



## COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

National Institute of Chemistry

### Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From 2019 to 2021

### Part1: Statement of the Continued Support by the Chef Executive or Equivalent

Ljubljana, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022

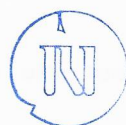
I am pleased to confirm that the National Institute of Chemistry reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. National Institute of Chemistry is deeply committed to making the Global Compact and its principles part of the culture and strategy of our organisation. Our important aim is to constantly contribute with research projects to the sustainable development goals, gender equity, employment transparency; we also encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization, National Institute of Chemistry has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles. We also commit to share this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely,

  
Prof. Dr. Gregor Anderluh, director



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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHEMISTRY



## **Part II. Description of Actions**

### ***About the National Institute of Chemistry***

The National Institute of Chemistry is a scientifically excellent, established and breakthrough research institution based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Europe. With our cutting-edge research, we are enriching the global treasury of knowledge by solving the most pressing challenges facing society including health, sustainable energy, climate change, a circular economy and safe food. Our research goals push the boundaries of science and create new values. We successfully transfer knowledge to industry and, in the long-term, support the role of science in the development of society.

We enable our scientific excellence through collaboration with the best global research institutions, groups and individuals. We are members of international multidisciplinary research networks. We aim to provide a stimulating environment and open learning space where young researchers can develop their curiosity and realise their research creativity. By doing so, we ensure future generations lives benefit from the profession.

We provide our employees with inspiring working conditions in which they can carry out their professional mission. We are proud that our interpersonal relationships are based on an open, integrated, equitable and inclusive culture that is not limited by gender or race. We strive to become the reason for excellent Slovenian scientists returning from abroad. With our mission, we contribute to the well-being of society and are an example of excellence.

We are an important actor in the Slovenian and international innovation ecosystem. The scope of the transfer of knowledge and technologies into industry ranks us as one of the leading public research organizations.

### ***The National Institute of Chemistry has promoted the Global Compact and its principles through the following activities:***

In the past two years NIC, as a research institution has taken up many research projects that involve sustainability, environmental challenges, promoting environmentally friendly technologies, gender equality and making work environment employee friendly.

In principle, we conduct research in order to make life better for everyone. Researchers aim to improve the quality of life to each and everyone. With promoting science, research and innovation through different channels and how important it is for the social and economic development, NIC reaches to a wider public.

NIC incorporates the Global Compact principles into internal operations and implements the sustainable development goals in all projects.



NIC values are described with:

- Excellence – with cutting-edge equipment and knowledge, we discover the unknown;
- Collaboration – we tackle the most difficult challenges together;
- Courage – we are curious, creative and daring;
- Without borders – we are globally engaged and open to collaboration;
- We share knowledge – we raise public awareness, spread knowledge among young people and transfer it to the economy;
- Family – we trust and support each other.

These are few actions on 10 principles topics:

### **On promoting gender equality, science and knowledge**

International Woman's Day on March 8 2019 NIC organized a roundtable entitled '**Science of family? Do we really have to choose?**' in the context of the PLOTINA project, that is promoting gender balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training. During the past years, several Ambassadors from other countries visited NIC. They were presented the work and achievements of NIC and shown the laboratories and state of the art research equipment. NIC also participated the **Garden of experiments**, which is a three-day Science festival, which is intended to foster curiosity and creativity as well to promote education and science. Another event participated by NIC is the project **Noč ima svojo moč (Night has its might)** that is part of European Researcher's Night activities. Every year in June NIC organizes the '**Week of the NIC**', which includes specific scientific events and some events suitable for wider public. The National Institute of Chemistry is focused to spread the knowledge and promote education in natural science among the youth, therefore, for the third consecutive year the Summer Research School was successfully organised. At the 14<sup>th</sup> Slovenian Economy Summit, which took place in November 2019, under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, NIC signed a special statement on Slovenia 5.0, where parties undertook that the economy would increase its investments into the development and creation of innovations as well as in updating processes and care for the environment.

