

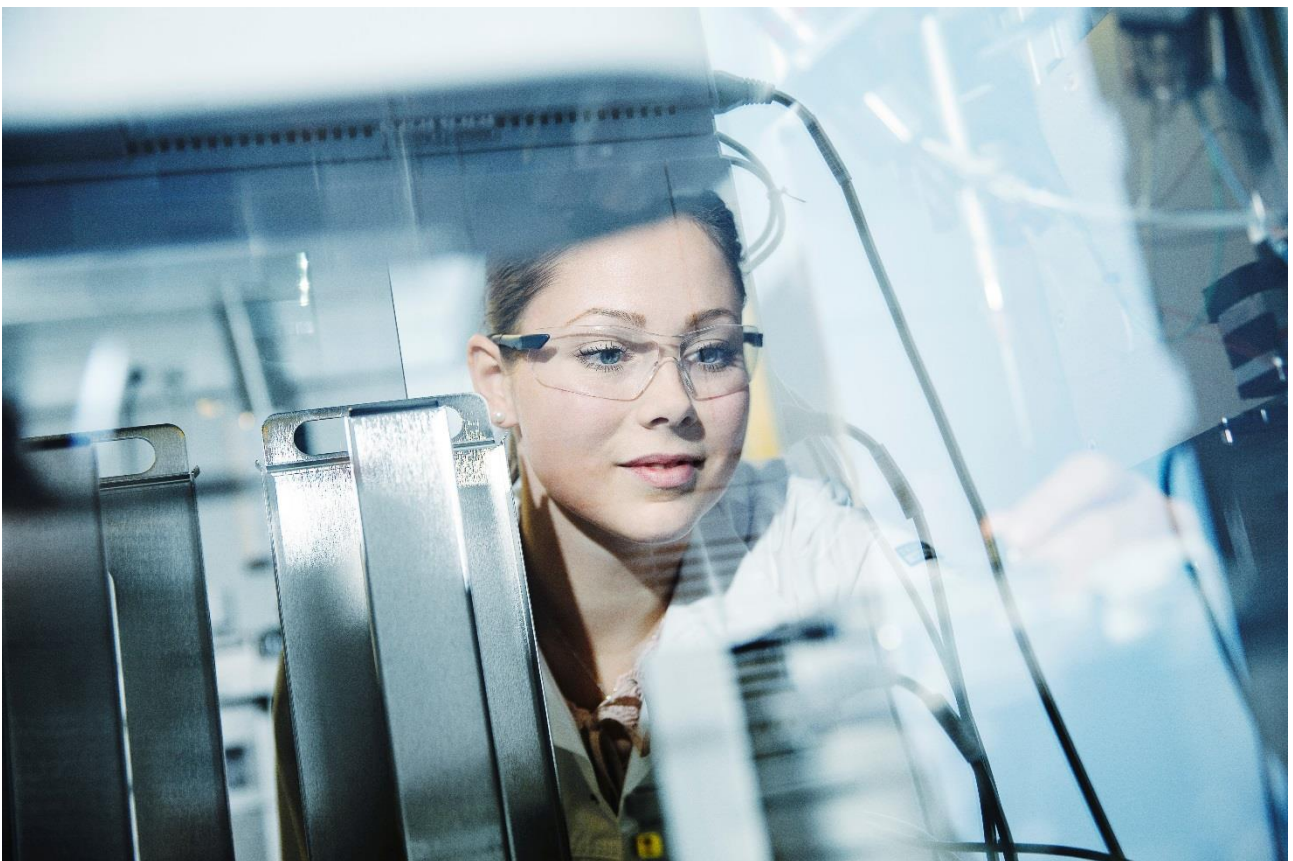
# Report

## Communication on progress (COP)

Annual report to United Nations Global Compact

**Author(s)**

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**VERSION**

1.0

**DATE**

2019-09-01

**AUTHOR(S)**

Tom Berland

**NUMBER OF PAGES/APPENDICIES:**

12/1 Appendix

**CHECKED BY**

Petter Haugan, Vice President, Public Affairs

**APPROVED BY**

SINTEF Corporate management

**CLASSIFICATION**

Unrestricted

**CLASSIFICATION THIS PAGE**

Unrestricted

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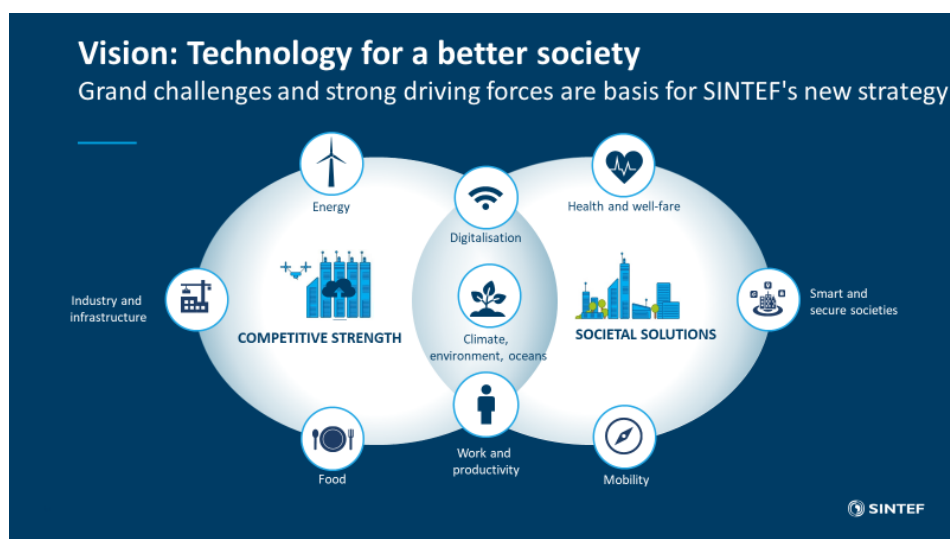
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## Preface

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

SINTEF is a private, not-for-profit research institute, which is organized as a foundation with subsidiaries. Through first-rate solution-oriented research and knowledge generation, SINTEF creates significant value for its Norwegian and international customers, the public sector and society as a whole. Our 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 are performed in accordance with the UN Global Compact principles, this COP will mainly describe the content of our research activities and how the results from this research have an impact on the global environment and society in a way that will support the Global Compact principles. In our next communication on progress in 2020, we will present a more comprehensive sustainability report for 2019.



## Statement of continued support – Technology for a better society

During 2018 and 2019, SINTEF has developed a new main strategy. Society's grand challenges, like climate change, a growing, ageing, and more urban population, digitalisation and resource stewardship through a circular economy are the strongest driving forces and basis for our new strategy. We have decided that UN sustainable development goals form a platform for our strategy.

SINTEF's vision is "Technology for a better society". 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 universal principles of the UN Global Compact. SINTEF acts in accordance with the principles by the way we conduct our own operations. But our most important contribution is the impact from our research and innovation.

Research is essential for respecting both the Global Compact principles and reaching the sustainable development goals. As an independent research institute, SINTEF aims to contribute actively by doing research that contributes to a better society, in accordance with our vision.

This Communication on progress report demonstrates some of our efforts during 2018. We express our continued support and commitment for the principles.

The report presents SINTEF's policies and commitments on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. We also present examples on our research activities in 2018, relevant for Global Compact issue areas.



Alexandra Bech Gjørsvik  
President



## Sustainable Development Goals – 17 goals to transform our world

On September 25th 2015, a new sustainable development agenda set 17 goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all - each goal with specific targets to be achieved in 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) see environment, economy and social development as a whole.

