

# Draft Corporate Social Responsibility Policy

## 1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the concept whereby organisations integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and into their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland is committed to adopting best practice in this area.

CSR developed in the private sector where companies recognised that, as well as making a return for their shareholders, they could at the same time contribute to social and environmental objectives. Public bodies are in a different position than companies and, in developing policies, are expected to take into account the possible impact on society and the environment. Nevertheless, there are CSR practices that can be usefully read across to public bodies. A recent European Union paper stated 'Corporate social responsibility has important implications...for public authorities, who should take them into account in determining their own actions'.

EONI is fully committed to the principle of CSR and intends that CSR should become embedded, where appropriate, into its policies and practices, to the benefit of staff as well as the wider community. There is already much good work which could be classified as contributing to CSR taking place within EONI and the policy and future strategy will build on this in future.

EONI aims to be recognised as an organisation that is transparent and ethical in all its dealings as well as making a positive contribution to the community in which it operates. It is committed to the following core values in all aspects of its work, including the fulfilment of its social responsibility:

- Clear direction and strong leadership;
- Customer focus;
- Respect for people;
- Open communication;
- Working to deliver best value;
- Openness and transparency
- Equality
- Probity
- Development of positive working relationships with others;
- Commitment to the highest ethical standards of public service; and
- Valuing and harnessing the diversity of EONI staff.

## 2. CSR Strategies

EONI will seek to achieve corporate and social objectives by focusing on five strategic areas:

- Equal Opportunities - maintaining and promoting our commitment to the fulfilment of Section 75 obligations on the promotion of equal opportunities and to the ethos of the EONI Equality Scheme.
- Good Relations – EONI has developed and adopted a Good Relations Strategy. This will be reviewed annually and will be implemented and endorsed through a corporate action plan.
- Workplace – addressing the needs and aspirations of staff through the continuing development of diversity, work-life balance and health and well-being policies and initiatives.
- Community Impact – encouraging and assisting staff to greater involvement in team/individual projects in support of the wider community.
- Environment – further developing environmental management practices that minimise waste and maximise efficiencies.

In October 2007 the EONI Management Board made a commitment to improving opportunities and quality of life in the community we serve and some of our work in this area will fall under the Community Impact Strategy. Other individual policies in relation to the above targeted strategies will be developed, where necessary, to detail the systems and procedures relevant to each area. These will specify who/which business area will be responsible for each policy.

An action plan for 2009 is attached as Annex A

### 3. Existing Policies

Existing policies in some areas may already, at least in part, address the issues listed above, and initial work will focus on integrating these with CSR principles. In order to establish the 'baseline' of CSR work that is already taking place, a framework has been drawn up (attached at Annex B), detailing corporate programmes.

### 4. Guiding Principles

EONI recognises that we must integrate our business values and operations to meet the expectations of our stakeholders. They include customers, employees, suppliers, the community and the environment.

- We recognise that our social, economic and environmental responsibilities to these stakeholders are integral to business. We aim to demonstrate these responsibilities through our actions and within our corporate policies.
- We take seriously all feedback, complaints and compliments that we receive from our stakeholders and, where possible,

maintain open dialogue to ensure that we fulfil the requirements outlined within this policy.

- We shall be open and honest in communicating our policies, strategies, targets, performance and governance to our stakeholders in our continual commitment to sustainable development.
- EONI will, where reasonable, make the necessary resources available to realise our corporate responsibilities. The responsibility for delivery lies with all employees.
- In relation to community involvement, EONI will identify a charity each year and staff will work together to raise funds and aid the charity as and when possible in a practical way.
- In selecting either a charity for this support or working with a charity in a team building scenario, EONI will only support programmes which are inclusive in nature and reach across all social and community backgrounds. Support will not be given to individuals or groups with political or sectarian connections.

## 5. Partnership Focus

- We shall strive to improve our environmental performance through implementation of sustainable development and environmental policies.
- We shall ensure a high level of business performance while minimising and effectively managing risk.
- We shall encourage dialogue with local communities for mutual benefit.
- We will record and resolve customer complaints in accordance with our published standards of service.
- We shall encourage our employees to help local community organisations and activities.
- We shall operate an equal opportunities policy for all present and potential future employees.
- We will offer our employees clear and fair terms of employment and provide resources to enable their continued development.
- We shall maintain forums for employee consultation and business involvement.

- We shall provide safeguards to ensure that all employees are treated with respect and without sexual, physical or mental harassment.
- We shall provide, and strive to maintain, a clean, healthy and safe working environment.
- We shall uphold the values of honesty, partnership and fairness in our relationships with stakeholders.
- Contracts with suppliers will clearly set out the agreed terms, conditions and the basis of our relationship

## 6. Reporting

CSR activity undertaken by EONI staff will be reported to the Management Board on a regular (at least annual) basis. In addition, CSR activity will be publicised both through the internal newsletter, and externally as appropriate, through a variety of media.

Sections heads will maintain a framework of current and future CSR programmes that are run within their business areas and report on these to the Board. June Butler, ACEO(E), will be the Board member responsible for CSR issues.

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY****ACTION PLAN - 2009****Annex A**

ISSUE	EONI ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	WHO IS INVOLVED	TO BE COMPLETED BY	COMMENT
1. Equal Opportunities	Awareness of equality of opportunity in all areas of EONI work and in dealings with stakeholders	JB	All staff	On-going	
2. Workplace	Respecting and maintaining commitment to the core values of CSR as set out in Section 1 of the policy	JB	All staff	On-going	
3. Community Impact	Identify charity for 2009 to raise funds/undertake practical work	JB	All staff	End January 2009	Alzheimer's society selected as charity
	Registration week focus	DB	All staff	Autumn 2009 (might change to avoid devolution of policing and justice)	

	Charities use ballot boxes FOC	PM	Finance	As necessary	
	Staff work at elections in advisory capacity	JB	HQ and Area Office staff as appropriate	As requested	
	Staff take one day as special leave to work, either solely or as a team, in a voluntary capacity on a community project	JB	All staff are eligible and participation is voluntary	As requested	
4. Environment	<p>Scope opportunities for energy savings including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switching off equipment</li> <li>• Automatic control of lights</li> <li>• Double sided copying</li> <li>• Increased email use</li> </ul>	M McM	All staff	Before end 2009	

**Corporate Policies and Programmes Providing a Framework for CSR within EONI**

Equal Opportunities Policy

Harassment and Bullying Policies

Call recordingly/CCTV Policy

Whistleblowing policy

Fraud & Response Policy

Procurement Strategy

Gifts & Hospitality Policy

Good Relations Strategy