodiversity Targets**

There are a number of practical ways a responsible company can contribute to UK biodiversity targets. Sound advice in their planning and implementation will ensure a durable and effective contribution. Activities include:

- managing habitats and species on land holdings to enhance and conserve biodiversity value through a site Biodiversity Action Plan;
- using science and scientific evidence as a basis for ecological appraisal
- as a purchaser of raw materials or manufactured products: by managing supply chains to minimise upstream impacts on biodiversity;
- as a lender or insurer: by setting minimum standards of environmental responsibility for customers;
- as an operator: by minimising the environmental impacts associated with any emissions to air, land or water, and the production of waste;
- as a user of energy: by implementing energy efficiency measures which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the rate of depletion of natural resources;
- as an employer: by raising staff awareness of biodiversity issues; by encouraging staff to get involved in biodiversity initiatives via local conservation organisations; by seconding staff to biodiversity projects within local authorities or conservation organisations; and by holding team-building days which contribute to practical conservation plans; and
- as a Corporate funder: by providing finance for the conservation of one of the species or habitats listed in UK's Biodiversity Action Plan under the UK Government championing scheme.

### **The Role of IEEM Professionals**

Many of the key elements in Corporate Responsibility relate to a good understanding of ecology and sound environmental management. Where organizations lack adequate knowledge internally, it is important that professional advice is sought, especially in view of the new EU Environmental Liability Directive and the recent EU and UK Government initiatives on CR. IEEM membership can bring a guarantee of professional qualification and ongoing professional development. IEEM training courses and conferences can help develop an organization's in-house competence. IEEM's convening power and reach across a range of disciplines helps to maintain and develop appropriate standards and provide a service to private and public sectors, to assist them in developing good practice in Corporate Responsibility; minimizing risk and avoiding environmental liabilities and, so to maintain a good image and the confidence of stakeholders.

IEEM will uphold best practice standards in providing relevant Corporate Responsibility components, including: Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) contributions, Risk Assessments and Environmental Liability Assessment; Environmental Management Systems; Environmental Management Plans; Surveying and Monitoring; Sustainability Strategies; Corporate Sustainability Reporting; Corporate Holdings' Management Plans; General Environmental Advice; Stakeholder Participation Processes; and Training Courses – all using the most appropriate ecological tools and techniques.

### **IEEM – Who we are and what we do**

IEEM is the institute supporting professionals in the fields of ecology and environmental management. The institute was established in 1991, and currently has around 3,000 members drawn from local authorities, government agencies, industry, environmental consultancy, teaching/research, and voluntary environmental organizations.

The objectives of the Institute are:

- To advance the science, practice and understanding of ecology and environmental management for the public benefit in the United Kingdom and Internationally;
- To further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological processes and life support systems essential to a fully functioning biosphere;
- To further environmentally sustainable management and development;
- To promote and encourage education, training, study and research in the science and practice of ecology, environmental management and sustainable development;
- To establish, uphold and advance the standards of education, qualification, competence and conduct of those who practice ecology and environmental management as a profession for the benefit of the public.

IEEM is a member of the Society for the Environment (SocEnv), the European Federation of Associations of Environmental Professionals (EFAEP) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). IEEM also has signed up to the Countdown 2010 agreement to halt the loss of biodiversity.

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