

- Unrestricted

Report

Communication on progress (COP)

Annual report to United Nations Global Compact

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KEYWORDS:**VERSION****DATE**

2013-08-23

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OPPDRAGSGIVER(E)**OPPDRAGSGIVERS REF.****PROJECT NO:****NUMBER OF PAGES/APPENDICIES:**

9 / 1 Appendix

ABSTRACT**PROJECT MANAGER****SIGN****CHECKED BY****SIGN****APPROVED BY (name, position)****SIGN****REPORTNO.****ISBN****CLASSIFICATION**

Unrestricted

CLASSIFICATION THIS PAGE

Unrestricted

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Communication on progress (COP)

1 Preface

SINTEF became member of UN Global Compact in January 2009, and this is our third communication of progress report.

SINTEF is an independent research and technology not-for-profit organisation, providing R&D services to clients in Norway and abroad. However, as we have no production or manufacturing activities, the number of suppliers and subcontractors is rather low, and the vast majority of service activities in SINTEF are performed within Norway even for projects with international clients.

As SINTEF's direct activities by themselves is largely performed in good accordance with the UN Global Compact principles, this COP will mainly describe the content of our research activities for our clients and how the results from this research may have an impact on the global environment and society in a way that will support the ten principles. Here it should also be noticed that SINTEF also have a small research group assisting clients directly in developing and improving their corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance, including studies of the impact of various CSR practices.

2 Statement of continued support – Technology for a better society

SINTEF's vision is "Technology for a better society". This vision both inspires and commits us. We are committed to contribute to a sustainable future, to human rights, labour rights, sound environment and anti-corruption and to comply with the ten universally principles of the UN Global Compact. SINTEF acts in accordance with the principles by the way we conduct our own operations and by doing research that contributes to a better society. This Communication on progress demonstrates some of our efforts during 2012. This expresses our continued support for the principles and on-going commitment to the initiative and its principles.

As a research organization, SINTEF contributes actively to reach the ideals and goals of UN Global Compact. Knowledge and innovation play decisive roles in developing jobs for the future, the wellbeing of society and enabling us to solve major global problems.

The Globe's most challenging tasks are derived from basic facts and trends: population growth, limited resources and huge divergences between rich and poor. The resulting challenges are complex, and solving them will require integrated efforts, alterations in behaviour and changes in technology. None of these will be possible without major investments in research and innovation.

We need to change our behaviour in many areas; society as a whole will have to be involved, and the dialogue between research and society must be improved. The development of new technology requires high scientific quality, the ability to innovate, national and international collaboration at all levels and good political leadership.

We all share responsibility for this process, both as researchers and as citizens.

Unni Steinsmo
President of SINTEF



3 Human rights

All activities in SINTEF shall adhere to the principles laid down in our [ethical guidelines document](#). This document states among others that:

- SINTEF shall always ensure neutrality related to all political parties in their activities
- SINTEF shall value all humans equal, and no discrimination will be tolerated, whether on grounds of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or age.
- Employees of SINTEF have the right to deny the participation in research project if the content of the projects are in conflict with their personal religious or ethical conviction.
- SINTEF shall strive to achieve a good work environment characterized by equality and equal opportunities.

In order to ensure that these principles are followed, management procedures in SINTEF include the following tools:

- The document “SINTEF statement of corporate business ethics and social responsibility on entry into contracts”, which are used as a addendum to all international contracts to ensure that our clients are not in direct conflict with the ten principles.
- The document “Supplier Evaluation Questionnaire”, which must be submitted and accepted for all major suppliers to SINTEF before contracts of delivery may be signed.
- Participation in national Research Ethics Committees
- SINTEF Ethical Ombudsman, whose responsibility is to investigate whether our ethical principles are followed, and to receive and handle ethical complaints from employees or clients.
- Ethics module in SINTEF internal training courses for new employees and new managers.
- Ethics module easily available from the front page of the SINTEF intranet.

Whenever SINTEF wants to establish a new international office abroad, a risk analysis shall be performed, where ethics and CSR aspects will be part of the analysis. A similar risk analysis will be performed for projects where part of the work will be performed in a country outside EU, Canada or US.

SINTEF also contributes to the improvement of global human rights through our research and development work within the health research field, like research on hospital patient treatments (diagnosis and cure). Much research activities are preformed to improve the life quality of the elderly, whether they live at their own home or in public or private care. See Annex A for examples and details.

