



# UN GLOBAL COMPACT – COMMUNICATION OF PROGRESS

2020

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

**BDO**

# BDO

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

**Antonio Guterres**

Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York  
NY 10017  
USA

Dear Secretary General,

We are pleased to be supporting the United Nations Global Compact and to be a part of the network of organisations adhering to the UN's aims and their guiding principle across human rights and responsible corporate citizenship.

At BDO our vision is to remain "an independent, sustainably profitable and globally focussed business, known for helping people and businesses succeed". Achieving this is based on our core purpose "Helping you succeed" and underpinned by our Values, which have been critical pillars for our decision-making, behaviours and employee support during the COVID-19 pandemic. I believe this vision is wholly aligned with the goals of the UN Global Compact.

In our annual Communication on Progress, we describe how our actions reflect our commitment to The Ten Principles through our business strategy, culture and daily operations and how we look to continually improve our adoption in future years.

Yours sincerely,

**PAUL ENGLAND**

Managing Partner  
On behalf of BDO UK LLP

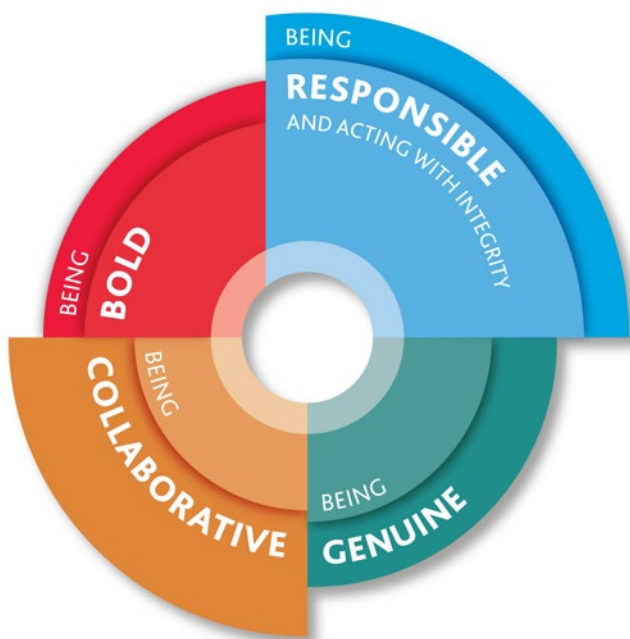


# 1. HUMAN RIGHTS

At BDO we are committed to ensuring all our staff, and those working in our supply chain, have their human rights respected and that we uphold the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights throughout our values, practices, policies, and culture.

- 01 PRINCIPLE 1**  
Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.
- 02 PRINCIPLE 2**  
Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

## OUR VALUES



## OUR VALUES IN ACTION

Our Values underpin everything we do at BDO. Our Values had been in place for 18 years so – over the last 12 months – we have conducted firmwide focus groups and surveys to define BDO's refreshed Values. In relation to human rights, our new Values state that we are committed to "being responsible and acting with integrity" and "being genuine" regardless of background and status. Examples of our Values in action include:

- ▶ **Through our supplier Code of Conduct, we ensure that our suppliers respect human rights to our exacting standards.** Our support of human rights resonates with the aims of the UN and our continuing focus on preventing modern slavery in our supply chain
- ▶ **We refreshed our Code of Conduct** for our BDO partners and staff last year, which our Institute used as an example of best practice
- ▶ **We established and promote an independently-run whistleblowing helpline**, through which staff can confidentially raise any concerns
- ▶ **Our BLEND network** supports our LGBT community and helps the firm as a whole to be an attractive place to work for all
- ▶ **Our Leadership Team at BDO champions a 'Be Yourself' agenda**, leading from the front and encouraging everyone to be authentic in bringing their whole self to work
- ▶ **We have launched our BDO Race Action Plan**, through which we can ensure all our staff have their human rights respected
- ▶ **We have created Inclusive Leadership training**, which all our business leaders are completing. Similar D&I training workshops will be rolled out to all our employees in 2021.



# UNIFYING CULTURE

## Our new Values:

### BEING BOLD

Being bold means we are ambitious, innovative and passionate about the things we do. We're curious, initiate ideas and make change happen – even if it sometimes feels uncomfortable. We are willing to try something new and prepared to take appropriate risks but never to the detriment of quality or our code of conduct. Today's fast changing world demands us to be forward thinking, pragmatic and willing to positively challenge the way things have always been done – to come up with new and innovative ways to help us succeed.

