



wts

# UN GLOBAL COMPACT

WTS Communication on Progress 2020

WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

## Preface

Dear readers,

The Corona pandemic has now been with us for more than a year, and we all feel its effects – not only economically, socially and within society, but also personally.

The crisis demands a great deal of strength and resilience from us all and confronts us with completely new challenges in life and work. Despite this difficult situation, WTS can look back on a successful year in 2020; and what is even more important is that we expect our business to continue to develop positively in the future.

This was and is possible in particular because of our strong corporate underpinning on which we can rely. The basis on which WTS was established is a foundation which is the only shareholder of the whole Group.

WTS has always been completely independent of short-term shareholder interests. Instead, we focus on long-term decisions and sustainable growth.

For us, economic success and taking responsibility go hand in hand.

In January 2020, we confirmed this conviction by signing the ten principles of the UN Global Compact, on human rights, labour standards, environmental protection and corruption prevention. We are proud to be part of the largest network for sustainable business and are glad to be involved in the German Global Compact Network (DGCN).

This first UN Global Compact Communication on Progress (COP) from WTS presents our measures and results of the implementation of the ten principles, with which we are contributing to sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We want to engage as many people as possible and inspire them for sustainable development because together and with great passion, visions become reality.

Yours faithfully,  
Fritz Esterer

Fritz  
Esterer

CEO of WTS Group



# Our commitment and progress

As a signatory of the UN Global Compact, WTS<sup>1</sup> supports its ten principles and thus contributes to a sustainable economy.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### Principle 1

**Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.**

Respect for human rights is essential for the sustainable business of WTS. We are fully aware of our responsibility for respecting human rights and are committing ourselves to ensuring that our company is managed at all times in a manner whereby the dignity of all human beings is respected and all legal requirements are met.

To ensure this fundamental stance, we have imposed a binding Human Rights Policy on our business partners and ourselves. This policy is based on the international principles of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the United Nations Global Compact and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The Human Rights Policy is flanked by our Health and Safety Policy.

### Principle 2

**Businesses make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.**

WTS strongly condemns all forms of human rights violations and ensures compliance with international human rights in all aspects of its business operations. In January 2021, WTS introduced a comprehensive Corporate Responsibility Policy in addition to its Human Rights Policy and Health and Safety Policy, which also commits our business partners to respect human rights, among other issues.

## LABOUR

### Principle 3

**Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.**

WTS respects and recognizes freedom of association as a fundamental right. This also means that no one may be forced to belong to an association. This right is also explicitly formulated in our Human Rights Policy.

We also attach great importance to the interests and needs of our employees and take these into account in our business activities and decisions.

Through regular surveys and feedback meetings, our employees always have the opportunity to get involved. In the current Corona pandemic, we have focused, in particular, on digitizing these opportunities so that the constant feedback and intensive exchange with employees can continue and even be strengthened.

### Principle 4

**Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.**

WTS prohibits all forms of forced and compulsory labour as well as human trafficking.

As a consulting company based in Germany, we are obliged to comply with the legal standards in the area of labour standards according to German law and legislation. This categorically excludes forced and compulsory labour as well as human trafficking, something which is also defined in our Human Rights Policy.

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this progress report, WTS means WTS Group Aktiengesellschaft Steuerberatungsgesellschaft, Munich/Germany and its affiliated companies as well as WTS Legal GmbH, Munich/Germany.

In addition, WTS aims to be an attractive employer through a variety of programs and offerings that support and continuously improve the job satisfaction of its employees. We are committed to the professional and personal development and growth of our workforce with a broad training and development program, thereby strengthening our collegial and respectful corporate culture. We digitized all offerings in 2020/21.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have also offered our employees coaching in various areas to provide them with even better support in the current situation.

## Principle 5

### **Businesses should work towards the effective abolition of child labour.**

WTS condemns the exploitation of children and expressly rejects any form of child labour, something which we clearly state for all our stakeholders in our Human Rights Policy.

