

# 1 Statement by the Chief Executive

**UNITED NATIONS**  
Secretary-General  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

For the kind attention of Mr. António GUTERRES

Brussels, 23 October 2020

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

I am pleased to confirm that cecoforma supports the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. With this communication, we express our intent to implement those principles.

We are committed to making the UN Global Compact and its principles part of the strategy, culture and day-to-day operations of our company, and to engaging in collaborative projects which advance the broader development goals of the United Nations, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals.

cecoforma will make a clear statement of this commitment to our stakeholders and the general public. We recognize that a key requirement for participation in the UN Global Compact is the annual submission of a Communication on Progress (COP) that describes our company's efforts to implement the Ten Principles.

We support public accountability and transparency, and therefore commit to report on progress within one year of joining the UN Global Compact, and annually thereafter according to the UN Global Compact COP policy.

This includes:

- A **statement signed by the chief executive** expressing continued support for the UN Global Compact and renewing our ongoing commitment to the initiative and its principles.
- A **description of practical actions** (i.e., disclosure of any relevant policies, procedures, activities) that the company has taken (or plans to undertake) to implement the UN Global Compact principles in each of the four issue areas (human rights, labour, environment, anti-corruption).
- A **measurement of outcomes** (i.e., the degree to which targets/performance indicators were met, or other qualitative or quantitative measurements of results).

Sincerely yours,

Stéphan UHODA  
CEO / Legal Representative  
CECOFORMA

## 2 Company profile



As an established European institutions events contractor with four decades of experience delivering quality and cost-effective results in more than 100 countries, cecoforma is ideally placed to successfully provide services to its clients for the organisation all types and size of events.

Founded by CEO Stéphan Uhoda, cecoforma is a PCO that has the capacity to deliver on all aspects linked to the organisation and management of projects and events such as conferences, seminars, meetings, summits, forum, fairs, communication activities, etc. Our experienced and multilingual teams offer the complete range of event organisation services including all technical, organisational and production services underpinned by comprehensive ISO-certified quality assurance procedures. Our offices in Brussels and Liège are backed by a pool of experts to seamlessly devise and implement all types of events worldwide.

cecoforma leads and implements local, national and international events and communication activities for private companies, governmental institutions and institutional clients including, amongst others, EU institutions and UN agencies. We have organised more than 2.300 events around the world.

Controlling our events' environmental, social and economic impact is an integral part of our philosophy. In addition to complying with international, EU and national applicable environmental laws and regulations, cecoforma is a participant in the United Nations Global Compact, which brings companies together with UN agencies, labour organisations and civil society to support 10 principles in the areas of anti-corruption, human rights, labour and the environment.

### 2.1 Experience working with EU institutions

Of the more than 2.300 events and projects we have organised for institutional clients, 98% were carried out on behalf of European institutional clients.

Our European institutional clients include amongst others:

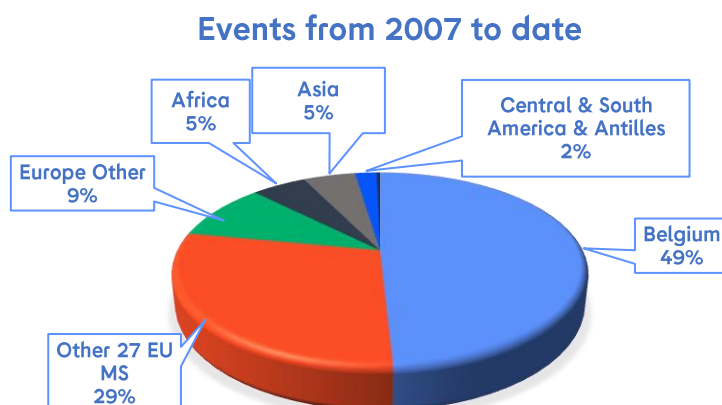
- The European Commission (DG COMM, DG DEVCO, DG EAC, DG EMPL, DG ENER, DG GROW, DG HOME, DG INFSO, DG JUST, DG MARE, DG MOVE, DG NEAR, DG RTD, DG SANTE, DG TRADE, EEAS/FPI).
- EU Delegations and Permanent Representations.
- Executive Agencies (EACEA, EASME, EASA, CHAFAEA).
- The Committee of the Regions.

