

## Communication

2022 UN GLOBAL COMPACT

# 2022

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# MD/Chief Executive Officer

## Statement

I am pleased to reaffirm Avalon Information Systems Private Ltd.'s 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.

Avalon Information Systems Private Ltd provides IT services to UN agencies, International Aid Agencies, and Governments in the field of human development. We consider our operations to have very low risk to the societies and environment in which we operate. Through our projects, we promote sustainable development and are actively involved in supporting countries to monitor and report on the SDGs.

Avalon Information Systems Private Ltd aims to operate in an ethical and responsible manner.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rahul Dev', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rahul Dev, MD/CEO

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## About Avalon Information Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Avalon is a well-established, industry-certified information technology solutions provider based in New Delhi, India. The firm's software development methodologies are based on industry identified and accepted Software Development Standards. The firm is certified for compliance with ISO 9001:2015 Management Standards and is an ISO 27001:2005 Information Security Management System registered company. Avalon is also registered as UDYAM / MSE Company.

Avalon Group has over 24 years of extensive experience in software development, data analysis, digital mapping, web-based application development, multimedia, and graphics design. Since 1996 we have been a technology partner of Community Systems Foundation (CSF), a UN ECOSOC-certified non-profit organization based in the USA. Through this partnership, Avalon has gained a broad experience in the design, development, and deployment of complex IT products and services with projects in more than 120 countries in support of UN agencies, government institutions, and NGOs.

We have worked in various sectors such as health, education, nutrition, and child protection, and have covered both national and global implementations such as the UNICEF ChildInfo database system and the United Nations DevInfo database system. Avalon excels in designing and implementing information technology solutions for improving human development programmes. Avalon has contributed to innovations in information technology for management information systems, geographic information systems, institution building, social welfare programme design, management training, technical support services, and evaluation methodologies. Avalon develops data-driven products for sustainable development, and hence our mandate is to provide open source solutions, favoring the utilization of off-the-shelf tools to lower the cost of implementation.



Through its partnership with CSF, Avalon has gained both local and international exposure in the implementation of IT projects linked to human development. We have supported the UN system in India and the Government of India in the production and dissemination of CensusInfo India in 2001 and 2011. We provided technical support to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) to adapt the DevInfo database system to develop DevInfo India. Our engagement has also been at the state level, wherein we have supported UNICEF state offices in embracing solutions for data collection, management, analysis, and dissemination.

Avalon has been closely supporting various states like Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh for national and state government initiatives in the last few years. Also, through our partnership with the Community Systems Foundation, we have been working actively with various UN organizations, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, foundations, and international NGOs

## Sector



**Government**



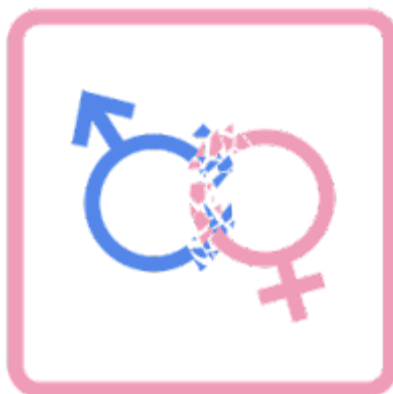
**Education**



**Health**



**Nutrition**



**Gender**



**Child Protection**



**Urbanization**



**Water & Sanitation**

## Products and Services



**PRODUCTS:** Avalon develops tools for data capture, data management, and data analysis. These tools are deployed on notebooks, tablets, and mobile phones.

The tools are built as tightly-aligned, loosely-coupled modules to facilitate interoperability and scalability.

These modules include SMS data capture, administrative management information systems (MIS), data integration, data warehouses, data visualization, data dashboards, data profiles, results-based monitoring, data modeling for better planning.



**SERVICES:** Avalon provides technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen the use of data for decision support.

We conduct high-level leadership seminars for planners. We conduct needs assessments and proof of concept exercises to identify the most appropriate strategies for a given country setting.

We provide hands-on workshops on data capture, data management, and data analytics. We provide training in the use of data for monitoring results and to improve programme outcomes. We provide training in data visualization and analytics through innovative data dashboards and advocacy materials.



**OPEN SOURCE:** Avalon is responding to the increasing demand for open data and open-source software technologies.

We aim to leverage the global and national investments in data collection to result in better development outcomes through evidence-based decision support.

