

UN GLOBAL COMPACT: COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

SWISS
FOUNDATION
FOR TECHNICAL
COOPERATION



Period covered by this Communication on Engagement:
From 1st November 2018 to 1st November 2020

Part I: Statement of Continued Support by the Executive Director

Zurich, 29 October 2020

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

I am pleased to confirm that Swisscontact, an independent Swiss foundation for international development and technical cooperation, reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents. In this Communication on Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,



Samuel Bon
CEO and Executive Director

Mission and Values

Swisscontact

Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation

We are a leading organisation for the implementation of international development projects. Founded in 1959 and registered under Swiss law, we are an independent non-profit organisation. We are politically and denominationally neutral.

Our Mission

We promote inclusive economic, social and ecological development to make an effective contribution towards sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies.

With this objective in mind, we offer the chance to economically and socially disadvantaged people to improve their lives on their own initiative.

Our Values and Beliefs

We believe that people, even in dire conditions have the ability and will to act and liberate themselves from the shackles of poverty. However, this is only possible in an enabling environment and level playing field.

We make an effective contribution to improve the framework conditions for sustainable development through the facilitation of access to skills, knowledge, markets, technologies and financial services.

We believe that balanced private sector and market-driven approaches in the context of an environmentally and socially sustainable market economy offer the best conditions for people to fulfill their potential and make sustainable development possible.

We act responsibly and respect people in their own contexts, societies and cultures.

We stand for professional quality and high ethical standards in our activities.

What we do

- We strengthen the competencies of people, improving their employability
- We increase the competitiveness of enterprises, growing their business
- We foster social and economic systems, promoting inclusive development

What we offer

- Project Implementation
- Advisory Services
- Training
- Applied Research

Our Working Principles

Inclusive Systems Development

We apply a systemic approach: this means acting as trainers, facilitators and enablers, seeking to enable local organisations and partners, ensuring they take direct ownership. This is how we achieve sustainable impact at scale.

Learning Culture

We continuously develop and embed new learning methodologies, increasing knowledge, competence and performance within our organisation.

Evidence-based adaptive management

We manage our projects with an evidence-based and adaptive management approach, based on a standardised monitoring and results measurement system that allows for informed decision-making and timely corrective action.

Engaging the Private Sector

We seek to develop partnerships with local and international businesses to increase the range of opportunities for our partners and people we serve.

Our Sustainability Criteria

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

We promote gender equality, both in our project work and within our organisation. We strive for the social inclusion of all people.

Financial Inclusion

In our projects, we promote financial literacy and access to affordable and fair financial products and services.

Environmental Responsibility

We always consider the environment, actively exploring opportunities to enhance the resilience of individuals and communities to deal with climate change and promoting solutions for efficient and sustainable use of resources.

Good Governance

We promote transparent, accountable, participatory and effective decision-making processes. We support and strengthen governing institutions that foster economic growth, human development and social cohesion.

Agenda 2030

The goals of the Agenda 2030 are integrated into our projects and help to increase the impact and quality of our work. We contribute directly to the following sustainability goals:



Partnerships

We foster and develop partnerships with local, national and international knowledge and implementation partners.

In Switzerland, we establish links between international co-operation and the private sector.

Certification and Taxes

The Swiss certification organisation ZEW confirms that Swisscontact utilises funds and donations as per their defined purpose, economically and effectively. Swisscontact is exempt from taxes. Donations are tax-deductible in Switzerland. Our financial accounting abides by the regulations of SWISS GAAP FER 21.

Part II: Description of Actions

Swisscontact signed the UN Global Compact in 2009. As a member we have been actively promoting the ten principles of the UNGC. With this Communication on Engagement, we would like to highlight some of our key activities of the last two years.

Labour (Principles 3-6)

Our Code of Conduct obliges Swisscontact, its employees and partners to fully comply with the International Labour Standards. In the selection process of our project partner, sub-contractors and local SMEs, we check their compliance with the Core Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and do not cooperate with non-compliant companies and organisations.

