

## COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

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Munster Technological University



Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 20.09.20 To: 10.10.22

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

13.01.2023

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Munster Technological University (MTU) affirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement (COE) with the United Nations Global Compact, which outlines the activities MTU has taken to support the Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents and commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders.

MTU was established in 2021 when the Institute of Technology Tralee and Cork Institute of Technology merged. All six campuses of MTU have continued with their ongoing activities in relation to the UN Global Compact and its Principles, and MTU has invested much time and effort in aligning MTU's values and mission with relevant GC Principles. I also wish to highlight the renewed commitment of MTU to the Global Compact as outlined in its [2022-2027 Strategic Plan](#), where SDGs are documented as a strategic enabler of the Plan.

Sincerely yours,  
Professor Maggie Cusack,  
President of Munster Technological University

## Part II. Description of Actions

As a recently established Technological University, MTU is aligning its systems and processes with a principles-based approach to conducting business and supporting all of the [UN Global Compact's Principles](#) across its five key themes:

- 1) Learner Education & Experience
- 2) People & Community
- 3) Research, Innovation  
& Entrepreneurship Ecosystem
- 4) Leading Regional Development
- 5) Global Outlook

In addition, two of MTU's five core strategic enablers are relevant to the GC Principles: 1. Sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals; and 2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. MTU is fully committed to embracing Education for Sustainable Development as an integral element of SDG 4 Quality Education as a key enabler of all other SDGs.

### **1. Deliver education on topics related to the Global Compact**

As part of its 2022-2027 Strategic Plan implementation, MTU is committed to embedding the SDGs across its entire portfolio to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to promote and contribute to achieving the SDGs and positive societal change. In particular, MTU is focused on generating sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship; and becoming a sustainability and climate-change leader regionally, nationally and internationally.

Concerning Principles 2 and 6 MTU is also working to provide digital technology solutions and platforms that are high performing, accessible, flexible, resilient, and scalable to enable MTU to adapt and thrive in a challenging higher education environment – as per MTU's Digital-by-default strategy 2020-2030.

MTU has partnered with Johnson and Johnson to adopt [WiSTEM2D - Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Manufacturing and Design](#). This undergraduate programme aims to inspire and support more women to pursue a career in STEM after university and increase female representation in the STEM2D workforce – in line with Principles 1 and 6. The WiSTEM2D programme fuels the development of the female STEM2D talent pipeline by awarding and sponsoring girls and women at critical points in their educational experience and careers in STEM disciplines.

MTU is a member of [INGENIUM](#), an alliance of ten higher education institutions from ten European countries. Funded by the EU, the alliance seeks to enable each member of the network to offer high-quality study and qualification programmes with digital components which are shared within the INGENIUM Alliance. Due to the internationalisation of courses and increased student and staff mobility, the promotion of intercultural competence among teachers and students is a core focus of the alliance. INGENIUM supports all GC Principles and is strongly committed to the Sustainable

Development Goals and Agenda 2030, and to the European Commission's European Green Deal (EGD) growth strategy.

In line with Principles 1 and 6 MTU is offering female staff members [Aurora Leadership Training Programme](#). Aurora is for all women, up to senior lecturer level or the professional services equivalent, working in a university, college or related organisation who would like to develop and explore issues relating to leadership roles and responsibilities.

## **2. Conduct applied research and thought leadership in relation to the Global Compact**

MTU is home to a number of research centres and projects, some of which focus specifically on sustainable development and human rights. These initiatives are:

### **CircBioCityWaste**

MTU, in partnership with the University of Limerick, Technological University Dublin, clean technology company BSL and the Circular Bioeconomy Cluster South-West are working on a first-of-a-kind 4 year project CircBioCityWaste. The project aims to transform urban biological wastes such as municipal sludge, dairy processing sludge and black bin waste into sustainable bio-based fertilizers and biochemicals for agriculture, food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical sectors. In line with GC Principles 8 and 9, collaborators include leading researchers and companies who are taking an integrated biorefinery approach by using thermal conversion processes to create value out of the waste products by transforming them into a clean source of energy and converting the residual by products into bio-based products focusing on plant growth, soil health, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. This process contributes to "closing the loop" of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use, and benefits the environment and the economy. <https://www.mtu.ie/news/transforming-urban-waste-into-sustainable-products>

### **The UNESCO Chair 'Transforming the Lives of Persons with Disabilities, their Families and Communities through Physical Education, Sport, Recreation and Fitness'**

