

**: response**



# **UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT**

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

2018 REPORT

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## **1 | STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT**

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To our stakeholders

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

In our first annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Arved Lüth  
(Managing Owner)

## 2 | ACTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS

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- Principle 1:** Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and  
**Principle 2:** make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

We are in no way complicit with human rights abuses and adopted a zero tolerance approach to human rights abuses, including but not limited to slavery, human trafficking and forced labour. Due to our main business being situated in Germany and given that :response mainly operates on a national level, human rights issues tend to be limited. The only risk factor lies in the area of procurement, for which we plan to systematically integrate the principles of human rights. If necessary, :response will be ready to take appropriate measures. The high standards of German labour law – regulating matters such as minimum wage, pensions, annual leave and insurance – are the basis for all of :response’s working contracts.

:response employs health and safety as well as equality and diversity policies which ensure a safe and diverse work environment. Occupational safety in the offices is regularly inspected by the employers' liability insurance association. We have an internal handbook which encourages our corporate culture of openness, friendliness, appreciation and accountability. This is further enshrined in the open forms of communication among all employees. Employees who do not comply with policies relating to human rights may face disciplinary action including the termination of the employment. Since the company’s foundation in 2007 :response has not encountered any incidents of human rights abuses, of violations of obligations under employment law or incidents of discrimination or harassment.

With regard to human rights compliance within the value chain our greatest influence as a service provider lies in our work with customers. Through our various projects we support them in strategy development as well as in organisational development and reporting. We promote human rights compliance in our internal procurement process (e.g. purchase of fair trade coffee for internal consumption).

## 2 | MEASURES: HUMAN RIGHTS

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### Infringement of law

:response has never violated any human rights laws or regulations. No fines had to be paid.

## 2 | ACTIONS: LABOUR

- Principle 3:** Businesses should uphold freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4:** the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- Principle 5:** the effective abolition of child labour; and
- Principle 6:** the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Given that :response is registered in Germany and mainly operates on a national level, we are subject to German labour law. The national labour law regulates matters such as minimum wage, pensions, annual leave and insurance as well as topics such as forced labour.

Labour rights are incorporated in our corporate culture, especially the pledge to promote equality and diversity within our policies. Furthermore, we treat everyone equally and with the same attention, courtesy and respect. We ensure that any decision on employment related issues is based on objective criteria. This especially applies to our recruitment process: we are committed to finding the most suitable and strongest candidates for the jobs in question, regardless of disability, gender, marital status, race, ethnicity or national origin, nationality, religion or believe or sexual orientation. All our employees are well aware of our anti-discriminatory policies and strictly comply to the standards and principles. Any type of discrimination is regarded as unacceptable.

:response values collective decision making, flat hierarchies and a high level of appreciation for each other. This results in high involvement of all employees in the company's decision making process. We offer fair and competitive remuneration for our employees above or at minimum wage level. All our employees receive a fixed remuneration. We further implement maternity, paternity and shared parental leave policies to grant our employees flexibility in parenthood to the greatest extent possible. If necessary, we enable our employees to work from a home office, for example in case of a need for family care or childcare. Our employees also benefit from flexible working hours and possibilities of working part-time.

Apart from that, we promote a learning intensive work environment for our employees. Additionally, we encourage our employees to live a healthy life style, by providing them with fairly sourced and organic fresh fruits and organising sports team events, such as our annual company run.

## 2 | MEASURES: LABOUR

### Workforce structure

In 2018, around 61 % of our employees were women.

### Percentage of employees working part-time

45 % of all employees worked part-time in 2018.

### Rate of absences due to illness

In 2018, the rate of absence due to illness was 5 %.

### Age structure

Age Group	Percentage
<30	30 %
30-40	43 %
40-50	22 %
>50	5 %

## 2 | MEASURES: LABOUR

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### Percentage of employees receiving training

At :response, all employees are offered regular consultant training in order to develop their personal and professional skills. In 2018, a total of 153 training hours was completed. In addition, we provide systematic mentoring and, if required, direct coaching by the company founder or senior consultants. Internships are offered, which serve as further training opportunities for students.

### Employee satisfaction

In 2018, :response conducted an employee survey concerning satisfaction, social aspects of the employment, learning as well as knowledge transfer. :response clearly identified strengths in the following aspects:

- Development of competency, knowledge acquisition and personal growth
- Self-Efficacy
- Appreciation by the manager
- Recognition of the individual and their actions
- Actively shaping business operations
- Usage of known methods
- Introduction of new ideas
- Usage of the DNK, UNGC, etc.

