Building partnerships for a sustainable future

Corporate Social Responsibility Network
Progress Report 2007

EMIRATES ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP
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1 Introduction

When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world
- George Washington Carver

Doing business in the way that business has been done traditionally is not the norm any longer. Increasingly business is being done in ways far different than ever before. Although business has never been restricted to geo-political boundaries, it is now transcending boundaries in an unprecedented manner. Globalisation has given a new connotation to the term ‘market’. Business now has wings to cover greater distances, reach bigger populates, and influence wider socio-cultural and political developments. The proposition has also brought the responsibility of business into sharper focus.

The call for business to integrate its objectives with broader developmental goals was sounded stringently over the past decade. In a ground breaking development the contribution of business to broader societal goals was acknowledged and assimilated into new thinking regarding the future well being and survival of the human species. It was found that continuous progress of mankind could be achieved through an integrated development of economies, societies and the preservation of the environment. This realisation took form and became known as the concept of sustainable development. By implication, new roles and responsibilities were conferred on business. For example, the 1987 Brundtland Commission, a defining report on the state of global development and international governance, emphasized that industrialization would be integral to the achievement of economic growth in the developing world, but cautioned that sustainable approaches were imperative to ensure human and environmental well being and urged for greater focus on the reduction of social and environmental costs.

A sweeping look at the state of the world revealed that several anomalies and inequities existed which required a great deal of resources and commitment from various sectors, including, in a big way, business. The capacity for innovation and leadership from enterprise was seen as a powerful instrument for positive change. Concurrently, the insular approach of business supported by profit and bottom line priorities was coming under greater scrutiny. Risks and opportunities in business acquired a new meaning, and were linked to losses and benefits for entire peoples. New ratings and indices emerged to identify companies that demonstrated openness and flexibility to adapt to arising demands. International standards and codes of conduct were applied that helped to understand if business was doing the common thing in an uncommon way.

In these circumstances, companies that managed to link their business mission and goals to wider objectives gained a definitive edge as leaders and change agents. They enjoyed greater confidence among stakeholders, and earned trust and loyalty of investors, shareholders, clients and customers.

A new concept that helped to define business role in sustainable growth and development was Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR. It helped to create a road map for sustained business contribution towards the persistent strive for excellence in social and environmental areas. It paved the way for reorientating policies and defining agendas that were essentially linked to long term profitability through conscious social investments and structured interventions in development fields like education, health, and humanitarian support, etc. It also helped to build a lasting interface between business and its direct and indirect stakeholders, including government, investors, shareholders, suppliers, consumers and civil society.
The United Arab Emirates stands tall as an emerging player in the global arena. From being a regional leader it is poised to take its place on the international stage as one of the fastest developing centers of growth. The nation’s leadership is striving to create the right environment to attract investment and strengthen capacity for entering global markets. Environmental, social and corporate governance issues deliver tangible benefits to companies that have the vision and determination to chart new courses. Seeking the opportunity to create a strong network of corporate pioneers, the Emirates Environmental Group launched its CSR Network in 2004. EEG has long provided a platform to companies keen to play an active role in the movement towards sustainability. EEG corporate members have provided valuable support to the facilitation of programs on environmental education, community waste recycling, clean up drives, and so on. They have taken active part in EEG activities of various sorts. Encouraged by their commitment, EEG decided to embark on a new program to formalize the role of its members and provide them a further avenue to disburse their responsibilities towards the environment and society.

At inception, the EEG CSR Network was the only entity that pooled together the initiative of public and private sector companies with civil society activism. This multi-stakeholder forum received wide acceptance from the government, private sector and the United Nations. Today, it has membership of over forty companies, as well as a partnership with the United Nations Global Compact; the largest global voluntary CSR initiative. It is a member of the Global Compact Board and a focal point of the Global Compact for the Gulf Cooperation Council nations. It has successfully launched the local network of the Global Compact in this region, and seventeen companies are now engaged in the Global Compact from the GCC.

This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the EEG CSR Network in the year 2007. A set of seminars and workshops, outreach engagements, and the compilation of a best practice are among the activities undertaken during the year.

www.eeg-uae.org/csr
1.1 What is CSR?

Corporate Social Responsibility is about managing business interactions with people, the environment and the economy. It means contributing to economic and social development in a way that safeguards our natural resources and the environment, and respects the rights of each individual.