Established by an agreement between UNESCO and the Institute of Technology Tralee, MTU's UNESCO Chair works directly with UNESCO and other global partners to drive progress on human rights and the SDGs in and through sport and all forms of physical activity, in direct support of Global Compact Principles 1 and 2. The work of the UNESCO Chair ranges from policy to practice and has a global remit. The UNESCO Chair coordinates a global consortium advancing the inclusive specific policy actions of the Kazan Action Plan, this has representation from UN agencies, Multilateral agencies, State Parties, Sports Bodies, Academic Networks, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, including UNESCO, UNDESA, UN Women, UNICEF, WHO, ILO, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Olympic Committee, Paralympic Committee, Special Olympics International, Deaflympics and more. Under this action the world first set of reporting tools and templates on sport and human rights has been developed and the support of UN treaty bodies and state parties on the use of these tools has been leveraged. The UNESCO Chair was a member of the 2020 WHO Guidelines Development Group, leading the Disability subgroup for the new guidelines for Physical Activity. The UNESCO Chair also collaborated with the WHO on the monitoring mechanism for the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity. The UNESCO Chair also

represented MTU on the steering committee, advisory group and technical committee working on *Measuring the Contribution of Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity to the Sustainable Development Goals*. The Chair also represents MTU on the **Advisory Council of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights** and the steering committee for UNESCO's Global Survey on Physical Education. *See the UNESCO Chair's Global Compact COE for further details on the contribution of the UNESCO Chair to the GC Agenda.*

### **Aclú: Empowering Recovery in Enduring Mental Illness**

Aclú is a partnership between MTU and the Health Service Executive (HSE) of Ireland that seeks to reframe mental health through a pioneering multidisciplinary approach focusing on enduring mental illness. Aclú's innovative research and implementation outcomes strive to substantially impact the lifelong health and well-being of people with enduring mental illness through physical activity, nutrition, and digital technologies. Aclú is underpinned by GC Principles 1 and 2 and the project directly supports the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and SDG 3 (ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all, at all ages), in particular SDG 3.4 (promoting mental health and well-being and reducing, by a third, premature mortality from non-communicable diseases, through prevention and treatment).

### **SIRIG**

The Sustainable Infrastructure Research & Innovation Group ([SIRIG](#)) is an umbrella research and innovation group anchored in the School of Building & Civil Engineering at MTU. Its research focus is in the area of sustainability in the context of infrastructural developments in the environmental, engineering, and built environments. SIRIG promotes multi-disciplinary infrastructure related research. It encompasses a range of active research areas including Renewable and Building Energy, Sediment Management, Structural and Infrastructural Development, Architecture, Building Performance, Lifetime Homes, Building Information Modelling, Fire Testing, Education and Climate Change. SIRIG has collaborated and attracted funding on a national and international level with business, research centres, universities and government bodies. Competitive research funding has been awarded, for example, through the Irish Research Council, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and the Marine and the EU Interreg North West Europe Programme. SIRIG operates with four pillars: Environment and Energy; Structures and Infrastructure; Wellness in the Built Environment; Digitisation and Education in Architecture and Engineering Education which align with GC principles 6 to 9.

### **Ireland's Knowledge Centre for Carbon, Climate, and Community Action (IKC3)**

In February 2022 MTU was awarded €3.7 Million in funding by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under the Human Capital Initiative 3 (HCI3) to establish [Ireland's Knowledge Centre for Carbon and Climate](#). The funding is designed to deliver investment targeting increased capacity in higher education to meet priority skills needs which includes the Climate Change and Sustainable Living. The project team will build a national platform for co-development and co-delivery of knowledge and skills to enable innovative and systemic adaptation of enterprise and society to a decarbonized economy and sustainable living as the new normal. This contributes to GC principles 7, 8 and 9.

## **Clean Technology Centre**

MTU's Clean Technology Research Centre (CTC) is an independent body, whose mission is to advise and assist business, government and society alike towards a more sustainable pattern of consumption and production. The integrity and reputation of CTC ensures its unbiased assessment of environmental issues. The founding principle of the CTC was 'waste prevention'; that it is better to prevent waste at source rather than find solutions to treat the waste after it has been created. With a focus on the GC's Environment-specific Principles 7-9, CTC continues to focus on prevention throughout its work and is proud to be at the vanguard in the battle against the climate and biodiversity crisis the world now faces. CTC has worked with over 400 Irish companies, across the business and industrial sectors as well as with the healthcare sector. CTC has supported all the local authorities in Ireland to develop more sustainable communities and regions and the centre has been commissioned by the EU, the Irish government and state agencies to project manage national and European environmental programmes, for training, and to develop new best practice methodologies. CTC has worked on 120 national and international, pure and applied environmental research projects – both individually and with over 140 partners from 32 countries.

