

**COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)**  
Organization for International Economic Relations (OiER)

**Period covered by this Communication on Engagement**

From: November 2019 to September 2022

H.E. António Guterres  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

October 17, 2022

**Statement of Continued Support by the Secretary General**

Dear Excellency,

I am pleased to confirm that the Organization for International Economic Relations (OiER) reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

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 an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Yours sincerely,



Kari Aina Eik  
Secretary General OiER  
Leader U4SSC Implementation Programme

## Part II. Description of Actions

### Our Vision

To play an active part in the global community promoting development, new technologies, specialized services and products for sustainable solutions putting people first.

### About OiER

For the past 75 years, the Organization for International Economic Relations (OiER) – \_based in Vienna/Austria – \_has been successfully building and expanding a worldwide network for business, technology, science and government and has been a pioneer in the development and promotion of economic processes and international cooperation.

Established in 1947, as an international NGO and business platform to promote peace and international cooperation through economic development, OiER has grown to become a global platform for business, financial institutions, corporate entities, academic institutions, NGOs, scientific communities and governments. With its wide variety of members - corporate entities, business associations, international organizations and NGOs - from more than 80 countries, OiER acts as an advisory and intermediary service organization that supports information exchange and analyses, identifying opportunities, matchmaking, and investment facilitation.

During the last decade, private corporations around the world have increasingly started to get involved in local and global causes. In today's world, there is an increasing pressure on private sector institutions to implement or support initiatives and causes that improve the environment and community well-being. This trend is evident in the increased corporate giving and increased corporate reporting on social responsibility initiatives. Corporate giving is gradually shifting from being an obligation to becoming an integral part of corporation's strategy and brand.

OiER places special focus on aligning public interest and the offerings and requirements of the private sector in the fields of education and employment, health, energy and environment, urban development, infrastructure, and agribusiness.

During the past years OiER has had its focus in using its platform to work with members to formulate effective and targeted public-private partnerships that promote and enhance smart, and sustainable development of Cities with a special focus on Asia, Middle East, Africa and South America.

Additionally, OiER assesses important initiatives by not-for-profit and public institutions, matches those initiatives to the interests of its private sector members as well as actively acquire the needed resources for successful implementation.

Today OiER is working to support governments and UN agencies in identifying partnerships for priority projects within the private and public sector. Main focus is on establishing partnerships for development projects in the sector of:

- Education and youth employment
- Health and medical infrastructure
- Energy and environment
- Urban development and smart cities
- Food supply and agro-business

OiER is using its platform to work with partners to formulate effective and targeted public-private partnerships that promote and enhance sustainable growth in ways that can promote sustainable development and reduce poverty.

The recognition of the three-partial cooperation between the role of non-governmental organizations, the private and public sector to support civil society we consider to be a key factor to foster innovative, transparent and cost-effective long term sustainable development, to reduce social economic disparity. We identify funding opportunities, strengthen resource mobilization, implement projects and programs, give support in development of CSR, marketing and strategic communication.

OiER is an active partner of the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

OiER's vision is complemented by our commitment to support the cross-cutting issues of good governance, sustainable urban development, energy, health, food supply, education and youth employment. This by supporting government and international organizations to identifying suitable private sector partners providing solutions for priority impact projects and cooperation in sustainable development.

## **Main achievements**

### **1.) Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities & Lead of the U4SSC Implementation Program**

Due to the long-standing partnership with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which started in 2014 with the launch of the programme "United Smart Cities" (USC), OiER was awarded by UNECE to become a Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities. This status was active from November 2018 until March 2021. Within this time period OiER realized many activities, described below.

The Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence on Smart and Sustainable Cities in Vienna supports UNECE to implement activities related to capacity building and cooperation.

In particular, in its capacity the Centre:

- Supports cities to assess their economic, environmental and socio-cultural performances and set priorities for action;
- Promotes exchange of best practices among countries and cities engaged in the implementation of smart sustainable city activities;
- Encourages cooperation among international, national and local stakeholders;

- Ensures knowledge transfer and strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities to develop and implement policies and actions to improve the quality of life of people and efficiency of urban operations;
- Identifies financing tools and mechanisms to accelerate progress of smart city projects;
- Supports the achievement of the SDGs at the city level.