Swisscontact is also dedicated to equal rights and opportunities. With many of our projects, we are promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially women, youth, and migrants. A project that centres this approach is the Nuevas Oportunidades programme in El Salvador which seeks the productive reintegration of returning migrants through certification of competencies. Every year thousands of migrants are sent back to their home countries and many of them face difficulties upon their return. Although the vast majority of the returnees have no criminal background, the deportees are perceived as criminals by their fellow citizens and have difficulty integrating into the labour market. At the same time, these practically experienced skilled workers bear great potential for the labour market, as there is a demand for qualified workers in growing economic sectors such as construction and tourism. The project aims to provide returning migrants with access to various services that increase their chances of recruitment. This includes the establishment of an evaluation process and the certification of professional skills of returning migrants in the construction and tourism sector. In addition, existing services (job placement, development of entrepreneurial skills of returning migrants) will also be improved. The potential for certification of competencies is high and pilot activities are being carried out to extend the reach to Guatemala and Honduras. Since returning migrants have no access to financing mechanisms, the project will also pilot the involvement of diaspora organisations that support returning migrants in setting up their own businesses. Up until 2019 the following results were achieved: 283 returning migrants obtained a certificate for their skills in the construction and tourism sectors, 82% of the certified returnees were successfully inserted into the labour market and 50 new jobs were created, 100 returnees were accompanied on their way to becoming self-employed entrepreneurs and an awareness campaign “#YoNoDiscrimino” (I don’t discriminate) was launched.

Regarding the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, Swisscontact is also implementing the Skills 4 Life Project (final phase started in 2019) in Turkana County in the North-Western region of Kenya. Beneficiaries are both members of the host community as well as refugees living in Kakuma Refugee Camp located in the area. The project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented in partnership with local community-based organizations working in both the refugee and host communities. The aim is to strengthen the income-generating capabilities of youth aged between 16 and 25 years by focusing on the local market opportunities and enhancing their access to technical skills development. Training modules for 12 technical trades are used to facilitate skills training for example in agriculture, blacksmith, computer repair, bakery, jewellery/beadwork and other fields. Furthermore, youth receive additional essential life skills training and basic literacy and numeracy necessary for enhancing young people's and adolescent girls' capacity to take control of their lives and increase the chance of better livelihood. In addition, it focuses on increasing the financial and business management capabilities of the targeted youths and ensuring access to finance via savings groups and links to financial institutions; strengthening business associations and supporting businesses of young entrepreneurs via skills upgrading, mentoring as well as peer to peer learning. To date 3,141 youths (1,916 female) from the refugee and host community accessed technical skills training in various trades. 1,227 beneficiaries were engaged in wage (190) and self-employment (1,037) as a result of the training and 126 business groups were formed and generated income worth CHF 65,586 from active groups as additional income.

Environment (Principles 7-9)

Another of Swisscontact’s key areas is environment: By promoting climate-smart economy, people in developing and emerging economies not only have the opportunity to develop and implement sustainable development practices, but also incorporate them into their business activities. The aim is to promote environmentally and

climatically sustainable economic growth that integrates the low-income population while protecting them from environmental and health damage as well as the negative effects of climate change.

With respect to environmental protection Swisscontact supports the The Climate and Clean Air Program in Latin American Cities (CALAC+), financed by SDC. This is a voluntary partnership of governments, intergovernmental organizations, businesses, scientific institutions and civil society organizations committed to improving air quality and protecting the climate through actions to reduce short-lived climate pollutants. The overall objective of CALAC+ is to reduce harmful air pollutants in Latin American capitals through the deployment of soot-free engines in urban public transport and off-road machinery (construction and industry sector) to protect human health and mitigate climate change. Thanks to its management and technical expertise, the CALAC+ contributes significantly to the transformation of cleaner transport in Latin American cities, promoting the transfer of knowledge and experience with a North-South and South-South regional and international cooperation approach.

