

## COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

Period covered by the Communication on Progress (COP):

From: 1 January 2018

To: 16 July 2021

### 1. STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

16 July 2021

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Options Consultancy Services Limited 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.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Elms

Managing Director

### 2. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS

#### Human Rights

- Options ensures workers are provided safe, suitable and sanitary work facilities
- Options has in place a dignity at work policy that provides protect workers from workplace harassment, including physical, verbal, sexual or psychological harassment, abuse or threats
- Options' overarching safeguarding function ensures our safeguarding policy and our do no harm frameworks are aligned and shared with our people, partners, communities and end users to provide a safe and protective environment for all those that come into contact with our programmes. Safeguarding risk assessments are undertaken to identify, and safeguard against, categorised high risk areas.
- Options' expectation of employee, consultant, partner and supplier behaviour is clearly defined our dedicated Codes of Conduct. The Code of Conduct has been drafted to reflect the Labour Principles within the UN Global Compact, specifically the

upholding of the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, as well as Options commitment not to be complicit in human rights abuses beyond Options and across the countries we operate in.

- Options' Whistleblower Policy sets out clear commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity and encourages all individuals to speak up about any concerns they may have about the conduct of others or the way in which the business is being run. Speaking up is encouraged via a variety of described mechanisms, including anonymously through our dedicated 'safe call' hotline.
- All reported incidents or complaints are registered, risk assessed and investigated by dedicated teams ensuring confidentiality, fairness of process and outcomes are reported on to external agencies as appropriate.
- Awareness of Options' key people policies is shared with all staff upon engagement, our people policies are accessible to all Options' employees via our global SharePoint intranet.
- In 2021 Options' moved to a cloud-based Learning Management System (LMS) to provide all staff globally with ease of access to our training offers to support ongoing development and learning. In addition to mandatory training e.g. safeguarding training and Anti-Fraud and Bribery training. Options' policies
- In early 2020 Options introduced a wellbeing initiative, with a particular focus on mental health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Support services are captured and signposted via the HR dedicated intranet page. Regional HR raise awareness of local support webinars delivered via the medical health provider.

## Labour

- Options' job opportunities are advertised on dedicated sector websites along with an indication of the salary range. Our practice is to attract local talent by ensuring a fair and equitable salary for the position and to support this approach Options recently engaged with an external Compensation and Benefits organisation to guide our journey across African regions.
- Options in house Recruitment Team follows our Recruitment Policy to ensure consistency of process and to engage high quality candidates using fair and measurable criteria.
- Options' policy is for our workforce to reflect the diversity of different cultures and affords equal treatment to all candidates. Additionally, Options' Equal Opportunities Policy demonstrates our commitment to being an equal opportunities employer as well as creating an inclusive work environment free of discrimination, victimisation and harassment.
- EAP and/or external support services are made available to our staff.
- Options monitors inflation levels and provides COLA payments quarterly, where applicable, to support our local country staff with the fluctuations.
- Options adopts a robust approach towards tackling modern slavery and human trafficking. Our 2020 policy and annual statements highlight our commitment towards zero tolerance and this includes any form of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour in our own processes or that of our supply chain
- Options operates the following policies that describe its approach to the identification of modern slavery risks and steps to be taken to prevent slavery and human trafficking in its operations: whistleblowing policy and speak up channel; code of conduct, modern slavery policy; due diligence process.

## Environment

- Options has established an Environmental Working Group chaired by an Assistant Director that reports into the Options Operating Management Group (co-chaired by two Directors). The Environmental Working Group is responsible for identifying best practice from across the sector coordinating the implementation of this across the company
- The group comprises of globally based staff, with representation from all company offices
- Options has an Environmental Policy established and the group is updating the policy to ensure it aligns with global best practice and UN Global Compact requirements.
- A Green Office Plan will be developed for each of Options country office. This will include sustainability indicators to assess the office environmental footprint. In 2021 the baseline will be established to be audited annually.
- Indicators will allow tracking of carbon emissions, energy usage, waste and recycling and travel.
- In 2021 we reported UK energy usage and travel to our parent organisation as part of the statutory accounts.
- Options is identifying ways to ensure we take an environmentally conscious approach through our procurement and supply chains. For example, we recently changed providers of our pension scheme, and climate related risk assessment and management of funds was a factor used in the selection process.
- Green Office Champions will also be inducted into these roles and will be the advocates to drive forward organisational change globally.
- The Environmental Working Group has established a coffee morning for all staff to informally discuss climate change and environmental challenges both internally for the organisation and externally through the work we deliver.
- A staff survey was issued to the global team to assess staff knowledge, understanding and interest in the environment and climate change. Staff provided ideas and subjects they would like to discuss further to reduce the environmental impact of our ways of working and the programmes we deliver.
- Options is also a member of the British Expertise International (BEI) Climate Change Working group. This group is comprised of UK based SMEs who work together to identify opportunities to contribute to climate change mitigation strategies.
- Through our BEI membership we are contributing to a policy paper that promotes the work of SMEs operating in the climate change space.
- We have established programmes that have climate change mitigation and resilience integrated into our work. This includes design of resilient health facilities, support in developing health systems to contribute towards global health security and using solar energy to power health facilities in rural areas across Kenya.

## Anti-Corruption

- Options has a robust Anti-Fraud and Bribery policy which all new staff are required to sign to confirm that they will comply with it. The Policy is supported by guidelines on how to report any suspicions of dishonest conduct.
- All staff are asked to complete mandatory anti-fraud and bribery training with a new e-module rolled out in 2021.
- There is a dedicated speaking up line that any Options staff members, partners or suppliers are able to use to report any instance of fraud, bribery or corruption.
- There is a clear and robust process for monitoring third parties such as partners and suppliers with whom Options engages and for investigating any suspicions of dishonest conduct. Options has a dedicated team that are convened when a fraud has been reported (Fraud Investigation Committee).