



## **Communication on Engagement UN Global Compact**

**NOVA School of Law  
Lisbon, Portugal**

*“NOVA University, as a public higher education institution, has as a mission to serve society at the local, regional and global levels, through the progress and dissemination of knowledge and understanding between cultures, societies and people, by way of excellent teaching and research and the provision of services based on a strong sense of community.*

*The promotion of solidarity and sustainable development in the health, economic, technological, cultural and social plans is also at the core of NOVA School of Law’s strategy.*

*All 3 pillars of sustainability – social, environmental and economic – are well represented in our teaching and research activities. Sustainability is also present in the way that we operate as an institution, through a strong commitment to sustainable practices (walk the talk), as made explicit in our joining the UN Global Compact in February 2021. The UN’s 17 SDG are an invitation to the whole of society. All of us must pull our weight if we are to succeed in this very relevant and yet so very challenging undertaking of achieving a better outcome for the people and for the planet”.*

*Margarida Lima Rego, Dean of NOVA School of Law*

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## **1. Description of the practical actions that NOVA School of Law has taken to support the Global Compact principles and to engage with the initiative**

NOVA School of Law is committed to the implementation of the 10 Principles of the UN Global Compact and, more generally, to contribute to sustainability and the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through our teaching and research activities which strive to promote inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG 4). Particular emphasis is placed on areas such as human rights and fundamental rights (UN Global Compact, Principles 1-2) - which include issues of equality and non-discrimination (SDGs 5 and 10), labour rights (UN Global Compact, Principles 3-6) and decent work (SDG 8), – the protection of the environment (UN Global Compact, Principles 7-9 and SDG 15), including the protection of the oceans (SDG 14) and the fight against climate change (SDG 13), and more generally how to foster responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and the promotion of peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16).

Our research activities are also supported by the various Knowledge Centres that we have created in order to provide and disseminate impactful research contributing to all three dimensions of sustainable development: the social, the economic and the environmental dimensions.

In addition, we strive to walk the talk by incorporating the values and principles of the UN Global Compact and the SDGs into the strategies, policies, and practices of NOVA School of Law in our daily life. In particular, a number initiatives to support and respect human rights and environmental standards can be highlighted:

### **1.1. Initiatives to Advance Human Rights**

#### **1.1.1. The promotion of Gender Equality within NOVA School of Law**

In line with the policy of NOVA University, NOVA School of Law strives to be at the forefront in the protection and advancement of gender equality. NOVA is the Portuguese institution with the best performance in “gender studies, gender equality policies and commitment to recruit and support women careers”, and the 15th best worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

NOVA School of Law implements the ambitious Gender Equality Plan 2021-2025 which has been adopted by NOVA University.

NOVA School of Law is actively involved in NOVA’s interdisciplinary PhD programme in Gender Studies and in major international research projects focusing on gender equality.

#### **1.1.2. Diversity and Inclusion**

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<sup>1</sup> NOVA University, Gender Equality Plan 2021-2015, p. 12

NOVA School of Law adopts an intersectional approach to protecting diversity and inclusion. This approach is visible in both legal education, and legal research, and is promoted by an ad hoc officer (Equality and Diversity Officer) that acts as a reference person for both the personnel and student body of the Law School on diversity matters. In addition, NOVA School of Law is collaborating with civil society organizations to promote awareness on diversity issues. For example, it recently entered into a partnership with *Egalia*, *ILGA Portugal* and *Associação para o Planeamento da Família*, and organized an event targeting students on Two-spirit and LGBTQIA + Advocacy, sponsored by the Canadian Embassy.

In relation to our research activities relating to diversity and inclusion, NOVA School of Law currently coordinates a research project funded by EEA in partnership with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (a Portuguese public body responsible for promoting and defending the fundamental principle of **equality between women and men**) entitled "Project Multiversity: White Paper on multiple and intersectional discrimination".

Furthermore, ANTÍGONA – Clinic For Equality and Discrimination Law, a Knowledge Center created within NOVA School of Law, carries out activities related to the promotion of legal counselling, training and research in the areas of equality and discrimination law.

In relation to our teaching activities relating to diversity and inclusion, NOVA School of Law has recently started to diversify its course offering in order to include a rich array of courses that cover diversity issues such as LGBTQ rights or intersectional discrimination. For instance, our Bachelor's degree now offers courses such as anti-discrimination Law, and we were awarded a Jean Monnet Module in EU family law which include a strong focus on LGBTQ families. We also offer include issues of diversity and inclusion in our modules on Comparative Family Law, *Direito da Igualdade Social* [Social Equality Law], and *Direitos Fundamentais* [Fundamental Rights].

