

Report

Communication on progress (COP)

Annual report to United Nations Global Compact

Author(s)

Tom Berland



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VERSION

1.0

DATE

2014-09-01

AUTHOR(S)

Tom Berland

NUMBER OF PAGES/APPENDICIES:

10 / 1 Appendix

CHECKED BY

Petter Haugan, Vice President, Corporate Communications

APPROVED BY (name, position)

Reidar Bye, Vice President

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 fourth communication of progress report.

SINTEF is an independent research and technology not-for-profit organization, providing R&D services to clients in Norway and abroad. However, as we have almost 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.

2 Statement of continued support – Technology for a better society

As a research organization, SINTEF is committed to contribute to a sustainable future, to human rights, labour rights, sound environment and anti-corruption and to comply with the ten universal 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 2013. This expresses our continued support for the principles and ongoing 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 challenges. None of these will be possible without major investments in research and innovation.

SINTEF's vision is "Technology for a better society". This vision both inspires and commits us. In this year's report, we present some good examples on our research activities in 2013, relevant for Global Compact issue areas. These are examples of research that aim at improving environment and health, in line with our vision. 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 was revised in 2013, and states among others that:

- SINTEF shall always ensure neutrality related to all political parties and political decision-making processes 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.
- Ethical Principles shall be an integrated part of SINTEF's Management Principles.
- 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 an 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, who shall be appointed directly by the SINTEF President, and 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 also performed to improve the life quality of the elderly or the disabled. See Annex A for examples and details.

4 Labour

SINTEF policy on employees focuses on the following principles:

- SINTEF shall be an attractive place to work, offering unique prospects for those with the ability and drive to develop their potential.
- SINTEF shall ensure that high ethical standards and awareness of Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) are applied to all of its activities.
- SINTEF shall 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 shall offer professional challenges and tasks that have a high value for its customers and society.
- SINTEF shall recruit and keep competent people in a global labour market.
- SINTEF shall encourage team spirit, creativity and initiative in its scientific groups.
- SINTEF shall 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 6 different organizations, and SINTEF maintain a more or less identical collective agreement with all of them. In addition to questions of remuneration, the collective agreement regulates issues like

- Equal rights policy
- Recruitment policy
- Advancement policy
- Collective bargaining
- Employee representation in the SINTEF Council and the SINTEF Board
- Paid time to work as an employee representative
- Cooperation between SINTEF and the union.

Membership in trade unions is voluntarily, and member lists are confidential. However, the number of members in each of the 6 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: “Cooperation Agreement on a More Inclusive Working Life” (the “IA treaty”). The main goal of the IA agreement is to *“improve the working environment, enhance presence at work, prevent and reduce sick leave and prevent exclusion and withdrawal from working life”*. The secondary goals of the agreement are:

- Reduction in sick leave.
- Prevent withdrawal and increase employment of people with impaired functional ability.
- Stimulate older employees to continue working.

Except for a few (<25) 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 71 different countries work in our organizations. 22 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.

In 2012 SINTEF was given the 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 organization. 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 Organization.

In 2013 SINTEF was awarded funding from the BALANSE initiative, a programme funded by the Norwegian Research Council. The aim of the project is to “to increase the number of women managers and to dismantle barriers in some research communities [in SINTEF] that prevent women from obtaining management positions”. Knowledge acquired from the project will be documented and included in SINTEF’s internal employee training programme.

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

[SINTEF's environmental policy](#) states that SINTEF takes the environment seriously and based on our vision – “Technology for a better society” – we aim to ensure sustainable development in all aspects of our activities. We consider the term sustainable development to include sound management of our activities, social responsibility and consideration for the environment.

The aim of SINTEF's environmental policy is to ensure that both our research and the management of our own business activities are carried out with due consideration for the external environment. It shall also ensure the continuous improvement of our own environmental performance. 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 is committed to:

- meeting relevant legislative environmental requirements.
- working for the establishment of domestic and international R&D programmes focusing on the development of environmentally-sound technology.
- focusing on environmental issues as part of our investment strategies, expertise development and in our laboratories.
- reducing the emission of climate gases, energy consumption and, as far as possible, to avoid the discharge of harmful substances into the soil, air and water systems.
- disseminate our knowledge and contribute towards public debate and the shaping of environmental policy, both in the domestic and international arenas.

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 (SINTEF Materials and Chemistry) was certified in 2014. SINTEF Building and Infrastructure is presently working on a certification process which should be completed in 2015 or late 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 democratic institutions, weakens ethical and moral values, hinders rationalization and efficiency and undermines all forms of business activity and free competition. The SINTEF Group distances itself from all forms of corruption and will make active efforts 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 ban on bribery in SINTEF includes all kinds of improper benefits, not only money, and applies both to the private and public sectors.

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 2013, relevant for Global Compact issue areas. The descriptions have previously been published on SINTEF's web during 2013, and are linked to the web-site:

Batteries could store the energy in sunlight and the wind

Batteries as big as houses could become an important component of our electricity supply in the future – enabling us to exploit renewable energy that at present literally just flies past us. [Read more](#)

Artificial heart with Norwegian sensor

France is going to test an artificial heart on patients. The heart will contain a Norwegian pressure sensor. [Read more](#)

An app to help ex-drug and alcohol abusers

Ex-drug and alcohol abusers who have completed their treatment need a simple support system and daily motivation. Now they are getting both – in a handy pocket format. [Read more](#)

Looking ahead to greener vehicle components

Aluminium components make vehicles lighter, which reduces fuel consumption. If a Norwegian project is successful, manufacturing them will soon also be less energy-intensive. [Read more](#)

Helping to reduce hospital admissions for COPD patients

Patients can use tablet computers to report their daily condition. Hospitals can pick up early symptoms, take action and thereby reduce admissions. [Read more](#)

More salmon and more hydropower

Norwegian research shows that it is perfectly possible for rivers to produce more salmon and electricity at the same time: a new environmental handbook shows the way. [Read more](#)

Energy-saving grocery shop

SINTEF researchers heralded a substantial step forward – in a new shop in Trondheim, Norway which they believe will use 30 per cent less energy than other Norwegian grocery stores. [Read more](#)

Activity can improve the health of dementia patients

Dementia patients who are kept active in their fields of interest appear to experience improved quality of life and better health. Research will now reveal whether this is really true. [Read more](#)

Pipeline technology helps alleviate climate change

SINTEF Energy Research will play a key role in a European Union project that aims to ensure that captured CO2 can be transported safely and cost-effectively by pipeline from the capture site to the storage site. [Read more](#)

Gets stroke patients back on their feet

A robot is now being built to help stroke patients with training, motivation and walking. [Read more](#)

Recipe for more environmentally friendly batteries

Norwegian scientists want to develop greener and more vigorous batteries, using inexpensive raw materials that are plentiful in Norway. [Read more](#)

Aviation fuel from Norwegian forests

Research scientists believe it will be possible to manufacture a competitive aviation biofuel by 2020-2025. [*Read more*](#)

Finding the way to lung tumours by “GPS”

The innumerable divisions of the bronchi often turn the hunt for tumours in the lungs into a game of chance. But soon, lung specialists will be able to navigate accurately inside the airways by “GPS”. [*Read more*](#)

Artificial liver support for the chronically ill

Helping people with chronic liver failure to live longer, better lives. [*Read more*](#)

“Blowing” a slope into place

SINTEF scientists from have developed a new method for stabilising areas with difficult soil mechanics. The concept is based on blowing expanded clay (Leca) spheres into enormous “sausage skins” made from geotextiles. [*Read more*](#)