We have a thorough understanding of the working methods of international institutions and their specificities such as standards for translation booths and working conditions of translators, requirements regarding access for people with disabilities, and the rules regarding the reimbursement of travel and accommodation, to give just a few examples. We always ensure that our events are reliable and that they are of tailored quality wherever that may be in the world.

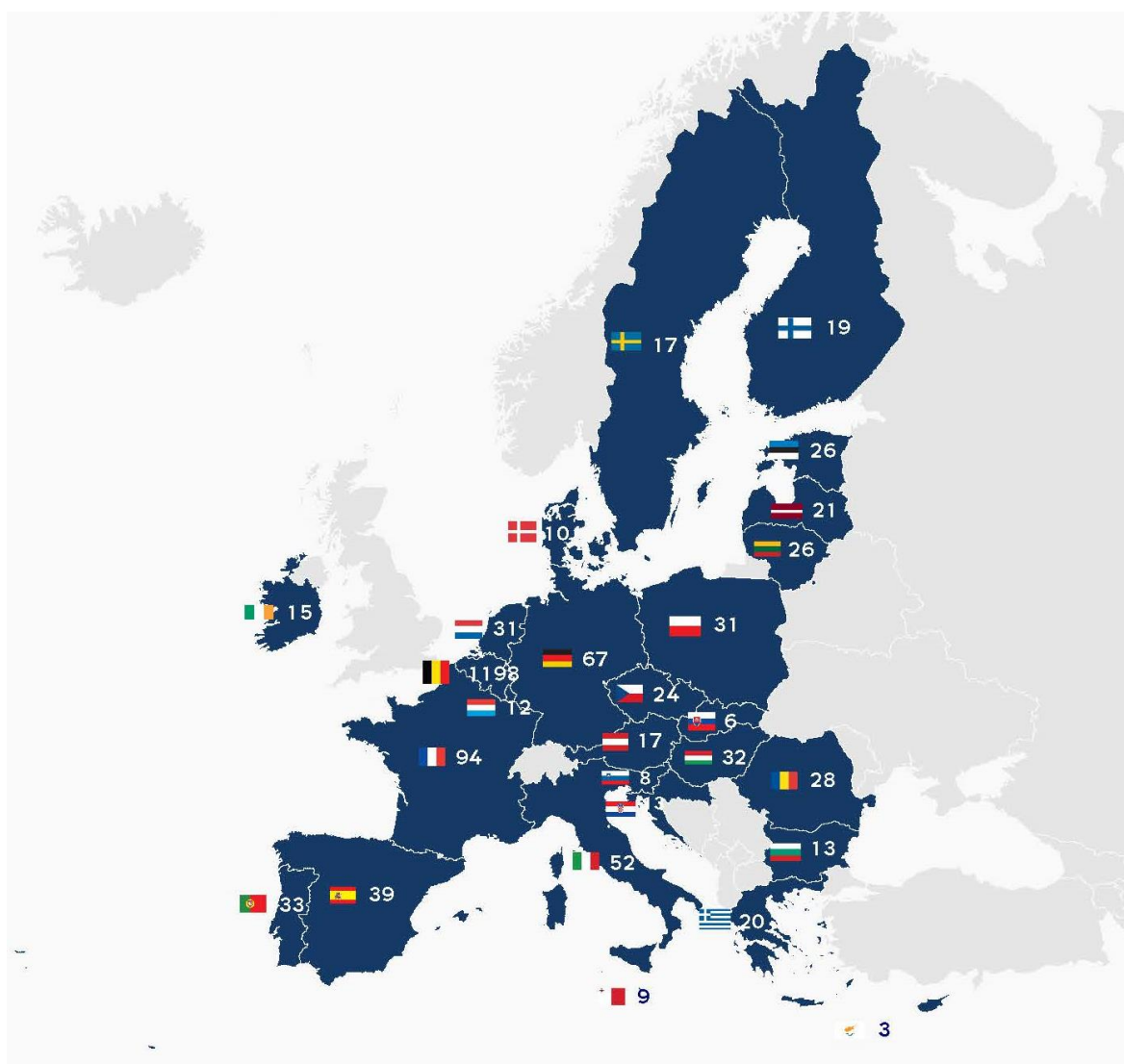
We currently manage 10 framework contracts and service contracts in events and communication activities, organising services as leader (sole contractor or leader of consortium).