The U4SSC Implementation Program is set up to support the development of Smart and Sustainable Cities by providing the necessary resources and expertise to cities across the world to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and especially SDG 11. The U4SSC Implementation Program builds on strong collaborative networks with cities, governments, international organizations, the UN, the private and finance sectors.

The U4SSC Implementation Program works to support the use of the U4SSC KPIs amongst cities and support cities in identifying and implementing projects, partnerships, solutions and mobilize resources to facilitate their development to become smart and sustainable.

Established in 2016, The “United for Smart Sustainable Cities” (U4SSC) is a UN initiative coordinated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to accelerate the transformation of cities globally to be smarter, more sustainable with better quality of life for its citizens and to ensure cities achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals in accordance with the 2030 agenda.

U4SSC is in addition to ITU, UNECE and UN- Habitat supported by the following UN bodies; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI), the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations University - Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

The U4SSC initiative has developed a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Smart Sustainable Cities to support cities worldwide in evaluating the role and contribution of ICTs in smart sustainable cities, and to provide cities with the tools for self-assessments in order to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To support prospective cities in implementing the KPIs, the 16 UN-Agencies supporting U4SSC have created the U4SSC Implementation Program (U4SSC IP).

This project not only aims at enhancing collaboration in the corporate, financial, and governmental sectors; furthermore, it is an innovative approach to evaluating and assessing potential industry partners, addressing and impact on the UN SDGs. As such, the tool measures and reflects companies’ contribution to the Global Compact Principles.

## 2.) United Cities Organization & United Cities Fund

With the newly founded United Cities OiER (as founding member) invest in People, Partnerships and Places to make the 10.000 cities better, together. As a Not For Profit the organization is connecting Cities and Solutions.

The face of the United Cities Family is United Cities International, a Not For Profit headquartered in Austria (United Cities International, Opernring 17, 1010 Vienna, Austria). This is the Hub for cities and regions. Programs are supported by the United Cities Funds / SDG Impact Fund, based in the US (United Cities Funds / SDG Impact Fund, Inc., 475 E. Main St., #154, Cartersville, GA 30121, USA), while program services are provided by our Profit for Purpose Hub in Norway (United Cities Project ServicesDIGS, Krabugata 2, 7011 Trondheim, Norway).

Our ambition is Net Zero Prosperity in 10.000 cities. Through the programme we want to give cities and communities everywhere the building blocks they need to pursue sustainability and Net Zero Prosperity. Our bold target is to reach 10.000 cities globally by 2030. Guided by data and using catalytic technology and finance.

United Cities has a place for everybody to get involved (as an open ecosystem). As an intern in the internship program, as a global expert, solutions provider, investor or partner in one of the regional programs. Connected through a network of United Future Labs. The programme is committed together with KPMG and global partners to reach all 10,000 cities by 2030, scaling 10X from the first 1,000 in the next year. To meet the magnitude of this goal, United Cities has partnered with SDG Impact Fund to create United Cities Funds as a global catalytic capital facility dedicated to enabling all 10,000 cities to transition to NetZero prosperity across the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

## 3.) United Future Lab Norway

United Future Lab Norway is part of the UN's smart city program United for Smart Sustainable Cities implementation program. The lab is located in the heart of the competence cluster at Sunnmøre, at NTNU Campus Ålesund, Norwegian Maritime Competence Center (NMK). On November 7th 2019, the Future Lab was opened with over 300 visitors and it was officially in operation from January 1st 2020 - <https://www.unitedfuturelab.no>.

OiER & Kari Aina Eik, Secretary General of OiER and leader and initiator of the UN Program for Smart and Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) at that time, played a key role in the establishment of United Future Lab Norway in Ålesund and is still playing an important advisory role in the engagement activities within the Lab.