With our vision of "Technology for a better society", SINTEF is committed to help realizing the SDGs. In 2018, we worked on a revised strategy (approved by the Board in March 2019), highlighting the SDGs as formative for our business. Technological development is an important basis for reaching the ambitious goals, and it provides the key to how SINTEF contributes. For example, renewable energy, new and clean industry, sustainable food, clean water and a clean ocean are core topics in SINTEF.

To more systematically track our impact going forward, we are developing our sustainability reporting. In future reporting we will to a larger degree relate information about our business and research activities to their societal impact and the sustainable development goals, to ensure that we do our very best to improve and ensure we contribute to the big challenges of our time.

## 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](#)" states among other things 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.
- SINTEF employees have the right to deny the participation in research projects 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 characterized by equality and opportunity.

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

- The document "SINTEF's statement of corporate business ethics and social responsibility on entry into contracts", which is 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 The National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology.
- SINTEF's 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's 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 office abroad, a risk analysis shall be performed, where ethics and CSR aspects are part of the analysis. A similar risk analysis will be performed for projects where part of the work is performed in a country outside the EU, Canada or the 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. Examples are found in Appendix A.



## Labour

SINTEF's 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 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 our trade union organizations in all discussions regarding issues involving employees and organizational changes. Our employees are organized within 6 different organizations, and SINTEF maintains 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 voluntary and member lists are confidential. However, the number of members in each of the six trade union organizations in SINTEF is public and shows that two thirds of our employees have chosen to become a trade union member.

In the UNIVERSUM evaluation of attractive working sites, the Norwegian university students within technology ranks SINTEF among the most attractive employers in Norway, and in the Karrierebarometeret evaluation of attractive working sites, SINTEF ranked no. 1 for 2019.

SINTEF employees are strongly involved in the development and implementation of [HSE policies](#). This happens both through elected HSE representatives, but also through strong awareness and considerations in 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.

