



**EU CSR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM REVIEW MEETING  
EABIS Input for February 10, 2009**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Since the CSR Multi-Stakeholder Forum was last convened in December 2006, the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS) has expanded its portfolio of activity as Europe's reference network for CSR issues in management research and education.

Despite rapid growth and notable project successes, much remains to be done. Against a backdrop of economic turbulence, increasing complexity and loss of public trust, there is an urgent need for more robust, practical knowledge that can support key actors in the global economy in adapting to the new realities of doing business.

**II. KEY EABIS INITIATIVES IN 2007-2008**

The following paragraphs highlight a number of significant knowledge development and learning initiatives that have run through EABIS and its membership in the past two years. These projects have been notably supported by the European Commission or by EABIS' Corporate Founding Partners – IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, Shell and Unilever.

**RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT**

**The CSR Platform: Promoting Excellence in EU Research and Learning**

In late 2008 the European Commission approved the final Green Book Report of the European Platform for Excellence in CSR Research Project (a.k.a. the "CSR Platform"), Europe's first and largest ever CSR Coordination Action under the FP6 framework. Addressing a fragmented and diffuse European CSR research domain, the EABIS-led project helped to delineate CSR as an academic field and to identify ways to drive it forward as a valid area of coordinated and collaborative inquiry.

During 4 years of activity and 25 events, the CSR Platform project brought together almost 2,000 representatives from scientific communities, companies, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders. It has created the foundations for a multipartite effort to help integrate the changing role of business in society into corporate training, research agendas and teaching practices.

For more information: [www.eabis.org/csrplatform](http://www.eabis.org/csrplatform)

**RESPONSE: Understanding Societal Expectations on CSR**

Also funded by the European Commission under FP6, the RESPONSE Project was the first research initiative to attempt to study (systematically) CSR as both an organizational practice and an individual behaviour. Led by INSEAD, its key objective was to understand the perceived gap between managers' and stakeholders' understandings of the company's responsibility towards society.

The project sought to inquire about the impact of organisational characteristics on managers' ability to understand stakeholders' expectations. These characteristics included topics such as the firm's strategy, organisational structure & governance, cultural traits, plus knowledge and learning management processes. The research team also examined various training approaches to understand which might be more conducive to developing responsible management behaviour.

For more information: [www.eabis.org/research-projects/response-2.html](http://www.eabis.org/research-projects/response-2.html)

### **The Business Case for Diversity**

In 2008, EABIS partnered with Focus Consultancy Ltd. (project lead), EIM Business Policy & Research, and the European Institute for Managing Diversity to deliver the € 1 million DG EMPL-supported "Business Case for Diversity" project.

The pan-European research sought to understand how the business benefits of diversity – especially innovation – could be further promoted and enhanced by companies and their support organisations. The project also explored current activities and future commitments within business schools and universities to incorporate diversity management in their curricula and institutional activities.

For more information: [www.ec.europa.eu/social](http://www.ec.europa.eu/social)

### **Developing the Global Leader of Tomorrow**

Led by Ashridge, and in collaboration with the UN Global Compact, an EABIS research consortium surveyed over 2000 corporate executives to better define the knowledge, skills and attitudes that global business will need to manage future social, environmental and governance issues more sustainably.

The research analysis highlighted a significant gap between corporate leaders' aspirations and the level of actual performance & capability within their firms. Unless future managers understand the **complexity, context and connectedness** of their operating environment, they will be destined to repeat the failures of previous generations.

For more information: [www.ashridge.org.uk/globalleaders](http://www.ashridge.org.uk/globalleaders)

## **EDUCATION & LEARNING**

### **CSR Case Studies and Mainstream Curriculum Development**

In September 2008 EABIS launched 12 new CSR teaching case studies at its Annual Colloquium in Cranfield, UK. These pioneering materials were created through direct collaboration between global companies and researchers from Europe's top institutions. They are the key outputs from the "Corporate Responsibility and Mainstreaming Curriculum Development" Project, led by London Business School and INSEAD, and funded by EABIS' Corporate Founding Partners.