United Future Lab Norway is a network of partners from private business, academia, organizations and the public sector. The Future Lab facilitates for the partners to work together to realize specific projects. In the Future Lab, the partners share knowledge, competence and experience so that they can find solutions to their challenges. The starting point for the work in and around the Future Lab, is the UN's analyzes of how sustainable and smart societies are. The goal is to contribute to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The Future Lab is part of the UN's program for smart and sustainable cities - United for Smart and Sustainable Cities (U4SSC - ip). The core of the Future Lab is projects. The use of technology and simulation tools is important for the projects related to the lab.

The Future Lab works closely with AugmentCity/Offshore Simulator Center (OSC) which has developed digital twins of several municipalities. The lab work to stimulate that technology and simulation tools are used in projects, and that partners who want to, have access to such tools.

The main goal of the Future Lab is to stimulate action through projects:

- Through projects between partners, the Future Lab will ensure sustainable urban, social and business development.
- The project will contribute to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, while at the same time creating value and opportunities for the partners involved.

To achieve the main goal, the future lab works actively with these strategies:

- Partnership  
The Future Lab is made of partners from the public sector, business, academia, civil society. The partners will collaborate through projects contributing to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, based on the results of the UN's KPI analysis.
- Project Facilitation  
Ålesund Futures Lab will facilitate partners to share knowledge, expertise and experience through action-oriented projects.
- Meeting Place  
The Future Lab will be the preferred meeting place to stimulate - and implement, projects focusing on smart and sustainable urban, social and business development.
- Resource Center  
The Future Lab and partners will be a resource center for smart and sustainable development locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

#### 4.) SDG Working Group 13 / Global Compact Network Austria

Within the SDG activities of the Global Compact Network Austria, our Head of Communication Lukas Ertl was co-leading the SDG working group 13 "People-Centric-Cities" from November 2018 to August 2021. Joined by leading Austrian businesses like VBV, EY, Wiener Linien, AIT (Austrian Institute of Technology) the objective of the working group was to develop digital platform for students to work together on new ideas and solutions for future technologies as part of a smart city hackathon and to position the topic of sustainability in cities as an important topic in mid-level school classes around Austria. References can be found: [https://globalcompact.at/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WP\\_SDGTeam\\_13.pdf](https://globalcompact.at/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WP_SDGTeam_13.pdf) // <https://globalcompact.at/sdg-team-13> // <https://globalcompact.at/sdg-teams>

#### Internal process-enhancements related to the Global Compact principles

Within OiER and our sphere of influence, we embrace, support and enact according to a set of core values laid down in the following internal documents:

- OiER Guidelines to Standard Operations procedures
- Ethical guideline related to development work

- Risk management procedure for fundraising and identification of funding (anti money laundering measures)
- Guideline for identification and acceptance of cooperating partners
- Guideline for program identification, participation, monitoring and evaluation

Our commitment is to function as a strategic and operating partner to the civil society, public sector and international and local businesses in global projects and programs and apply to crosscutting issues of good governance, sustainable development, gender equality and cross-sector cooperation in the most effective way. However, not all policies will work for all companies and partners pending on size, sector and country. OiER shall offer to assist to align the company CSR to the UN Global Compact 10 principles.

For business-development, anti-money laundering and anti-corruption measures and commitment are essential in a CSR policy. Measurement and monitoring of impacts and progress are essential if companies are to be effective in avoiding and combating corruption and money-laundering through their funding and program involvement.

This by amplify their success and assist to replace policies that do not work in their context of operation. According to our general rules of engagement involvement shall be within the following sectors:

- Energy;
- Urban development;
- Medical and health infrastructure;
- Agro-business;
- Education;
- Good governance Involvement shall be in projects and programmes that;
- Promote good governance;
- Promote long term sustainable development;
- Promote innovation and new technologies;
- Secure a clean and rich environment;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Prevents pollution;
- Reduce social economic disparities;
- Are non-discriminable;
- Enhance food supply;

The core objectives for Project and Program (P/P) participation from OiER;

