

## Autumn 2002 update

There is sustained and growing interest in corporate responsibility even in the current tight economic conditions. This trend is reflected in various surveys on rising levels of reporting and the involvement of many new organisations in CSR. We are also experiencing the trend through increasing interest in GoodCorporation.

### Global principles tested

The GoodCorporation standard has already been used to verify organisations in Europe, North America and Japan. Over the next six months we will be assessing companies in a number of developing country environments in Latin America, West Africa and the Far East. This will allow us to develop our network of local verifiers. It will also allow us to ensure that the standard works in all cultures and is truly global.

If your organisation has overseas operations in emerging markets we would be happy to discuss how we could help create consistent good practices in these countries.

### Applying principles to investment

The Oxford University Investment Committee has recently reviewed its investment approach with regard to socially responsible or ethical investments. As a result it has adopted a policy of “engagement” with its fund managers to ensure, as far as is possible, that the companies with whom they invest meet certain socially responsible standards, using GoodCorporation’s standard as their model.

A spokesman said: ‘In recognising the difficult nature of determining what is acceptable and what is not, we are pleased to report that they have adopted both the “spirit” and the practical approach

contained within the GoodCorporation Charter.’

### Discussion paper on CSR in fund management

October saw Hermes, the major UK pension fund manager, publish its investment principles. Lord Sharman, chairman of the GoodCorporation Advisory Panel, followed this with a GoodCorporation discussion paper welcoming the Hermes approach, but cautioned, ‘one investor, however large and influential, will find it hard to make a difference.’

He points out that investors, even company pension funds, reward on the basis of short-term returns, encouraging the sort of behaviour which we now know can have catastrophic consequences: ‘If the incentives on investment managers are perverse, the same will be true of company managers.’

Copies of the discussion paper are available on our web site [www.goodcorporation.com](http://www.goodcorporation.com).

### The role of CSR reporting

GoodCorporation features in a Marketing Week article (7 Nov) in which Alex Blyth discusses trends in corporate responsibility reporting. The GoodCorporation standard is highlighted as a way to demonstrate genuine management and measurement of corporate responsibility practices. Industry practitioners and researchers give their views on linking actions to words, and the extent to which selective reporting on CSR issues may just be being used to keep critics at bay.

### The business case for corporate responsibility

Many of us who champion corporate responsibility in our organisations have been in pursuit of the elusive goal of a clear business case to persuade our colleagues. In an article in the current edition of *New Academy Review (Autumn 2002, Vol 1 No. 3)*, Michael Littlechild of GoodCorporation argues that the business case can be more easily constructed if corporate responsibility is broken down into its constituent elements. This presents the positive benefits of a set of practices, rather than arguing the case at an overall CSR level.

### Baroness Greengross hosts CSR reporting debate

There is growing interest in legislation in the area of CSR. At the beginning of December, Baroness Greengross will host an event at the House of Lords on behalf of GoodCorporation to discuss the current parliamentary debate over mandatory CSR reporting. Baroness Greengross, who chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on CSR, will provide an update, and will

introduce a debate on the pros and cons of corporate responsibility legislation.

### Training course date

GoodCorporation's next Practitioners' Course will be held on 28–29 January 2003 and places can be booked by contacting Cat Craig. We anticipate that an increasing number of in-house CSR managers will attend the course to explore how the framework can be used to develop existing practices and how the verification can be used to measure progress.

### Accreditation Council

The GoodCorporation Accreditation Council met in mid-November to discuss the recent verifications conducted by GoodCorporation and to assess the fairness of the verification work. The Council's role is to endorse the certification of GoodCorporations and deal with any queries or disputes about verifications. If any stakeholder has comments or questions about any GoodCorporation verification, they can contact the Accreditation Council Chairman, Ken Rushton, via the GoodCorporation office.

For more information about any of the items featured here, please contact Cat Craig at GoodCorporation on 020 7924 3994 or [cat.craig@goodcorporation.com](mailto:cat.craig@goodcorporation.com).