4 Labour

SINTEF policy on employees focuses on the following principles:

- SINTEF is to be an attractive place to work offering unique prospects for those with the ability and drive to develop their potential
- SINTEF is to ensure that high ethical standards and awareness of Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) are applied to all of its activities
- SINTEF is to offer a work environment in which its staff are respected and appreciated, and where they are given the opportunity to develop their abilities in cooperation with their colleagues
- SINTEF is to offer professional challenges and tasks that have a high value for its customers and society
- SINTEF is to recruit and keep competent people in a global labour market
- SINTEF is to encourage team spirit, creativity and initiative in its scientific groups
- SINTEF is to develop leadership that is explicit, inclusive and inspiring

To increase our focus on these themes, to exchange experience with other research institutions about HR-strategies, and to further commit ourselves to these principles, SINTEF has signed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers. We are also participating in the common development of HR strategy for researchers.

SINTEF involves their trade union organizations in all discussions regarding issues involving employees and organizational changes. Our employees are organized within 5 different organizations, and SINTEF maintain

an identical collective agreement with all of these. In addition to questions of remuneration, the collective agreement regulates issues like

- Equal rights policy
- Recruitment policy
- Advancement policy
- Employee representation in the SINTEF Council and the SINTEF Board

Membership in trade unions is voluntarily, and member lists are confidential. However, the number of member in each of the 5 organizations in SINTEF is public, and shows that two thirds of our employees have chosen to become a trade union member.

By the UNIVERSUM evaluation of attractive working sites, the Norwegian University Students within technology ranks SINTEF among the most attractive employers in Norway.

SINTEF employees are strongly involved in the development and implementation of HSE policies. This happens both through their elected HSE representatives, but also through strong awareness and considerations in their research activities. Every second year SINTEF issues a major anonymous inquiry among all employees, in order to evaluate the state of the working conditions and working environment. The result of this inquiry is distributed to all managers in our organizations, and their management performance is subsequently measured by how well they manage to improve conditions based on the inquiry.

SINTEF has also entered into a framework agreement with Norwegian State authorities regarding the integration of employees with temporary or permanent work disability (the “IA treaty”). This agreement requires that attending companies should strive to obtain the following three main goals:

- Reduced sickness absence
- Increased number of disabled employees
- Increased retirement age

Except for a few (<10) representatives at our Houston and Rio de Janeiro offices, all SINTEF employees work in our research facilities in Norway and Denmark. However, SINTEF recruits scientific personnel of all nationalities, and presently persons from 68 different countries work in our organizations. 20 per cent of our employees were born and raised in other countries than Norway. SINTEF provides training courses for employees in Norwegian and English language, in addition to offering Norwegian language courses to our foreign employees.

SINTEF was given the 2012 Diversity Award. The jury based its choice on the fact that SINTEF has managed to create an international environment of highly competent staff from many different cultures, which are represented at most levels of the organisation. The jury was made up of representatives of Norway’s social partners, the Contact Committee between the Immigrant Population and the Government, and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation.

Several of SINTEF's research projects are aimed at improvement of working conditions, in particular improving the safety of employees in high-risk occupations. Examples might be found in Appendix A.

5 Environment

The environmental policy document of SINTEF states that our organization shall consider the principle of sustainable development in all their activities, including business management, social responsibility and environmental protection. Both in our research activities and in our daily business management SINTEF shall provide for the adequate protection of our external environment. Our policy shall ensure that our organization is continuously improving its environmental performance.

In short, SINTEF will:

- contribute to the establishment of national and international R&D programmes aimed towards development of environmental-friendly technologies
- increase the emphasis on environmental issues in our development of laboratories and knowledge

- in our own business activity, work for the constant reduction of climate gas emissions and energy consumption, and avoid release of potentially harmful substances to earth, water or air.
- communicate our knowledge and provide terms for society debates on development of national and international environmental policies.

SINTEF aims to satisfy the requirements for certification by the international ISO 14001 standard. The first sub-unit of SINTEF was certified in 2011, and our largest department (Materials and Chemistry) is presently working on a certification process which should be completed in 2013/2014.

However, the major contribution from SINTEF to the fulfillment of the UN Global Compact principles is our extensive research activity within energy and environmental research for our clients. When our clients apply new environmental-friendly technology developed by SINTEF, the global ecological footprint is reduced far more than what is possible by implementation of improved environmental performances within our own activities.

Part of the research related to environmental improvement concerns the research on energy efficiency, renewable energy production, carbon capture and storage (CCS) and better and more environmental-friendly food production technologies. Similarly, our research on noise reduction in populated areas should be included here. More details on our research activities may be found in Appendix A.

6 Anti-corruption

SINTEF executes a strict policy regarding corruption in all its forms. Our ethical guidelines document states that “...*Corruption undermines confidence in a state governed by law and in democratic institutions, weakens ethical and moral values, hinders rationalization and efficiency and undermines all forms of business activity and free competition. Corruption damages our good name and puts SINTEF and the individual at risk. SINTEF distances itself from all forms of corruption and will actively work to ensure that it does not occur in our commercial activity.*”

The document also states that SINTEF will work to prevent practices of minor payment and that SINTEF will compete on a fair and ethical basis within the framework of current rules of competition, and will not prevent others from competing with us.