### BEING COLLABORATIVE

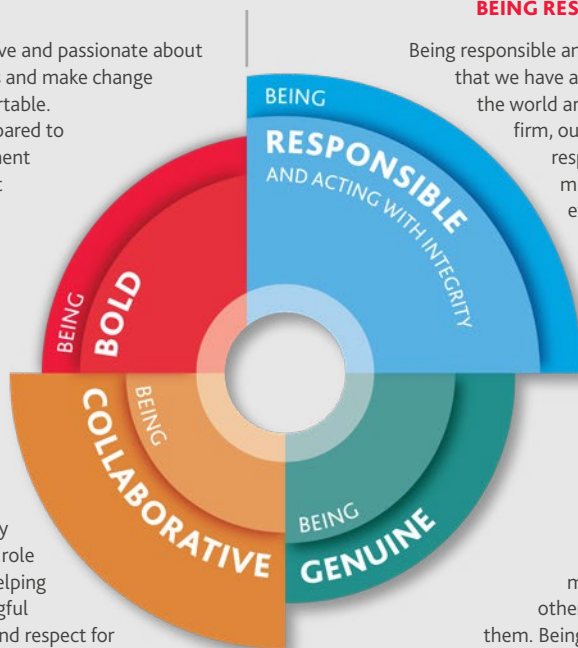
Being collaborative means that we recognise the power of supporting and working with each other, our firm and our clients. It is a way of working where everyone has an important role to play, and we believe in empowering and helping one another. To enable this, we build meaningful relationships based on trust, understanding and respect for the unique perspectives, skills and qualities that we each bring. Above all, we are committed to supporting each other and sharing our knowledge, experience and expertise to help others to succeed.

### BEING RESPONSIBLE AND ACTING WITH INTEGRITY

Being responsible and acting with integrity starts with a recognition that we have a choice in how we act, respond to and influence the world around us, conscious of our impact on others, our firm, our clients and the environment. It is about taking responsibility for our actions and learning from our mistakes. It extends to our commitment to acting ethically with integrity, professional competence and scepticism, objectivity, due care, confidentiality and, when appropriate, with independence. Always delivering high quality work with the public interest in mind.

### BEING GENUINE

Being genuine means we are true to who we are. We're honest about what we think, believe and feel – as well as our own vulnerabilities. We embrace individuality and difference, which means we don't judge the beliefs and opinions of others, but listen and, where appropriate, learn from them. Being true to ourselves means we speak up when we don't agree with something, but also acknowledge when we're unsure or have got something wrong. Trust has to be earned and we nurture it by being authentic, generous and respectful of others.



We meet regularly with our various network groups, individually and collectively such as BLEND (our LGBTQ+ network), BDO Inspire (our women's network), Islamic Network, Jewish Network, BAME Society and Christian Network to help us better understand barriers and opportunities. This approach helped us to identify three initial priorities – which will naturally evolve as we develop as a business and respond to the changing world and workforce:

► WELLBEING ► BE YOURSELF ► CITIZENSHIP

We believe that, by driving success in these three culturally important areas, we will achieve our vision to be an independent, sustainably profitable and globally-focused firm, known for helping businesses and people succeed.

We encourage everyone to be themselves. At the end of the day, it is about knowing you can be authentic and will be valued and respected for who you are. And that's important for people wanting to join BDO and stay with BDO.



# OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORKS



## A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

In 2020, BDO moved to remote working as a result of UK government measures to stem the spread of Coronavirus. During this time, we launched a new quarterly Networks Newsletter to promote and celebrate our networks.

More than a third of the world's population has been in 'lockdown' in 2020. Researchers have been considering the impact for individuals, groups, communities and workforces when faced with periods of physical distancing, isolation and even social breakdown. But despite the concerns, behavioural experts are seeing some positive and unexpected results, including widespread outpourings of charity, togetherness and empathy for complete strangers. As many of us reflect on what 'belonging' and 'community' mean to us in a COVID-19 world, we thank our Network groups for creating a place for our local communities, in which we can provide support, promote inclusivity and encourage us to be ourselves.