## 2 | ACTIONS: ENVIRONMENT

- Principle 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8:** undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9:** encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

As a professional services company our ecological footprint is relatively small. The direct environmental effects of our activities are mainly caused by business trips, office operations and to a minor extent procurement. However, environmental and climate protection are deeply rooted in all our services and actions.

Therefore, we are committed to minimise our environmental impact by using public transport for business trips. We have set ourselves travel guidelines and established rail as our preferred method of transportation. We only travel the last mile from the railway station by taxi if the client is not located within walking distance. In case we are unable to travel to our clients by train within a reasonable period of time, we travel by rental car or in exceptional cases via plane. Striving for carbon neutrality, :response fully compensated its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from car journeys and business flights for the reporting year.

To reduce emissions from our electricity consumption to zero, we switched to 100 % green electricity in 2018. Additionally, we continuously focus on applying energy-saving behaviour.

:response promotes environmental and resource-friendly behaviour in its office and purchases office equipment with high energy efficiency. Also, whenever possible we use recycled materials, e.g. for our office supplies. We partly acquire refurbished hardware and ensure to use it for its entire life span. Besides our efforts of keeping our office waste at a low level, we also separate paper, glass and residual waste.

## 2 | MEASURES: ENVIRONMENT

### Percentage of recycled paper used

About 99 % of the paper used is recycled paper.

### Electricity from renewable energy sources

Since 2018, :response uses 100 % green electricity.

### Resource usage\*

Resource	Consumption
Electricity	3.474,77 kWh
Heating oil	1.335 l (estimated)
Water	30.750 l (estimated)
Paper	73,89 kg (office paper and hygiene paper)

\*data from 2017

## 2 | MEASURES: ENVIRONMENT

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### CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral business activities\*

In 2018, :response's overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were around 21.6 tons.

This includes heating oil and electricity for the building as well as fuel for business travels by car or plane.

:response compensated all its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, including, for the first time, facility management emissions.

## 2 | ACTIONS: ANTI-CORRUPTION

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**Principle 10:** Businesses should work against all forms of corruption, including extortion and bribery.

Since the issue of corruption is an important part of our consulting practice, our employees are aware of any such risks. Upon joining the company, all our employees sign a non-disclosure agreement, supporting our company's anti-corruption commitment. The agreement relates to all operational procedures, business secrets and customer data. We strictly comply with data protection, compliance and anti-corruption guidelines of our clients. Our employees are continuously sensitised in this respect within their projects. Internally, we also counter potential risks relating to corruption by consistently applying the dual control principle. In this way, risks related to corruption within projects are being mitigated or minimised.

Additionally, we strictly follow German rules and regulations concerning corruption and bribery. The fact that our main point of business is the German market and that the country achieves a high ranking in the internationally recognised Corruption Perception Index (CPI) decreases the risk of bribery and corruption within our day-to-day business. Until today, there have not been any issues related to corruption at :response. In case an incident occurs, :response will be ready to take appropriate measures.

## 2 | MEASURES: ANTI-CORRUPTION

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### Infringement of law

:response has never violated any anti-corruption laws or regulations. No fines had to be paid.

## 3 | ABOUT :RESPONSE

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:response is a leading German consultancy firm for sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Established in 2007, we help our clients from business, society, politics and administration to contribute to the "great transformation" as well as with their small steps towards more sustainable paths.

We advise our clients in their strategy development by conducting analyses and feasibility studies and by developing new business models. We help clients with knowledge, methodology, leadership development and facilitation to achieve sustainable impact. We have a strong base with the German Mittelstand and the Public Sector, but we have also always been working with Fortune 500 companies.

We have grouped our consulting projects around these core areas:

- Circular economy and Public Waste Management
- Sustainable Finance and Insurance
- International Development Cooperation and Social Entrepreneurship
- Managing and Reporting Performance, Externalities and Risk

Our work is characterised by strategic thinking, creative solutions, a profound knowledge of systemic change while focusing on tangible outcomes and actionable results. We navigate our clients through sometimes confusing information, situations and perceptions to advance their sustainability performance.

We create value for people, organisations and society while regenerating the planet.

## 4 | CONTACT

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## **: response**

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