The anti-corruption ideas are mandatory topics in internal training courses for new employees and new managers, but are also regularly discussion topics on larger management meetings.

In order to further support this policy, SINTEF has since 2007 been a member of the international anti-corruption organization Transparency International.

To make sure that corruption practices are not developed in any parts of the organization, SINTEF encourages whistle-blowing and has established confidential reporting channels to the ethical ombudsman in SINTEF.

Appendix A

In this appendix we present some examples on our research activities in 2012, relevant for Global Compact issue areas. The descriptions have previously been published on SINTEF's web during 2012, and are linked to the web-site:

Diagnosing patients at an early stage

Norwegian researchers have developed the world's first sensor capable of measuring individual particles in a blood sample. This new innovation could cause a sensation in the medical world.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Diagnosing-patients-at-an-early-stage/>

SINTEF given 2012 Diversity Award

SINTEF was given the 2012 Diversity Award. The jury based its choice on the fact that SINTEF has managed to create an international environment of highly competent staff from many different cultures, which are represented at most levels of the organisation.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/SINTEF-given-2012-Diversity-Award/>

Lobster farming breakthrough

SINTEF researchers have succeeded in doubling survival rates among lobster larvae under farmed conditions. This could boost populations of a species threatened in the wild.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Lobster-farming-breakthrough/>

Destroying tumours with ultrasound

SINTEF scientists are helping to develop a tool for surgical operations that will allow tumours in internal moving organs to be eliminated with the aid of high-intensity focused ultrasound. The technique opens the way for a new type of treatment that uses neither scalpels, lasers nor anaesthetics.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Destroying-tumours-with-ultrasound/>

Blood samples analysed on the spot

The Norwegian company SpinChip aims to help doctors analyse patients' blood samples on the spot and provide immediate results. The technology is licensed from SINTEF.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/SpinChip-analyses-blood-samples-on-the-spot/>

Air safety and wake vortices

SINTEF researchers are working on monitoring vortices created by aircraft during take-off and landing. The objective is both to maintain the level of safety and to improve the capacity of airports.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Air-safety-and-wake-vortices/>

Working towards a better hearing aid

Twenty per cent of hearing aid users in Norway use the equipment for only an hour each day. The reason is often poor fitting and inadequate support. Now all this could change.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Working-towards-a-better-hearing-aid/>

The jacket that talks to Facebook

Collision. Fire. Accidents. Chaos. In a rescue operation, it's no use trying to communicate via a small mobile phone display. But a jacket - now you're talking!

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/The-jacket-that-talks-to-Facebook/>

Norwegian sensors for detecting explosive gases to South Africa

South Africa's need to be able to detect explosive gases in mines before they explode has given SINTEF ICT its first footprint in that country.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/South-Africa-sniffs-at-Norwegian-sensors/>

Recycling to save renewables from shortage of materials

SINTEF scientists are extracting rare earth metals from scrap. Their aim is to prevent scarcity of materials from holding back energy-conservation efforts.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Recycling-to-save-renewables-from-shortage-of-materials/>

Connecting fall alarms to social media

When the elderly suffer falls, many agencies should be alerted so that help can arrive as quickly as possible. Researchers, students and physiotherapists are trying to connect fall alarms to social media.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Connecting-fall-alarms-to-social-media/>

Hospital design impacts on patient care

When hospitals group patient rooms into small clusters, nurses have more time for their patients. The design of these ‘bed clusters’ is important.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Hospital-design-impacts-on-patient-care/>

Offshore problem improves fire protection

Fire tests on a simulated North Sea “problem platform” have left SINTEF NBL with a unique laboratory module, developed in-house, that will raise fire-protection standards at sea.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Offshore-problem-improves-fire-protection/>

Creating the next generation of osmotic power stations

Energy company Statkraft has assigned a new two-year project to SINTEF to carry out research into osmotic power generation. New membrane technology and long-term trials will bring this renewable energy source one step closer to viability.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Creating-the-next-generation-of-osmotic-power-stations/>

Protecting his hearing

Just before Christmas, 80 workers on the oil drilling platforms in the North Sea started their shifts by putting an intelligent plug in their ears.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Protecting-his-hearing/>

Little creatures do great damage

Pink and insidious: a tiny animal has become an expensive neighbour for fish farmers. Now scientists intend to make it hot for the little pest, and without using toxic chemicals.

<http://www.sintef.no/home/Press-Room/Research-News/Little-creatures-do-great-damage/>