The overarching objective is to increase the uptake of teaching materials that address corporate responsibility across the core curriculum of MBA and executive development programmes. Ultimately the cases will help to equip future generations of managers and leaders with new skills, attitudes and competencies to manage sustainable growth and profitability.

For more information: [www.eabis.org/education/curriculum-development.html](http://www.eabis.org/education/curriculum-development.html)

### **United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)**

Since 2007 EABIS has partnered with leading international organisations (EFMD, AACSB, Net Impact, GMAC, GRLI, Aspen Institute BIS Program) and the United Nations to develop and launch this global initiative.

The PRME are inspired by internationally accepted values such as the principles of the United Nations Global Compact. They seek to establish a process of continuous improvement among institutions of management education in order to develop a new generation of business leaders capable of managing the complex challenges faced by business and society in the 21st century.

In the current academic environment, corporate responsibility and sustainability have entered but not yet become embedded in the mainstream of business-related education. The PRME are therefore a timely global call for business schools and universities worldwide to gradually adapt their curricula, research, teaching methodologies and institutional strategies to the new business challenges and opportunities.

For more information: [www.unprme.org](http://www.unprme.org)

### **EABIS-EFMD Business in Society Gateway**

The Business in Society Gateway is a new international portal for CSR knowledge and learning. It has resulted from a strategic alliance between EABIS and the European Foundation of Management Development (EFMD). For several years the two organizations have pioneered the integration of CSR into accreditation standards and management schools across Europe and beyond.

The Gateway aims to become one of the world's most comprehensive online resource centres for thought leadership and educational materials on business in society issues. Its wider purpose is promote awareness and availability of CSR knowledge, events, tools and learning programmes to any interested stakeholder.

For more information: [www.businessinsociety.eu](http://www.businessinsociety.eu)

### **Global Survey and International Directory on CSR Education**

In 2007 EABIS and EFMD jointly ran their “*2<sup>nd</sup> Survey on Business in Directory and CR Issues in Management Education, Research and Other Initiatives*”. Involving hundreds of management institutions worldwide, it mapped existing initiatives on CSR to better understand how successfully it was being mainstreamed into curricula and elsewhere.

The survey data is now hosted on the EABIS-EFMD Gateway in the world's first **International Directory on CSR in Business Schools and Universities**. It profiles their full range of activity on CR in teaching, research, faculty development and other initiatives – from undergraduate up to tailored executive education programmes.

For more information: [www.businessinsociety.eu/directory](http://www.businessinsociety.eu/directory)

## **Annual CSR Education & Training Exchange**

In 2007 and 2008 EABIS staged two international events to profile pioneers and innovators in CSR education, in-company training and learning programmes. Over 120 initiatives were presented to multi-stakeholder audiences by leading business schools, companies and other bodies, following the successful “Marketplace” format created by CSR Europe in 2006.

For more information: [www.eabis.org/crete/12.html](http://www.eabis.org/crete/12.html)

## **EABIS AND THE EU ALLIANCE FOR CSR**

EABIS members and secretariat have been actively involved in supporting the EU Alliance since early 2007. Foremost among these activities has been the “Valuing Non-Financial Performance” Laboratory, co-facilitated by CSR Europe. The initiative has successfully developed a European framework of principles and recommendations to improve understanding and communication on CSR performance (among others) between companies and investors.

The NFP Laboratory is based on a unique double-helix structure: on one side, business-specific consultations led by Lloyds TSB and Telecom Italia with expert stakeholder groups, and on the other, an international team of academic researchers mapping cutting-edge practice led by Cranfield University School of Management.

The Laboratory’s work has been hailed by EU Commissioner Guenter Verheugen (DG ENTR), who in December 2008 noted that there is “... no other powerful incentive to consider the strategic role of CSR than an investor able to value the role that it plays for the future prosperity and sustainability of a business.”