## 2.2 Geographical scope

The graph below illustrates the percentage of events cecoforma organised in each geographical region between 2007 and 2020:



50 % of our projects take place in Brussels. Outside of Belgium, cecoforma has already organised projects of all sizes in every single one of the other 27 EU Member States as illustrated here below (2007-2020).



## 2.3 Team

Our multilingual team has complementary and varied expertise. In addition, it is stable, available at short notice and flexible. More details of our labour related policies and practices are available at page 6.

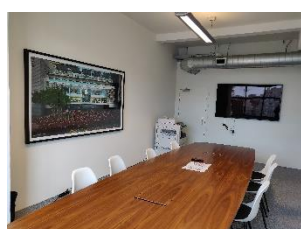
## 2.4 Offices and infrastructure

cecoforma has two office locations in Brussels and one in Liège (headquarters). All our infrastructure is up-to-date and state-of-the-art and includes a networked computer infrastructure with high-speed Internet access.

The servers are backed up regularly and externally. Each member of staff has his/her own computer, and staff required to be on the move have laptops, which they carry with them - equipped with Wi-Fi and Ethernet connection capability.

cecoforma works on a contract basis with a call centre to offer a phone answering service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This specific fixed phone line is used for all our FWCs and can be reached worldwide to respond immediately to any issues faced. The call centre is briefed on how to find cecoforma team members; calls are transferred at no expense to the caller who pays only the cost of a call within/to Belgium. In addition, for each contract and project, the Project Director/Coordinator can be reached on their mobile phones wherever they are in the world.

In Brussels, one location is situated at the Place Eugène Flagey 18. The second location is at Rue de la Loi 42, in the heart of the EU centre. On the lower floor is a separate business centre with proper meeting facilities entitled L42 ([www.l42.be](http://www.l42.be)). Located in a passive building on one of the busiest streets of Brussels, the L42 Business Center also focuses on reducing its environmental footprint by making choices that support sustainability and green development. This space, composed of two meetings rooms, a bar/lounge area and a conference space, has all the infrastructure and technology necessary to host events of up to 110 people. For example, L42 already had the pleasure to host United Nations events (UNHCR, UNICRI).





