



Communication on Engagement to the United Nations Global Compact

Technical University of Denmark
April 2018 – April 2021

Submission date: 23 April 2021



Statement of continued support to UN Global Compact

I am pleased to confirm that Technical University of Denmark (DTU) reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-corruption.

DTU was founded in 1829 with the mission of creating value for the benefit of society. In line with our corporate strategy 2020-2025 [Technology for People](#) we strive to be internationally renowned for elite polytechnical research and the education of outstanding and innovative engineers who are a driving force for digital and sustainable change in a globalized world. Our ambition is to develop value-adding technology for people, exploiting synergies between research, education, innovation, and scientific advice in close collaboration with the outside world.

DTU's approach to sustainability, described in our [Sustainability Policy](#), is to meet current human needs without jeopardizing future generations' opportunities to fulfil their needs. We take a balanced view of sustainability, taking into account its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Technology can be a driving force for a sustainable transformation of society and can contribute to a more inclusive society with broader access to knowledge, information, services, and sustainable products. DTU defends the principle that technology must be used with responsibility and care.

With this mindset and platform we engage with students, researchers, industry, authorities and organisations and pledge to promote and collaborate for the Ten Principles.

This document is our first Communication of Engagement. We have dedicated work going on in terms of integrating sustainability even more into our core businesses, operations and management. Part of this work encompasses developing a sustainability reporting and action framework, and this CoE should be seen as a first and interim version.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Claus Nielsen', is positioned below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Claus Nielsen
Executive Vice President





DTU is member of UN Global Compact since April 2018.

The CoE is structured in two parts: Part One shows how DTU's work, operations and management are in line with and supportive to the Ten Principles. According to the CoE reporting guidelines, Part Two provides an introduction to concrete activities and practical actions that have taken place in the period 2018 up until today and which directly or indirectly promote Global Compact and the Ten Principles.

Part I:

Human Rights

Principle # 1: Business should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

DTU is a secular university that welcomes differences in personal preferences, nationalities, and cultures. We see diversity is a driver for groundbreaking research, education, scientific advice, and innovation.

Diversity, equal treatment, and equality are fundamental principles underlying DTU's expectations of how we practice respect and equality at DTU. The principles are integrated into [DTU Employment Policy](#), [DTU's Equality Policy](#), [DTU Guidelines regarding Harassment](#) and through the students' Polytechnical Association's work.

The policies are implemented through management and recruitment procedures and promoted through the way we articulate what it means to be a DTU student, employee or collaborating partner.

In relation to the university's core businesses, DTU has a *Guideline for International Partnerships* that addresses the potential risks and challenges to be aware of, when contacting international partners and establishing collaborations on research and innovation activities, including respect of protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

Since 2017 DTU President Anders O. Bjarklev has been member of '[Gender Diversity Roundtable Denmark](#)' aimed at finding tools and solutions that can pave the way for greater gender diversity in top management. Behind the initiative are UN Women and Boston Consulting Group (BCG), and it brings together 19 top executives from the business, education and social organizations.



Labour Standards

Principle # 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

Principle # 4: Businesses should uphold the elimination of forced or compulsory labour

Principle # 5: Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour

Principle # 6: Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

DTU recognises the right to employees' freedom of association and collective bargaining. In a Danish context this is an overarching framework, which forms the basis for a stable and regulated labour market with attractive conditions for both employer and employee.

In addition to the overarching framework, DTU translates high labour standards into creating a study- and workplace that recognizes diversity, equality, and a healthy physical and mental working environment. An example of a policy that addresses this is *Policy for flexibility in work life* formulated with the mindset that employees' thriving and performing go hand in hand. Every employee has the right to dialogue with the local management about how flexibility is best obtained, taking into consideration workload, collegiality, and private circumstances.

Further, DTU ensures that students and employees have access to counselling services, social activities, and sport facilities.

DTU's procurement policy and guidelines explicitly adhere to UN Global Compact Principles and to several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Also, it is ensured that investments are made in line with UN Principles for Responsible Investments. As a self-governing institution with considerable expenditures related to building projects and service contracts, DTU has a focus on establishing measures and dialogue with suppliers in order to promote collaboration for societal responsibility and sustainability.

Environment

Principle # 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Principle # 8: Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

A remarkable part of DTU's activities relates to climate and environment.

Examples of strong DTU research positions that contribute to a sustainable climate and environment are renewable energy, environmental life cycle assessments, water and resource management, healthy and sustainable food production, and marine ecosystem management. As a technical university, a core competence is development and deployment of climate- and environmentally friendly technologies.

DTU is a main provider of scientific advice to Danish authorities and have a considerable number of assignment portfolios for international organisations such as EU bodies, FAO and UNEP. Provision of scientific advice is one important way to work for maintaining high standards and societal responsibility within research areas, which at the same time are important business sectors. A few examples from the environmental sector are DTU's advice based on regulatory engineering that develop decision support frameworks and principles for regulation in the fields of chemicals and nanomaterials, risk assessment of contaminated sites, microplastics in the aquatic environment, and marine fish stock assessments.

DTU has a strong and dedicated organisation working to ensure 'order in own house'. In terms of climate and environment, this encompasses ensuring sustainable campuses, where the approach is laid out in documents such as [Strategic Campus Development](#) and [Sustainability Policy for DTU Campuses](#). Some of the addressed topics are energy efficient building solutions, recycling of water and waste, and phasing out of undesirable substances according to EU standards.

An example of a recent milestone reached within sustainable campus, is DTU Lyngby Campus being pre-certified as Denmark's biggest sustainable urban area according to the German building standard DGNB. DGNB is based on the three central sustainability areas of ecology, economy and sociocultural issues, and are weighted equally in the evaluation of an area or building.