For more information: [www.investorvalue.org](http://www.investorvalue.org)

## **III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

In 2009, EABIS and its members will continue to push back the boundaries of knowledge development and learning on business in society issues. In part, this will manifest itself through continued support for European and international initiatives with mainstream goals and potential – such as the EU Alliance, PRME, and partnerships with other agencies such as the ILO.

It will also do so by continuing to mobilize its membership to provide research responses to the most pressing European Commission policy questions and requirements on CSR, in particular under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Social Sciences & Humanities Research (FP7).

EABIS’ Corporate Founding Partners – IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, Shell and Unilever – are at the heart of many activities, investing €350,000 in new research and education projects during 2009 as concrete evidence of their commitment to responsible and sustainable business. Some of the themes where new knowledge and insight will be developed include:

- Implementing Environmental and Social Policy in Supply Chains
- Corporate Governance, Global Governance and the New Context of Business in Society
- Corporate Responsibility, Social Branding and Reputation

- Best Corporate Responsibility Performers in the CEE Region
- Leadership Practices for Integrated Corporate Responsibility
- Consumer Perceptions of Corporate Responsibility Activities
- Mainstreaming Corporate Responsibility in Executive Education
- Corporate Responsibility in the Healthcare Industry

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM**

Deeper and broader understanding of CSR issues will support a better interface between business and society. Among other aspects, it will help to shape more robust approaches to the use of scarce resources, delivering improved environmental and social conditions in the European Union and enhancing its strategic relationships with the rest of the world.

The principal messages from EABIS to the Multi-Stakeholder Forum are that there is a continuing need to connect European institutions and individuals, and to provide centralised resources to support research and teaching on CSR issues, while promoting and raising quality.

Improving the relevance of research and its usability and accessibility are just as important if real gains are to be made in accomplishing the ambition of Europe as a centre of excellence in competitiveness and innovation, through responsible business practices that maintain the quality of the European environment and contribute to social cohesion.

The key to this approach is found in **‘more and better-connected knowledge’**, with its base in connections between research centres and disciplines, between research and practice and between research and education. Only in that way will research fulfill its capability to contribute to a competitive, environmentally sound and socially cohesive Europe.

Particular attention must also be paid to enhancing the education and training of current and future policy-makers and corporate decision-makers who will provide new European leadership and vision. Ultimately Europe has much knowledge in this area but there is far more to know and learn. The pace of change and the enormity of societal challenges require nothing less.

Groups outside of research and education have an important role to play in driving this agenda. Enhanced and systemic face-to-face contact between researchers and research stakeholders, for example, is critical if we are to see better exchange of knowledge and ideas between EU member states, and between the key actors contributing to the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies. Without such stakeholder involvement, future knowledge and learning will develop in isolation.

Based on the findings of the CSR Platform Project, EABIS also recommends that multi-stakeholder attention be focused on developing new knowledge, tools and insight in ELEVEN thematic areas related to corporate responsibility and the changing role of business in society:

- Governance
- Collaboration, Partnerships, Clusters and Alliances
- Developing and Emerging Economies and Societies
- Competitiveness
- Practices for Change Inside Companies
- Diversity and Excellence across the European Research Area
- Strategy and Corporate Governance for Embedding Corporate Responsibility

- Managerial Skills and Organisational Competences
- Sector-Specific and Implementation Studies
- Integrating Corporate Responsibility in SMEs
- Sustainable Systems and Society

EABIS will continue its commitment to open dialogue and knowledge exchange both through the Multi-Stakeholder Forum and in wider circles. By extension, it will work actively with its strategic partners and stakeholders to promote **collaborative research** – seen as research that draws on a number of disciplines and that connects with managerial concerns. The Forum can expect that the findings from this work will be translated rapidly into materials that can be used and accessed across a wide range of interested stakeholder groups.