

WORKSHOP 5

Business & CSR in Green Economy

Moderators:

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Business leaders are invited to use the Earth Charter as a common ethical framework in their dialogue with civil society actors and other stakeholders, as well as in their effort to incorporate sustainability principles in their practices and to fulfill their corporate responsibility role. Approximately 200 businesses have endorsed the Earth Charter and many are using it to deepen their understanding of the Triple Bottom Line enhancing their reporting on their economic, environmental and social performance.

A special document called “The Earth Charter, GRI and Global Compact” was developed to help business groups to see the relationship among these efforts. ECI has signed an MOU with the Global Reporting Initiative to strengthen corporate commitment to sustainable ways of living. The Earth Charter International encourages all businesses to use the Earth Charter in one or more of the following ways:

- **Engage** employees with the Earth Charter for the purpose of learning, training, and inspiration.
- **Assess** the activities of the business in the light of Earth Charter values and principles, using the Global Reporting Initiative's Guidelines.
- **Incorporate** Earth Charter values and principles in the business mission statement and its core operations with the goal of developing a more socially and ecologically responsible business.

This workshop will explore ethical codes and tools to guide sustainable and responsible business practices and specific ways the Earth Charter can help in this endeavor.

The workshop will look at how to motivate businesses to increase sustainable practices, clarify the added value of the Earth Charter and new tools such as the Social Responsibility ISO standard in the quest towards corporate social responsibility, and to explore ways to advance the vision of green economy. This workshop should also strengthen the work of the EC Business Task Force.

Objectives of this session:

1. Provide a space to share about experiences and good practices of how the Earth Charter is been used in the private sector.
2. Explore ways (tools and resources) to motivate businesses to improve their management and actions towards more responsible and sustainable practices, clarifying the added value of the Earth Charter as an ethical framework and guide to action in this process.

The main focus of the workshops on this theme will be the approaches to integrate business imperatives with responsible corporate action to mainstream the goals of sustainable development. Green economy is one of the milestones and will signify a consolidation of intent, actions and insights to ensure appropriate action.

Some of the most important areas for deliberation include benchmarking tools, the role of regulations, fiscal and other monetary interventions and institutional mechanisms that will enable collective action. The need to evolve system specific tools for assessing performance of industry on the basis of constraints that dominate a given socio – economic context cannot be overemphasized. This calls for mechanisms to identify and foster excellence in proactive and mediated responses by industry to internalize externalities. Leadership by industry to identify and articulate limitations, demonstrate the feasibility of overcoming barriers, document empirical information and contribute to decision making at the national and regional levels has to also be recognized.

The technical preparedness of industry to adopt preventive and remedial measures will determine the spread and depth of human and institutional development measures for the benefit of industry stakeholders to effectively implement appropriate measures. The imperatives of obsolescence, technology adaptation and leap-frogging have to be mainstreamed in the architecture of policies and plans.

The workshops will deliberate also on the emerging dimension of communities exerting their rights to a better quality of life and ensuring that the externalities are internalized by the generators of perturbations will also be considered. Improving preparedness of communities aligned with the goals of sustainable and equity – based development becomes an important agenda in the overall framework of planning for development. The cross cutting nature of impacts of climate change and the imperatives of carbon footprints will also be discussed. The most important highlight will be the insights from industry leaders on the parameters that have to be considered for benchmarking with special reference to such integration initiatives in developing economy contexts. This will be a significant value addition to the thinking on these aspects.

The three sessions of the workshops are as follows:

1. Perspectives & approaches to derive integrated economic and environmental benefits
2. Tools for assessment of performance &
3. Redefining the role of industry

The sessions will deliberate on such aspects as

- a.** The Green Economy framework
- b.** Ethics in action
- c.** Government & Business setting standards
- d.** Consumer education
- e.** Tools and approaches to reduce the carbon foot print
- f.** Market mechanisms
- g.** Benchmarking & Leadership
- h.** Process innovations & the supply chain &
- i.** Indicators of performance.

A summary of the discussion at the workshops will be posted on the Conference website each day. Each workshop will come up with a final report on day three. The report will include a road map for the future and a set of recommendations for the Rio plus 20 Conference proposed in Brazil 2012, as well as for the next decade of the Earth Charter 2010-2020