CSR is usually understood as the private sector’s contribution to sustainable development. While governments may introduce laws that protect the environment as well as its citizens’ current and future economic and social needs and rights, many businesses recognise a responsibility and a commercial advantage in going beyond what is required by law when managing their impacts on society, the environment and the economy.

Businesses must therefore not only balance responsibilities to the environment, society and the economy today, they must also ensure the future sustainability of those three elements.

1.2 What does CSR mean for EEG?

The United Arab Emirates, as a hub of dynamic growth and technological progress in the Middle East, offers tremendous potential for sustainable development achievable through strategic policies and practices that bring benefits to its economy, society and environment.

The EEG sees its CSR Network as a tool for facilitating open and transparent business policies and practices based on ethical values that have a sustained positive impact on business.

The EEG’s CSR Network provides a unique forum for discussion and debate around emerging trends in CSR in the region, and an opportunity to exchange ideas and best practices between companies. The network facilitates dialogue and spawns long lasting partnerships across the sectors to work together for the future success and sustainability of the UAE.
1.3 Aims and Objectives of EEG’s CSR Network

- To demonstrate commitment to the global sustainable development agenda
- To contribute to the national initiative for sustainable development in the UAE
- To position the UAE as a leader in Business Excellence and CSR in the region
- To promote the voluntary adoption of CSR policies and practices among businesses in the region
- To showcase examples of best practice CSR activities undertaken by corporate organizations and public sector enterprises
- To identify benchmarks and key indicators of sustainable growth
- To develop a national databank of CSR case studies to boost research into CSR implementation
- To develop a network for liaison and partnerships with entities that are engaged in CSR programs at national, regional and global levels

Network Members

The EEG CSR Network has been growing steadily since 2004. It is joined by a number of companies from a gamut of sectors. Their participation provides the bulwark, and their experience gives direction and impetus to the Network. More and more companies are showing an interest in the Network and the programs conducted by it.

In 2007, eighteen companies joined in as founding members of the Network, bringing the total number of members to 42. Another set of companies are in the process of becoming members.

Currently, the members of the EEG CSR Network include:

- ABB
- ABN Amro
- Al Safi Club for Friends of the Environment
- Amlak Finance
- Atkins
- BASF
- BP
- Citi Realty Services (Citibank)
- Chalhoub Group
- Department of Economic Development – Govt. of Dubai (DED)
- Department of Naturalization and Residency – Govt. of Dubai (DNRD)
- DNATA
- Dolphin Energy
- Dow
Progress and performance

The EEG CSR Network took long strides in 2007 and crossed several milestones. Not only did it continue to conduct successful seminars, it also became a center stage player in the global CSR movement. EEG’s efforts in mobilizing businesses in the Emirates and the region bore rich fruit and EEG was successful in taking the experience of the EEG CSR Network and its members to the international level.
The key achievements in 2007 were:

- The number of founding members increased from 24 to 42
- A first-of-kind seminar on the theme of Climate Change and Business was organized
- A regional delegation took part in the prestigious United Nations convened Leaders Summit and met the UN Secretary General
- The first set of professional CSR training courses for Network members and other companies was rolled out in collaboration with the renowned Asian Institute of Management
- The first Global Compact Communication on Progress workshop in the Region was organized
- A pioneering attempt was made to produce a CSR best practice and case studies book based on the experience of the Network members
3.1 EEG CSR Network Performance Indicators

To measure the progression of the Network EEG has developed a set of six quantifiable indicators, matched with the aims and objectives of the Network. It is EEG’s aim to further develop these indicators to assess the qualitative impact of the Network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantifiable Performance Indicators (QPI)</th>
<th>Corresponding Aims and Objectives</th>
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</table>
| 1. Number of international speakers invited to workshops  
2. Number of international CSR events attended by EEG | To demonstrate commitment to the global sustainable development agenda |
| 3. Number of government organizations participating in EEG CSR events  
4. Number of events conducted in partnership with other organizations | To contribute to the national initiative for sustainable development in the UAE |
| 5. Number of events hosted by EEG  
6. Number of events/ projects initiated by network members | To promote the voluntary adoption of CSR policies and practices among businesses in the region |

