

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

Asker Næringsforening



Period covered by this Communication on Engagement 2021 - 2023

From: 31.05.22

To: 31.12.23

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

Please use the box below to include the statement of continued support signed by your organization's Chief Executive or equivalent.

30. june 2024

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Asker Næringsforening 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.

Sincerely yours,

*Steinar Bustad
CEO*

Part II. Description of Actions

Asker Næringsforening has been actively engaging in outreach efforts and awareness-raising initiatives to attract new participants to the UN Global Compact. Here are some key activities and strategies they have employed:

As a member of the UN Global Compact, Asker Næringsforening leverages local networks to foster connections among businesses, NGOs, government entities, and academia. These networks facilitate policy dialogues, collective action, and partnerships aimed at promoting the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Asker Næringsforening organize, participates in and promotes various educational initiatives, such as workshops and webinars, to educate local businesses about sustainable practices and the benefits of joining the UN Global Compact. These sessions often focus on practical steps businesses can take to align with the SDGs and incorporate responsible management principles

Asker Næringsforening has independently organized the implementation of several courses on various sustainability topics. These include the Green Competitiveness Program, courses for Eco-Lighthouse certification, the Circular Academy, Social Profile Asker - inclusion and certification, and Asker Opportunity. In connection with Social Profile Asker, the UN Global Compact participated with its own presentation on inclusion.

Asker Næringsforening has a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have not yet established a sustainable strategy. Their challenges include, among other things, expertise and resources. Asker Næringsforening is committed to ensuring that all local businesses develop a sustainable strategy in line with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)

Awareness Campaigns: Through targeted awareness campaigns, Asker Næringsforening highlights the importance of sustainable business practices and the impact of the UN Global Compact. These campaigns often use social media, newsletters, and local events to reach a broader audience and encourage participation.

Collaborative Projects: The organization engages in collaborative projects with other local and international entities to advance sustainability goals. These projects often involve practical actions and innovative solutions to local and global challenges, demonstrating the collaborative spirit of the UN Global Compact

These efforts by Asker Næringsforening help to build a stronger local network committed to sustainable development and responsible business practices, aligning with the broader goals of the UN Global Compact.

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.

Asker Næringsforening has seen significant positive outcomes from its sustainability initiatives:

The Green Competitiveness Program:

The program was a pilot and included 10 companies.

The companies have reported enhanced competitiveness and improved environmental performance, integrating sustainable practices into their core strategies. The program provided deeper insights into sustainability and how to assess one's own footprint in relation to ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria and the The UN Global Compact's 10 Principles for Businesses.

Courses for Eco-Lighthouse Certification:

30 local businesses have attended courses and achieved Eco-Lighthouse certification, leading to reduced environmental impact and improved operational efficiencies. The Eco-Lighthouse courses are supported and subsidized by Asker Municipality. Asker Næringsforening will continue to follow up SME's to develop and improve their sustainable strategy.

The Circular Academy:

This is a yearly academy, started in 2023. The top management in 20 companies have participated in our Circular Academy. 3 hours x 5 academy days with insight into leading circular activities. Many companies have successfully adopted circular economy principles, reduced waste and promoting resource efficiency. This has fostered a better and deeper understanding of innovation and sustainable business models.

Social Profile Asker - Inclusion and Certification:

The project was initiated to promote inclusion and diversity within the business community in Asker municipality. To increase attractiveness for companies, a local certification was established to document the company's social sustainability profile and commitment to social responsibility.

The project is designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) better include individuals facing challenges in entering the regular workforce. To enhance their capacity to take on this social responsibility, companies need to be familiar with local social enterprises, and have insight into public support schemes related to the inclusion of individuals struggling to find employment in conventional businesses.

The aim of the project is not the inclusion process itself but to ensure that company management understands where and how they can take social responsibility by including individuals with various challenges. The target groups for inclusion in this project are young people outside the labor market, individuals with disabilities, and immigrants. These are diverse and heterogeneous groups, requiring insight for successful contribution. This project focuses on the social dimension of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by emphasizing inclusion and diversity in the business community. The initiative has promoted social inclusion, and 24 companies have received local certification for their inclusive practices. UNGCN participated in our introduction of the pilot project that was supported by Viken County Authority.

Asker Opportunity:

The program was designed to include immigrants with a minimum of a bachelor's degree into the workforce. Asker Opportunity was helping skilled immigrants find suitable employment enhances their economic contribution and supports local economic growth. Many immigrants possess valuable skills and qualifications that are underutilized. By integrating them into the workforce, businesses can benefit from a diverse talent pool. A diverse workforce brings different perspectives and ideas, fostering innovation and creativity within organizations. Helping immigrants find meaningful employment promotes social inclusion and cohesion, reducing barriers and fostering a more integrated community.

The program was conducted twice, with a total of 24 participants. All participants secured employment after completing Asker Opportunity. This program will continue in the future.