

Working Groups



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Sustainable Development & Management

Sustainable development and its management continue to move up the agenda as the over-arching theme through which the various forms of regulation and best practice shown by EIC members link together. The Group's aim, through the focus on key work areas, is to lobby Government on regulation and voluntary 'codes', find synergies with other organisations and increase the knowledge of members to move towards a more sustainable and competitive economy.

The key work areas and associated activities during the year are:

Corporate and Environmental Reporting - with the demise of the Operating and Financial Review, the Group has focused on the consultation around the Business Review (evolving from the EU Modernisation Directive) with the aim of using the regulation as the basis for clear, structured, consistent and improved reporting by corporate organisation on environmental and social material issues. Aligned with this, the Group has been working with other organisations to set out appropriate methods for assurance of such information in corporate reports to enable stakeholders to have confidence in the content and data.

Environmental Management - where the Group lobbies on effective implementation of certified management systems, that bring about not only compliance but performance improvement. A useful and informative presentation was provided by UKAS with a view to understanding and supporting the aims of UKAS and its activities that ensure consistent and high quality certification of environmental, sustainable development and integrated management systems.

Greening Public Procurement/Sustainable Construction - which has been a very active area of the Group with the involvement in the consultation on the Code for Sustainable Homes, input into the Sustainable Procurement Task Force and the DTI Sustainable Construction Strategy.

Sustainability Appraisal and Planning - the Group recognised that delivery of sustainable communities and buildings starts with the planning and appraisal process. The Group provided a response on the consultation of the Environmental Impact Regulations and will lobby on ensuring that appraisal and planning process integrates all the necessary requirements on climate change, waste, affordable housing, sustainable construction. Therefore this area has emerged as one of greater importance and will be a focus in 2007.

Environmental Data - the Group recognised that underpinning evidence based decisions in planning, appraisal, impact assessment, demonstration of sustainable construction, management and corporate reporting requires robust data techniques and transparency. The Group will unpick this work area to find an effective way to raise such issues up the agenda and an effective mechanism to enact change.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the members of the Group that have actively participated and also to those new members that have joined the Group this year. I look forward to an active work programme for the coming year

Transport Pollution Control

The EIC's Transport Working Group represents organisations actively involved in creating and marketing solutions that help reduce the environmental impact of transport. Since its inception in 1996, the Group has maintained an ongoing and active dialogue with Government on key issues related to transport and environmental policy. Through this dialogue, it has established a track record of successful campaigning for policy support to encourage the uptake of cleaner fuels and technologies that reduce vehicle emissions.

Tackling transport emissions remains as relevant today as in previous years. The Government continually stresses the importance of tackling climate change, and local authorities across the country are acutely aware of urban air quality problems. At both levels, the environmental industries sector offers solutions that help cut vehicle emissions but require policy support, whether by regulatory measures or through the use of financial instruments.

During 2006, through the PRECIS Working Party, the Group actively supported the Greater London Authority and London Councils in the development of the London Best Practice Guidance for the control of emissions from construction work. Members of the group are now involved in the implementation of this Guidance. The Group has also been involved with Transport for London and their advisors in developing their plans for the proposed London Low Emission Zone (LEZ).

In addition to these campaigns, the Group has been in dialogue with Defra and the Department for Transport (DfT) on the National Air Quality Strategy. Support at this policy level for Low Emission Zones and the application of retrofit technologies on urban vehicles is essential. The Group has maintained its involvement in key Government and industry forums, including the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership, the Air Quality Forum and the Cleaner Transport Forum. It has also contributed to the EU-sponsored Sadler Report on supporting technical measures to reduce emissions from existing heavy-duty vehicles.

The next year will see the Group pursuing its campaigns in these areas, and no doubt responding to the fresh challenges will inevitably arise in this exciting sector.