### 3 The Ten Principles

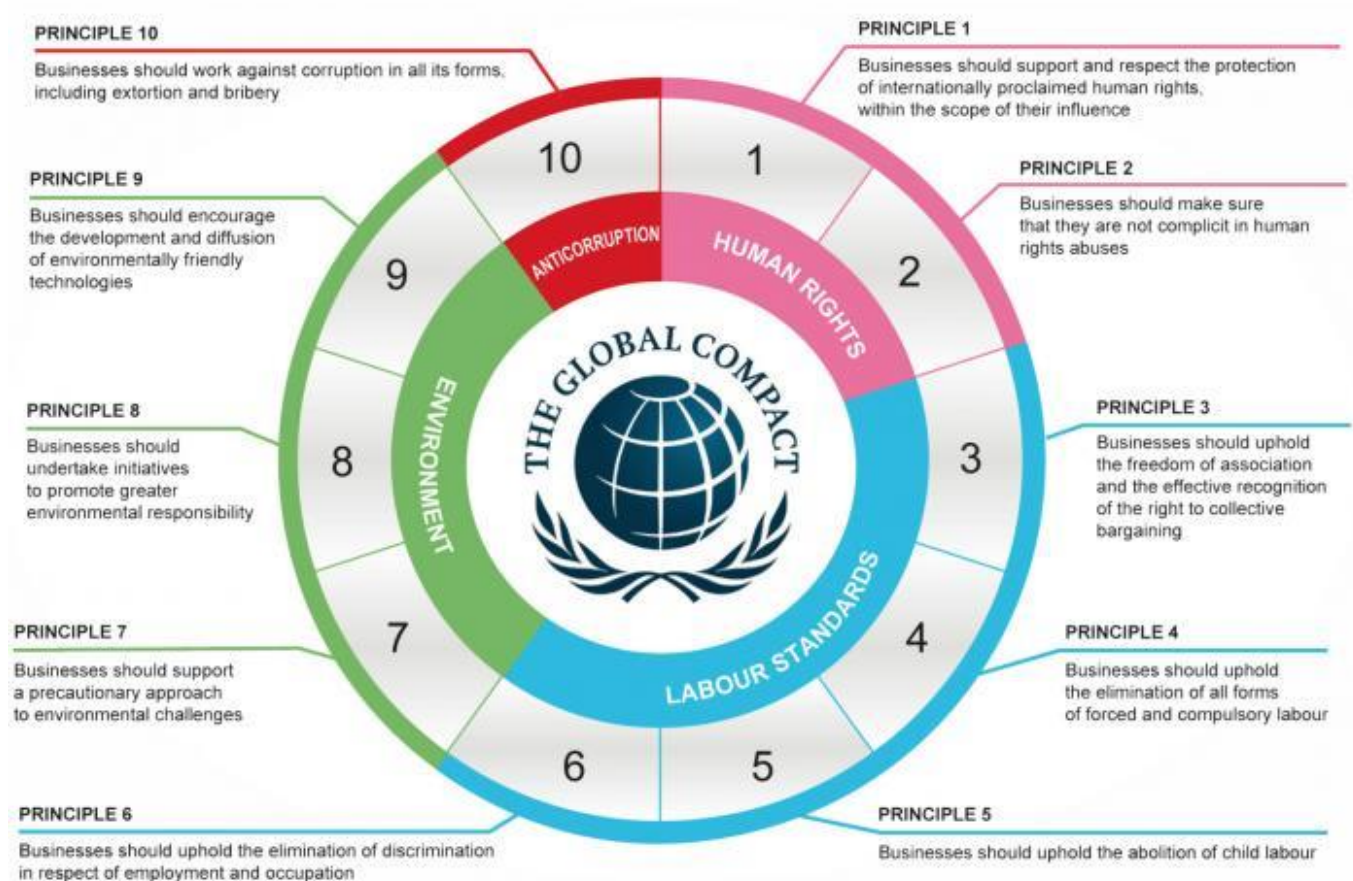
The UN Global Compact Ten Principles refer to the fundamental responsibilities that worldwide business has in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. We agree with the idea that responsible businesses must enact the same values and principles wherever they have a presence, being aware that good practices in one area do not offset harm in another.

The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact are derived from four of the main international law agreements which are: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

cecoforma joined the UN Global Compact initiative in 2017 to be part of the network of international responsible businesses which decided to raise their awareness and give their contribution to the communication and events management fields, making them more sustainable

Since then, many improvements have been made in all the four areas of action and more will be implemented. This in order to guarantee to both our employees and clients a high-level service, aware of the social and environmental implications of our activities, structured to guarantee an increasingly better impact on the planet.

As part of our present commitment and future strategy, we also want to be part of the social and environmental project led by the new European Union, the Green Deal. This ambitious long-term strategy is willing to reach impact neutrality by 2050 and to "leave no one behind". We do embrace these values and objectives and will make sure that our future actions will be going in this direction.



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### 3.1 Human Rights

#### Principles

- *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.