Our software is designed to make it easier to discover, analyze and visualize meaningful relationships and patterns in socioeconomic data sets, with the ultimate goal of improving planning, policy formulation and decision-making.

# Quality Standard

## *UN Global Compact*



Avalon is committed to a principles-based approach to doing our work. Our values hold us accountable for our fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.

We have incorporated the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact into our strategies, policies, and procedures. We have created a culture of integrity that not only upholds our basic responsibilities to people and the planet but also sets the stage for long-term success.

## *Industry Standards*



ISO 9001:2015 management standard,

ISO 27001:2013 information security management systems standard.

Avalon develops data systems in compliance with statistical standards for data and metadata exchange (SDMX, DDI) and aid flow transparency (IATI).



Our IT service management is based on the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), a set of detailed practices that focuses on aligning IT services with the needs of clients.

Avalon applies PRINCE2 (Projects IN Controlled Environments) structured project management methods in manageable and controllable stages.

## Our Partners

- Community Systems Foundation
- ADB Asian Development Bank
- AfDB African Development Bank
- AusAID Australian Aid
- DFID UK Department for International Development
- GIZ German Society for International Cooperation
- Gates Foundation
- Tata Trusts
- JHPIEGO
- Merck for Mothers
- Abt. Associates
- IPE Global
- Children Investment Fund Foundation
- IDB Inter-American Development Bank
- International Federation of Red Cross
- ILO International Labor organization
- SCI Save the Children International
- GIZ - Coimbatore SDG Localization
- Sphere India
- KORD IT
- UN-Habitat United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS
- UNDESA United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs
- Reliance Foundation
- Grand Challenge India
- Child Investment Fund Foundation
- United Nations Development Group
- UNDP United Nations Development Programme
- National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency - Botswana
- UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization
- United Nations Population Fund
- UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees
- IIT - Delhi
- TERI
- BIRAC - Department of Biotechnology, Government of India
- Municipal Corporation Dharamshala Smart City
- UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services
- UNSSC United Nations System Staff College
- US EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency
- US HHS United States Department of Health and Human Services
- United States Library of Congress
- USAID United States Agency for International Development
- WFP World Food Programme
- WHO World Health Organization
- World Bank Group
- World Vision
- SIDA Swedish International Development Agency
- United Nations Children's Fund
- UN Women
- United Nations Children's Fund
- NMH - Rajasthan
- NHM - Madhya Pradesh
- Development Corporation - Govt. of Rajasthan
- Registrar General India and Census Commissioner - MHA



## Our Culture and Company Values

The world is going through an unparalleled transition affecting the way communities live and work together. More people now live in cities than ever before. The balance of power is shifting from the west to the east. Extreme poverty has decreased, while inequalities are widening across the world. Glaring gaps exist between the “haves” and the “have-nots” as we all compete for scarce natural resources. Women and girls remain a high proportion of the vulnerable sections of society deprived of the basics of education, health, and freedom from poverty. Climate change threatens the future of our planet.

In this strategic setting, AISPL is challenged to engage in the debate to rethink development. We must strive to expand community options by building capacities and opportunities in ways that lead to good development **outcomes** sustained by responsible development **processes**. We must address the process of enlarging people’s choices by expanding their capabilities and opportunities in ways that are sustainable from the economic, social, and environmental standpoints while benefiting the present without compromising the future.

The challenge is to help communities rethink their development strategies to use the technology and resources available to reduce poverty, eradicate polio, save the lives of under-fives, and fulfill their basic needs above a minimum threshold of well-being. AISPL is in a position to make the most of this momentum to leverage innovations for change while helping communities mitigate risk and reduce inequalities.

Sustainable development is the way forward and emerging technology is an important part of the solution. AISPL has a proven ability to influence policy and build capacity by transferring appropriate technology to communities to help them address the long-standing human development challenges. We must aim for sharper focus and more effective operations to reach more communities and continue to be relevant.

The AISPL strategic plan addresses the five key human development issues: poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge, sustainable development, gender equality, transitions from relief to development, and resilience, the latter two being particularly relevant in disaster and post-conflict settings. Resilience is the inherent, as well as acquired condition, of being able to manage risks within communities in ways that sustain development. These risks include natural disasters and conflict that may both disrupt development progress and inflict community losses.

