



CSR Stakeholder Forum
9th Meeting, Tuesday 21st June 2016, (9.00am – 11.30am)
Ibec
85/86 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin 2

Participants: See Appendix I

Item 1: Opening Comments

The Chair thanked Ibec for hosting the meeting.

Item 2: Minutes of the Meeting of 1 March 2016

As the minutes of the last meeting, were circulated immediately prior to this meeting, the Chair called for any comments to be made should be forwarded to the Secretary for necessary action before close of business Friday 24 June. He advised that if no comments were received by Friday the minutes would be taken as approved.

Action:

Post minutes on CSRHub once approved.

Item 3: Presentation: Overview of the Origin Green Programme

Mr Andrew Mullins, Sustainability Development Manager at Origin Green thanked the Forum for the opportunity to speak today, and introduced his colleague Ms Ali Sheridan. He provided a very informative overview of the workings of the Origin Green Programme. The Programme, which was launched in the Summer of 2012, is the only substantial programme that operates on a national scale, uniting Government, the private sector and food producers through Bord Bia.

Mr Mullins stated that Ireland has the lowest dairy related carbon emittance in the EU, and that as Ireland is viewed as Green and Natural, we now need to prove it. Agriculture carbon emissions are in steady decline and are down 9% since 1990, and The Origin Green Programme goes a long way to continuing this commitment.

This Programme is a unique sustainability programme, developed by Bord Bia to brand and market the commitment of Irish food and drink producers to sustainable production. Ireland has a strong international reputation as a source of high quality food and drink and this programme was designed to drive a further preference for Irish products.

The Programme also aims produce more with less, addressing Ireland's challenge to meet climate change goals while maintaining its tradition as a producer of high quality food. The programme enables Ireland's farmers and producers to set and achieve measurable sustainability targets – reducing environmental impact, serving local communities more effectively and protecting the rich natural resources in Ireland.

Mr Mullins stated that verified members, by acting in more sustainable ways have those actions verified as making the difference and are acknowledged under Origin Green. Origin Green was

initially a business to business initiative but is now a full supply chain programme, and evolving to the consumer. Mr Mullins outlined the conditions of success, namely that every farm and food manufacturer signs up to the sustainability agenda, they measure what matters, receive independent accreditation and ensure that performance is based on science, innovation and best practice.

Some of the benefits outlined for small businesses, apart from doing right by the environment, the consumer and driving a new level of job satisfaction for staff, are the commercial advantages in the marketplace and the opportunity to build their reputation and trust with their customers ultimately winning more business.

Musgrave plc were showcased as the first retail and wholesale company to have been accredited with the Bord Bia Origin Green Sustainability Standard.

Mr Mullen discussed the Carbon Navigator, which is a ground breaking world first online farm management package produced by Bord Bia and Teagasc. It quantifies the environmental gains that can be made on an individual's farm and provides the feedback to the farmer to aid the improvement of their performance.

Origin Green verified members have a proven and measured commitment to sustainability. There are currently 169 verified members, and 508 registered. Mr Mullin informed the Forum of the stages of the Sustainability Charter to continuously improve responsible sourcing, and that their first Sustainability Report was produced last November. He spoke briefly about the 10,000 targets under the three headings: Raw Material Sourcing, Manufacturing Process and Social Sustainability and its links to the Workplace Pillar and Community Pillar of CSR. Key areas of the Charter include food waste, packaging, sourcing, emissions, and health and nutrition.

In terms of advising the CSR Stakeholder Forum, Mr Mullin stated that an essential component of success is spreading the message via an 'Ambassador Programme'. He stated that the Taoiseach Enda Kenny, is an advocate of Origin Green and mentions the programme at relevant events. In addition, he recommended that the Forum need to showcase tangible proof before a full marketing programme, such as our case studies on the CSR Hub.

The Chair thanked Mr Mullin and his colleague Ms Sheridan for speaking to the Forum today and agreed that their programme is aligned with the CSR agenda. Mr Mullin stated his willingness to work with the CSR Stakeholder Forum citing partnership as key.

Item 4: Standing Agenda Item: "*Sharing the CSR Experience*"

Theme: The Sustainable Development Goals

Ms Bernadette Phelan, BITCI opened by briefly outlining to the Forum what has been happening since the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were launched in New York last September, specifically what they mean for BITCI and its network, in addition to how the Forum will need to examine the SDGs role in the next iteration of the National Plan.