#### Description of practical actions

- We provide our teams with safe, workable and sanitary workplaces in our offices located in Brussels and Liège.
- In 2019, we organised 300 projects around the world. We are very aware of our wider social and economic obligations, and we conduct our operations in a way which promotes Corporate Social Responsibility in terms of interaction with our workforce, clients and service providers.
- We have processes in place for our employees so that they can express any issues that might affect their well-being in the workplace (such as physical harassment, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, psychological pressure, violence or threats on any basis).

#### Measurement of outcomes

cecoforma has never been subject to any investigations, legal cases or incidents involving Human Rights violations and no other issues have been identified.

### 3.2 Labour

#### Principles

- *Principle 3:* Businesses should uphold the 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.

#### Description of practical actions

- We are committed to upholding freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- Our employees are selected, hired and managed in the respect of national and international labour law with a neutral approach. This means that we reject any discrimination: age, gender, religion, nationality, political convictions etc.
- cecoforma complies with Belgian minimum wage rates.
- We do not employ any personnel under the age of 18, and we are aware of, and comply with, the Council Directive 94/33/EC covering the protection of young people at work.
- All employment posts have formal job descriptions assigned and are advertised internally and to the wider community during the recruitment process. After the interview stage, all successful applicants are offered formal contracts of employment with information on roles and responsibilities, hours of work and conditions of employment clearly stated.
- We pay careful attention to pay based on the qualifications of our employees of their experience. We have an equal opportunity employment recruitment policy, which underpins a diverse and gender balanced workforce.
- We consider the aspirations, tasks and directions of professional growth in the areas chosen by our employees via regular evaluations.
- Employees are encouraged to develop their professional skills through trainings to the mutual benefit of individuals and the company. All managers complete a leadership training.

- We sponsor and encourage both sport activity and inclusion by sustaining the Leg's Go initiative, dedicated to handicapped sport players, during the marathon "La corrida des Remparts", in Liège.
- As part of our Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, we support local associations like La Porte Ouverte or Buy Aid in order to encourage their services in social inclusion and childhood protection.

### Measurement of outcomes

- cecofoma has not been involved in any Health & Safety notices, investigations, legal cases or other relevant events related to the contravention of the Global Compact Labour principles.

## 3.3 Environment

### Principles

- *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.

### Description of practical actions for our physical events

Controlling our events' environmental impact is an integral part of our planning and decision-making process. This year, we have updated our **sustainability checklist**, which we apply to all events:

#### *Event organisation*

- When required, we provided to our clients specific Sustainability Plans in order to illustrate concretely our vision of sustainability
- We ensure our events are in harmony with the host city and that they respect the inhabitants by reducing the inconveniences associated with the organisation of an event (e.g. avoid blocking access to public spaces, such as park, etc. over an extended period of time).
- When organising cultural visits, guided and sightseeing tours, showcase the location's assets, taking environmental and social criteria into account (visits of innovative solutions and places).
- Identify and address any religious or cultural sensitivity pertinent to the event, its timing, activities or location.
- We prioritize the use of Green Goodies which are reusable, recyclable and fair trade.

#### *General guidelines for suppliers*

- Prioritise local suppliers.
- Include environmental criteria or green certification in the selection and evaluation process of suppliers in accordance with:
  - the TYPE I Ecolabels for the purchase of goods and material (e.g.: the EU Ecolabel, Blue Angel, etc.)
  - and for the purchase of services suppliers that have implemented an environmental management system in accordance with the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, ISO 14001 or sectoral and regional environmental management labels.
  - Ensure that all suppliers respect the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact. (cecofoma has a list of preferred suppliers with sustainable practices).
- Favour suppliers that work with or donate to charities.
- Favour suppliers with Circular economy practices.
- When hiring event support staff (hostesses, technicians, security agents, interpreters, etc.), recruit locally whenever possible to avoid unnecessary travel and to support the local economy. We make sure that salaries are compliant with local wage standards.

#### *Venue/accommodation*

During selection of a venue, we pay close attention to its environmental and social practices, as it is the venue that usually provides the bulk of the services for an event (ex: catering, hostesses, technical equipment, accommodation).