### **1.1.3. High impact research, awareness raising and capacity building to promote responsible and sustainable business conduct in Portugal and beyond**

In 2020, NOVA School of Law created the [NOVA Centre on Business, Human Rights and the Environment](#) (NOVA BHRE) founded and directed by Professor Claire Bright and supported by a team composed of students (undergraduates and postgraduates), researchers (PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers) as well as renown national and international experts.

The NOVA BHRE is a multidisciplinary academic centre which main goal is to contribute to fostering responsible and Sustainable business conduct in Portugal, Europe and beyond that upholds respect for human rights, decent work and environmental standards throughout global value chains. In this way it aims to



advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals which 'seek to realize the human rights of all'.

The main pillars of the activities of the NOVA BHRE are threefold:

- To conduct high quality research with an emphasis on applied academic work which puts the latest academic research directly into practice. In particular, the team seeks to clarify the role of law in corporate sustainability and analyse the effectiveness of the various legal frameworks in prompting sustainable due diligence practices by companies. The work of various members of the NOVA BHRE has directly contributed to legislative developments taking place at the domestic and European levels. For example, the [study for the European Commission on due diligence requirements through the supply chains](#) co written by Professor Claire Bright forms the basis for the current Draft Directive of the European Commission on [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence](#).

- To promote awareness and capacity building around key issues of sustainable business conduct through the organisation of high level events (conferences, practical workshops and webinars) as well as [podcasts](#) and [blog posts](#). The last Annual Conference of the NOVA BHRE organised in September 2022 counted with the participation of the EU Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders, the Secretary-General of the Portuguese Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as members of the UN Working Group of Business and Human Rights, members of the Portuguese government, scholars, civil society organisations and businesses from 5 continents.

It also aims to train the next generation of sustainable business leaders and legal practitioners through the development of courses and trainings (the last training on Due Diligence and Corporate Sustainability offered in December 2022 to the members of the Portuguese Chamber of Commerce and Industry was attended by over 140 participants).

- To serve as a platform of exchange, facilitating strong connections, exchanges and collaborations between multistakeholders including academics from various disciplines and institutions, companies, NGOs, legal practitioners, government officials, trade-unions, investors, business organisations as well as European and international organisations.

#### **1.1.4. Promoting the rights of asylum seekers**

The NOVA Refugee Clinic – Legal Clinic (NRC) is the legal clinic of the NOVA School of Law which aims to develop research in the field of asylum law, in order to monitor and evaluate the existing legal and political responses in this matter, as well as propose and recommend changes and/or the development of mechanisms that guarantee adequate public asylum policies to protect and respect the rights of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in Portugal.



Counting on research projects, to which a strong pedagogical component is added, the NOVA Refugee Clinic also aims to guide and refer applicants and beneficiaries of international protection to the competent services in the issues raised.

In order to achieve its goals, the NOVA Refugee Clinic develops work of an informative nature and produces research and content in the area of the right of asylum, also developing training, capacity building and awareness actions.

The main activities of the NOVA Refugee Clinic revolve around 3 aspects:

- **Teaching** : *learning-by-doing* principle .
- **Research** : dissemination of studies and reports based on information and experience acquired in carrying out the project.
- **Support services to the community**: guidance and referral to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection through an

## 1.2. Initiatives to Advance the Protection of the Environment

### **1.2.1. Waste management**

NOVA School of Law is working on a developed a waste and management strategy in partnership with [Electrão](#) (a Portuguese entity which assumes responsibility for waste management). Various points with containers have already been [installed at NOVA University](#) and NOVA School of Law is planning to instal containers for electric waste, batteries and household appliances and light bulbs (in addition to the general recycling container that are already available).

In addition, NOVA School of Law actively seeks to promote research in the field of environmental protection. In this perspective, the work carried out by two recently created Knowledge Centres can be highlighted.

### **1.2.2. Promoting Research in the field of environment, climate and energy law**

The [NOVA Green Lab](#) is a knowledge centre founded in 2019 as part of the CEDIS (Centre for Research on Law and Society), the research centre of NOVA School of Law. Since October 2022, it has been coordinated by the Abreu Chair in ESG Impact, Professor Lucila de Almeida.