The strategic plan of AISPL builds on our core strengths to help communities eliminate poverty while reducing inequalities and exclusion. This vision is within reach and can be achieved within a generation if the communities of the world unite together to harness the resources and technology currently available to achieve this outcome.

The desired outcomes of the AISPL strategic plan are 1. Sustainable development using innovations that create livelihoods for all; 2. Systems of democratic governance; 3. Communities have universal access to basic services for human development; 4. Communities implement policies of gender equality; 5. Communities are able to reduce conflict, and lower the risk of natural disasters

The AISPL strategy is implemented in line with the following principles that reflect our approach to sustainable development and for which we will be accountable.

AISPL will be guided by participation with communities to build local ownership of development initiatives that build the capacity of communities to make decisions on how best to meet their own aspirations and needs.

AISPL recognizes the intrinsic value of the body of economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights established by the United Nations that are pursued through the human rights-based approach to development.

AISPL will follow a plan for sustainable human development where our contributions are grounded in the process of expanding the opportunities of communities to benefit themselves in the present while not compromising the future. AISPL believes gender equality is a pivotal condition for achieving sustainable community development. AISPL will implement a strategy of community participation to address issues of equitable access to opportunities for development gains. AISPL will continue to pursue its advancement of South-South cooperation in the implementation of sustainable development initiatives. AISPL will continue to leverage the power of access to open data for all to enable communities to understand their development challenges more clearly and to use data to support their own plans, policies, and actions.

Our **vision** is to increase opportunity and equity for those most in need through solutions that protect and promote well-being in every community. Our **mission** is to improve the quality of life through applied research and technical assistance to communities by pioneering technological solutions that yield measurable results that leave no one behind. We pursue our mission with entrepreneurship, creativity, and originality. We are humble and mindful in our actions and words of the insights and counsel of diverse opinions. We seek to learn how to tap the great potential of science and technology to improve lives around the world

We believe that it is only in partnership with the community that experts can begin to bring the tools of modern science to bear effectively on efforts to improve the quality of life. We demand ethical behavior from ourselves and our partners. We make every effort to explore and examine issues with objectivity and neutrality. We strive for excellence through continuous quality improvement. We are accountable for the decisions we make and the work we perform.

The cornerstone of our strategic approach is the development and application of techniques to help communities gain a better understanding of their environment and thereby help determine how to attain their goals.

A common element in our repertoire of techniques is community learning which involves members of the community in all program phases--problem definition, program design, resource procurement, implementation, management, monitoring, and evaluation--with the ultimate objective of vesting in the community the skills and knowledge necessary to attack not only the problem at hand but also the unanticipated problems of the future.

We treat important human development problems and their potential solutions, as systemic community issues which are usually not served well by existing institutions alone. We help communities decipher complex development problems that from the outset are usually not framed properly nor well understood. We strive to design and implement engaging educational exercises and programs devoted to promoting accurate images of commitments and needs throughout the world. We help provide access to timely and relevant information that is necessary for solutions. We help close data gaps and improve data quality. We help transform data into information, information into knowledge, and knowledge into wisdom.

We are committed to the long haul: we pay attention to going beyond writing up a report and leaving to go on to the next problem. We endeavor to be as flexible and timely as possible in working with existing institutions even though we start with the assumption that we all are often as much “part of the problem” as “part of the solution.”

## Description of actions

### Human Rights

AISPL strives to ensure workers are provided with safe, suitable, and sanitary work facilities. The Human Resources Team (HR) closely monitors the workplace environment for any case of harassment of any sort.

Past working hours, the office provides taxi services to drop the staff at the nearest public conveyance area. Should any staff stay back to work overtime, a cab is arranged for the employee to be dropped at his/her doorstep.

With the majority of the team now working from home, HR schedules regular check-ins to discuss with staff members any challenges they may be facing - on professional as well as personal fronts.

Should any challenges arise at the professional level, and the staff is struggling, then HR creates a discussion platform between the team lead, COO, and the HR team itself to ensure that the staff member is heard and properly guided.

#### **Outcomes:**

There have been no incidents of human rights abuses associated with the company during the reporting year, and no complaints or grievances lodged. The attrition rate has decreased and we have observed exceptional performance of the team members in the work from home setup.





## Labour

AISPL supports the core conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the relevant labor legislation prevailing in the country.