We aim for our Networks to be well-represented groups, with access to strong and prominent role models. We embrace individuality along with collaborative working; collaboration is critical between our Networks. We believe that 'difference' is what makes us great and what strengthens our team, which is why we foster an inclusive culture at BDO that encourages people to be themselves.



In the last 12 months, our Networks have:

- ▶ Worked together on cross-network projects to share their stories, aims and challenges together
- ▶ Hosted a series of skills-based, practical networking events to support female career development – held in London but streamed regionally
- ▶ Held 'Bantz with BAME' informal networking events in our London office
- ▶ Hosted dedicated Mindfulness sessions for our Islamic Network
- ▶ Attended the InterTech LGBT+ Diversity Forum
- ▶ Celebrated Passover, Ramadan, Eid, Easter, PRIDE and Trans Visibility Day during lockdown
- ▶ Encouraged our colleagues to complete our Inclusion Survey.

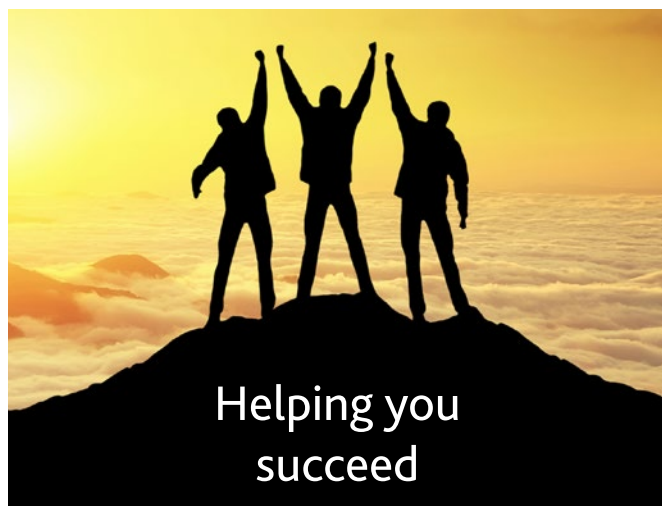


## 2. LABOUR STANDARDS

At BDO we are committed to implementing the highest standard of labour practices and to complying with UK labour law in all cases.

- 03 PRINCIPLE 3**  
Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- 04 PRINCIPLE 4**  
The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
- 05 PRINCIPLE 5**  
The effective abolition of child labour.
- 06 PRINCIPLE 6**  
The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### OUR CORE PURPOSE



### OUR CORE PURPOSE IN ACTION

In relation to labour standards, our Core Purpose means we are committed to “helping you succeed” – both our clients and our people. Examples of our core purpose in action include:

- ▶ Our employment policies are in line with and/or exceed UK Labour standards and are consistently reviewed
- ▶ BDO complies with the [Modern Slavery Act](#)
- ▶ We publish [Gender Pay Gap reports](#) annually and have committed to the “Women in Finance” Charter as part of our Gender Balance strategy
- ▶ As part of the leadership strategy we are committed to a ‘Unifying Culture’ and we have established a ‘U Board’ which coordinates all of our activity related to our firm’s culture. Our 2020 Culture Report is available [here](#). This specifically includes a chapter on how we have helped society succeed in the last 12 months
- ▶ We set rigorous standards for our suppliers through our Supplier Code of Conduct.





# UNIFYING CULTURE

THE U BOARD STRATEGY WILL SHAPE, STRENGTHEN AND EMBED OUR INCLUSIVE CULTURE –  
FOR TODAY BUT ALSO TOMORROW

FOSTERING A UNIFYING CULTURE WHERE WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO BE OURSELVES, ARE INSPIRED AND CHALLENGED,  
COLLABORATIVE AND SUCCESSFUL

## WELLBEING

'Successful and Collaborative'

## BE YOURSELF

'Diversity and Inclusion'

## CITIZENSHIP

'Challenged and Inspired'



# BE YOURSELF

Our 'Be Yourself' strategy incorporates a number of different inclusion agendas.

We ran our first Inclusion Survey in 2018 to help us find out more about our BDO population. This allowed us to make decisions that are informed by the facts of today to ensure we're focusing our efforts on the right areas (actual rather than assumed challenges) and having an impact that creates measurable and sustainable progress. We continue to work with our people to capture key demographic data.

