

# **Corporate Social Responsibility Statement 2011**

Corporate Responsibility is about the contribution a business makes to its social and environmental concerns as well as its economic ones. At Bank of Ireland, these wider responsibilities have always been important to us, but never more so than today in what are difficult times for all our stakeholders. We are committed to working with shareholders, customers, employees and the wider community to understand their different needs while building a sustainable commercial business for the future.

This report provides a summary of the activity taking place across the Group during 2011, demonstrating our current approach and commitment to Corporate Responsibility.

## **PLAYING OUR PART IN THE MARKETPLACE**

Our participation in the market in Ireland, particularly in the Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) and Mortgage markets, remains critical to our future. This has been underpinned by our designation by the Minister for Finance as a Pillar bank of the Irish Banking sector, focused on supporting Irish economic recovery across all sectors, including those where additional growth over the next few years is envisaged.

We continue to promote the availability of both advice and credit through a broad range of promotional activity, reinforcing to customers and potential customers the message that Bank of Ireland is committed to supporting consumers and SMEs through challenging times and remains 'open for business'. These communications, with a strong emphasis on both support and availability, are supported by our branch network, internal communications, training programmes and participation in nationwide events.

Supporting the recovery and return to growth of the SME and Agri market remains a priority for the Bank. In 2011, as part of our lending commitment to the sector, we approved €3bn in new and increased lending facilities. The Bank has also pledged to increase our approvals to €3.5 billion in 2012 and €4 billion in 2013 to Irish SMEs and farmers. We remain committed to lending to viable enterprises in all sectors and geographic locations in Ireland.

Despite the difficult trading environment, many small businesses are experiencing growth and these businesses are confident about their future and believe they are well positioned to benefit from any economic uplift. We recognise that SME business confidence and its accompanying investment will be a key driver of economic recovery in Ireland. The Bank is determined to play a role in this process.

### **Bank of Ireland National Enterprise Programme**

The objective of our National Enterprise Programme is to provide an ongoing programme of activity to support businesses in local communities by providing them with the necessary financial support and practical advice.

One of our most popular events is Enterprise Week that is run twice a year usually in May and November. It was developed to help support SMEs in their own communities and to give them a chance to showcase their businesses and get advice from some of the most successful entrepreneurs and business people in Ireland. Approximately 5,000 businesses have showcased in the 'Show your Business' element since it commenced in 2009, with many more attending our advice events. Participants have welcomed the opportunity to promote and sell their wares to a new market while gaining tangible assistance and support not only from the Bank but also through meeting like minded SME owners. All of these businesses are focussed on the same goal of improving and expanding their business ensuring its future survival.

The Bank continues to expand and improve its range of support services for SMEs. We have a wide variety of

advisory supports and specialist funds available including a €200m Agri Farm Investment Fund which was launched in July 2011.

### **Supporting Mortgage Customers**

Bank of Ireland launched a new Mortgage Fund of €1.5bn in December 2011 to support customers who will be purchasing their first home or moving home in 2012. This initiative builds on the existing plans that Bank of Ireland has to support customers who wish to purchase a home and is reflective of the very significant role the bank is playing in the Irish Mortgage Market. This fund is consistent with our business plans and will act as a further support to the Ministerial announcement in the 2012 Budget to support first time buyers in the market. Bank of Ireland is committed to supporting customers who wish to purchase a home and we will continue to take further steps to demonstrate this support.

## **PLAYING OUR PART IN THE COMMUNITY**

### **Give Together**

Give Together, Bank of Ireland's major community investment initiative since March 2007, is the way in which we channel our support for charitable causes.

At the core of Give Together is a desire to create an environment where volunteering is actively encouraged. To this end, every Bank of Ireland employee can avail of a day each year to volunteer for the cause of their choice. As well as facilitating employee volunteering, employees can supplement their fundraising efforts by applying for matched funding when they are involved in fundraising for a community or charitable organisation. There is also funding available for team volunteering projects to buy materials and equipment to enable their volunteering project.

