

Report

Communication on progress (COP)

Annual report to United Nations Global Compact

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Communication on progress (COP)

1 Preface

SINTEF became member of UN Global Compact in January 2009, and this is our sixth communication of progress report.

SINTEF is a private, not for profit research institute, which is organized as a foundation with subsidiaries. Through its first-rate solution-oriented research and knowledge generation, SINTEF creates significant value for its Norwegian and international customers, the public sector and society as a whole. Our strategy lays a heavy emphasis on SINTEF's social responsibility, which is to develop society through research and innovation.

As SINTEF's direct activities by themselves is performed in accordance with the UN Global Compact principles, this COP will mainly describe the content of our research activities for our customers and how the results from this research may have an impact on the global environment and society in a way that will support the ten principles.

2 Statement of continued support – Technology for a better society

SINTEF is committed to contribute to a sustainable future, to human rights, labour rights, sound environment and anti-corruption and to comply with the ten universally principles of the UN Global Compact.

This Communication on progress demonstrates some of our efforts during 2015. This expresses our continued support and commitment for the principles.

SINTEF acts in accordance with the principles by the way we conduct our own operations. As an independent research institute we also contribute actively by doing research that contributes to a better society. This is at the core of our business.

SINTEF's vision is "Technology for a better society", which inspires and commits us. In this year's report, we present some examples on our research activities in 2015, relevant for Global Compact issue areas. These are examples of research that aim at improving environment, health and the quality of our society.

Knowledge and innovation play decisive roles in developing jobs for the future, the wellbeing of people and enabling us to solve major global challenges. None of these will be possible without major investments in research and innovation.

The development of new technology requires high scientific quality, the ability to innovate, national and international collaboration at all levels and good political leadership.

It is our commitment to contribute actively in this work.

Alexandra Bech Gjørsv
President of SINTEF



3 Human rights

All activities in SINTEF shall adhere to the principles laid down in our ethical guidelines. The documents are easily found on our [website](#). The main document, our "[Ethical compass](#)" states among other things that:

- SINTEF shall always ensure neutrality related to all political parties and political decision-making processes in their activities.
- All people are equally valued by SINTEF. No form of discrimination is acceptable, whether on the grounds of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or age.
- SINTEF employees have the right to deny the participation in research projects if the content of the projects are in conflict with their personal religious or ethical conviction.
- Ethical Principles shall be an integrated part of SINTEF's Management Principles, and following up our ethical guidelines is a responsibility of line management.
- SINTEF expects and requires our suppliers and partners to share our ethical foundations. Suppliers and partners who are involved in our activities must accept SINTEF's ethical guidelines in writing.
- SINTEF will work to achieve a good work environment characterized by equality and opportunity.

In order to ensure that these principles are followed, management procedures in SINTEF include the following tools:

- The document "SINTEF's statement of corporate business ethics and social responsibility on entry into contracts", which is used as an addendum to all subcontracts to ensure that our subcontractors are not in direct conflict with the ten principles.
- The document "Supplier Evaluation Questionnaire", which must be submitted and accepted for all major suppliers to SINTEF before contracts of delivery may be signed.
- Participation in national Research Ethics Committees.
- SINTEF's Ethical Ombudsman, who shall be appointed directly by the SINTEF President, and whose responsibility is to investigate whether our ethical principles are followed, and to receive and handle ethical complaints from employees or clients.
- Ethics module in SINTEF's internal training courses for new employees and new managers.
- Ethics module easily available from the front page of the SINTEF intranet.

Whenever SINTEF wants to establish a new international office abroad, a risk analysis shall be performed, where ethics and CSR aspects are part of the analysis. A similar risk analysis will be performed for projects where part of the work is performed in a country outside EU, Canada or US.

SINTEF also contributes to the improvement of global human rights through our research and development work within the health research field, like research on hospital patient treatments (diagnosis and cure). Much research activities are also performed to improve the life quality of the elderly or the disabled. See Annex A for examples and details.