AISPL operates a comprehensive human resources department and maintains policies clearly stating employee rights and responsibilities, compensation, and benefits. Alongside a detailed HR operating manual, employees are issued with an employee handbook outlining their rights and responsibilities, including a code of conduct, terms and conditions of employment, benefits, disciplinary procedures, performance reviews, and the company grievance procedure.

AISPL maintains a dedicated recruitment and selection process that ensures all applicants are above the legal age of 18 years old and are not discriminated against on the basis of age, religion, caste, race, or gender.

### **Outcome:**

Equitable workplace in terms of the pay scale, well aware of the labor policies linked to regular appraisal and their career pathways. The organization's equitable hiring practices have resulted in more gender balance in the workforce. In a traditionally male-dominated field, the organization has made strides to achieve better balance through the identification and hiring of more female staff.



## Environment

AISPL supports a precautionary approach to environmental challenges and undertakes timely initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility. The company encourages the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly practices.

Being a company with a strong sense towards the society, we are consistently emphasizing reducing energy levels through identification of reduction opportunities, and on-time technology upgrades. We are reducing our environmental impact where we see it matters most. We are very much committed to setting ourselves on a path to reduce our emissions and increase our energy efficiency.

### Implementations: -

1. Usage of **energy-efficient lighting** supply with motion detector technology through infrared.
2. Employees **working from home**
3. Optimum **Utilization of office** space
4. **Planned usage and installation** of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems across facilities
5. Printing Paper Reduction – Using **automated processes** like paperless performance appraisals, digital signatures, E-resignations, and electronic payslips.
6. **Digitalize bills** for telephones, internet, and others.
7. Business **Travels are monitored** for all three modes of travel, i.e., road, rail, and air (cab bookings organized by AISPL alone are considered).
8. Recycling & Waste Generation – Reduction in consumption of paper cups and plastic bottles by encouraging staff to carry their own cups/bottles in order to avoid the unnecessary use of plastic, cups, and chemicals.
9. E-Waste – **Responsible disposal of electrical and electronic wastes** through authorized recyclers.

**Outcomes:**

AISPL encourages workplace behavior that promotes care towards the environment and our approach is aligned to simultaneously leveraging several frameworks mapped to the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), and other Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) aspects.

The outcomes we produce as value are:

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions:**

There is an overall reduction in the emission of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Work from home supported the less use of air-conditioners and generators resulting in saving Kilograms of Carbon dioxide emission.

**Electricity:** Electricity is accounted for by usage as follows:

- Electricity is generated by the respective electricity board.
- Electricity is generated through diesel generators and owned by facility providers.
- Electricity is generated through diesel generators owned by AISPL Information Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Adopting the latest technologies, planned architecture, and automated processes in the office premises resulted in controlling the consumption of electricity at a very significant rate.

**Printing Paper:**

Implementing digitized systems in the company has helped in reducing paper consumption equivalent to 472 KG of paper; prevented the axing of 8 fully grown trees.

**Recycling & Waste Generation Reduction:**

Prevented axing of trees, consumption of water and electricity, excess utilization of office space, and contribution of carbon dioxide to the climate.

Help in reducing our dependence on paper cups and plastic bottles.

**Business Travel**

Public transport usage, virtual meetings, and employees working from home resulted in a reduction of carbon emissions arising from global business travel through flights, buses, trains, and hired cabs.

**Electrical-Waste**

Contracting with authorized recyclers/destructors helped in the reduction in environmental hazards and occupying space in landfills. This leads not only to the reduction of environmental hazards but also to improved health conditions of those employed in unorganized recycling at landfills.



## Anti-Corruption

AISPL is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness, and financial accountability in its operations.

We have a strict policy for Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption. AISPL policy on Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption forbids the giving or taking of bribes in any form to secure business and protects whistleblowers from retaliation.

### Implementations: -

This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects any regulatory changes and developments in acceptable standards. Changes are communicated across the organization via internal portals through responsible officers.

When new staff is hired, they are provided orientation and a safe work environment; they are strongly encouraged to report any suspected wrongdoing to the management. Employees are sensitized to identify and avoid situations that are at odds with the policy.

AISPL also has an ethics committee that is empowered to investigate all matters of suspected violations of set standards of the company.

### Outcomes:

1. **Zero incidents** have been reported.
2. **Uniformity and integrity** in business operations.
3. Delivering **better value** to the clients.