EEG strongly believes in the adage, - thinking globally, acting locally. And nothing gives stronger evidence of this than the NGO’s prolonged effort to factor in universally applied sustainability principles across sectors. It is significant that the majority of the programs developed by EEG are aligned with global issues and causes. From education for sustainable development to Climate Change, EEG brings focus on various issues and themes that are being addressed around the world today. For example, EEG launched a Million Tree Project this year to support the United Nations Environment Programme Billion Tree Project. The EEG’s project was designed to help achieve the target of planting a billion trees around the world, by facilitating the planting or pledging of a million indigenous trees in the UAE. The EEG’s Million Tree Project crossed its target and is running successfully. Many companies, including those belonging to the EEG’s CSR Network have joined this project and pinned their efforts on making this international initiative a success.
QPI 1
A number of international experts were invited to speak in seminars and workshops organized under the banner of the EEG CSR Network in 2007. They were able to bring in diverse perspectives on a range of crucial themes, including widening the debate on Climate Change.

- Number of international speakers participating in the Network’s activities in 2007 was 6.

QPI 2
EEG continued to take active part in international events on CSR including two meetings of the United Nations Global Compact Board and the Global Compact organized largest gathering of CSR leaders and decision makers, namely, the Leaders Summit among others. These forums helped to give representation to the Network at the global level and provided wonderful opportunities for the Network to benefit from shared learning and networking with pioneering CSR advocates across the world.

- Number of international CSR events attended was 5.

QPI 3
The interest of public sector entities in CSR continues to grow and this year the network had a steady stream of public sector companies participating in the activities of the Network. Four government or quasi-government companies joined the network in 2007. Existing members of the Network from the public sector are actively initiating CSR programs in their organizations, with CSR forums being organized by DIFC, DED, etc.

- Number of government organizations participating in 2007 was 27.

QPI 4
EEG continued to provide strategic inputs in local corporate responsibility initiatives, through its contributions in advisory committees and conferences, or by giving specialized talks on the subject to various local stakeholders.

- Number of events conducted in partnership were many and included conferences, seminars and talks.

QPI 5 & 6
This year a workshop on Climate Change, and another on the Global Compact’s reporting framework and a training on CSR, were organized under the banner of the Network. Furthermore, a team of high level business leaders were mobilized to take part in the Global Compact’s Leaders Summit. EEG’s efforts have been instrumental in creating further partnerships and project opportunities between companies in the Region and the United Nations system. One of the leading members of the Network is engaged in developing a pioneering regional project on water conservation in collaboration with a United Nations body. Another member is actively facilitating cross-sector forums on Green Building and pioneering the establishment of a center for capacity building in the field of Energy. Many members are actively drawing up plans for integrating CSR principles in business practices.

- Number of events hosted by EEG in 2008 was 3, and included 2 workshops and a training.

- Network members have been engaged in developing many events and projects, as well as collaborating regionally and locally to further CSR.

All the above endeavors have effectively given the EEG CSR Network a strong foundation locally and at the international level.
### 3.2 Performance against aims and objectives