Ireland, along with Kenya co-led the international SDGs negotiations culminating in the agreement entitled: *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The agreement consists of 17 SDGs covering a wide range of areas, and the 17 SDGs are backed up by 169 targets.

Ms Phelan asked the question “Why should business care?” stating that business is a vital partner to transforming the world and achieving the SDGs. She stressed that the Goals will not be realised without business and organisations should align their CSR engagements with the SDGs. Delivering the Goals will help stabilize the global economy to create future business opportunities for all.

Businesses are listening, said Ms Phelan, and quoted Mark Wilson, CEO of Aviva Plc “The world has never before been united by a set of global goals on poverty, inequality, injustice and climate change”, and to not achieve the Goals would be the biggest market failure of our time.

Ms Phelan informed the Forum members of the scale of the challenge. She discussed the grading of each Goal, and presented the SDG Scorecard 2030 which displayed Ireland’s ranking (20th) among the 34 OECD countries.

Drawing comparisons with other jurisdictions, Ms Phelan proposed that as a group, the Forum could further explore what other countries are doing to inform the next National Plan.

In BITCI, they have begun the process of mapping the Business Working Responsibly Mark to the SDGs and will position the Goals in network meetings. BITCI invited Mr Jeffrey Sachs, the architect of the SDGs to their CEO meeting in October which illustrates a huge commitment for Ireland to mobilize and get support for the agenda.

Ms Phelan asked the Members to think about the Forum’s role and the priorities for Ireland. She stressed the importance of engaging with other stakeholders and emphasized the need for business and Government to work together on delivering the Goals.

The Chair queried the level that the SDGs will play in informing the next National Plan and asked the Department if direction will be received at EU level. Ms Eadaoin Collins, DJEI informed the Chair and the members that the Department would be attending a High Level Group meeting on CSR on 29 June and will report back to the members at the next meeting. Ms Collins considered it vital that the EU interpretation of the SDGs be examined during the development stages of the next Plan.

Ms Collins added that the main objective of the first Plan was to create awareness of CSR and that there is now an opportunity for deeper awareness and a chance to explore new areas of enhancing competitiveness through CSR.

A general discussion ensued around the level that businesses need to go to build some of the goals into their strategies and the need for a SDG Toolkit.

The Department of Health raised the issue regarding the number of Government Action Plans working towards similar goals and a more holistic approach would be desired, especially in relation to the SDGs.

The Chair said that the current Plan was produced before the establishment of the CSR Stakeholder Forum and that the next version is an ideal opportunity to work together to ‘Brand Ireland’. This highlight a concern for the Forum members, stating that there is no national leadership of the SDGs, emphasizing that following Ireland’s major involvement in the launch last September, from an international perspective there is a greater need for Ireland to embrace the goals. The Forum can play a vital role by ensuring that the SDGs gain momentum among businesses via the National Plan. Ibec added their support stating that the competitive advantages of CSR in business is where the

next Plan can gain traction. Ms Phelan agreed and shared that competitiveness is the narrative from the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

Action:

The CSR Stakeholder Forum to convene a Focus Group to discuss the SDGs and the National Plan possibly a series of Roundtables.

Item 5: Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation – The Prompt Payment Code / Portal

The Chair welcomed Mr Patrick Rochford and his colleague Ms Orla Kenny from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), and Mr Frank Moroney, Irish Institute of Credit Management (IICM) to speak to the Forum on the Prompt Payment Code (PPC).

Mr Rochford explained to the members about the PPC, a joint initiative developed by DJEI and IICM. The PPC sets standards for best practice in payment among businesses operating in Ireland, and is supported by a number of business groups. It represents an important step in addressing the culture of late payment in Ireland.

The speakers stressed that the issue of late payments is of critical concern especially among SMEs. Late payments can cause an adverse effect on their business by straining cash flow thereby fuelling uncertainty for many businesses. The primary aim of the PPC is to maintain cash flow – getting paid on time can mean the difference between a company staying in business and going under.

In an effort to ease cash flow difficulties for Irish small businesses, the Government introduced a 15 days prompt payment facility for all public service bodies to pay their business suppliers within 15 days of a valid invoice.