4 Labour

SINTEF's policy on employees focuses on the following principles:

- SINTEF shall be an attractive place to work, offering unique prospects for those with the ability and drive to develop their potential.
- SINTEF shall ensure that high ethical standards and awareness of Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) are applied to all of its activities.
- SINTEF shall offer a work environment in which its staff are respected and appreciated, and where they are given the opportunity to develop their abilities in cooperation with their colleagues.
- SINTEF shall offer professional challenges and tasks that have a high value for its customers and society.
- SINTEF shall recruit and keep competent people in a global labour market.
- SINTEF shall encourage team spirit, creativity and initiative in its scientific groups.
- SINTEF shall develop leadership that is explicit, inclusive and inspiring.

To increase our focus on these themes, to exchange experience with other research institutions about HR-strategies, and to further commit ourselves to these principles, SINTEF has signed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers. We are also participating in the common development of HR strategy for researchers.

SINTEF involves their trade union organizations in all discussions regarding issues involving employees and organizational changes. Our employees are organized within 6 different organizations, and SINTEF maintains a more or less identical collective agreement with all of them. In addition to questions of remuneration, the collective agreement regulates issues like

- Equal rights policy
- Recruitment policy
- Advancement policy
- Family policy
- Collective bargaining
- Employee representation in the SINTEF Council and the SINTEF Board
- Paid time to work as an employee representative
- Cooperation between SINTEF and the union.

Membership in trade unions is voluntarily and member lists are confidential. However, the number of members in each of the 6 trade union organizations in SINTEF is public, and shows that two thirds of our employees have chosen to become a trade union member.

By the UNIVERSUM evaluation of attractive working sites, the Norwegian University Students within technology ranks SINTEF among the most attractive employers in Norway.

SINTEF employees are strongly involved in the development and implementation of HSE policies. This happens both through their elected HSE representatives, but also through strong awareness and considerations in their research activities. Every second year SINTEF issues a major anonymous inquiry among all employees, in order to evaluate the state of the working conditions and working environment. The result of this inquiry is distributed to all managers in our organizations, and their management performance is subsequently measured by how well they manage to improve conditions based on the inquiry.

SINTEF has also entered into a framework agreement with Norwegian State authorities: “Cooperation Agreement on a More Inclusive Working Life” (the “IA treaty”). The main goal of the IA agreement is to *“improve the working environment, enhance presence at work, prevent and reduce sick leave and prevent exclusion and withdrawal from working life”*. The secondary goals of the agreement are:

- Reduction in sick leave.
- Prevent withdrawal and increase employment of people with impaired functional ability.
- Stimulate older employees to continue working.

All SINTEF employees work in our research facilities in Norway and Denmark. However, SINTEF recruits scientific personnel of all nationalities, and presently persons from 71 different countries work in our organizations. 21 per cent of our employees were born and raised in other countries than Norway. SINTEF has set up an integration programme for new appointees from other countries and their families. The programme offers expatriate services, free Norwegian classes and teaching in English in the SINTEF School. Diversity management is one of the topics. The Work Environment Survey has documented that our colleagues from other countries are pleased with working in SINTEF.

One of the aims of SINTEF is to raise the proportion of female research staff and managers. In 2015 35% of our staff were females, and 36% of our managers were women. The President of the SINTEF Group is a woman. SINTEF attempts to recruit women to new appointments and to promote female managers from its own ranks. In 2014, a project co-funded by the Research Council of Norway, was launched to encourage the development of a better gender balance in top-level academic positions and research management. This

project is expected to provide SINTEF and other Norwegian research institutions with useful knowledge, and to increase the proportion of female management staff in SINTEF.

Several of SINTEF's research projects are aimed at improvement of working conditions, in particular improving the safety of employees in high-risk occupations. Examples might be found in Appendix A.