As part of our corporate citizenship commitment, we stand up for children and young people and their rights. WTS brings together its social commitment through the WTS Group Foundation and relies on long-term cooperation with smaller and regional initiatives and non-profit organizations.

As part of our large Corona help project 2020/21, we have also been involved in helping underprivileged children all over Germany, amongst other projects.

Our employees were able to participate in the form of donations, doubled by the company. In March 2021, we held an employee volunteering Easter present donation for the charities Deutscher Kinderschutzbund and Die Arche, which was received with enthusiasm and great commitment by our employees.

## Principle 6

### **Businesses should work to the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.**

We value the diversity of the people who work for or with us and are committed to equal opportunity and fair treatment. WTS is committed to the prevention or elimination of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

At WTS, hiring, training, compensation and promotion are based exclusively on the skills, qualifications and performance of our employees. The principles mentioned above also apply to WTS business partner relationships, which we express in our Human Rights Policy.

When the discussion about racism came to a head worldwide in May of last year, we sent a signal against all forms of discrimination and in favour of diversity with a public statement by our Management Board Members.

As part of our diversity activities, we also established a special women's network in 2020. NOW (Network of Women) specifically networks and promotes women and gives them even more visibility.

## ENVIRONMENT

**Principle 7**

**Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.**

WTS is actively committed to preserving and protecting our environment, because it is the basis of our lives and that of future generations. In doing so, we rely on cooperation with non-profit environmental organizations on the one hand, and have taken initiatives to reduce the impact of our business activities on the environment on the other.

The main levers are mobility and building management. For example, we are reducing flights, subsidizing public transport tickets and offering job bikes. All our company buildings are to be supplied with green electricity in the future – Munich and Kolbermoor have already switched over. We are also committed to our active environmental protection with our Environmental Policy.

**Principle 8**

**Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.**

We take our environmental responsibility very seriously. Particular importance is attached to promoting the environmental awareness of our colleagues. To this purpose, we rely on communication and opportunities for participation because only if we live sustainability together can we change for the better and contribute to a „thinkable“ future.

WTS has therefore set up the WTS Sustainability Board, a committee consisting of six employees, which, under the leadership of Anselm Bilgri, a former Benedictine monk, monitors the specially established WTS Sustainability Fund, through which we donate to environmental projects – last year 35,000 euros.

**Principle 9**

**Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.**

We are committed to the efficient use of resources and active environmental protection. In particular, we build on the digitalization of our processes, which contributes to significant work simplification and efficiency gains – both for ourselves internally and for our clients.

In 2020, we began converting our printers in our company buildings to a pull printing system, whereby print jobs are stored on the system and only printed out on large printers when the user authenticates themselves on site and starts the printout. This saves paper and toner costs and ensures greater data security.

For the tax and finance sector in particular, digitization and automation bring far-reaching opportunities. With our extensive tax, finance and IT expertise, we support our clients in the complex process of digital transformation while keeping environmental protection aspects firmly in mind.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

**Principle 10**

**Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.**

As a tax and financial advisory firm, we are particularly committed to integrity in all our business activities. The same applies in personal terms to the numerous professionals employed by WTS who are subject to special ethical obligations (lawyers, tax advisors, auditors).

We do not tolerate any form of corruption – especially bribery and extortion – neither in our own business relationships nor with clients. We have also laid this down in our anti-corruption guidelines. WTS, as well as external stakeholders such as clients and business partners, have access to a professional web-based whistle-blowing system. Via this particularly secure and certified reporting channel („whistle-blower tool“), specific indications of possible compliance or other breaches of rules relating to the WTS organization can be reported with guaranteed absolute anonymity and immediate measures can be taken by the company.

Through the WTS Academy, we also offer all employees on-line training on the Money Laundering Act.

*“With a pioneering spirit,  
we are shaping the future  
sustain-ably. On this path,  
we face the responsibility  
to act in a social and  
ecological manner and to  
operate profitably in the  
long-term.*

*We see ourselves as a  
reliable and durable partner  
for our clients, employees  
and our social environment.”*