- Can be a global initiative
- Can strengthen civil society, increase knowledge through participation by the affected population, different sectors and local businesses and contribute to good governance
- Enhances three-partial participation between public, private and the NGO sector through capacity building, opportunities and cooperation focusing on the results of the interventions on people, systems, sectors and the environment
- Respect local culture and custom
- Can be established based on Risk –based Management Approach (OECD/DAC)



- Is accountable and have the possibility to define indicators with targets and baselines used to assess measurable progress in accordance with desired impact
- OiER is a main partner in the operation
- UN Global Compact 10 principles are basis for OiER involvement

## Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

### 1.) Within the U4SSC Implementation Programme framework these concrete actions were taken by OiER in collaboration with international partners:

- **Enhancement of the following outcomes/developments of the last reporting period:** U4SSC KPI Assessment/Verification process; Creation of a Global City Solutions Marketplace; Development of Data Management Platform including City KPI Dashboard; Set-Up of Innovation & Co-Creation LAB Vienna/Austria; Set-Up of Innovation & Co-Creation LAB Aalesund/Norway; Creation of a Global City Simulation Tool; Development of Digital Co-Creation Toolbox and blue print for city solutions; Development of Smart City Guide and Business platform; Integration of City SDG Intelligence Tool
- **Sustainability Management Workshop:** The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the core of the United Nations Agenda 2030 (Transformation of our World for Sustainable Development). In a collaboration between business, public sector, and its citizens the program has been set up to pro-actively support all stakeholders on the path to act smart and sustainable within their project management. OiER has developed a workshop to introduce the SDGs to employees and the management team - why, what, how. The workshop is created to highlight possible opportunities within the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and showcase sustainable activities to align the company's strategy with the UN's sustainability goals, or it can simply be a knowledge platform as a basis for considering what you want to do next. As we see Sustainability as one of the largest business cases of the future more insights on the topic can build the foundation of further revenue streams for corporates – no matter which size.
- **Urban Air Mobility recommendations for the next 5 years:** Throughout history, transportation has been a powerful catalyst for cultural, political, and technological change. There is little doubt that the century ahead will introduce revolutionary new modes of transport, and Urban Air Mobility (UAM) ranks among the most promising. Together with Airbus and other Stakeholders OiER has developed viable policy recommendations with the aim of guiding industry in bringing the vision of UAM to life.
- **New value creations models for a digitally & electrically world:** The FUTURE is ELECTRIC - ELECTRIC requires digital. That is why the ongoing digital transformation converges towards the increasing electrical transformation in order to become the INTERNET OF ENERGY. In a partnership with OiER backbone. One was highlighted on numerous high-level events such as the FIA Smart City Forum, Nico Rosberg's Greentech Festival, etc. and connected on an international level.



- **Agile, Digital, Workplace Platform: Solved –** The Cleantech Company in collaboration with the OiER developed the agile workforce and workplace solutions to help organizations innovate and tackle complex initiatives that require specialized expertise faster than ever before. The Digital Co-Creation Platform provides access to an expanding community of over 5000 top experts and expert organizations in smart cities, cleantech and environmental sustainability. The platform provides all the necessary tools to easily find, contact and start collaborating and to bring one's own extended network into the same virtual space. It provides a robust solution to build and manage different partner and stakeholder ecosystems online and offers cloud-based solutions built on top-notch web technologies.

## 2.) Within the United Cities framework these concrete actions were taken by OiER in collaboration with international partners:

- **United Cities partner with Sharaf Foundation for Sustainable Development Cairo:** The Sharaf Foundation for Sustainable Development is an independent non-profit charitable foundation whose vision it is to create a fulfilling and sustainable life for present and future generations. In support of this vision the Sharaf Foundation participates in building, developing and empowering domestic and international sustainable communities through collaborative partnerships with multiple stakeholders at all levels and in various fields. United Cities, OiER, KPMG and Sharaf Foundation co-hosted a Net Zero Mobility Roundtable at KPMG's Cairo office on September 22nd 2022.
- **The United Cities Internship Program 2022 Norway:** A Public Private Partnership bringing young people from 8 nations to Norway for a paid 10 months internship. A chance of a lifetime to explore sustainability and make an impact.
- **United Cities Sports - Enabling Sustainability Bottom-Up:** The United Cities' vision for sports and sustainability is to accelerate sustainability through sport and it's unique positioning in our local and global communities. All in keeping with supporting a global, bottom-up movement towards sustainability. OiER is supporting this initiative in providing resources to facilitate local happenings.
- **United Cities North America:** United Cities North America (UCNA) is the steward of Sustainable Development Goal 11 for North America and is committed to achieving The 2030 Sustainable and Net Zero Agenda. The aim is to unite investors, collaborators, entrepreneurs and partners, large and small, to achieve The 2030 Sustainable and Net Zero Agenda.
- **LG Nova Capital Alliance:** OiER supported the United Cities Funds to join the SDG Impact Fund as Founding Members of LG NOVA Capital Alliance, towards a better, more connected future. The aim is to Kick-start a Network of Investors Created to Support Startups with Emphasis on Impact Innovation.

- **United Cities Philippines - Part of a global network of United Future Labs:** Under the Stewardship of our Regional United Cities Director, Ms Seok Mei Goh, the United Future Lab (SDG Centre) was opened in the city of Cauayan by Philippines Minister of Science and Technology, H.E. Prof. De La Pena.
- **Learn with United Leaders - Doing the right things right at the right time:** United Leaders Leadership Development and Strategic Services is delivered through learning programs, immersive experiences, and systemic consultation to equip city leaders to accelerate and manage better, sustainable futures.
- **Train the trainer service:** The developed Operational Readiness Training Concept is a research-based training is a method that allows participants to both learn the methods of United Cities and train on their own future reality in an efficient way.

**3.) Within the Global Compact Network Austria SDG Working Group these concrete actions were taken by OiER:**

- **Development of a digital platform for students to participate in a Smart City hackathon:** OiER in its leading role in the SDG 13 working group of the Global Compact Network Austria has developed a concept for an online hackathon about Smart City under the motto "Generation Y & Z design future cities". The objective is to create a digital platform to bring very different young students together to work on new ideas and solutions for future technologies as part of a smart city hackathon, and to position the topic of future/sustainability in cities as an important topic. School classes from the 4 lower grades and all upper grades should have the opportunity to download all information and documents about the hackathon via an online platform and carry them out individually within 3-4 learning units in a selected subject. All results can be uploaded directly via the platform and selected by an elected jury on a deadline. In addition to the digital, individual hackathons, 2-3 physical ones should take place throughout a year.

Beyond seeking partnerships with mutual aims to advance the UN Global Compact principles, OiER additionally incorporates the 10 principles into its corporate DNA.

## How OiER works following the ten principles

	Principles	OiER Outcomes 2020-2022
Human rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights;</li> <li>2. Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We respect the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and continuously promote and support these rights with all our stakeholders. We wish to explicitly communicate our engagement within this field.</li> <li>• In our establishment of business partnerships, we solely make sure those partners live up to the Universal Declaration.</li> </ul>
Labor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;</li> <li>4. The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor;</li> <li>5. The effective abolition of child labor;</li> <li>6. The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OiER supports and recognizes labor rights and works only with partners that adhere to and comply with the Global Compact's Labor Principles.</li> <li>• In full compliance with local and federal labor laws, we try to eliminate and eradicate any type of discrimination based on race, sex, religion or gender.</li> </ul>
Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;</li> <li>8. Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility;</li> <li>9. Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United for Smart Sustainable Cities Implementation program realized worldwide, initiated together with UN partner agencies.</li> <li>• Further development of U4SSC projects and business partner solutions.</li> <li>• Activities within the United Cities framework.</li> </ul>
Anti-Corruption	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OiER guidelines and statutes.</li> <li>• Risk management procedure for fundraising and identification of funding (anti money laundering measures)</li> <li>• The OiER policy for corruption is communicated to all our employees and partners. In compliance with local and federal anti-corruption laws, we fully support UNGC anti-corruption rules, dealing only with partners that have similar principles of good faith and fair play.</li> </ul>