Our results are consistent with our peers but we need, and want, to do better.



In an all-employee survey this year, 91% of BDO's people positively responded to being able to be themselves at work.

## GENDER BALANCE

We have set in place a BE INSPIRED action plan, which summarises a detailed programme of local and national activity led by the Leadership Team, our U Board, BDO Inspire (our women's network) and a group of passionate people, with the aim of ensuring there are no barriers preventing our talented people from succeeding. As a signatory of the Women In Finance Charter, we've:

- ▶ **Improved our Gender Pay Gap** for the third year running, now at 16.1% mean
- ▶ **Started the next cohort of senior women** taking part in the 30% Club's mentoring programme. In the past six years, more than 100 of our senior women have taken part – and we'll have a record-breaking 30 people taking part this coming year
- ▶ **Discussed gender balance and our Gender Pay Gap** data directly with each Leader across the firm
- ▶ **Re-checked our Early In Careers advertising** to ensure it is accessible to any gender and implemented 'inclusive recruitment' training guides for people running interviews
- ▶ **Supported our BDO Inspire network** to run a series of skills-based, virtual events – open to the whole firm.

## RACE IN THE WORKPLACE

As a signatory to the Race At Work Charter, we have launched our Race Action Plan this year with five commitments:



### 01 LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

We will support our Race Action Plan from the top.



### 02 CAPTURE DATA

We will measure and report on our data and progress.



### 03 ZERO TOLERANCE

We will have zero tolerance to racial harassment and bullying.



### 04 EQUAL RESPONSIBILITY

We will take equal responsibility for equal opportunities.



### 05 HELPING YOU SUCCEED

We will help you succeed.





# WELLBEING

Three years ago, we launched a Wellbeing programme across BDO using Mind's '5 Ways of Wellbeing' as our framework.

This included a dedicated Wellbeing portal, firm-wide promotions, team challenges and events and company-wide 'Performance Under Pressure' resilience training. We hired a Wellbeing Manager to co-ordinate and develop our employee support, and created a network of Wellbeing Champions across the firm to share ideas and stories about how to improve our mental resilience and physical health in the workplace.

That we had already recognised Wellbeing as an important part of our BDO culture – including being awarded 'Silver' in the Mind Wellbeing Index - was a huge asset to the firm as Coronavirus hit the UK. Supporting our BDO workforce to care for their physical and mental health during the global pandemic was non-negotiable. We shared Wellbeing resources and tips through our weekly #StayConnected bulletins, partnered with external Wellbeing experts to host live wellbeing webinars, promoted our Employee Assistance helpline, trained even more Mental Health First Aiders - and, critically, looked out for each other.



BDO donated £20,000 to mental health charity, Mind, this year through various funded activities.



