

# 10

*reasons*

*why we're  
a responsible  
business*

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# Who we are

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*We're an international law firm that some of the world's biggest companies turn to for help on the mandates that matter most to them, wherever in the world they may be.*

With over 2,500 lawyers, we're one of the largest law firms in the world.

Together with a network of partner law firms, our transactional, contentious and regulatory lawyers advise clients in all industry sectors how to grow, strengthen and defend their businesses.

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**£1.245bn**  
*turnover 2014–15*

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**5,446**  
*employees*

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**150**  
*average number of countries that we work in each year*

# How we want to do business

*As you'd expect from a law firm that operates in a highly regulated industry, we run a responsible business. But we want to do more than just observe the rules. We want to do business in a way that's ethical and sustainable.*

That's easy to say, but how will we actually do it? By focusing on the five actions that will make the biggest difference:

- use our professional skills to support great causes through pro bono work;
- make a positive impact by supporting communities in which we operate;
- be a good employer, value diversity and create a supportive and welcoming working environment;
- maintain high standards of governance and business integrity in our work; and
- minimise the impact we have on the environment.

The more progress we make in these areas, the more we'll be running the kind of business we want – one that's responsible and sustainable.

This report highlights just some of the projects we're involved in that are helping us achieve that goal.

Despite having made good progress, there's more work to do. So for each project, we describe the next steps towards where we want to be.



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*‘Integrating  
our activities  
and embedding  
Responsible Business  
into everything we  
do around the firm,  
day in day out, will  
make an even bigger  
difference to the world  
around us.’*

WILL LAWES, SENIOR PARTNER

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Will Lawes, Senior Partner

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*Making a positive difference to the communities in which we operate is one of our core values and it is good for our business. We aim to make this difference through our volunteering activities and pro bono support, as well as through ethical and responsible business practices.*

This being our aim, the challenge is to do it in a way that harnesses the talent and energy of all of us and by working with clients and others to maximise our impact. To help us meet that challenge, we're joining up what we do in volunteering, pro bono, social mobility, diversity and ethical and responsible practices into one integrated programme we are calling *Responsible Business*.

Integrating our activities and embedding Responsible Business into everything we do around the firm, day in day out, will make an even bigger difference to our communities. As you'll read in this report, we're making good progress – and it's encouraging that our efforts have been recognised by others through the awards described in the report.

Almost half the firm – 2,201 people – contribute to our Responsible Business programme. We are hugely grateful and believe our firm is stronger for it. There's always more we can do to live this core value. Responsible Business will help us to focus our efforts and, more importantly, to make a positive difference to the world around us. As this report shows, we are committed to aligning our operations and strategy with the 10 UN Global Compact (UNGC) principles.

We welcome your comments on our report and any suggestions to help us make even more progress as we integrate Responsible Business across the firm.

[crfeedback@freshfields.com](mailto:crfeedback@freshfields.com)

# 1

## *We help asylum seekers make a new start in life*

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*We have long worked in the field of human rights, focusing on issues such as violence against women, asylum, and the denial of rights. All too often these issues are linked – as the case of Ms R, supported by our Washington DC office, demonstrates.*

Ms R, a 25-year-old woman with a two-year-old son, fled Guatemala after more than a year of severe physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her former partner. Despite her various attempts, the Guatemalan police and courts refused to protect her from her abuser.

She sought asylum in the US because it was too dangerous to return to Guatemala, as the authorities there had shown they could not protect her. At the hearing, the contention centred on whether Ms R's psychological state following her abuse caused her to miss the one-year deadline within which to apply for asylum.

The court favoured our arguments and granted Ms R asylum, allowing her to stay in the US with her son.

Ms R's case is just one example of how offices across our firm support asylum seekers as they try to make a new start in life. In Hong Kong, for example, we help refugees with the legal aspects of their asylum claims to give them the best chance of success.

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## Over 150

*asylum seekers  
supported in 2014–15*

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*‘We learned more than we could have possibly anticipated working on Ms R’s asylum case.’*

LUPE LOPEZ AND ANKITA RITWIK,  
ASSOCIATES, FRESHFIELDS



### *What next?*

As the refugee situation around the world reaches crisis proportions, we’re working with organisations internationally and domestically that support refugees and asylum seekers. We’ll develop this work over the coming years to support and integrate those who are forced to flee.