All SINTEF employees work in our research facilities in Norway and Denmark. However, SINTEF recruits scientific personnel of all nationalities, and presently persons from 75 different countries work in our organizations. 23 per cent of our employees were born and raised in other countries than Norway. SINTEF has set up an integration programme for new employees 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. As of May 2019, 35% of our staff were females, and 37% of our managers were women. The President of the SINTEF Group is a woman. SINTEF attempts to recruit women to new positions 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 may be found in Appendix A.



## Environment

SINTEF's [environmental policy](#) states that *"On the background of our vision of "Technology for a better society", all aspects of SINTEF's activities will be based on our concern for the external environment. SINTEF's environmental policy aims to ensure that both our research itself, and the manner in which we operate, reflect considerations for the external environment. It also intends to ensure that our own environmental performance is upgraded on a continuing basis."*

SINTEF is committed to:

- work for establishment of national and international R&D programs aimed at development of environmental-friendly technologies
- contribute to the research and development of environmentally friendly solutions through our projects
- emphasize environmental issues in our investments in knowledge development and laboratory facilities
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions, choose energy friendly solutions and avoid harmful emissions to land, air and water
- communicate knowledge, develop solutions and provide research-based knowledge as a basis for environmental-political public debate
- satisfy applicable legal requirements and other requirements we impose on us regarding our environmental aspects

SINTEF has established a common environmental action plan whose significant aspects include energy-efficient operation and the responsible treatment of waste. All of SINTEF's six institutes have drawn up their own local environment action plans, and the SINTEF Group is also certified in accordance with ISO 14001. In 2018, there were no reported major incidents that affected the physical environment.

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 knowledge 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, transport and infrastructure, 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.

## 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 and 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 2018, relevant for Global Compact issue areas. The descriptions have previously been published on SINTEF's website during 2018, and are found online via the links below:*

### **"Urban mining" technology to recycle rare metals**

New technology will be used to recycle rare and valuable metals from waste materials such as electronic scrap and foundry slag. The process is profitable and may help to reduce environmentally harmful mining operations. [Read more](#)

### **Testing fuel cells for main propulsion potential**

ABB and SINTEF Ocean are undertaking groundbreaking research to test the viability of fuel cells as an energy source for main ship propulsion. [Read more](#)

### **Entrepreneurs aim to end ghost fishing**

A small device, developed in Norway, will now be used in the battle against environmentally unfriendly ghost fishing caused by lost or forgotten fishing gear. [Read more](#)

### **New Norwegian pulmonary medicine tool wins innovation award**

The team behind a new medical navigation system which makes it easier to take biopsy samples from the lungs received an international innovation award. [Read more](#)

### **Robot vision makes solar cell manufacture more efficient**

In order to maintain the leading position of Norwegian solar cell manufacture on the global stage, we need sensors that can see what humans can't. [Read more](#)

### **Can nanotechnology help diagnose Alzheimer's?**

Exosomes are natural nanoscopic particles released by most cell types, and are currently the focus of research because they represent a possible tool for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's. These particles are not so easy to isolate, and nanotechnology may help in this process. [Read more](#)

### **First aid training for young children**

The aim of the national campaign "Saving lives together" is to encourage Norwegians to save more lives. Children are included, and researchers have been given the job of ensuring that it succeeds. [Read more](#)

### **[Capturing CO<sub>2</sub> using heat pumps - SINTEF](#)**

Capturing the greenhouse gas CO<sub>2</sub> from industrial processes such as cement manufacture is a demanding and therefore expensive exercise. However, by introducing a renewable powered heat pump in the capture system, the energy required to capture CO<sub>2</sub> is reduced by three quarters.

[Read more](#)

### **[New research on composite materials to provide more durable wind turbines](#)**

Bridges constructed with fibre reinforced polymers (composites) may become a familiar sight in Europe if a new pan-European research project achieves its objectives. The project also aims to provide more durable and reliable wind turbines. [Read more](#)

### **[Measuring devices for the world's most extreme environment](#)**

Norwegian research scientists are contributing to the development of the world's hottest geothermal well in a non-volcanic area. The goal is to exploit the inexhaustible supply of heat from the interior of the Earth, and this calls for equipment that can withstand the most extreme conditions. [Read more](#)

### **[Preventing hurricanes using air bubbles](#)**

Many people have tried to find ways of preventing hurricanes before they make landfall, resulting in the loss of human lives. Norwegian researchers believe that the answer lies in cold bubbles.

[Read more](#)

### **[Cities are hidden power stations](#)**

Waste heat and locally-produced renewable energy can be generated by compact, "urban power plants" that are efficient enough to supply heat to entire housing estates. [Read more](#)

### **[Increasing production of macroalgae](#)**

Research project will target successful and predictable production of high-quality biomass thereby making significant steps towards industrial macroalgae cultivation in Norway. Increased production of kelp and algae have a substantial potential for binding CO<sub>2</sub>, an important part of what is called climate-positive solutions. [Read more](#)