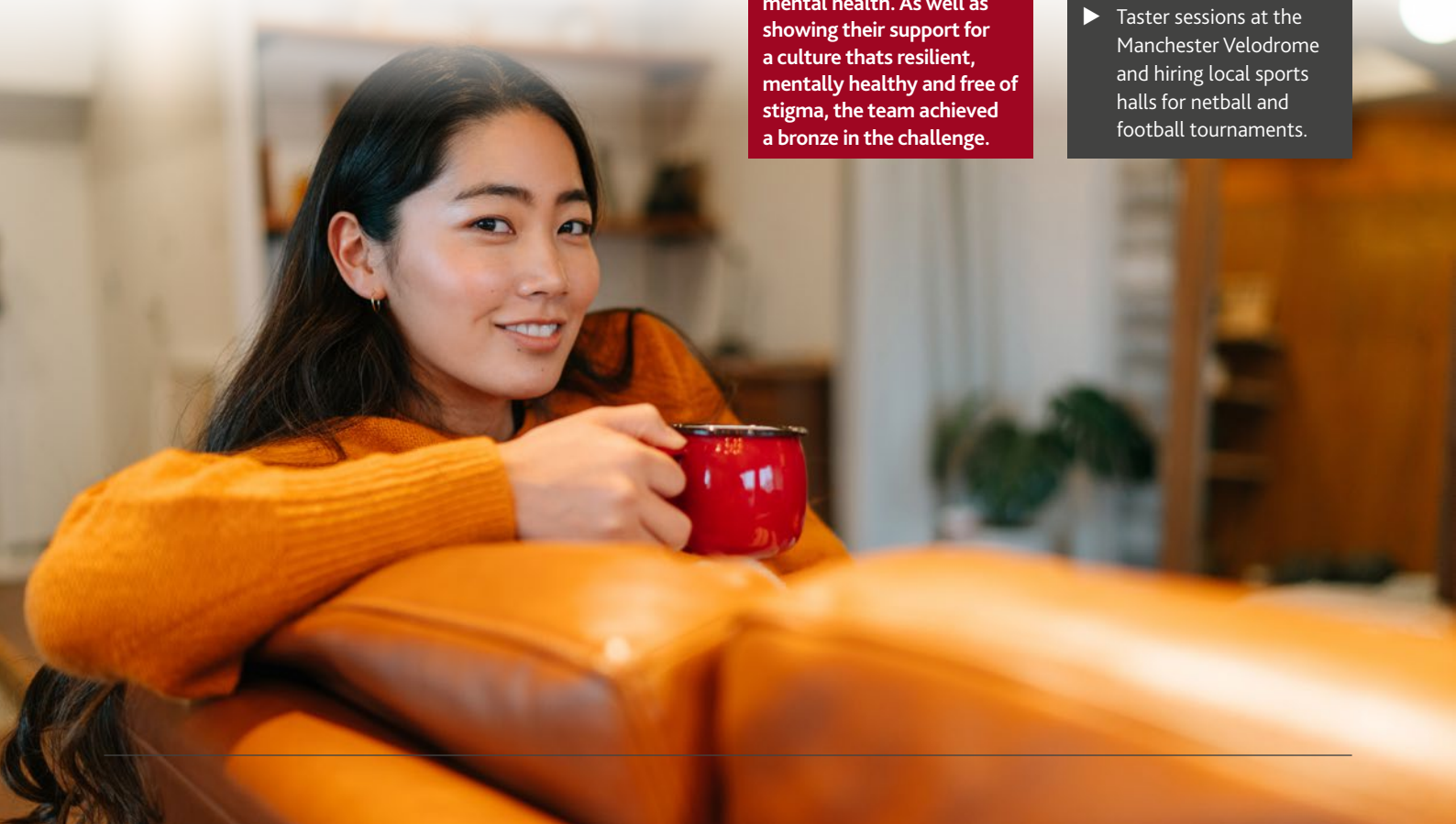
Chair of our U Board, Chris Grove, has been shortlisted as 'Exec Sponsor of the Year' for the Inside Out mental health awards.



Five of our partners stepped up to take part in the MindCycle, a cycling challenge created by social enterprise, Inside Out, to help smash the stigma of mental health. As well as showing their support for a culture that's resilient, mentally healthy and free of stigma, the team achieved a bronze in the challenge.

## OUR LOCAL TEAMS HELD:

- ▶ Lunchtime yoga sessions
- ▶ Lunchtime park walks
- ▶ Cycling goals
- ▶ Lunchtime pedalos in Regents Park
- ▶ Treasure hunt
- ▶ Table football tournament
- ▶ In-office massages
- ▶ A 'breathe' workshop
- ▶ Blood donation visits
- ▶ Optimising health workshop
- ▶ Crochet session
- ▶ Bake sale
- ▶ Meditation days
- ▶ Creation of quiet areas with healthy snacks
- ▶ Traffic-free cycle rides
- ▶ Taster sessions at the Manchester Velodrome and hiring local sports halls for netball and football tournaments.



# CITIZENSHIP

We also make a difference by sharing our skills, time and passion with the community. This activity keeps us inspired, engaged and energised, individually and collectively – and very proud of our culture. Helping not just each other or our clients but also helping society succeed.

For circa 14 years, BDO has offered ten CSR days to everyone. This is often quoted back to us in interviews about why people want to come and work here. To encourage people to utilise their days in a way that will truly help society succeed, we call our approach '5+5':

- ▶ **'My Action 5'** – five days can be used for the usual fundraising, volunteering or team-building days as people currently do – we call them action days.
- ▶ **'My Strategic 5'** – the other five days are called strategic days – where people can use their professional skill sets to really make a difference. It might be as a trustee of a charity, working on a big societal challenge with some of our Tech Track companies or going into schools to help with interview prep or CV writing.



