

# Report

## Communication on progress (COP)

Annual report to United Nations Global Compact

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# Communication on progress (COP)

## 1 Preface

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

SINTEF is a private, non-profit research institute, which is organised as a foundation with subsidiaries. Through its first-rate solution-oriented research and knowledge generation, SINTEF creates significant value for its Norwegian and international clients, the public sector and society as a whole. The SINTEF Board adopted in 2014 a new main strategy for SINTEF. This new strategy lays a heavy emphasis on SINTEF's social responsibility, which is to develop society through research and innovation.

As SINTEF's direct activities by themselves is performed in 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

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 universally principles of the UN Global Compact.

This Communication on progress demonstrates some of our efforts during 2014. This expresses our continued support for the principles and ongoing commitment to the initiative and its principles.

SINTEF acts in accordance with the principles by the way we conduct our own operations. As an independent research organization we also contribute actively by doing research that contributes to a better society.

This is in line with our vision "Technology for a better society". This vision both inspires and commits us. In this year's report, we present some examples on our research activities in 2014, relevant for Global Compact issue areas. These are examples of research that aim at improving environment and health.

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.

The development of new technology requires high scientific quality, the ability to innovate, national and international collaboration at all levels and good political leadership.

It is our commitment to contribute actively in this work.

Unni Steinsmo  
President of SINTEF



### 3 Human rights

All activities in SINTEF shall adhere to the principles laid down in our ethical guidelines. The documents are easily found on our [website](#). The main document, our "[Ethical compass](#)" 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.
- All people are equally valued by SINTEF. No form of discrimination is acceptable, whether on the 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, and following up our ethical guidelines is a responsibility of line management.
- SINTEF expects and requires our suppliers and partners to share our ethical foundations. Suppliers and partners who are involved in our activities must accept SINTEF's ethical guidelines in writing.
- SINTEF will work to achieve a good work environment that is characterised by equality and opportunity.

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 subcontracts to ensure that our subcontractors 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
- Family 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 (<15) representatives at our Houston office, all SINTEF employees work in our research facilities in Norway and Denmark. However, SINTEF recruits scientific personnel of all nationalities, and presently persons from 74 different countries work in our organizations. 22 per cent of our employees were born and raised in other countries than Norway. SINTEF has set up an integration programme for new appointees from other countries and their families. The programme offers expatriate services, free Norwegian classes and teaching in English in the SINTEF School. Diversity management is one of the topics. The Work Environment Survey has documented that our colleagues from other countries are pleased with working in SINTEF.

One of the aims of SINTEF is to raise the proportion of female research staff and managers. The President of the SINTEF Group is a woman. SINTEF attempts to recruit women to new appointments and to promote female managers from its own ranks. In 2014, a project co-funded by the Research Council of Norway, was launched to encourage the development of a better gender balance in top-level academic positions and

research management. This project is expected to provide SINTEF and other Norwegian research institutions with useful knowledge, and to increase the proportion of female management staff in SINTEF.

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 given our vision of "Technology for a better society", we pay close attention to sustainable development in every aspect of our activities. The concept of sustainable development encompasses good corporate governance of our own organisation, social responsibility and respect for the environment. SINTEF's environmental policy is intended to ensure that both the research we do and the way in which we run our own organisation take environmental considerations into account. Our policy also aims to ensure that our own environmental performance undergoes continuous improvement."*

SINTEF has worked towards the establishment of a common environmental action plan, whose significant aspects include energy-efficient operation and the responsible treatment of waste. All of SINTEF's eight institutes have drawn up their own environment action plans, and three institutes are already certified in accordance with ISO 14001. In 2014, SINTEF Materials and Chemistry and SINTEF Building Research were certified. In 2014, there were no reportable incidents that affected the physical environment.

In short, SINTEF will:

- contribute to the establishment of national and international R&D programmes aimed towards development of renewable energy, climate, and 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.

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.

Creating new jobs contributing to the development of new medicines, health technologies, securing safe supply of food and water are also prioritized areas.

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:*

### **Norway is Europe's most effective "green battery"**

Norwegian hydropower is the most cost-efficient source of energy that Germany could adopt as back-up for solar cells and wind-power, new calculations show. [Read more](#)

### **Tailor-made clothing for the aquaculture sector**

Fish husbandry workers have played an active part in developing work clothing tailor-made for their wet, windy and messy working conditions. [Read more](#)

### **Using robots to get more food from raw materials**

Can an industrial robot succeed both at removing the breast fillet from a chicken, and at the same time get more out of the raw materials? This is one of the questions to which researchers working on the CYCLE project now have the answer. [Read more](#)

### **Robot water-pipe inspectors**

Norwegian researchers and a small company in Tromsø are taking part in a project aimed at preventing between 30 and 50 per cent of Europe's drinking water being lost due to pipe leakages. [Read more](#)

### **Degradable electronics**

Norwegian researchers are developing electronics that disappear to order. [Read more](#)

### **Reducing salt in our food**

Researchers have been looking into how we can reduce the salt content in foods without compromising on taste. [Read more](#)

### **Greener ship propellers**

A Norwegian invention is reducing by a third the energy that foundries need to manufacture ship propeller blades. [Read more](#)

### **Zero emissions buildings**

Six Norwegian office buildings were erected outside of Oslo around 1980. Two of these have now been rehabilitated and represent northern Europe's first zero-emission buildings of their type. [Read more](#)

### **Use of gas turbine in oxyfuel power process for CO<sub>2</sub> capture**

After three years of development and testing, SINTEF, Siemens, and partners have produced a well-functioning oxyfuel gas turbine based power process. [Read more](#)

### **Testing safety alarms of the future**

If scientists get their way, we will soon be able to measure grandma's acceleration. If she has a fall, that is. [Read more](#)

### **Stealth medicine**

Using nanocapsules containing cancer drugs, researchers have succeeded in attacking tumours with surgical precision. One of the ways to manufacture such capsules is with minute droplets of super glue. [Read more](#)

### **Plastic solar cells see the light of day**

In the future, you may be able to buy solar cells for your roof from a roll, by the metre. [Read more](#)

### **Capturing false hormones**

They damage our ability to reproduce, and they pollute the natural environment. Yet chemicals known as hormone mimics can be found in consumer goods. Eventually they end up in our water. But we now have a way of capturing them. [\*Read more\*](#)

### **More electricity from the sun**

Ultra-efficient solar cells, based on cheap materials, could be here in a few years. [\*Read more\*](#)

### **Preventing air accidents**

A Norwegian, satellite-based system aims to ensure that helicopters and light aircraft are prevented from colliding with power lines and other obstacles. [\*Read more\*](#)

### **What do we do when a well blows out?**

Oil and gas companies are worried about gas discharges at the sea bed. Recent field experiments can now quantify the volumes of gas reaching the sea surface and how they spread in the atmosphere. [\*Read more\*](#)

### **“Super bacteria” cleaning up after oil spills**

Researchers in Trondheim have achieved surprising results by exploiting nature's own ability to clean up after oil spills. [\*Read more\*](#)

### **Lifesaving sensor**

A small pressure sensor can make the difference between life and death. The first tests on humans will be carried out in April on patients with spinal injuries at Sunnaas Hospital in Norway. [\*Read more\*](#)

### **Little chip – instant diagnoses**

Soon, your family doctor will no longer have to send blood or cancer cell samples to the laboratory. [\*Read more\*](#)