The NOVA Green Lab aims to promote legal and multidisciplinary research in the field of environmental, climate, and energy law, with a particular focus on the challenges to the implementation of the European Green Deal in Portugal, the European Union, and its global reach. Besides encouraging intensive scholarly debate, the knowledge centre aims to facilitate access of policymakers, civil society, stakeholders, and citizens of different generations to the knowledge needed to achieve a better and more sustainable future.



By pursuing the goals for research, education and dissemination, NOVA Green Lab proactively supports all the objectives set by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 15 (life on land).

The activities and publications of the NOVA Green Lab deliver different outputs, from scientific research to events, courses, blogs, podcasts and YouTube series, all with the purpose of fomenting a better and more sustainable future.

In 2023, NOVA Green Lab will focus on developing two outputs. The academic output has the purpose of promoting depth and multidisciplinary research with the purpose of building a better comprehension of the concept of Greenwashing, the thresholds of its practices, how it has been regulated, and how courts have addressed the issue in the litigation.

The stakeholder's output will focus on the Circular Economy, most precisely the challenges to overcome the legal and regulatory barriers to enhance the supply chain of waste-to-plastic and waste-to-energy.

The goals of the Green Lab are as follows:

- Conduct innovative and high-quality legal and multidisciplinary research in the field of environmental, climate and energy law, with the purpose of accelerating the transformations for a more sustainable future in Portugal, the European Union, and on the global scale;
- Facilitate the dialogue and collaboration between academia, policymakers, stakeholders, civil society, and citizens of different generations;
- Disseminate the knowledge created through academic publications and ensure the accessibility of the knowledge created to policymakers, stakeholders, civil society, and citizens through events, blogs, and media;
- Engage students and early-career researchers with legal and multidisciplinary questions and methodologies aiming to solve the great challenges of climate change, energy and just transitions;
- Promote high-level education addressed to students and professionals with the learning objective of improving awareness of the sustainability challenges and transferring skills to solve them in the realm of law.

### **1.2.3. Promoting the protection of Oceans**

[NOVA OCEAN](#) is specially committed to SDG 14 – life below water -, in line with the participation of NOVA School of Law to the *United Nations Global Compact*, the European Union blue agenda and the National Ocean Strategy 2021-2030.

Besides promoting and participating in several conferences, the NOVA OCEAN has an active research agenda and is participating in an innovative joint programme dedicated to the development of Blue Bio Economy, as part of a consortium that joins more than 80 entities. Nova OCEAN is also about to lead a project that combines





Ocean with gender equality, aiming to assess the role of women in the ocean economy.

The NOVA OCEAN Knowledge Centre is anchored in the [Master's Degree in Law and Economics of the Sea](#) – Ocean Governance – created in 2015 (and distinguished by Eduniversal's international ranking as the best in the world in Maritime Management), that has already developed and import research work, promoted partnerships, internships, and research visits.

It should also be noted that the NOVA Law School is the only higher education institution in Portugal that is a host institution of the prestigious *United Nations Programme "The Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme for Human Resources Development and Advancement of the Legal Order of the World's Oceans"*. The NOVA OCEAN Knowledge Centre aims to create a new interest for knowledge related to the ocean, namely among the BA students.

## **2. Measurement of outcomes**

NOVA School of Law is monitoring closely the gender diversity of our staff, students, and research outputs. The data attest to the attention to a remarkable gender balance in top positions (3 deans in a row are women, and 2 out of 3 vice-deans are also women), in the highest ranks (with women outnumbering men as full professors) and in NOVA School of Law staff.

In addition, significant steps were taken and include, particularly, the appointment of an officer in charge of equality and inclusion (Professor Nausica Palazzo), the adoption of guidelines in the Pedagogical Council to account for work-life balance and family commitments.

We also monitor closely and strongly encourage the contribution of each of our Professors to each of the SDGs through their research and teaching activities. For example, the number of Professors withing NOVA School of Law contributing to the SDGs is as follows:

SDG	Number of Professors contributing to the SDG through their Research
<b>1. No poverty</b>	3
<b>2. Zero Hunger</b>	1
<b>3. Good health and well being</b>	2
<b>4. Quality Education</b>	4
<b>5. Gender Equality</b>	9

<b>6. Clean Water and Sanitation</b>	1
<b>8. Decent Work and Economic Growth</b>	4
<b>9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b>	4
<b>10. Reduced Inequalities</b>	11
<b>11. Sustainable Cities and Communities</b>	3
<b>12. Responsible Consumption and Production</b>	4
<b>13. Climate Action</b>	5
<b>15. Life on land</b>	2
<b>16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b>	12
<b>17. Partnerships for the Goals</b>	3