**Volunteering and fundraising is extremely important** – to individuals at BDO and to the hundreds of communities we continue to support. There are simply too many stories to share in this report – not least the 100 people who joined in the UK's 2.6 Challenge in April to raise money for the charities who would lose critical funding as a result of the London Marathon 2020 being cancelled due to Coronavirus restrictions.

**But, as a purpose-led firm, we need to do more than just take days out to do good deeds.** We aspire to leave a legacy, which is about creating a future BDO for our people, stakeholders and society as a whole. There are things we need to do as a firm to maximise our positive impact on the world around us, but if we enable our people to make a difference at the same time, our impact will be far greater. Our Citizenship priority provides us with a 'check and balance' that we're being a good corporate citizen and about our overall contribution to society.



Our BDO people spent 9,500 hours volunteering in their local communities, as they used their CSR days to help society succeed.

## THANK YOU

It has been extremely inspiring and encouraging for us to see many of our healthcare and life sciences clients making their own contribution to attempt to overcome the Coronavirus and its impact on society. We have been proud to have them as BDO clients and hope that their efforts continue to prove to be fruitful.





# SOCIAL MOBILITY

Given that our Managing Partner joined BDO straight from school in 1987, after working in Walthamstow Market and choosing to join the workforce rather than go to university, you'd expect us to care a great deal about social mobility. And we do.

We:

- ▶ **Were a founding partner in the creation of the social mobility drive called 'Access Accountancy'** in 2014. This continues to provide greater opportunities to talented UK students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- ▶ **Hold a position as a Trustee on the Access Accountancy Patron's Group** through our partner, Sarah Hillary
- ▶ **Took part in a pilot outreach programme** with other major accountancy firms to support students in social mobility cold spots and help set them up for success, whatever career they might want to consider in future
- ▶ **Were the first major accountancy firm to offer the higher apprenticeship** in audit
- ▶ **Expanded our long-established school leaver programme.** Both our graduate and apprentice programmes are now aligned to the Level 7 Accountancy/Taxation Professional Apprenticeship standard. Upon completion, our trainees will then qualify as an ICAEW, CIOT, CIMA or ACCA member and will also hold a Level 7 Accountancy/Taxation Professional Apprenticeship, which is the equivalent to a Master's degree
- ▶ **Take part (C-19 excepting) in a range of mentoring and internships** with organisations specifically targeting inner city schools and students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- ▶ **Support our trainees** – who we recruit circa 400 each year – through their exams, including study time, and our excellent results speak for themselves – regularly up to 10% above the national average
- ▶ **Are delighted to have welcomed 90 new apprentices** into last year's new cohort of BDO trainees; and will welcome 70 more before 2020 is out
- ▶ **Crafted our newly defined Employer Brand Promise**, so we can clearly, consistently and coherently communicate what makes BDO a unique and attractive place to work.





## 3. ENVIRONMENT

At BDO, we act on climate change because it is the right thing to do for our employees, clients and future generations. Our Core Purpose is 'helping you succeed' – at its core, this is about social purpose; there is perhaps no greater alignment than with the Climate Change agenda. In January 2020, we set our goal to become carbon neutral, reducing our footprint by embedding environmental controls, carbon offsetting and achieve a greener culture.

### 07 PRINCIPLE 7

Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.

### 08 PRINCIPLE 8

Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.

### 09 PRINCIPLE 9

Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

### OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



### OUR APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

We are monitoring and minimising our impact on the environment. As well as establishing an environmental management system and KPIs, we are promoting environmental awareness amongst partners and staff.

- ▶ **Our plans to reduce our environmental impact are set out in our 2018-19 Carbon Footprint Report.** Our commitments go beyond what is required for compliance
- ▶ **We achieved ISO14001 certification** for environmental management in 2010 and have retained it since
- ▶ **We are working to secure PAS 2060 accreditation** by the end of 2020, through which all our UK offices will be carbon neutral
- ▶ **We have introduced environmental criteria** to our procurement processes, extending our ambitions to our supply chain.