Anti-corruption

Principle # 10: Businesses should work against all forms of bribery, including extortion and bribery

In terms of business integrity DTU fully supports and proliferates the “Good Practice in the Danish Civil Service” and Danish Civil Servants Act. The latter states that “The civil servant must conscientiously comply with the rules that apply to his position, and both on duty and off duty prove worthy of the esteem and trust required by the position”.

In addition to the public policies, DTU ensures that employees are familiar with more organisation-specific policies and procedures for impartiality, proper practice in accepting gifts etc.

The above mentioned *Guideline for International Partnerships* addresses the potential risks and challenges to be aware of when contacting partners and establishing collaborations on research and innovation activities. One of the focus areas that should be taken into consideration is financial and legal arrangements.

Part II

Conducting applied research and thought leadership in relation to the Global Compact

DTU focuses on applied science and realizes this through innovation and collaboration with industry. DTU's performance is reflected e.g. in the World University Research Rankings 2020 where DTU ranks second in the world after MIT and number one in Europe¹. DTU scores particularly high in the categories multidisciplinary and collaborativeness. In 2019 DTU launched the programme *DTU Industrial Partnerships* as a means to strengthen the collaboration with industry.

Worldwide there is a major and persistent focus on sustainability challenges. Requests for action are widespread and go along with considerations about where to prioritize resources and efforts and sustainability dilemmas are plenty. DTU aims to be societies' leading expert for providing reliable and science-based knowledge and decision support. Following this approach, in the period 2018-2021 DTU carried out so-called sector development projects in the areas of water, bioeconomy, smart energy and green shipping fuels and circular construction. The projects focus on the potential of the individual sectors for increased competitiveness, employment, sustainability, and growth through technology development. The findings are available in [sector reports](#) and constitute an important tool for raising attention and funding for further development in the sector areas.

Education at DTU is science-based and ensures that graduates are highly skilled with up-to-date knowledge within their field of study and research. In addition, throughout their education DTU students are encouraged to and provided with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills within entrepreneurship, a global outlook, and a desire to promote engineering as an important part of solving our societal challenges. Throughout 2020 DTU has explicitly incorporated sustainability in the formal documents that frame educational offers; i.e. in overall competence profiles for all degrees and in learning objectives for programmes and courses. In the last decade, including in the period 2018-2021, each year DTU has experienced an increasing number of students applying for admission. [Today the university has approximately 12.000 students from 99 countries \(Bachelor of Engineering; BSc Eng, MSc Eng and PhD\).](#)

In summary this is the kind of thought leadership that we as a technical university bring into play, and which we believe contributes to strengthen the world vision that UN Global Compact stands for.

¹ Links to rankings: [DTU ranked number two in research world ranking - DTU](#) (September 2020), [DTU again the most innovative university in the Nordics - DTU](#) (October 2019)

Delivering education on topics related to the Global Compact

In the previous section DTU's overall and generic approach to education is described. Here follows a few concrete examples from 2018 – 2021 on how DTU delivers education that are supportive to the mindset of UN Global Compact:

- [Green Challenge – Student competition for development of sustainable solutions](#). For the last decade DTU has once a year organized Green Challenge; a student competition where students present their projects on a sustainability topic developed as an integrated part of their educational activities. Green Challenge aims to increase the focus on the Sustainable Development Goals and highlight engineers' role to find solutions to the world's sustainability challenges.
- [Technology Leaving no one Behind](#) is an educational and entrepreneurial programme launched in 2019 that provides opportunities and support to make inclusion and accessibility a natural part of technological solutions. The programme draws attention to functions and simplicity of the design features and hereby make the solution easier for all and help the 15 % of the global population with diverse forms of disability to take part and contribute to society.
- [Next Generation](#) is an initiative that engages students, university associated start-ups, and youth organisations at high-level international events and summits. This allows for sharing of knowledge of perspectives and competencies between the settled and the next generation academics, entrepreneurs, companies and politicians, which is important to spur societies' sustainable transition. The Next Generation initiative rests on a tailored program including course collaboration, challenges, keynotes and bootcamps. NextGeneration has taken part in Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals Summit in Copenhagen 2018; Next Generation City Action as part of C40 Mayors Summit in Copenhagen 2019 and Next Generation Water Action in relation to International World Water Congress 2021.
- [Mandatory PhD Course "Sustainability evaluation and communication"](#), launched in 2019 and part of curricula for the approximately 400 new PhD students DTU receives every year. The general objective is to provide an understanding of sustainability and sustainable development, and enable the PhD students to position and develop their research in the context of the goals and to contribute positively to the achievement of these in their research and future professional work. DTU also wants its PhD students to be able to communicate their research to a non-expert audience in a popular science form, for example through [engaging with high schools students](#).



Incorporate the Global Compact principles into internal operations and communicate progress following the COP guidelines

DTU has an annual management and reporting cycle with a high level of data collection and business intelligence-based management. This process also lays the foundation for development of DTU annual report, which contains management statement, financial statements and accounting, and reporting of progress in core business (i.e. research, education, innovation, and scientific advice) and operations. This encompasses a green accounting, data on human resources and governance. The 2020 annual report as well as reports from previous years is found [here](#).

Currently DTU is carrying out a series of projects that aim to strengthen our ability to assess, document, and communicate our societal impact both in relation to core businesses as well as in operations. As mentioned previously, DTU is about to launch a new project aiming at developing a sustainability reporting and action framework.

Also as mentioned previously, DTU has explicitly incorporated references to UN policies and UN Global Compact principles where relevant, for example in the Procurement Policy.

Where relevant, information about approach and events from UN Global Compact and the Danish branch of UN Global Compact Denmark, is shared with students and staff at DTU.