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To demonstrate commitment to the global sustainable development agenda</td>
<td>✓ Involved international speakers in the national debate and exposed local delegates to global sustainable development issues.</td>
<td>Continued to demonstrate commitment through the involvement of international speakers and raising awareness of global issues.</td>
<td>Had the highest number of international speakers in the workshop series and increased interaction at the international level.</td>
<td>✓ At the local and global levels, continued to raise the profile of sustainable development, promote universal goals and objectives, and involve companies in international projects.</td>
<td>Organise a formal launch event to announce the establishment of the Global Compact regional network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contribute to the national initiative for sustainable development in the UAE</td>
<td>✓ Brought together key players from the government and private sectors to further sustainable development in the UAE.</td>
<td>Continued to involve federal and local government in the CSR Network.</td>
<td>Continued to involve federal and local government in the CSR Network and contribute to National initiatives for sustainable development.</td>
<td>✓ Provided inputs in national sustainable development initiatives and aligned its work with the national agenda, involved more companies in this regard.</td>
<td>Continue to interface between sectors to synergize sustainability efforts for the benefit of the nation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To position the UAE as a leader in Business Excellence and CSR in the region</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Broadened the reach of the CSR Network to include organizations based in other Gulf countries in the workshops.</td>
<td>Broadened the reach of the CSR Network beyond the UAE and continued to lead thought development in this area.</td>
<td>✓ Led a high level regional delegation to a major global forum, roped in many companies from the UAE and the GCC in the Global Compact.</td>
<td>Continue to provide leadership in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To promote the voluntary adoption of CSR policies and practices among businesses in the region</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Through the development of a CSR resource center and online tools assisted companies with implementation.</td>
<td>Continued to develop the online CSR resource center.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Organized a top level training to encourage and facilitate voluntary CSR practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To showcase examples of best practice CSR activities undertaken by corporate organizations and public sector enterprises</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Provided a platform for sharing of best practice from corporate, government and other sectors.</td>
<td>Continued to provide a platform through workshops.</td>
<td>Continued to use the EEG CSR Workshops as a platform for sharing best practice.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>To identify benchmarks and key indicators of sustainable growth</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>N.B. A future target of the EEG CSR Network will be to identify benchmarks and key indicators for sustainable growth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop a national databank of CSR case studies to boost research into CSR implementation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>A compilation of CSR best practices implemented by network members is underway.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop a network for liaison and partnerships with entities that are engaged in CSR programs at national, regional and global levels</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Workshops provide an opportunity for networking and building of partnerships across sectors and industries.</td>
<td>Allocated more time for networking and building of partnerships across sectors and industries.</td>
<td>Partnership with United Nations Global Compact, and active relation with national entities working on CSR programs.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2007 Workshop Series

4.1 Workshop on CSR and Climate Change
March 28, 2007, Renaissance Hotel Dubai

The series of workshops in 2007 started with one on the topic “Climate Change – a business risk or opportunity “, held in the Renaissance hotel in Dubai.

Recognizing the growing importance of Climate Change and its impact on the way businesses operate globally, EEG organized a forum on the subject as the first CSR event of 2007. The purpose was to look at the phenomenon of Climate Change and explore its many facets, and identify both risks and opportunities associated with it. The specific objectives of the workshop were, - developing an understanding of the challenge we face in addressing climate change, understanding the role of business in combating climate change, identify climate action policies, technologies and mechanisms, outlining strategies to be adopted by companies in the UAE to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and showcasing best practices in energy efficiency and renewables, carbon efficiency, clean technologies, etc.

The workshop was successful in bringing together a total of 64 people from the government, businesses, academe and civil society. 6 speakers presented a diverse range of perspectives on Climate Change, including interpretations based on climate science theory and evidence, political action, business responses, technological innovations, and action programs.

The workshop opened with a brief address from the Minister of Environment and water, Dr. Mohammed Saeed Al Kindi, followed by the customary welcoming address delivered by the Chairperson of EEG, Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi. Three presentations were delivered in the first round, highlighting ground breaking thoughts and experiences, and representing the difference of opinion that potentially exists in the Climate Change debate. Mr. Peter Wilson, Director of 5 Capitals, gave a rousing talk entitled, “Climate Change – a Moral or Political Issue?”. The other presentations in this round were delivered by Mr. Rami AbuLaila, Associate Member of the MASDAR Clean Tech Fund; and Dr. Chris de Freitas, Associate Professor, Deputy Director, School of Geography and Environmental Science, University of Auckland. The former gave an insightful overview of the MADAR Initiative launched by the Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company, which is a comprehensive clean development project based on carbon action. Dr. de Freitas is renowned for his alternative views of Climate Change, that are based on his long years of work and research as a climate scientist. He gave a useful presentation on the imperative for business to espouse energy efficiency in the long term, taking climate response beyond the precincts of global targets and objectives like the Kyoto Protocol. This unique presentation enriched the workshop and helped in building EEG’s credibility as a non-partisan and open forum.

The next round boasted of an equally impressive set of speakers, and included Mr. Mario Seneviratne, Director of Engineering of Green Technologies; Mr. Marcus Chandler, Corporate Environment Manager of Dolphin Energy; and Mr. Richard Smith, Technical Director of Atkins Middle East. Mr. Senevirtane spoke about the Clinton Climate Initiative and its partnership with the newly formed Emirates Green Building Council. Mr. Chandler spoke about the futuristic Dolphin Gas Project and its potential as an emission reducing initiative. Mr. Atkins spoke about design and technological innovations to reduce carbon emission in buildings.
The workshop provided a platform to showcase local and regional initiatives, and also widened the knowledge base on carbon emission, climate change and environmental impacts associated with a diverse set of industries and economic activities. It was successful in driving home the reality of potential anthropogenic impacts on climate and the environment, and in building consensus on the immediate need for energy efficiency and overall eco-efficiency.