With the support of Give Together, almost €17million has been invested in more than 1,400 community organisations over the past four years. Employee volunteering is a key element of Give Together and over 3,500 employees across the Group have availed of a volunteer day to benefit a very wide range of causes. Bank of Ireland has also partnered with the Make-A-Wish Foundation as our locally focussed Charity of the Year for 2011/2012.

In addition, we are working with Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) to develop a Professional Skills volunteering programme within which staff will be matched with various community groups where their skills can make a real difference.

### **New Student of the Year Awards launched**

The Bank of Ireland Student of the Year Awards was launched in Spring 2011 for schools in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. These new awards were designed to replace the long running and very successful National Student Awards. The new format is proving very popular with schools, students and branches, helping us to build relationships with schools, parents and the local community.

The new Awards are easy for schools to enter, and each school is involved in choosing their own winners. There is a range of categories and skill areas in which students can be recognised for their achievements, including academic achievement, art, entrepreneurial spirit, music and sport. There has been a 60% increase in the number of schools taking part compared to the previous awards in 2010.

Bank branch staff work with local schools to agree the winning candidates and the awards are presented by the local branch manager. So far over 300 schools are participating, which will result in over 580 secondary students receiving a Bol Student of the Year Award this year.

### **Financial Education**

- **Money Skills For Life** Volunteers from the Bank delivered three pilot sessions of the “Money Skills for Life” workplace financial education programme established by the National Consumer Agency (NCA). The overall pilot programme was rolled out to 53 employers, using 31 trained presenters, mainly volunteers from the Financial and Insurance industry, from February to June 2011 during which time approximately 3,500 booklets were distributed which is a good indication of the maximum number of attendees. The NCA conducted an evaluation of the pilot and the following are the key findings :
  - 87% of attendees found the presentation useful and relevant;
  - Overall, 55% and 44% of attendees were ‘very’ or ‘a little more’ confident in their finances as a result of attending the presentations;
  - 84% felt the programme was pitched at the right level;
  - 88% said they were ‘very’ or ‘quite likely’ to use the booklet, website or helpline following the presentation;
  - Money tips, personal examples and case studies engaged the audience most;
  - There was mixed feedback from employers on the timing of the presentation with some suggesting longer/more presentation sessions while others could not commit to a full hour.

In addition there was strong evidence from the 3 month post evaluation survey of attendees that the programme has had an impact on behaviours. Additional volunteers from Bank of Ireland will be involved in delivering its further roll-out in 2012

- **Learn to Earn** Bank of Ireland in association with Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI) and Young Enterprise Northern Ireland (YENI) has designed a dynamic and innovative 5-week financial literacy programme, Learn to Earn, a course aimed at senior cycle secondary students aged 15-17 years. Learn to Earn consists of 5 modules, delivered by a volunteer from a local Bank of Ireland branch. The programme includes an opportunity for students to gain an understanding of the practicalities of everyday finances, and highlights the importance of saving and investing their money responsibly. Each student receives a Certificate of Achievement upon completion to recognise the time and effort students put into the programme.

There has been a very positive response to the course with 52 Bank of Ireland business volunteers teaching the Learn to Earn programme to 2,089 students in 89 secondary school classes across 65 schools throughout Republic of Ireland during the 2010 - 2011 School Year. In Northern Ireland, 18 Bank of Ireland business volunteers taught 44 sessions in 18 schools during the 2010 - 2011 School Year.

## **PLAYING OUR PART IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **ISO14001 – Environmental Management**

Bank of Ireland is committed to ensuring that the Operations Centre in Cabinteely retains its ISO 14001 Environmental Management Certification, initially awarded in 2005 and successfully recertified in 2008 and 2011. This has been achieved through the introduction of a computerised maintenance system, managed by our outsourced Facilities Management partner Carillion, which ensures that all of our critical operating plant is maintained and operating efficiently. Other initiatives include controlling the lighting with occupancy sensors which switch off lighting when staff are not present, thereby reducing CO2 emissions and the introduction of waste stations throughout the building supporting a strict enforcement programme, allowing us to achieve and

maintain recycling rates in excess of 95%, which has significantly reduced the amount of waste going to landfill. In 2012 we intend to extend the scope of the ISO14001 programme to our other large administration buildings.