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*'Save has a footprint in many countries and resulting complex legal needs. Freshfields has worked with us since 2009 and knows us intimately. We can trust them to understand us.'*

CIARE CANNING,  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF SAVE  
THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

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*Aswini, four, at a tented settlement in Kamalbinayak, Bhaktapur, Nepal. Save the Children is providing displaced families with infant kits, which include warm clothes, hats and blankets as well as essential hygiene kits.*

*Photo: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children*



# We work across borders with global charities

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*When you're one of the biggest charities in the world, operating in over 120 countries with over 30,000 staff, your legal needs can be somewhat complex.*

Freshfields is used to this multi-jurisdictional complexity. It's what we're known for and it's why our core skills complement Save the Children International's in-house legal team so well. From core corporate support to resolving disputes and being on hand to handle urgent queries on the Ebola crisis, we're there to help.

We're in awe of the work Save the Children does. Its central mission to educate, protect, and care for children resonates around the world and is why this charity is supported by many of our offices, as well as many of the firms we partner with across the globe.

We don't just do Save the Children's most important legal work, we also try to understand what makes it tick. We attend members' meetings and briefings, and host talks by members of its policy team. Its sole trainee is linked up to our trainee development team, and we are helping their lawyers expand their skills.

15,722

*pro bono hours for  
Save the Children  
since 2009*

## *What next?*

As part of our focus on providing access to opportunity, we will strengthen our work with Save the Children in the areas of child rights and education.

# 3

## We support social businesses that make a difference

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*Frankfurt-based Yunus Social Business (YSB) helps to accelerate social business entrepreneurs in developing economies who don't have access to traditional financing. YSB subsequently finances the most promising social businesses. Social businesses are companies set up solely to solve a social problem in a way that is financially sustainable – all profits are re-invested to help the business grow and benefit society.*

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**\$8m**  
**deployed**

**400,000**  
**customers served**

Co-founded by Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Muhammad Yunus, YSB brings the discipline of an investment fund to the world of social businesses. It leverages capital from donors and philanthropic lenders to finance social businesses that have been selected and prepared by YSB teams in developing and emerging economies including the Balkans, Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, India, Tunisia, and Uganda.

Freshfields has worked with YSB since its inception. Led from Germany, a global team of around 20 lawyers works with YSB to develop legal models for social businesses. The team advises on corporate, regulatory, commercial, and other areas of law.

This has helped YSB bridge the divide between charitable legislation and the social business sector, and has led to groundbreaking legal structures that establish best practice for financing social businesses.



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*‘A charity dollar  
has one life; a  
social business  
dollar can be  
invested over  
and over again.’*

PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS,  
CHAIRMAN, YSB

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*Professor Yunus  
greeted beneficiaries  
of a social business.*

### *What next?*

We are committed to supporting YSB in its mission to enable game-changing social businesses in developing economies to solve the problems of poverty in a financially sustainable way.

# 4

## We help increase access to legal advice

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*As a result of government cuts in legal aid in England and Wales, there's been a huge rise in people who can't afford a lawyer having to represent themselves in court. They face a court system and civil procedure rules that are often confusing.*

Recognising the need to guide people through the court system, Freshfields suggested the concept for CourtNav to our long-standing pro bono partner the Royal Courts of Justice Advice Bureau (RCJAB). It's an online resource to help people who represent themselves in divorce and civil partner dissolution file their cases correctly. This saves time and money for all lawyers, litigants, and judges involved.

CourtNav builds on the firm's 10 years' experience of advising people who come to the RCJAB for help. While we will continue to give pro bono legal advice at the RCJAB in person, CourtNav will mean that those most able to help themselves can do so – allowing resources to be focused on giving face-to-face advice to those who need it most.

RCJAB developed CourtNav in partnership with Freshfields. As well as its legal skills, the firm contributed professional skills pro bono – including information technology, public relations and communications – to help make CourtNav an all-round success.

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## Winner

*Freshfields is the first City law firm to win a Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Award for our contribution to CourtNav alongside the RCJAB*





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*‘A revolution in  
how we provide  
services to our  
customers.’*

ALISON LAMB,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, RCJAB

### *What next?*

Initially piloted in divorce and civil partnership dissolution cases at the Royal Courts of Justice, new CourtNav modules for bankruptcy and defending possession proceedings in the county courts are being developed.