4.2 CSR Training Program
June 26-28th, 2007, JW Marriott Dubai

In 2007 EEG undertook to organise the first training for the members of the Network and other stakeholders. The training was a modified version of the popular Reinventing CSR Program developed by the Asian Institute of Management, Manila, Philippines. AIM is a leading knowledge provider in Asia and across, imparting highly developed CSR training and consultancy to a range of sectors. A top level delegation of AIM faculty facilitated the training course, which was designed to suit the needs and requirements of companies in the Emirates and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Twenty one participants as well as an internal team from the EEG took part in the three day course to learn more about the underlying precepts of corporate responsibility and how it is being implemented by organizations. Participants included top management across disciplines and functions, and other key personnel entrusted with CSR in a wide range of companies.

The specific objectives of the training were:
To introduce and to promote CSR concepts and strategies that may be applicable to the GCC;
To suggest ways of integrating CSR into corporate policies and programs; and
To provide approaches and best practices of CSR so that firms may develop and evolve their own CSR strategy and structure.

The training modules dwelt on the fundamentals of CSR, stakeholder issues, challenges and incentives, business case of CSR, case examples, etc. The modules were based on the following themes:
- Understanding the CSR Environment in the Middle East and the Emirates
- CSR “Drivers” Stakeholders, the Multiple Bottom Line, and the social License to Operate
- Formulating CSR strategies and Programs (a simulation event that involved active participation)
- Applying the CSR Framework: Workshop on Participant CSR Programs
- Implementing CSR strategies; Sustainable Development and Environmental Issues
- Implementing CSR strategies: Stakeholder Analysis: and Corporate Responsiveness to Social / Societal Concerns

The interactive structure of the training provided ample scope of discussion and shared learning. Break out sessions were conducted to provide real life situations based on which participant groups were required to design CSR policies.

Participants also exchanged their experiences in addressing environmental, social and governance issues, and discussed the challenges and concerns typical to the conditions in the UAE and the Region. Two interesting examples, - the Singapore Case Study and the Nike Business Case, were presented which offered excellent opportunities of learning from actual CSR practices.

Presentations were given by a group of local resource persons, to explain the background of CSR locally, and present possible local models of CSR. They included Najeeb Al Ali, Executive Director of Dubai Center for Corporate Values; and Daniel Dowling, Principal Consultant and Nivedita Mahida, - Environmental Consultant from WSP Environmental. Mr. Al Ali’s presentation focused on the different CSR models implemented globally and a local CSR model being developed by DCCV. The WSP speakers presented an overview of CSR and how companies are addressing the same.

The visiting faculty from AIM included Professors Francisco Roman and Ma. Nieves Confesor, also a former Secretary of Labour.

The participants were provided with certificates upon undertaking the training, qualifying them as CSR professionals. AIM and the two organizations supporting the training program were recognised for their contributions. The three day workshop was hosted by EEG CSR Network founding member JW Marriott.

The feedback from the workshop was very encouraging. Many participants emphasized the value of the training and how it would benefit their businesses. Several delegates requested for the continuation of such training programs on a regular basis. All participants agreed that such trainings are highly needed to build organizational capacity for CSR in the Region.
4.3 Workshop on United Nations Communication on Progress

September 5th, 2007, Pacific Controls Headquarters, Dubai Techno Park

In the last quarter of 2007, EEG organized another first of its kind workshop for its members and other constituencies. The United Nations Global Compact Communication on Progress (COP) Workshop was the first event on the UNGC’s reporting standard in the Middle East. EEG pulled on its resources as a focal point of the Global Compact to bring in the head of COP from the GC office. Jeff Senne, the COP Manager was accompanied by Chris Edell from the Yale School of Management. A special session on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) was also organized to combine the twin perspectives of the Global Compact COP – GRI G3 Guidelines. It was facilitated by Ralph Thurm, Associate Director, Business Engagement and Development, GRI.

