



Communication on Progress UN Global Compact

2020-2021

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I. Introduction

To our stakeholders,

I am pleased to confirm that OCO Global 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 this 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,



Shalini Raste

Director, Consulting Services
OCO Global Ltd.

II. Who We Are

OCO Global is a recognised leader in International Trade and Investment. Founded in 2001, OCO supports its clients in building and executing successful plans to attract international investment and grow businesses in new markets. With presence in the key commercial centres in Europe, Asia, America and the Middle East, we employ a multi-national and multi-lingual team dedicated to delivering success. We are engaged with both companies and government organisations along all aspects of the international expansion journey. We also run a Business Intelligence unit which gathers global insights across key industries.



Headquartered in Belfast, Northern Ireland, OCO has over 100 professional staff and an overseas presence with offices in the US (New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles), Europe (London, Dublin, Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin), the Middle East (Dubai, Riyadh) and Asia (Tokyo, Shanghai). We also have a trusted partner network in key trade and investment markets.

III. Our Commitment to the UNGC

In January 2020, OCO Global signed up for the UN Global Compact programme. Signing up to the UNGC was one of the first milestones for OCO in developing and implementing a successful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy that will tackle issues related to labour, human rights, the environment and corruption.

In this report, we review what OCO's existing initiatives are that align with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact; we also review the different initiatives that we aim to implement in the future. To make sure that all our staff are engaged, we have also decided to set up a CSR committee which will be responsible for monitoring the existing initiatives and implementing future ones.

WE SUPPORT



IV. Our CSR Policy

Our CSR policy will relate mainly to labour and the environment but will also include elements related to human rights and anti-corruption.

IV. 1. Labour

OCO believes in providing good and flexible working conditions for all its employees, giving them the opportunity to freely express themselves and their individual needs. This is ensured through regular communication between management and employee groups through weekly/bi-weekly meetings and monthly staff calls.

Wellbeing

Since the pandemic started, we have taken our employees' mental health very seriously. We continually organise voluntary confidential wellbeing catch-up sessions, monthly online yoga classes and held a webinar on mental health on World Mental Health Day.

We have also sent regular pulse surveys to monitor staff wellbeing. The surveys have shown some areas for improvement which we acted on immediately. Since the start of the pandemic, we have supported our staff's need for flexible schedules while working from home and provided them with a home office furniture allowance of £150 to improve their work environment. We also provide other flexible work opportunities for our employees such as four months full pay on maternity leave.

In order to build greater cohesion between employees across our offices, we hold an annual company away day which offers staff the opportunity to meet up in person with their colleagues and also hold companywide virtual quizzes and games quarterly.

Performance Management

We have formalised our performance management systems, providing a clear career path and guidance for consultants on expected core competencies at different levels within the organisations. Our Performance Management process includes formal bi-annual performance reviews. During the reviews, staff can discuss their performance, career aspirations and development needs directly with their Manager. The Performance Management process is supported by OCO's Career Development and Training policies.

Upskilling

At OCO, we are also committed to investing in our employees' learning and development by making training and development opportunities widely available.

Our employees can access both formal external training courses funded by the company as well as internally shared learning sessions conducted by both senior managers and their peers. Internally, we have worked on providing mentoring programmes and regular training workshops, including through our FDI Academy to manage internal skills building. We have also provided upskilling opportunities externally through regular webinars and paid internship opportunities for university students – we have received four students from the University of Exeter.

OCO also offers its employees immediate access to an online training platform upon joining the company; it offers staff access to thousands of online training courses.

Equal Opportunities

At OCO, every new job offer advertises OCO as an “equal opportunity employer.” We are proud of having a diverse and multi-cultural workforce and to have a recruitment policy based solely on merit. We aim to always promote a positive and harmonious working environment in which our employees are treated with dignity and respect. We also ensure gender equality in the recruiting and hiring process – currently 44% of our staff is female, and 43% of management is female.

We are also registered with the Equality Commission for the purposes of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998. As such, we are obliged to monitor the community background and sex of our job applicants and workforce (this applies to Belfast based staff only). We are also obliged to review our employment policies and practices and the composition of our workforce every three years.

IV. 2. The Environment

Our impact on the environment remains limited given the relatively small size of our company and the nature of our intellectual capital-based business. However, we still consider ourselves responsible for reducing our carbon footprint and environmental impact.

CSR Strategy

OCO is forming an internal working group to develop a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy. This strategy will identify a range of specific actions that can improve our social, economic and environmental impact; it will also determine an action plan to deliver these over the coming year. The CSR working group will present their strategy to the Senior Management Team in Q1 of FY21-22 and will aim to have it officially in place by the end of the year.

Code of Conduct

As part of our CSR strategy, we will develop and implement a code of conduct which will include measures such as turning down electricity during breaks, printing only when absolutely necessary, reducing travel, implementing fair-trade coffee for all offices and no first-class travel. Through this code of conduct, we will aim to reduce our carbon footprint by 10% next year.

CSR Management Committee

To ensure our staff's continued commitment to environmental sustainability, we will set up a CSR management committee that will regularly inform the company of new initiatives or projects being implemented and of competitions to reward the most energy-efficient office. Each office will also have a 'green officer' who will ensure that the CSR strategy is being followed.

Training

We will deliver trainings to educate and engage employees on the importance of environmental issues and on what actions they can take at work but also at home to reduce their carbon footprint.

Accreditation

We will also seek international accreditation for international agreed standards such as ISO 14001 to keep our organisation on track with progress and accountable for our ambitions.

IV. 3. Human Rights

At OCO, we believe all our employees should be treated equally and should have equal access to opportunities, and we are fully committed to promoting gender equality and to empowering women within our company.

Women's Empowerment

We have launched the OCO Women's Network, comprising a steering committee of nine members with a representative from each office and the wider Women's Network Group. Every month, the committee organises a topical webinar/presentation with inspiring women. As part of this network, we also host podcasts, knowledge sharing sessions and thought leadership posts. Our goal is to empower women within OCO, encourage them to extend and build a stronger network of women in business and aspire them to progress.

Accreditations

We also aim for our efforts to be recognised internationally by obtaining accreditation for international social responsibility and human rights standards such as ISO 26000. We have started discussions on this internally and will pursue it in the coming year.

IV. 4. Anti-Corruption

Finally, we are committed to fighting corruption and to adopting comprehensive anti-corruption policies and training. Our code of conduct will include anti-corruption measures which will help us prevent and combat corruption in our various sectors of activity. To show our commitment to the public, OCO will sign the “Call to Action Against Corruption,” which we hope will inspire other companies to implement similar measures.



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COLLABORATE.

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