#### **EN16001 / ISO50001 – Energy Management**

Building on the success of the ISO14001 Environmental Management System, (EMS) which was introduced in 2005, Bank of Ireland worked with Certification Europe (CE) and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and implemented an integrated EMS to support Bank of Ireland with the management of energy right across the organisation, from sourcing energy; through to the purchase and operation of plant and equipment and the day to day operation of our buildings. The initial focus for the programme is in our IT and Operations Centres in Cabinteely. These Centres were certified to the EN16001 standard in 2010, making Bank of Ireland the first financial institution in the world to have attained this level of external certification. The EN16001 standard will transition to the ISO50001 standard during 2012 and we expect our systems to be certified to the new standard in advance of the cutover date. As with the ISO14001 system, we intend to extend the ISO50001 scope to other key buildings within our property portfolio during 2012. To this end, Bank of Ireland implemented sophisticated real time metering and monitoring systems across its 300+ buildings during 2011, which allows us to benchmark optimal consumption of electricity, gas, oil and water. We believe the information derived from this system will allow us to significantly reduce our impact on the environment over the coming years.

#### **Irish Carbon Disclosure Project**

Bank of Ireland has participated in the inaugural Irish Carbon Disclosure Project, (CDP). This was the first year in which a sample of Irish companies was specifically selected by CDP to participate. The sample selected by CDP was based on the large listed companies together with the companies that had received the largest allocations under Ireland's National Allocation Plan for Emissions Trading 2008-2012.

#### **Group Cycle to Work Scheme**

In January 2009, as part of the Finance Bill, the Irish Government introduced a tax incentive designed to encourage more employees to cycle to and from work. The Scheme has been a great success in the Group. Overall, a total of 859 employees participated in this year's scheme across Ireland and the UK. This equates to almost 6% take-up across the Group, which is higher than the average take-up (c. 4%) in other companies both in Ireland and the UK. While supporting a Government environmental initiative, the scheme also provides an appealing benefit to employees as well as promoting employee fitness and well being. The scheme also supports the Group's Corporate Social Responsibility agenda through encouraging a cleaner greener environment and reducing the number of cars on the road.

#### **Smarter Travel Workplace Programme**

In May 2011, Bank of Ireland became a partner within the Smarter Travel Workplace Initiative under the auspices of the National Transport Authority. The focus of this programme is to minimise the impact of workplace travel and encourage more effective ways of getting to and from work.

#### **Green Awards**

In April 2011, Bank of Ireland was short listed in 3 categories at the Green Awards and was named as Green Financial Institution and the winner of the Overall Green Business Award. These awards represent further external endorsement of the extensive work being undertaken by staff throughout the Bank of Ireland Group supporting all elements within environmental sector – provision of funding for investment in the green economy; provision of finance for personal and business customers who wish to make their properties more energy efficient; provision of carbon trading through our Global Markets desk; working internally to make the buildings in our own property portfolio more energy efficient.

## **PLAYING OUR PART IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **Learning and Development**

Bank of Ireland Group is committed to encouraging and supporting the training, development and education of

our employees in line with role, business requirements and individual development needs. We believe this helps us deliver business results, while allowing individuals to maximise their potential. To achieve this goal we work in partnership with Accenture Learning to deliver our learning service - called Learningzone.

During 2011 we continued to build capability through this service with particular emphasis on the Leadership & Business skills for our people. We also invested considerable resources in programmes for front line staff supporting our customers and also in programmes to meet regulatory requirements. We extended our service during 2011 by building and delivering training for our customers via the web and also by providing classroom training for our SME customers in business skills as part of national Enterprise Week.

We welcome your views and comments on this report. Our email address is: [corporate.responsibility@boi.com](mailto:corporate.responsibility@boi.com).