The following is a list of MTU's further Research Centres most of which have a focus on one or more areas of sustainable development, and all of which are in the process of aligning with MTU's strategic plan and the underpinning focus on the SDGs, inclusion and human rights.

- Irish Academy of Hospitality and Tourism
- The Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre (Shannon ABC)
- Intelligent Mechatronics and RFID (IMaR)
- Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (CEED)
- BIOEXPLORE research focuses on developing and applying the best platform technologies available to detect and treat both human and animal related diseases.
- CAPPA research focuses on the next generation of photonic devices, materials, and applications. NutRI research focuses on Food Innovation, Food Microbiology and Public Health Nutrition. The Process Innovation Engineering Research Group (PiERG) research focuses on providing solutions to the Pharma Engineering sector through its combined expertise in the development of predictive models and industrial pharmaceutical processing. Ríomh research focuses on the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help solve some of our most pressing Cybersecurity challenges. The Enterprise Engagement and Experiential Learning Research Group (E3LRG) focuses on viewing the workplace as a valid and valuable centre for learning. The Health Exercise and Sport Research Group (HEX-Spo) research focuses on exercise and sports performance optimisation. The V-LINC research group focuses on enhancing regional competitiveness through ecosystem mapping, analysis, and evaluation. MTU Cork School of Music research involves investigating technical, creative, cultural, historical, and pedagogical aspects of musical practices and musical repertoires.

- MTU Crawford College of Art & Design research takes place across the disciplines of Fine Art, Applied Art, Art Education, Art Therapy, Visual Design and Media Communications.
- Ed Tech and E-learning research focuses on the impactful interaction between technology and learning.
- Halpin research focuses on opportunities in the global maritime domain.
- Hincks research focuses on entrepreneurship in all its forms.
- MeSSO research focuses on mechanical and energy systems and applications.
- Nimbus research focuses on Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) and Internet of Things (IoT) applications

### 3. Disseminate the Global Compact principles

MTU actively disseminates and embeds the Global Compact Principles into staff and student programming and services, many of which aim to impact the wider community and society at large. For example, in line with Priorities 1 and 2 MTU regularly publishes the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Newsletter](#)

MTU has led the following events:

White Ribbon Online Seminar. MTU is the first Irish University to join White Ribbon, a global gender based violence movement that focuses on making personal and community change to prevent violence against women and children. A three-year process to accreditation launched with an online seminar with the Men's Development Network.

Cultural Unconscious Bias, multiplier event. As part of the Erasmus+ project [CUB@work](#) – Cultural Unconscious Bias, a project that contributes to social inclusion and non-discrimination in the workplace in line with GC Principles 2 and 6, MTU led a programme for various MTU stakeholders in partnership with All Talk Training. The session looked at ways unconscious biases can impact decisions during recruitment, the impact of low cultural intelligence on multicultural teams and how they interact, and what it feels like to do something that is culturally strange.

IPEPAS. A Disability Inclusive Physical Activity capacity building programme in South Africa, through the UNESCO Chair.

LGBTIQ+ inclusion. MTU is installing Rainbow Crossings and similar visual representations of the Progress Pride flag on all six MTU campuses to create a semi-permanent demonstration of support for the LGBTIQ+ community and to provide a backdrop for future EDI and human rights promotion and awareness-raising opportunities.

MTU is engaged in EDI surveys of both students and staff. In line with Principles 1, 2 and 6 MTU has partnered with other Technological Universities across Ireland to address the need, as identified through student surveys and multi-university staff focus groups, to embed more inclusion and human rights within its curricula through the development of a new Charter, with the support of [Advance HE Athena Swan Ireland](#).

MTU is currently developing an EDI Virtual Hub titled “One Stop Shop” for all EDI related supports and resources related to human rights and inclusion.

In October 2021, MTU became the first Irish University on **Code Red** a university-wide period dignity project in support of women’s rights and gender equity. Code Red dispensers, in 60 bathrooms across our campuses, are stocked with sustainable single-use sanitary pads and tampons. Code red recognises that no person who menstruates should have to miss out on educational activities, work, or recreation due to lack of access to appropriate products.

MTU’s UNESCO Chair has been active in this domain and associated dissemination activities are outlined in the UNESCO Chair’s COE (under separate cover).

### Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

Please use the box below to include the most relevant qualitative and/or quantitative indicators to measure the outcome of the activities described in Part II above

As part of MTU’s 2022-2027 Strategic Plan the MTU Executive Team is currently developing a new implementation plan that includes monitoring and reporting of outputs and outcomes, including measurable targets across all operations across the university, in line with the Global Compact Principles and the SDGs.

The following key performance indicators (KPIs) were developed by MTU stakeholders and subject matter experts to reflect the scope of activities that will be measured to ensure successful implementation of MTU’s Strategic Plan and will better facilitate MTU’s future Global Compact COE reporting.

	1) Learner Education & Experience	2) People & Community	3) Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship Ecosystem	4) Leading Regional Development	5) Global Outlook
Key Performance Indicators	<b>1. Work-ready:</b> Percentage of graduates entering the workplace or remaining in Higher Education within 9 months of graduation  <b>2. Success Rates:</b> Rates of completion & progression  <b>3. Quality Assurance:</b> Programmatic Reviews, External examiner feedback, Professional Body Accreditation	<b>7. Professional Development:</b> Percentage of CPD units completed, skills attained, or qualifications achieved per headcount  <b>8. Staff Satisfaction:</b> Employee opinion survey score	<b>9. Research Income:</b> >€35m p.a.  <b>10. Knowledge Transfer:</b> Research Assignments with industry >550 and Licences, Options and Agreements (LOAs) >75  <b>11. Knowledge:</b> High quality publications >350 of which >75% in Open Access journals  <b>12. Entrepreneurship:</b> Number of viable commercial ventures created  <b>13. Impact:</b> Research and scholarly activities across a broad range of disciplines for economic, societal, and cultural impact	<b>15. Regional Presence:</b> Positive, mutually beneficial impact on the region.  <b>16. Partnership:</b> Collaborating partner satisfaction surveys. Ensuring SME engagement across the region  <b>17. Employment:</b> Number/percentage of graduates entering workplace in NUTS2 region	<b>18. International:</b> % of students & staff, and income generated  <b>19. Mobility:</b> % of student & staff obtaining an international experience (physical & virtual)  <b>20. Global Reach:</b> Span/footprint number of networks, MOUs, partner HEIs  <b>21. Quality:</b> International student experience survey & University Rankings
	<b>4. Student Satisfaction:</b> National student engagement survey	<b>14. Regional &amp; International Benefit:</b> Impactful, domain-wide knowledge transfer enabling attainment of partner goals and KPIs (e.g., UN SDGs, UNESCO projects, EDI goals, CPD, commercial and non-commercial outcomes)			
	<b>5. Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion:</b> The leading TU on EDI initiatives which will break down barriers and promote gender balance and inclusivity.				
<b>6. Sustainability:</b> Leading regional sustainability initiatives towards achieving and embedding UN SDGs across all our activities.					

Figure 1 MTU Key Performance Indicators



Some qualitative outcomes from the previous reporting cycle include:

MTU achieved the **Athena Swan** Technological University Legacy Award in June 2021, having previously achieved the Athena Swan Bronze Award in MTU Cork in May 2019. The Athena Swan Charter launched in Ireland in 2015 through funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA), as part of Ireland's national strategy for gender equality with progress linked to institutional eligibility for funding from Ireland's major research agencies. The Charter supports higher education institutions, academic departments, and professional units in impactful and sustainable gender equality work and to build capacity for evidence-based equality work across the equality grounds enshrined in Irish legislation.

MTU was awarded **Age Friendly University (AFU)** accreditation in 2021 and became a member of the Age-Friendly University Global Network in May 2021. This is a rapidly growing network (75 members currently) with a shared challenge to promote an inclusive approach to healthy and active ageing through research, enhanced learning opportunities for people across generations, and through innovations that address specific issues affecting older adults.

Joining the **White Ribbon Movement** to address gender-based violence and actively implementing change initiatives through the process of accreditation. MTU aims to become the first White Ribbon University on the island of Ireland.

MTU's Department of Marketing and International Business won a prestigious [National DELTA Award](#) for its record of excellence in teaching and learning enhancement and commitment to an ongoing, clearly articulated, shared process of continued enhancement. The Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) Awards is awarded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. . The Awards amplify good practices for the benefit of wider local and national audiences, fostering development, innovation and collegiality within higher education communities.

COP Links Below:

Relevant MTU Documents and Policies

- MTU [Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Protection Procedures](#)
- [Research Ethics Policy](#)
- [Staff Garda \(Police\) Vetting Policy](#)
- [Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities](#)
- [Equality Policy](#) and [Equality Statement](#)
- [Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)
- [Work Against Racism](#)
- [Data protection](#)