

United Nations Global Compact

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**Communication on Engagement February 2019 - June 2022**

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Danish Association of Architectural Firms (formerly DANSKE ARK)

I am pleased to confirm that the Danish Association of Architectural Firms reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles, and its support of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its principles as suggested for Business Associations like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders.

Kind Regards



Lene Espersen  
Chief Executive Officer

## ***Nature of business***

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms is a business association for architectural firms based in Denmark. Our objective is to represent the commercial interests of practicing architects and strengthen the position, quality of work and professionalism of our member firms. We have more than 700 member firms which employ about 5000 persons combined and account for app. 90% of the aggregate building contract sums in Denmark. Most members are small and medium size enterprises.

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms works strategically to promote sustainability by pursuing political influence towards smart regulation of the built environment for resource efficiency and social value. We strive to build competencies and develop business models for the life cycle processes of design, construction, operation and reuse of buildings, urban areas and landscapes that our members are involved in.

We are continuously engaged in the public debate on urban development, building standards and the quality of the built environment. We aim to communicate and discuss how architecture can create value for society, users and clients in terms of social, environmental, and economic sustainability combined. As a member of Green Building Council Denmark, we work to build alliances with other progressive organizations and companies in the building and design sector to push the boundaries of quality and sustainability performance of the built environment.

## ***Key focus areas***

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms has four committees, one of which is entirely devoted to address and pursue questions of sustainability in the profession and discipline of architecture. The other three committees deal with political issues, business development and legal issues. Though sustainability has its own committee, sustainability is - in varying ways – a core consideration in all committees. The committee on sustainability has identified three focus areas that are given priority among the various questions the committee addresses:

- Building a knowledge base, identifying and communicating how sustainable architectural solutions create value - socially, environmentally and economically.
- Building frameworks for sustainable construction in building and planning codes as well as green building standards.
- Developing services and business models for sustainability in architectural practice.

## ***Strategy 2022-2026 We shape a sustainable future***

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms' new strategy recognizes the need for leadership in the green transformation of societies as a business opportunity for architects. To accelerate the green transition expertise is

needed, as well as new business models and notions of value creation, which enables the architects and the construction value chain to deliver high quality solutions to improve life conditions while reducing environmental impacts dramatically. The Danish Association of Architectural Firms will work to create market conditions favouring sustainable solutions while stimulating innovation, competence building and new business models among its member companies.

## ***Partnerships***

### **Architects' Council of Europe**

The Association of Danish Architectural Firms is a member the Architects' Council of Europe, represented on the board by Paul Jeppesen, while Peter Andreas Sattrup is co-chairing the Sustainability work group, which is advocating sustainability in EU activities and legislation concerning the built environment.

### **Green Building Council Denmark, DK-GBC**

As a premium member of DK-GBC, The Association of Danish Architectural Firms is part of a non-profit association of businesses and organizations that work to promote green building standards, education, business models and design across the value chain of the building industry. The DGNB criteria have direct references to the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals, allowing architects and clients to measure their contribution to the SDGs when certifying their projects.

### **Social Responsibility**

The Association of Danish Architectural Firms is a member the Association for Social Responsibility in the Construction Sector and a member of the Danish Council on Health and Safety in Construction that works to improve health and safety on Danish construction sites. Key activities are education, guidelines, and awareness building.

## ***Activities 2020-2022***

### **The 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals**

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms embraces the 10 principles and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and works to support these in action with the participation of our members. In the period since February 2020, we have taken several initiatives to support and promote the SDGs directly:

### **The 17 Sustainable Development Goals – How To Get Going**

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms published a guide to working with the SDGs aimed at architects and their clients. It offers a methodology for change leadership to use within the organisation of the architectural firm as well as with clients and partners in the value chain when working on architectural projects. The guide is available in both Danish and English:

<https://www.danskeark.com/content/17-global-goals-how-get-going>

### **Danish Climate Partnerships**

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms was a partner in the Danish Governments Climate Partnership, a public private collaboration process identifying the most efficient ways policy making can enable Denmark to reduce its carbon footprint by 70% before 2030. The top 5 recommendations for the construction sector were: 1 Energy retrofitting existing buildings, 2 renewable heating systems, 3 Climate targets in the Building Code, 4 Fossil-free construction sites and 5 Energy certificates for all buildings.

### **Climate targets in the Danish Building Code**

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms successfully advocated introducing climate targets in the Danish Building Code, which will be implemented from January 1st 2023 and become gradually more strict during the present decade. Since the targets were confirmed by a large majority in the Danish Parliament, an immediate market transformation has begun in the construction sector.

### **Knowledge creation, tool making and competence building**

The mandatory climate targets in the Building Code creates a need to develop the necessary competences within the entire value chain of construction. The Danish Association of Architectural Firms has developed a suite of network meetings and courses to facilitate business development and upskill employees to be able to calculate carbon footprints using the LCA method properly. We are also developing a digital toolbox that will make carbon budgeting intuitive and fast.

### **UIA World Congress 2023 Sustainable Futures**

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms is an organizing partner in the International Union of Architects' World Congress in Copenhagen in 2023, which has the 17 SDGs as its theme. The congress will host 10-15000 architects from across the globe discussing and demonstrating the progress made in architecture and planning of the built environment towards achieving the SDGs.

### **New European Bauhaus, DESIRE – Designing the Irresistible Circular Society**

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms is extremely excited about the New European Bauhaus initiative of creating a cultural movement for the green transition. We are proud to be a knowledge partner in one of the first 5 New European Bauhaus demonstrator projects titled “DESIRE – Designing the Irresistible Circular Society” which we co-created with partners in Denmark, Netherlands, Latvia, Italy and Slovenia led by the Confederation of Danish Industries and Bloxhub. Our mission is to make green solutions “irresistible” while identifying pathways to reconcile the resource use of the built environment with the planetary boundaries.

<https://www.irresistiblecircularsociety.eu/>

### **Danish Indian Partnerships for SDG #8 Decent work and Sustainable Growth**

The Danish Association of Architectural Firms is continuously building a Partnership with the Confederation of Danish Industries, the Confederation of Indian Industries and the India Green Building Council for SDG 8: Decent work

and sustainable growth. The partnership released its report Sustainable Workspaces and Indian Business Environment in June 2022, based on case studies of workspaces in Gujarat, India.

#### **Documenting Value creation in terms of sustainable development**

In previous years the Danish Association of Architectural firms has argued that value creation in the built environment needs to be reconsidered in terms of integrating the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability. Our guide to value creation ARCHITECT – Document your value creation is now available in English:

<https://www.danskeark.dk/content/architect-document-your-value-creation>

#### ***Reaffirming our commitment to the Global Compact***

As Chair of the Danish Association of Architectural Firms, I hereby declare that the Association remains fully committed to the United Nations' Global Compact and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Katja Viltoft

Chairman