Then in 2015 the Prompt Payment Portal www.promptpayment.ie was launched by Minister Nash to facilitate organisations to play their part by signing up to the Code. The Code was developed by business for business and is therefore vital that it is supported by business.

Mr Rochford illustrated just how damaging late payment is to business by providing some statistics, and outlined a number of benefits to signing up to the Code for businesses in the marketplace. The DJEI and IICM intend to roll out a promotional campaign to educate the business community about Code. It is their intention that this campaign will remove the ‘fear factor’, provide clear guidance to suppliers and encourage good practise.

They also intend to explore the area of linking the PPC to Public Procurement to address social clauses in public procurement, a topic of discussion for all Members States and the EU Commission.

Ultimately, the PPC can create new industry norms and make positive changes to the payment culture in Ireland.

The Chair thanked Mr Rochford, Ms Kenny and Mr Moroney for their informative presentation.

Item 6: Sub-Group Progress Reports - Updates

SME Tool (Sub-Group C):

The Chair of Sub-Group C informed the wider Forum that the members of Sub-Group C met early June to progress the SME Tool, for which the pilot phase was complete. This meeting proved extremely productive and the feedback received from ISME and BITCI on the pilot provided food for thought.

Following the analysis of the feedback, the Group collectively made a number of modifications to submit to the Department. The Chair of the Sub-Group shared the Group's discussions about the promotion and dissemination of the Tool with a view that all relevant Forum members circulate it via their networks.

Sub-Group C recommended that a gathering of members of the various sub-groups is essential at this stage to discuss the future of the sub-groups and possible restructure. The Chair in her update notified the members of the Forum that a brainstorm/strategy session would be called early September.

Action:

The Group would ask the Department to collate the modifications and further liaise with the developers and IT specialists.

A meeting of the SME, Mentoring and Communications sub-group to be organised by Sub-Group C with the assistance of the Secretary to the Forum for early September.

Mentoring Programme (Sub-Group B)

The Chair of Sub-Group B (Mentoring Programme) thanked the officials in the Department for providing a suite of documents on which the development of the CSR Mentoring Programme was based. The Sub-Group met immediately prior to the CSR Stakeholder Forum meeting of 21 June to discuss and agree the approach taken, and to meet with potential Mentor Companies, some of which were also in attendance. It is expected that 8 – 10 large companies will sign up to the CSR Mentoring Programme – made up of Forum member organisations and other large firms.

Communications Strategy (Sub-Group A):

The Chair of Sub-Group A updated the members of the Forum on measures the sub-group are progressing to further raise awareness.

Following their meeting of 28 April 2016, the Chair of the sub-group developed a brief for use in CSR communication. This included a synopsis of the concept of CSR, the CSR Stakeholder Forum, the Hub and positive soundbites.

The Chair announced the recent increase in twitter activity and urged members to continue to mention CSR, the Hub and and the @CSRHubIrl twitter handle when posting on social media. A number of tweet examples and pictures also issued to members following the sub-group meeting in

April. The Chair of the group encouraged members to request their media team to post and reuse these tweets on a regular basis.

It was announced during the Sub-Group A update that a CSR ezine should be a Q4 deliverable and Forum members were invited to input for material. It is the intention that this ezine would be posted on the CSR Hub but also have the ability to be printed and circulated at events and to member organisations' networks.

2017 Responsible Business Day is an initiative which has been discussed at the previous two meetings of the sub-group. This would be depended on resources and will need further discussion, possibly during the development of the next National Plan.

Item 7: AOB

The Chair rounded off the meeting informing members that the next big issue will be the development of the second National Plan on CSR. He expressed the need to finalise current initiatives before embarking on the formulation of new initiatives, and objectives for the next plan. He asked members to think about identifying key issues, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, and sought volunteers to sit on a Focus Group to explore the direction the Forum should take in the development of the second plan.

The Department of Social Protection notified the members that the exploratory meeting discussed previously has been called for 8 July and invitations would issue shortly via the Secretary.

Actions:

Send invitations to members on behalf of the Department of Social Protection.

Tracey Murphy
Secretary to the Forum
25 August 2016

Good for Business, Good for All

Members don't forget, in order for CSR to survive and thrive!

Tweet, retweet and then tweet again!

Promotion is the key to success!