# 5

## We take our carbon neutral commitment seriously

*The large majority of our carbon footprint is emissions from business travel and the use of our offices.*

Our core business is advising clients wherever in the world they need us, resulting in a lot of necessary business travel. While we're striving to cut this down, we buy carbon offsets to minimise our impact on the environment.

We've come some way since we began offsetting our carbon emissions in 2007. Instead of buying offsets from projects that just have strong environmental credentials, we now choose projects that also deliver important local economic and social benefits.

For example, the project we chose back in 2007 was a coalmine methane capture project in Germany. By 2011, we were buying offsets from Turkish wind farms, and in 2012 our offsets came from projects that supplied clean drinking water to communities in Africa.

In 2015, we offset our emissions through a tree-planting scheme in Africa. As well as capturing carbon, this scheme benefits local farming communities through improved soils, farming skills, and incomes.

### What next?

We plan to make a long-term commitment to a project that delivers wide-ranging environmental, social, and economic benefits.





A farmer surveys  
tree crops, which  
will generate  
carbon credits.

# 6

## *We don't distinguish between pro bono and fee-earning hours*

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*We treat work for pro bono clients the same way as work for fee-paying clients – to the extent that our internal reporting systems make no distinction between fee-earning and pro bono client hours.*

Instead, we refer to all hours recorded as 'client hours'. This means that for our lawyers, the work they do for a client has equal value in terms of the time they spend on it for all internal purposes – irrespective of whether it's fee-earning or not.

# 7

## *We see diversity as a strength*

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*We embed diversity into our culture and are committed to creating a supportive environment in which all can flourish. This commitment has been recognised internationally.*

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### 9<sup>th</sup>

*our position in  
Stonewall's Workplace  
Equality Index of the  
100 best employers for  
lesbian, gay, bisexual  
and transgender (LGBT)  
people in Britain*

In the UK we won the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative of the Year in 2014 for our scholarship scheme to widen access to the legal profession. In 2015 we were a *Times* Top 50 Employer for Women, which acknowledges organisations that lead gender equality in the workplace.

We were the highest-placed law firm in The Best Employers 2015, the German employer ranking published by *FOCUS Spezial* magazine. Our success in promoting diversity was further recognised in Germany when the publisher JUVE awarded us the 'azur Award Diversity' and second place in the azur100 – Top Employers for Lawyers in Germany, both in 2015.

New York corporate partner Tim Wilkins has been selected as a CUP Catalyst: Change Agent in Law by the Council of Urban Professionals (CUP). CUP Catalysts are leaders in their professional field from diverse backgrounds who contribute to the greater good through voluntary service, mentorship or philanthropy.

Sexual orientation is an area of diversity where we have become a standout employer.

As well as our top-10 ranking in Stonewall's 2015 Workplace Equality Index, we are also a Stonewall Top Global Employer – recognition of our efforts to ensure our LGBT employees feel supported wherever they work in the firm.

In Asia, we achieved a bronze standard in the first Hong Kong LGBT Workplace Inclusion Survey, organised by Community Business Hong Kong.

We recognise the importance of these achievements to clients and employees and are determined to build on these efforts further.





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*‘There is a huge difference between tolerance and outright support of LGBT people; with the launch of its international Halo Champions’ network... Freshfields has distinguished itself from other top law firms by unreservedly falling into the latter category. For me, this makes it a very attractive prospective employer.’*

FUTURE TRAINEE

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*David Aitman,  
Global Managing  
Partner, opens the Halo  
Champions event.*

### *What next?*

On LGBT diversity, we are launching our Halo Champions network globally. Halo Champions is open to all staff who do not identify as LGBT but who want to support and promote the equality of their LGBT colleagues to create an environment free from discrimination. We will also host our third international LGBT conference, an important networking opportunity for our LGBT employees.

# 8

## We help young people realise their potential

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*Determined to do something to address the disproportionately small numbers of black and black mixed-race men in large commercial law firms, Freshfields and Doreen Lawrence, Baroness of Clarendon, OBE, launched the Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme in 2013.*

First run 20 years after the death of Stephen Lawrence, the black teenager murdered in London in 1993, the scheme broadens access to large commercial law firms for black and black mixed-race men from low income families.