- Favour venues/hotels that have a sustainability label or certificate, such as a Green Key label, EU Ecolabel (nearly 400 hotels in Europe) EMAS (200 accommodations and venues EU wide), or that have robust environmental responsibility guidelines.
- Choose event venues/hotels with easy access to public transportation.
- Limit the distance between different event locations to reduce transportation needs.

#### *Catering*

- Apply the FLOSS (Fair - Local Organic Seasonable Sustainable) principle as much as possible.
- Selection of fish and fish produce should avoid products from endangered stocks. In this context, procurement procedures should apply criteria for certified fish (e.g. the independent MSC label).
- Choose fair-trade coffees and teas, local juices and provide Tap water in carafes.
- Ask participants in the registration form which meals they plan to be present for so that we can anticipate the correct amount and type of food.
- Anticipate the percentage of “no show” of participants (an average of 20% participants don’t attend the event): use a waiting list and remind participants to re-confirm their participation 1 or 2 weeks before the conference and adapt the amount of food ordered to the latest registrations
- When serving a buffet meal, avoid putting out too much food to avoid excesses; have the catering team refill platters as necessary to avoid waste.
- Avoid decorations made from food.
- Avoid individual packages or packaging in general.
- Avoid one way / disposable cups, dishes, etc.
- Favour caterers with sustainable practices, such as restaurants/catering companies that produce their own products (ex: restaurant with rooftop vegetable gardens or beehives) or catering companies that have their own compost or that have signed charters to combat food waste
- Favour circular economy practices e.g. as the reuse of coffee ground to grow mushrooms and using these mushrooms for catering.
- Favour caterers that donate leftover food; if this option is not available, leftover donations can be organised by cecoforma team (depending on the laws in each country). In Brussels, several food sharing initiatives exist, such as ‘open fridges’ in which leftover food can be donated.

#### *Waste management*

- In line with the principle of the circular economy, the generation of waste should be minimised. For any waste remaining after all efforts to avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle,
- Installation of containers throughout the event venue should be used and assure good visibility / communication to make participants aware of the waste separation principles adhered to;
- Used roll-ups will be upcycled in goodies and gadgets for the next events.
- This year we attended a conference organised by Sylvie Droulans named “Zero-Waste pioneer” concerning the zero-waste strategy implementation in companies.

#### *Travel arrangements and transportation*

- For travel arrangements, we encourage, when possible, the use of train or to group people in case of car travels. This in order to have a lower CO2 emissions impact.
- Carbon offsetting is ensured in the projects that require it.
- For events that require hotel arrangements prefer ones which are located at a walking distance. If not possible, public transportation will be preferred to private transportation services.
- At the internal level, cecoforma encourages the use of public transportation, bikes or car-sharing when possible. In this sense, two electrical bikes have been bought in order to facilitate the travel between our two Brussels’ offices in order to have the least environmental impact possible.

### **Description of practical actions for our digital events**

Governmental measures taken to handle the covid-19 situation in 2020 led to most physical events being cancelled for the majority of the year. cecoforma responded by creating a **digital event team** that could enable our clients to organise some way of bringing their stakeholders together.



However, now we are fully competent at delivering such services we also see this as a major part of **making our work more environmentally friendly** in the future since virtual events will allow our clients to gather stakeholders and avoid the environmental impact that entails.

This year we have already organised 70 virtual events which means that although enforced, we have avoided the impact of 70 physical events while still enabling our clients to meet their objectives.

### Description of practical actions in our offices

As a service provider active in the event industry, we are aware that our daily activities bear a certain ecological footprint, and that **the responsibility to reduce it should be integrated in our global business plan**. More and more clients also have this ecological concern when it comes to organise an event; therefore, we do our best every day to adapt to their needs and provide better and greener services.

Over the past year, efforts have been put in place to switch the way of working, step by step, towards a more responsible and green way of working. Here is an overview of the measures we took recently:

#### *Building*

- Our L42 centre is located in a passive building.
- There is no air conditioning system in our L42 centre, but an auto-regenerating ventilation system which maintains a comfortable temperature over the seasons.
- Photovoltaic panels on the roof were installed, which provides part of the building's electricity.