Reporting on the implementation of the Global Compact’s Ten Universal Principles is a central requirement of participation in the Compact. The Communication on Progress report is really a yardstick, and helps in understanding the level of commitment and the nature, scope and scale of implementation of the GC principles across sectors and regions. This compliance mechanism allows the GC office to track the performance of GC participants and provides a default action plan for participating companies.

The workshop was aimed at building capacity for sustainability and CSR reporting, and deal with some of the challenges and issues involved in communicating CSR to multi-stakeholders. The COP is sometimes seen as a deterrent to participation in the Global Compact; EEG’s workshop chose to dispel doubts and dilemmas, and established the value and benefits of reporting on ESG (environmental, social and governance) issues.

Specific objectives of the workshop were:

• Broaden the understanding of Global Compact and its 10 universal principles. Highlight the benefits in implementing its principles into business strategy and operation.
• Allay concerns about the reporting requirements and implementation process related to Global Compact membership
• Encourage membership to the Global Compact, amongst EEG–CSR Network founding members, to promote partnership and help build strong links with the global business community
• Experience the process of writing a COP
• Demonstrate how COP can engage with key stakeholders, facilitate cooperation and benefit an organization
• Add value to any kind of sustainability reporting
• Introduce the Global Reporting Initiative (a highly regarded international reporting standard)

The workshop focused on the Global Compact, the business case and how it delivers value at the local level, the implementation of the ten principles of the Global Compact, COP reporting and the GRI standard.

Around thirty participants attended the workshop and benefited from the extensive discussion of issues related to CSR communication and reporting within the overall context of a COP. The workshop was generously hosted by Network founding member Pacific Controls, in their newly opened headquarters, which is the Middle East’s first Platinum rated Green Building.

5 Outreach and Collaborations

The Network continued to build lasting partnerships with various entities locally and overseas. Its partnership with the United Nations Global Compact provides new opportunities of engagement for EEG and the participating companies. This year EEG was seen playing a strong role in several Global Compact activities.

At the local level EEG continued to explore opportunities of collaboration with business, building the case for CSR and successfully providing the triggers for a diverse set of companies.

United Nations Global Compact Board Meetings, COP workshop and Leaders Summit

EEG is committed to provide continuous support to the Global Compact in reaching its message and leveraging the Compact’s Ten Universal Principles based on human rights, labour, anti-corruption and environment. It is a challenging undertaking since the concept and principles of the Global Compact are relatively unknown in the region and just coming to light. EEG plays a pioneering role in this respect and is working intently on furthering the global initiative at the regional level. It routinely communicates the objectives and activities of the Global Compact to its constituencies, keeping companies abreast of leading international movements in CSR. EEG’s role is seen as extremely valuable to the expansion of the Global Compact
and in the familiarization of the core issues championed by the latter.

It was remarkable that this year EEG was able to add nine participants to the Global Compact within a couple of months, and rally a strong team to attend the Global Compact’s biggest convention, the Leaders Summit. There are now seventeen companies that are participating in the United Nations Global Compact, with several more actively interested to associate with the UN body and the principles it promotes. The companies operate in the Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The board meetings helped in underpinning achievements and challenges faced by the Global Compact and provided the direction for oncoming activities of the Compact.

Global Compact Board Meetings
EEG’s Chairperson Habiba Al Marashi attended two annual meetings of the Global Compact Board in New York headquarters of the UN, one each in April and November. She also participated in a set of high level meetings and forums held alongside the Global Compact Leaders Summit. Mrs. Al Marashi discussed CSR issues in the Arabian Gulf region with her counterparts in the Board and provided updates on the growing influence of Global Compact among countries in the region.

Global Compact Communication on Progress Workshop
EEG provides key assistance to the participants of the Global Compact in meeting fundamental requirements like the Communication on Progress reporting. It advises, guides and reviews the reports produced by newly initiated participants, and liaises with the GC office to obtain preliminary feedback and guidance. EEG took part in a Communication on Progress workshop organized by the Global Compact in Geneva in April with a view to better understand the reporting mechanism and build capacity for the facilitation of COP reporting. Subsequently, EEG organized the region’s first COP workshop in September in collaboration with the GC office.

