

## **Voluntary Code of Conduct Inclusions**

The following document includes voluntary and suggested guidance to consider when writing a code of conduct that you can share with suppliers to ensure your value chain is aware of relevant sustainability-related behaviours and processes. These are suggestions only, based on existing code of conduct documents supplied by Ad Net Zero supporters and the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles. If using this copy, please ensure it is compliant with your own internal code of conduct and practices and adapt copy where needed.

### **Title**

This varies from organisation to organisation. Some call it a 'charter', some their 'principles', some simply 'supplier code of conduct'.

### **Overview**

This should offer an insight into your own business practices, explaining the ethics you hold your own company to, and explain why you are expecting this of stakeholders, including suppliers. You could also outline the onward effect of these behaviours, asking that your stakeholders in turn implement them with their suppliers and subcontractors where possible.

If using the copy below, some of which is adapted from the copy outlined in the [UN Global Compact's Ten Principles](#), you could reference this as a core part of this code of conduct.

"By incorporating the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact into strategies, policies and procedures, and establishing a culture of integrity, companies are not only upholding their basic responsibilities to people and planet, but also setting the stage for long-term success."<sup>i</sup>

### **Example Voluntary Copy- this has been divided into three categories; Environmental, Social, and Governance**

#### **Environmental**

- Your company should define its vision, policies and strategies to include sustainable development and work towards the improvement of environmental performance across business. You should utilise an EMS or other management system(s) to maximise resource usage efficiency and minimise negative impacts of your business. You will operate in line with Principle 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration to support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges, communicating potential risks for the consumer and providing complete information on risks to the consumer and the public.
- Your company should measure, track and communicate progress on incorporating sustainability principles into business practices, including reporting against global operating standards. This includes measuring your GHG emissions and other pollution sources, having these audited by a third party.

- Your company should operate in compliance with all relevant national and international environmental legislation, obtaining permits where necessary and complying with health and safety laws.
- If resources allow, your company should use your emissions inventory to determine a baseline and set science based, validated reduction and net zero targets.

## **Social**

- We expect suppliers not to directly or indirectly participate, facilitate, enable, or benefit in human rights violations and abuses in their own operations, supply chain, use or design of products/ services, and/or customers. Suppliers will adopt and disclose a commitment to human rights covering their operations and value chains, adhering to applicable voluntary or mandatory human rights frameworks. Suppliers will publish their Modern Slavery Statement if in scope of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and work to improve awareness of modern slavery and human rights among staff and improve processes to identify breaches of human rights.<sup>ii</sup>
- Ensure you do not tolerate acts of bullying and harassment, taking any complaints seriously and investigating all allegations made. Ensure that any employee found to have breached this policy will be dealt with under your disciplinary procedure, which could lead to disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal. Your approach and practices should be underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 (the “Equality Act”) which provides that acts of harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation are unlawful.<sup>iii</sup>
- Ensure wages and benefits paid for a standard working week meet, at a minimum, national legal standards or industry benchmark standards, whichever is higher. In any event wages should always be enough to meet basic needs and to provide some discretionary income. Working hours must comply with national laws, collective agreements, and international labour standards, which recommend the progressive reduction of normal hours of work, when appropriate, to 40 hours per week, without any reduction in workers’ wages as hours are reduced.<sup>iv</sup>
- Ensure your company has policies and procedures which make qualifications, skill and experience the basis for the recruitment, placement, training and advancement of staff at all levels, and do not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. These include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.<sup>v</sup>
- Ensure your business upholds the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, respecting the right of all employers and all workers to freely and voluntarily establish and join groups for the promotion and defence of their

occupational interests. Put in place non-discriminatory policies and procedures with respect to trade union organization, union membership and activity in such areas as applications for employment and decisions on advancement, dismissal or transfer.

**Governance**

- Your company is expected to avoid bribery, extortion and other forms of corruption, and to proactively develop policies and concrete programmes to address corruption internally and within its supply chains. Your business can sign the “Anti-corruption Call to Action”, which is a call from Business to Governments to address corruption and foster effective governance for a sustainable and inclusive global economy. Your company’s participation in this Call to Action underscores your continued efforts to integrate anti-corruption into your strategies and operations.

**Please see here for a breakdown of which areas correlate to which of the Ten UN Global Compact Principles**

Human trafficking.	Principles 1-2
Exploitation and bullying.	
Wages and working hours.	Principles 3-6
Discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs etc.	
Collective bargaining.	
Improvement of environmental performance across business.	Principles 7-9
Encouraged to measure GHGs and other environmental impacts.	
Compliance with environmental legislation.	
Net zero targets.	
Anti-corruption & bribery	Principle 10

- i. [The Ten Principles | UN Global Compact](#)
- ii. [legal-and-general\\_2024-supplier-code-of-conduct.pdf \(legalandgeneral.com\)](#)
- iii. [Bullying and Harassment, Tesco. 2021](#)
- iv. [Ethics Policy Statement, UK Gov.uk. 2018](#)
- v. [Equality, diversity and inclusion policy template | Acas](#)

<sup>i</sup> [The Ten Principles | UN Global Compact](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [legal-and-general\\_2024-supplier-code-of-conduct.pdf \(legalandgeneral.com\)](#)

- <sup>iii</sup> <https://www.tescopl.com/sustainability/documents/policies/bullying-and-harassment/>

- <sup>iv</sup> [Ethics policy statement for suppliers and sub contractors.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- <sup>v</sup> [Equality, diversity and inclusion policy template | Acas](#)