The scheme awards scholarships to exceptionally talented first-year law undergraduates. The scheme assesses potential over two days, and offers successful applicants a scholarship with many benefits including a tailored development programme. The aim is that they'll be offered a training contract at Freshfields.

The scheme has had considerable success in attracting candidates from a wider than usual range of universities. It invests a great deal of time in their development and doesn't assess potential by relying on past academic qualifications. Its success is also due to the large number of Freshfields employees and clients, who contribute to the scheme. With contributions from over 100 Freshfields employees, the scheme is helping to change the firm's culture and to trigger conversations about differing backgrounds.

To address social mobility at an earlier age, Freshfields participates in other initiatives to raise aspirations among less advantaged children. For example, our long-standing partnerships with Haggerston and Redlands schools in East London offer benefits to the pupils, including work experience in Freshfields, links with our Rome and Madrid offices' partner schools, and help with reading and numeracy from Freshfields volunteers.

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## Winner

*Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative of the Year at the Legal Business Awards 2014*

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*‘The scheme is the most innovative legal profession diversity initiative I have seen in the City.’*

KYLE WILLIAMS,  
MANAGING DIRECTOR & SENIOR COUNSEL, LEGAL  
DEPARTMENT, GOLDMAN SACHS INTERNATIONAL

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*Assessment day  
at Freshfields.*



### *What next?*

Our fourth scheme year starts in late 2015 with every university in the UK invited to a prize-giving event for previous scholars. Scholars' families and friends, as well as all volunteers from both Freshfields and clients that support the scheme, are invited too. For future years, we are considering whether to adapt the scheme to reach even more exceptionally-talented students.

# 9

## *We believe in second chances*

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*Freshfields has run Ready for Work, in partnership with Business in the Community, since 2001. Ready for Work helps excluded groups gain the skills and confidence they need to get back into work, focusing on those furthest from the job market.*

Through Ready for Work we support people who face multiple barriers to work, such as the long-term unemployed, care leavers and ex-offenders. All are, or have been, at risk of homelessness. Our support includes mentoring, offering work experience placements, and making gifts in kind, such as lending rooms.

In support of Business in the Community's Ban the Box campaign – and because we recognise the important part business can play in cutting re-offending – Freshfields was the first law firm in the UK to remove the criminal conviction tick-box from its application forms.

By not asking candidates to declare criminal convictions on their application form, they are judged solely on their skills and suitability for the role. It isn't until later in the application process that they're asked to declare any convictions.

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## Winner

*Work Inclusion Award  
at Business in the  
Community's Responsible  
Business Awards 2014  
and Best Social Mobility  
Programme at the MPF  
Awards for Management  
Excellence 2015*





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*'The Ready for Work programme changed my life. It escalated me to heights I could never have reached through my own efforts and has allowed me for the first time ever to achieve my full potential in my personal life and in my working life.'*

A READY FOR WORK PARTICIPANT

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*Ready for Work  
pre-placement training.*

## *What next?*

Our priorities over the next year are to continue to encourage other law firms, clients and suppliers to support and raise the profile of both Ready for Work and the Ban the Box campaign.

# 10

## *We help communities affected by climate change in Bangladesh*

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*The British Red Cross has been working with the Bangladesh Red Crescent for over 30 years to help communities prepare for and recover from the impact of an increasing number of natural disasters. With our support, large numbers of people in Bangladesh are being equipped with the resilience necessary to adapt to climate change.*

Bangladesh is one of the world's most disaster-prone countries, and is particularly susceptible to cyclones and floods. With a population of more than 154 million, it's one of the most densely populated countries in the world – which means the impact of any natural disaster can be devastating.

Freshfields has supported the British Red Cross and its climate change adaptation project in Bangladesh since January 2014. The partnership has grown to include pro bono support, first aid sessions, employee engagement events and fundraising.

Community participation and raising awareness are key to the project's success. For example, it uses local volunteers to explain to their communities how to respond to a cyclone. It has set up 85 community committees and trained them to prepare for disasters, including how to identify the hazards, analyse the risks and plan for when cyclones hit.

Our support for the programme has equipped over 60,000 people in Bangladesh with life-saving skills and better resources.