Global Compact Leaders Summit
In July EEG attended the Leaders Summit in Geneva. It was the largest convention of the Global Compact, and the highest platform for Compact participants to discuss their work and challenges in implementing the GC principles. The summit was attended by top management of companies participating in the Compact, key representatives of labour, human rights and ethics organizations across the world, as well as other strategic partners of the Global Compact. The summit opened up new opportunities for GC participants to take initiative on major issues like Climate Change, Water, Education for Responsible Management and so on. Around a thousand delegates from different corners of the globe met in the Geneva headquarters of the UN to debate, discuss and exchange experiences. Emerging networks were represented in the Summit and the EEG led network was marked as one of the leading emerging networks from the Middle East. EEG rallied a group of chief executives and equivalent counterparts from Al Safi Danone, Oryx Enterprises, Pacific Controls and Condor Group, and organized a meeting with the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The delegation took active part in the working sessions, bringing rich perspectives on CSR issues and trends in the Middle East. Habiba Al Marashi, in her capacity as a member of the GC Board took part in high level meetings with other UN bodies and key stakeholders, as well as in strategic meetings of the Board and the GC office. The Summit provided an excellent opportunity for the companies to meet, share and learn from the diverse range of experts and advocates propagating CSR as a key to business excellence and corporate leadership in sustainable development.

2nd Global Conference on Social Responsibility
EEG was invited to the second Global Conference on Social Responsibility held in Portugal in mid February. The conference was organized under the initiative of the World Council for Corporate Governance. It highlighted the importance of good corporate strategies in seeking solutions to global challenges like poverty, climate change, and so on, while enhancing the image and branding. An impressive array of speakers addressed the sessions, including former heads of states and key public figures, as well as notable business leaders driving CSR in large multinational organizations.
A presentation on the progress of the EEG CSR Network was given by the EEG Chairperson, which provided an excellent opportunity to raise local issues to the global level, and share understanding and experiences with the large assemblage of government and business leaders. Another highlight of the event was the presentation of the Golden Peacock Awards for 2007 for outstanding CSR performance at the global level.

Local CSR Events
EEG has actively worked with many organizations locally to address CSR issues at different levels of experience. In August, EEG delegates took part in a meeting of the CSR Committee set up by Dubai Center for Corporate Values. The agenda in-
cluded a proposed CSR model for local businesses and women in the workplace issues in the local environment. A number of companies and CSR organizations took part in the roundtable discussion.

The NGO was invited to participate and support the 4th CSR Summit organized by IIR Middle East. A presentation entitled “Walking the talk - the role of civil society organizations and NGOs in helping companies put words into action” was delivered at the summit by EEG’s Chairperson, Habiba Al Marashi. It helped in bringing to light the effectiveness of civil society collaborations and partnerships with the private sector, and the range of services that NGOs are currently offering businesses.

EEG participated in an orientation event on the Queen’s University Executive Education Program organized by the Queen’s University School of Business (Canada) in the Dubai International Financial Center. Subsequently, EEG was invited to take part in a three-day workshop on “Queen’s Strategy Programme” organized by the Canadian Business Council.

EEG Chairperson Habiba Al Marashi delivered inspiring talks on corporate responsibility at two special occasions, - an Iftar organized by Atkins, a new founding member of the Network; and at an inaugural ceremony to mark the “Show How Much You Care” initiative launched by founding member Dubai Aluminium. Additionally, EEG has spoken about its CSR program at several forums organized by various enterprises include the Chalhoub Group, ABN Amro, Standard Chartered Bank; as well as by the German, Dutch and Swedish Business Councils.

Mrs. Al Marashi was chosen a member of the eminent jury to select the winners of the Middle East Business Achievement Awards instituted by IIR Middle East in partnership with Dubai Holding. For the first year awards were being given out for environmental contribution and corporate social responsibility. The award function was attended by EEG.

6 Overall Conclusions

The fourth year of the EEG CSR Network was successful in its attempt to draw the business and corporate sector into issues surrounding the community and the environment. The forum created by EEG generated a high level of interest, which is borne by the fact that there were eighteen new members as well as a large number of participants in the activities organized under its banner. The influence of EEG’s work was visible in the renewed thrust on environmental performance and social involvement among members of the Network. Both public and private sector companies are now taking a hard look at the impact of their operations on the environment and their reputation vis-à-vis their customers, clients, investors or shareholders. The call for responsible practice among businesses in the region is being scaled up under the able guidance of EEG.