In 2019 throughout 2021 among many others, some important projects on sustainability were acquired and completed such as:

**Webaselcoat** – Within the project, the National Institute of Chemistry is developing independently form thickness, spectral, selective, water-based coatings with a self-cleaning effect which is one of the most optimal solutions, since with them, we can achieve a high conversion efficiency of solar energy into thermal energy, longevity and also a high aesthetic architectural standard.

**Grafood** - the basic idea of the project is to improve the characteristics of the meat and cheese packaging, which will allow the longer and better-quality storage of raw products.

**CoBioTech RHODOLIVE** – Olive Mill Wastewater is an important by-product of the food industry of





olive oil producing countries in the Mediterranean basin, but it represents a major environmental impact if not addressed appropriately. Rhodovile proposes an innovative circular bioeconomic approach to valorise this side-flow of the food industry by treating OMW with unconventional yeast in order to accumulate and produce microbial lipids biophenols and carotenoids to be used in the development of functional food products.

**NOEL** – project will develop environmentally sound layered semi-conductor-carbon composites for use as innovative electrodes for the next generation of batteries of supercapacitors. It also aims to ensure improved performance, low price and high material availability, which would be produced locally in Europe, as well as eco-friendly properties.

**NMP**- project that research the exploitation of the potential of biomass for the development of advanced materials and bio-based products. Through such projects, we are building new value chains, opening our doors to the market of green products with high added value, strengthening the competitiveness of the Slovenian economy, strengthening social ties and at the same time reducing the burden on the environment.

Disseminating the key findings from the above mentioned joint research reports and other research outcomes through invited events and lectures, media briefings, round tables and articles, through shared knowledge with young researchers and wider audience is how the institute promotes the Global Compact principles.

On work environment and employee:

At the end of 2019 and 2021, an extensive queries were made about the employee satisfaction working at the institute, where employees could express their opinion about working conditions. The survey was made by the external independent professionals. With this survey, we gained an insight into what needs to change according to our co-workers. The survey revealed certain shortcomings regarding the organization of the work at the Institute, thus giving us a plethora of useful tips for improving working conditions. We will put even more efforts into developing and facilitating research careers in the future, nevertheless it is important to note that the employees are satisfied with the work environment and the work motivation at the Institute is very high, which is encouraging.

Achieved certificates and acknowledgement:

The National Institute of Chemistry is also a proud holder of several certificates that mean recognition on several fields of work. The Slovenian Institute of Quality and Metrology -SIQ Ljubljana awarded a certificate for the management system in accordance with the ISO 9001. The scope of the certificate includes research, education and the provision of services in the field analytical and food chemistry, environmental protection, inorganic and organic materials and technologies as well as support processes that enable the functioning of the primary processes. We also maintained the GMP certificate, awarded by the Public Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices of the Republic of Slovenia and a certificate for performing accreditation activity from Slovenian Accreditation. NIC also maintains the Family Friendly Enterprise certificate, which includes measure in the field of the reconciliation of working and family life. In year 2019, the institute also published Code of Ethics for the employees.



From year 2020, the institute is also in a process of obtaining HR Excellence certificate - The European Commission recognises with the 'HR Excellence in Research Award' the institutions, which make progress in aligning their human resources policies to the 40 principles of the Charter & Code, based on a customized action plan/HR strategy.

Years 2020 and 2021 were heavily marked by the coronavirus pandemic, and the institute was and still is the leading Slovene institute that is researching the virus and promoting the restriction of it, raising awareness to the general public about the seriousness of the issue as well as by developing a vaccine and rapid tests.

### **Part III. Measurement of Outcomes**

As a result of the above-mentioned activities the institute has contributed to the increased recognition of the Global compact 10 principles among researchers and beyond several outcomes witnessed so far, including:

- increased media coverage on the key findings from research
- increased media coverage on Covid research activities
- increased numbers of online symposiums, events and lectures
- promoting principles in brochures and promotional material.

The institute is promoting 10 Global Compact principles in every day work through its projects, programmes, promoting them through science, through human resource relations, through international collaboration, elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. Corporate sustainability is a core value at NIC and is strongly shown through its work and good practice, through corporate climate and culture. By incorporating the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact into strategies, policies and procedures, and establishing a culture of integrity, we are aware that we are not only upholding our basic responsibilities to people and planet, but also setting the stage for long-term success.