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# 60,000

*people helped by our support of the British Red Cross's climate change adaptation project*

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*‘This vital support  
will offer a lifeline;  
helping people adapt  
to climate change and  
anticipate the issues  
they face today, before  
they become greater  
problems tomorrow.’*

MARK ASTARITA,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FUNDRAISING,  
BRITISH RED CROSS

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*Setting up women’s  
resilience forums and  
building confidence  
through training.*



### *What next?*

We plan to strengthen links with Freshfields and Red Cross offices worldwide through our partnership and extend the range of our activities to include topical lunchtime talks, volunteering, and pro bono opportunities.

# Our key performance indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>2011–12</i>	<i>2012–13</i>	<i>2013–14</i>	<i>2014–15</i>
Total number of employees	5,266	4,859	5,060	5,446
Female partners (per cent)	12	12	12	13*
Gross carbon footprint per capita (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e)	4.79	4.70	4.53	4.34*
Gross direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions – scope 1 and 2; fossil fuels and refrigerants; electricity (tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent – CO <sub>2</sub> e)	15,646	15,889	14,629	15,052*
Total gross indirect greenhouse gas emissions – scope 3; business travel (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e)	9,654	11,283	13,560	12,682*
Gross carbon footprint (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e)	25,299	27,172	28,189	27,734*
Global water use (m <sup>3</sup> )	63,702	143,103	83,457	85,938*
Global waste disposal (tonnes)	1,416	1,708	2,483	2,519*
Employees involved in pro bono and community investment programmes (per cent)	39	37	39	44*
Hours contributed to pro bono and community programmes	51,498	60,878	79,105	74,336*
Total community contributions, including management costs (£m)	8.96	10.48	15.46	13.83*
Participation in UK payroll giving (per cent)	5	5	5	5
Turnover (£bn)	1,117	1,229	1,278	1,245
Profit per equity Partner (PEP) (£m)	1.3	1.4	1.48	1.37



## Employee profile by gender (per cent)\*

	Male	Female
Partner	87	13
Associate	53	47
Legal trainee	46	54
Other fee earners	44	56
Business services	26	74

## Global workforce by region

Asia	438
Germany and Austria	1,692
UK	1,968
Middle East and North Africa	91
Rest of Continental Europe	942
USA	314

\*This data has been independently assured by Deloitte LLP.

**Deloitte.**

A table highlighting our performance against previous targets can be found in the Responsible Business section of our website: [www.freshfields.com/cr/](http://www.freshfields.com/cr/)

# External recognition

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## *BITC*

Winner in the Work Inclusion category for our Ready for Work Programme (London)

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## *BITC*

Highly Commended in the Education category for our partnership with Haggerston School (London)

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## *MPF Winner*

Best social mobility programme for Ready for Work

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## *Stonewall*

Listed as a Top 100 employer in the 2015 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

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## *ISO 14001*

London Office operations only. LRQA are our UKAS accredited assessor

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## *ISO 50001*

London Office operations only. LRQA are our UKAS accredited assessor

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## *Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year*

Winner 2015 for CourtNav

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## *Law Society Excellence Awards 2015*

Excellence in Pro Bono award

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## *Focus Spezial Magazine award*

Top three professional services firm: Best Employer 2015

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## *JUVE Azur Award*

Diversity award 2015

# UN Global Compact and assurance



*We have been a supporter of the UNGC since March 2009 and are required to report on how we have advanced the 10 principles with respect to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption within our sphere of influence. This report also acts as our annual communication on progress to the UNGC.*

## Reporting and independent assurance

This report includes data covering the period 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015. For more information, please see our Basis of Reporting, which outlines the scope and calculation methodology of each of our KPIs on our website: [freshfields.com/cr/](http://freshfields.com/cr/)

This document also identifies the indicators where methodological or estimation changes have affected our reported KPIs.

We have sought external assurance for our CR reports since 2007–08. Deloitte LLP has issued an unqualified opinion using limited level assurance in accordance with ISAE3000 on selected performance indicators contained within this report. A copy of its Independent Assurance Statement is available on our website: [freshfields.com/cr/](http://freshfields.com/cr/)

**Deloitte.**

Issue	UN GC principle
Human rights	Principle 1 – Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.
	Principle 2 – Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.
Labour	Principle 3 – Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
	Principle 4 – Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
	Principle 5 – Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour.
	Principle 6 – Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
Environment	Principle 7 – Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.
	Principle 8 – Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.
	Principle 9 – Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.
Anti-corruption	Principle 10 – Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

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