#### *Catering services*

- Our choice of catering providers focuses on partners which can demonstrate a strong interest towards locally produced products, and seasonal products. Among our 3 main caterers, one is working mostly with products from local producers located in Belgium and respecting the seasonality of the food. Another provides only organic food, including for the drinks. The last one also focuses on the proximity of the products and put the accent on organic and vegan recipes.
- We removed almost all our single-use products. We have our own stock of “hard” plates, cutlery, glasses and rent other material externally when needed, to avoid any waste.

#### *Food and drinks*

- Drinks are proposed only in glass bottles, which are consigned and returned to our provider. There are no plastic bottles anymore, including for milk.
- We replaced the usual soft drinks by a brand of Belgian crafted lemonades using mostly natural ingredients, the industrial fruit juices by a Belgium brand of natural juices, and water, in glass bottle, is also produced and bottled in Belgium.
- We chose reliable brands for coffee and teas, known for their fairtrade and organic commitment. Their packaging was also studied to contain no aluminium but only paper or biodegradable material. The tea bags, for example, have no staples.
- For biscuits, we turned to a Belgian brand of organic and gluten-free speculoos biscuits, and the biscuits and delivered in bulk bags of 3kg.
- We also buy our honey (for the teas and herbal teas) from a Belgian producer who provides a 100% natural honey from his own beehives.
- After catering service for meetings at our L42 business centre, we provide paper bags and containers and offer to the participants to bring back their food leftovers, in order to avoid as much food waste as possible. This is usually very appreciated by the participants.

### Measurement of outcomes

- On-going successful evaluation of our environmental management.
- Positive staff involvement and increase of awareness.
- Decrease of the use of paper and increase of the awareness of electricity and water's use.
- Reduction of the number of travels made by car.
- Reduction of waste in our offices.
- Two electric bikes have been bought and put to the service of our employees.



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### 3.4 Anti-corruption

#### Principle

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

#### Description of practical actions

- Corruption in all forms is not acceptable.

#### Measurement of outcomes

- cecofoma has not been involved in any legal cases, rulings or other events related to bribery, corruption or extortion.

## 4 cecoforma commitments for 2021

In 2021, cecoforma will continue to support the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact in order to guarantee aware and high-level services. This, to the attention of both our employees and clients.

As part of our commitment, we are implementing a Sustainability Strategy which will start in Q2 2021. The activities included in the Sustainability Strategy are both addressed to our clients and to our employees:

### At the external level

- Go towards the EU climate neutrality objective as much as possible and implement sustainable events.
- Facilitate to our clients the use of public transportation and reduce their use of flights, when possible. If not, we offer the implementation of an offsetting instrument.
- Encourage the reduction of the use of paper among our suppliers and the use of digital services.
- Build on the enforced move to digital events in 2020 to build a long-term hybrid (digital-physical) strategy that enables clients to achieve their goals while also reducing environmental impact, and actively encourages clients to use virtual events instead of physical ones where it is appropriate.

### At the internal level

- Encourage the use among our employees of non-pollutant transports like electric bikes for everyday professional activities and travels.
- Participate in trainings, meetings and other initiatives in order to learn best practices and nourish an up-to-date knowledge of best practices related to sustainable events and international policies related.
- A sustainability task force made up of employees will be created to create a driving force for change in this respect.
- Develop sustainable equipment we use internally: we are considering installing a new ashtray outside of the building, in partnership with a Belgian startup, which collects the cigarette butts and transform it into a polymer material which is currently used to create pocket ashtrays. This will allow to recycle the cigarette butts and participate in a upcycling project; replacing our paper napkins by fabric napkin in collaboration with a laundry service; replacing the paper towels in the sanitary by fabric towels, in collaboration with a laundry service; switching all our cleaning and maintenance products by green alternatives.