Two achievements of the year, - the completion of the CSR survey and compilation of a report; and the training imparted by a leading business school of Asia; - captures the strength and potential of the Network. It clearly demonstrates that the Network is developing well in the second phase and venturing into new undertakings. The successful participation in the Global Compact Leaders Summit was another accomplishment that bore rich fruits. In 2008, EEG has ambitious plans to develop the local network of the Global Compact and initiate a set of value add programs and activities.

However a great deal more is required to accomplish the tasks set upon the EEG CSR Network. New programs, different levels of activity and involvement, projects and partnerships; - these are some of the areas that EEG will seek to develop. Further, it will continue to look at ways and means of improving the performance of the Network and delivering highest value to its stakeholders.

EEG sees a strong need for stakeholder engagement in CSR, and hopes that Network members will take on the initiative to strengthen their commitment by embedding CSR into their culture and operations, and allow it to permeate into their stakeholder relationships. EEG will continue to facilitate organizational capacity building within members, organise forums focussing on relevant issues and themes, develop tools and resources on CSR, and promote universal principles furthering corporate responsibility. It is also on the agenda to design a best practice CSR award for the Region, and EEG has worked on the criteria and structure. The award is tentatively scheduled to be launched in the first quarter of 2008.

The success of the EEG CSR Network is attributable to the positive response and commitment of the companies that are its real plinth. It is their encouragement that drives EEG to strive harder in making responsible corporate culture and strong stakeholder commitment a part of the business climate in the Arabian Gulf. Starting with environmental responsibility and moving on to broader societal objectives, companies in the region have much to offer. The double digit growth of GCC coun-
tries can be sustained through a positive business environment where challenges are transformed into opportunities through thought leadership and innovative practices. Just as companies globally are finding themselves increasingly on the hot seat with reference to responsibility, ethics and governance; so will companies in this fast developing region. The future will bring new codes, standards and regulations for business, and the message for responsibility will grow stronger and more strident in the years to come. In the long run companies taking the first steps towards CSR now will emerge as the leaders of tomorrow’s business and pioneers of society. EEG hopes that the members of its CSR Network will be among today’s change agents and tomorrow’s new league.

7 Future events

- **Training Course Reinventing CSR Program for the GCC Region** (January)
  A comprehensive six day training program brought by Asian Institute of Management, Manila, Philippines. The two-pronged objective of the training was to introduce companies to the concept and underlying issues within CSR, and provide them with the resources and tools to improve and benchmark their performance on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues.

- **Launching of the comprehensive report and sourcebook on CSR best practices in the Arabian Gulf** (First Quarter of 2008)
  During this event, EEG will release its first offering of a CSR best practice and case studies compilation. The book is based on the experience of the members of the Network and outlines CSR issues, trends and challenges of practising companies in the Emirates and the GCC Region.

- **Launch of the United Nations Global Compact local network** (First Quarter of 2008)
  EEG will organise an official launch to announce the establishment of the United Nations Global Compact network in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. Global Compact participants from the GCC states and dignitaries and high level officials from the UN system will be among the key participants. EEG CSR Network members, corporate and associate members, and other stakeholders will be invited to take part in the launch.

- **Workshop on Raising the curtain on social accountability standards** (Second Quarter of 2008)
  This workshop will provide an overview of the new standard in progress the SA 26000 on Social Accountability.

- **Workshop on Human Capital Development and CSR** (Third Quarter of 2008)
  This workshop will focus on human capital and the labour market in the Gulf region. It will cover labour market analysis, legal framework, unemployment and underemployment issues, Emiratisation issues, cultural diversity, women’s empowerment and women in business leadership.

- **International Conference on CSR** (Last Quarter of 2008)
  This conference will be the first to be organized by the EEG CSR Network. It will include some of the most current and leading issues in CSR locally and globally.

- **Roundtable Discussions of Network Members**
  Roundtable meetings of Network members will be organized to engage them actively in the work of the Network. Their participation and strategic inputs will be sought to develop the Network further in the current year.

- **CSR Best Practice Award** (Tentative: 1st Quarter of 2008)

**Other activities:**

- **Global Compact activities** – translation of resource materials, workshops and seminars, review of COPs, attendance at GC events, inputs in the GC initiatives and those of its partner organizations.