

Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development in 2009

Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development had another busy year. As many of our members, we have experienced the downturn in our operations due to the economic recession that have cost us several of our members who could not cope with their business problems. By losing two and admitting one new member, we ended a year at a number of 39 members. But, nevertheless, we have continued with our activities as much as we could, turning to European sources for additional funding.

Activities

Therefore, as a partner to Croatian Employers Association, we have participated in the joint project funded through PHARE 2005 assistance program, which aimed to support SMEs in embracing CSR practices. In the CSR conference organized within the project we reached to approximately 80 non-member enterprises giving them support in initiating CSR activities in their companies. For our members and partners we have organized four workshops and seminars with different topics which are chosen according to the needs of Croatian businesses. The topics this year were round tables: *Croatia in the context of revised EU ETS scheme; Tourism and IT technologies* and workshops: *Standardization as a tool for competitiveness* and *Community investment*.

Publications

This year we have published four standard issues of our newsletter: *Business and sustainability* and a special *Handbook on packaging and product notation* which has received large interest from business as well as consumers, students and other interested stakeholders.

Partnerships

HR BCSD has detected that one of the major problems in promoting sustainable development in Croatian business is general lack of interest for sustainable development of Croatian government as well as lack of knowledge in general public. To help introduce these issues on government's agenda, we have actively participated in preparation of Croatian Sustainable Development Strategy and are involved in preparation of Action plan for implementation of the Strategy. We have also become national partners of CSR Europe as well as a support for Global Compact Network, becoming the national focal point for international initiatives on CSR and sustainability. Gathering more than 8 local partners from business associations, academia, unions, NGOs and Government, we have applied for the grant from ENT/CIP/09 for the development of the National CSR platforms acting as a lead partner.

CSR Index

Finally, a project on which we are especially proud is, for the second year in the row, Index CSR award, a price based on the methodology developed by local experts. The project is a result of the cooperation of HR BCSD and Croatian Chamber of Economy

(HGK). The methodology was created by a group of experts from different fields who defined major areas and key indicators on which the methodology was based. Index values six different areas of responsible practices: working environment, environmental management, market, community, economic sustainability and CSR in business strategy. Each of these categories is defined by a set of criteria that were developed based on their materiality, accessibility and ability to verify the information. Furthermore, for each criteria, a group of indicators was developed, which all together provide an image of business practice of the company in specific field. In defining of areas and criteria, we were guided by a number of well known international methodologies such as the methodology of BITC's CR Index, GRI's Guidelines for sustainability reporting and many others. The questionnaire consists of 119 questions while a special questionnaire with 61 questions was created for small companies.

This year we had 199 companies opening the questionnaire and 42 of them submitted the responses. Even though it can still be considered as low interest, we have experienced a significant increase comparing to the previous year and as well the results of the submitted answers are higher in average than the year before. An award ceremony was held on December 16th, when 10 awards were given, 3 for large, 3 medium and 3 small companies. Also, one award was given to the company with the largest increase in the results comparing to the previous year. The companies that were awarded this year are: Cemex Croatia, Ericsson Nikola Tesla, Euro-unit, Hartmann, Hauska and Partner, Holcim Croatia, Končar Institute for electro-techniques, Neva, Oikon and Banco Popolare Croatia.