## 3. ENVIRONMENT



### AS A FIRM

- ▶ BDO has committed to going carbon neutral
  - In January 2020, we worked with an independent carbon consultancy to offset our identified carbon footprints from 2019 and 2018 combined
  - Offsetting our emissions in this way helps to fund an African climate project, which provides efficient and safe Gyapa cookstoves to families across Ghana
  - We are working with Avieco to secure PAS 2060 accreditation by the end of 2020, when we will declare our offices carbon neutral
- ▶ We have been reducing our actual carbon footprint at a steady rate year-on-year: last year, we reduced the firm's intensity per FTE by 28% and the year before by 13%
- ▶ We reduced our energy consumption, total emissions and emissions intensity for a third consecutive year; naturally, COVID-lockdowns played a part in this, as with many businesses
- ▶ We review supplier contracts for their environment and sustainability commitments
- ▶ We continue to be recertified for important environmental credentials (ISO14001:2015) which our clients and employees expect of us
- ▶ More than half of our office locations are rated either very good or higher, with six offices rated 'excellent', by independent environmental consultants
- ▶ We are working with our travel booking provider to measure and promote the carbon impact of each business journey requested in a post-C-19 world
- ▶ Our people can now order and choose carbon-neutral BDO stationery and merchandise
- ▶ We planted 300 trees in the UK as part of our Sunday Times Fast Track marketing partnership.





### 3. ENVIRONMENT



## WORKING WITH OTHERS

- ▶ No single firm or individual can tackle climate change alone. The solution is collaborative
- ▶ Our Senior Partner, Matthew White, has joined Chapter Zero, a climate forum for Board Chairs and Non-Executive Directors to ensure climate change appears on the agenda of every boardroom table this year
- ▶ We are helping many clients succeed on a variety of sustainability projects, including the development of Circular Economy, forest protection technology and renewable power programmes
- ▶ The accountancy and business advisory work we do to help Renewable Energy companies with their corporate finance, forensics, audit or tax requirements is growing. Our partner, Marc Reinecke, has taken on the role as leader of BDO's Global Renewables sub-sector, a team which is now receiving further attention and investment from across BDO globally
- ▶ We partner with CleanGrowth, supporting tech start-ups find funding and a space to develop tech
- ▶ Our Financial Model Assurance team is ranked #1 globally in the Renewables sector.



## AS INDIVIDUALS

- ▶ We want to keep working with our BDO people to identify the next right things to do
- ▶ Although decreased during COVID-related restrictions, business travel continues to be the largest part of our carbon output. We will be encouraging our people to think twice before travelling as we 'build back greener'
- ▶ We have trained Environment Champions in each office to help activate environment programmes locally
- ▶ We have opened up a 'There Is No Planet B' group on our internal social media tool to share personal hints, tips and stories
- ▶ BDO employees can contribute to charities that deal with carbon offsetting, for example the Woodlands Trust, through bespoke Give As You Earn benefits
- ▶ Our partners are also showing their commitment by personally paying to offset their individual footprints each year
- ▶ At BDO, we offer a generous ten CSR days each year. We are asking our people to think about how they can use some of their days to get involved in local Sustainability or Climate Change initiatives.





## 4. ANTI-CORRUPTION

BDO holds itself to the highest standards of ethical behaviours and has a zero tolerance approach to all forms of corruption and bribery. This is embedded in our values and implemented throughout our supply chain. We are committed to quality, independence and ethics.

### 10 PRINCIPLE 10

Businesses should work against all forms of corruption, including extortion and bribery.



### OUR APPROACH TO ETHICS AND ANTI-CORRUPTION

At BDO, we don't see ethics and compliance as a standalone undertaking: the behaviours expected by our regulators and the ICAEW are already embedded in the firm's Values, our commitment to quality, our strategic framework and, critically, our working culture.

- ▶ Within BDO's strategic framework, we specifically state: *"We are committed to Quality, Independence and Ethics"*
- ▶ BDO is heavily regulated as a firm and all partners and staff comply with the ICAEW code of ethics
- ▶ Extensive ethics and anti economic crime training for all partners and staff is provided each year
- ▶ We have a designated Ethics Partner, Money Laundering Reporting Officer, and Quality and Risk Partner
- ▶ Our [Annual Transparency report](#) documents our approach to ethics, independence, quality and risk
- ▶ We take an active role in the wider anti-corruption agenda, for example as a signatory to the joint statement of support to the London Anti-Corruption Summit.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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