



# GOVERNMENTS AND THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT: MOBILIZING BUSINESS ACTION TO ADVANCE AGENDA 2030



People everywhere expect leadership from Governments and companies to tackle major global issues, such as rising inequality, corruption, increased competition for natural resources and climate change. Recognizing that a sustainable future cannot be secured through Government action alone, the United Nations Global Compact — the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world — can be a valuable partner to Member States in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UN Global Compact is a call to companies everywhere to align their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. In numerous United Nations General Assembly resolutions, Member States have recognized the vital role that the UN Global Compact and its Local Networks play to advance UN values and responsible business practices. Together, the UN Global Compact and Governments have tremendous potential to drive progress on Agenda 2030.

# Win-Win Collaboration: How Governments Can Engage with the UN Global Compact

There are four key ways Governments can support the efforts of the UN Global Compact to advance the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## 1 JOIN THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT GOVERNMENT GROUP

Political and financial support from Member States to the UN Global Compact is critical to the success of the initiative. The Government Group of the UN Global Compact is composed of Member State representatives who meet bi-annually with UN Global Compact leadership and senior staff to provide strategic guidance, review progress and impact, and shape future programmatic plans and priorities. Government Group members also provide important financial and political support to the initiative. The Chair of the Government Group — a position that rotates on an annual basis — holds a seat on the multi-stakeholder UN Global Compact Board chaired by the UN Secretary-General.

## 3 COUNTRY-LEVEL ACTION WITH UN GLOBAL COMPACT LOCAL NETWORKS

Located in nearly 70 countries around the world, Global Compact Local Networks support companies to operate responsibly and find opportunities to collaborate with Governments, the UN and civil society to advance national SDG priorities. Local Networks offer a particularly important entry point for small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries to find opportunities to support sustainable development. In countries where a Local Network is yet to be established, the Government can lay the groundwork by helping generate a critical mass of awareness, resources and corporate supporters.

## 2 PARTICIPATE IN THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT GROUP OF FRIENDS

The UN Global Compact Group of Friends is open to all Member States and offers a chance to learn about the work of the UN Global Compact in greater detail and explore opportunities for collaboration. As part of the Group of Friends activities, representatives of UN Missions in New York convene four times annually — both at the Ambassador and Expert-level — for briefings on the work of the UN Global Compact and to discuss the progress and impact of the initiative.

## 4 PROGRAMME COLLABORATION

Governments are valued contributors to the UN Global Compact portfolio of **Action Platforms** which convene stakeholders around time-bound projects on a wide range of sustainability challenges. The Platforms enable Governments to work closely with business, Local Networks, civil society and the UN on specific issues of mutual interest.

Governments can also join the **UN Global Compact Expert Group** consisting of representatives of businesses, civil society, trade unions, UN Agencies, Governments and Global Compact Local Networks. Expert Group members are invited to share perspectives on emerging trends and gaps in corporate sustainability, provide input to programmatic prioritization and to support the agenda-setting of the UN Global Compact.

Further, Governments can make use of the suite of programmatic tools, resources and learning opportunities the UN Global Compact offers to its participants. For instance, the **UN Global Compact Academy** coaches participants to develop their understanding of critical topics and helps them build actionable skills. Governments can also take advantage of networking and learning opportunities through conferences, events and side meetings convened by the UN Global Compact and its Networks around the world.

## Partnerships in Action: Examples of Collaboration Between the UN Global Compact and Governments



In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development finances staff assistance, office space and political support to help grow the country's Local Network.

In Kenya, the Danish International Development Agency provided critical capacity-building support to enable the Kenyan Local Network to grow and deliver greater local SDG impact.

In Colombia, the Local Network is taking part in an ongoing policy dialogue with the High Level Commission for the Alignment and Effective Implementation of the 2030 Agenda



The Government of Norway worked closely with the UN Global Compact and its multi-stakeholder network of experts to design and launch an Action Platform on the Ocean, which it continues to work with as a key partner.



Nearly half of all Global Compact Local Networks (41%) are working in partnership with their Government to integrate business into the voluntary national review process. Eight Local Networks sent representatives in their national delegations to the 2018 High-level Political Forum in New York.