Since the beginning of the project in 2018 more than 130 decision makers and experts have shared experiences and generated synergies during seminars or whilst attending the International Conference on Nanoparticle Emissions from Internal Combustion Engines. In addition, more than 30 public officials have been trained in cost-benefit analysis and EURO VI/6 technologies and in Colombia and Peru the first off-road machinery emissions inventory was introduced, in Chile the inventory was updated. Furthermore, different studies are being conducted for example a cost-benefit study for the Ministry of Environment of Peru which estimates that if the EURO VI/6 regulations are incorporated into the law as from 2021, 78% of the population of Lima and Callao will be positively impacted. In Santiago de Chile a life cycle analysis of the transport system is carried out to compare advantages of EURO VI/6 and electromobility and similarly in Bogotá, a tool is being developed to calculate the emissions associated with the operation of off-road machinery, which will make it possible to compare the different existing technologies in order to make more conscious purchasing decisions.

Another example of Swisscontact's engagement to safeguard the environment is a Zero Waste Project in Bolivia which started in January 2020 in collaboration with Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and Aguatuya Foundation. The project will contribute to the management of solid waste (at different levels and involving public, private and social stakeholders or actors) by prioritizing the reduction of solid waste, separation at the source and recycling of various materials. In addition, the project focuses on the usage of organic waste to produce compost in order to migrate to a more efficient and environment-friendly circular economy. Expected results are among others: optimised solid waste collection and transportation services, technical and professional skills development in comprehensive solid waste management through postgraduate courses, technical specialization and short courses as well as strengthened treatment, reuse and marketing of plastic, aluminium, paper, cardboard, and glass. With more adequate sectoral public policies and with efficient and sustainable services, the project will directly contribute to the improvement of living conditions and specifically to public health. The project is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA).

Swisscontact is also committed to raising awareness of environmental protection within the company and has therefore implemented an Environmental Policy in 2018. This institutional framework has been adapted in 2020 and sets priorities to improve the organisation's footprint. It is accompanied by practical instructions regarding increased staff awareness, reduction of energy consumption, printouts, recycling, and airplane transportation. In line with the policy, an Environmental Committee was formed to develop specific strategies and measurements to be implemented at the head office of Swisscontact. For example, the carbon footprint of all activities at head office was calculated for the first time in 2019 to get a baseline and recommendations were developed based on the results.

Thematic Global Communities of Practice (CoPs) are internal exchange platforms that serve to connect our staff worldwide and link them to global and regional KCM (Knowledge and Content Management) initiatives. Within the CoP Environment, Swisscontact has developed and tested an Environmental Assessment Tool, which was updated in 2019. The toolbox helps projects to assess environmental risks and impacts, develop mitigation measures and systematically integrate those into all steps of the project design and implementation, ranging from a basic do-no-harm approach to a strong environmental focus. In addition, key environmental indicators for skills and enterprise projects were developed and will be measured as of 2020.

Part III: Measurement of Outcomes

On organisation level:

- In 2019 the Environmental Assessment toolbox was updated
- In 2019 key environmental indicators for skills and enterprise projects were developed
- In 2019 recommendations for reasonable flight behaviour were communicated
- In 2019 an Environmental Committee at Swisscontact head office was formed
- In 2020 the Environmental Policy was updated for example with an overview of environmental responsibility at different levels within the company

Through our projects:

- CO2 reduction by 69,908 tons in 2019
- CO2 reduction by 435,700 tons in 2018
- Recycling of 14 tons used materials in 2019
- Recycling of 40,590 tons used materials in 2018
- 79,700 people have completed training programmes in skills development, entrepreneurship, and labour market insertion (47% women) in 2019
- 107,900 people have completed training programmes in skills development, entrepreneurship, and labour market insertion (43% women) in 2018
- 55,3 million CHF additional net income generated through wage-employment, self-employment and enhancement on the job in 2019
- 53,8 million CHF additional net income generated through wage-employment, self-employment and enhancement on the job in 2018