5 Environment

SINTEF's environmental policy was revised in 2015 and states that *"On the background of our vision of "Technology for a better society", all aspects of SINTEF's activities will be based on our concern for the external environment. SINTEF's environmental policy aims to ensure that both our research itself, and the manner in which we operate, reflect considerations for the external environment. It also intends to ensure that our own environmental performance is upgraded on a continuing basis."*

SINTEF is committed to:

- work for establishment of national and international R&D programmes aimed at development of environmental-friendly technologies
- contribute to the research and development of environmentally friendly solutions through our projects
- emphasize environmental issues in our investments in knowledge development and laboratory facilities
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions, choose energy friendly solutions and avoid harmful emissions to land, air and water
- communicate knowledge, develop solutions and provide standards for environmental-political public debate
- satisfy applicable legal requirements and other requirements we impose on us regarding our environmental aspects

SINTEF has established a common environmental action plan, whose significant aspects include energy-efficient operation and the responsible treatment of waste. All of SINTEF's eight institutes have drawn up their own local environment action plans, and three institutes are already certified in accordance with ISO 14001. In 2015, there were no reported incidents that affected the physical environment.

However, the major contribution from SINTEF to the fulfilment of the UN Global Compact principles is our extensive research activity within energy and environmental research for our clients. When our clients apply new environmental-friendly technology developed by SINTEF, the global ecological footprint is reduced far more than what is possible by implementation of improved environmental performances within our own activities.

Creating new jobs contributing to the development of new medicines, health technologies, securing safe supply of food and water are also prioritized areas.

Part of the research related to environmental improvement concerns the research on energy efficiency, renewable energy production, carbon capture and storage (CCS) and better and more environmental-friendly food production technologies. Similarly, our research on noise reduction in populated areas should be included here. More details on our research activities in 2015 may be found in Appendix A.

6 Anti-corruption

SINTEF executes a strict policy regarding corruption in all its forms. Our ethical guidelines document states that *"... Corruption undermines confidence in a state governed by law and democratic institutions, weakens ethical and moral values, hinders rationalization and efficiency and undermines all forms of business activity and free competition. The SINTEF Group distances itself from all forms of corruption and will make active efforts to ensure that it does not occur in our commercial activity."*

The document also states that SINTEF will work to prevent practices of minor payment and that SINTEF will compete on a fair and ethical basis within the framework of current rules of competition, and will not prevent others from competing with us. The ban on bribery in SINTEF includes all kinds of improper benefits, not only money, and applies both to the private and public sectors.

The anti-corruption ideas are mandatory topics in internal training courses for new employees and new managers, but are also regularly discussion topics on larger management meetings.

In order to further support this policy, SINTEF has since 2007 been a member of the international anti-corruption organization Transparency International.

To make sure that corruption practices are not developed in any parts of the organization, SINTEF encourages [whistle-blowing](#) and has established confidential reporting channels to the ethical ombudsman in SINTEF.

Appendix A

In this appendix we present some examples on our research activities in 2015, relevant for Global Compact issue areas. The descriptions have previously been published on SINTEF's web during 2015, and are linked to the web-site:

[Bacteria from the sea join the fight against cancer and infections](#)

Norwegian scientists are opening the gates of nature's secret medicine factories, with the aim of giving us new weapons against cancers and resistant bacteria. [Read more](#)

[Plugging old oil wells to secure environment](#)

Thousands of old offshore oil wells will have to be plugged to prevent them leaking. SINTEF researchers propose a solution that may offer some relief. [Read more](#)

[Making the most of waste heat](#)

A new SINTEF project aims to exploit large volumes of energy that industries dispose of in the form of waste heat, by upgrading the heat using heat pumps. [Read more](#)

[Fighting tuberculosis in the shadow of HIV](#)

In Malawi in southern Africa 50,000 new cases of tuberculosis are registered every year. SINTEF scientist has identified clear signs that information about TB is not reaching out to all strata of the population as well as campaigns about HIV do. [Read more](#)

[Healthier indoor climate for heavy industry](#)

A dust extraction unit that exploits the laws of nature has made the indoor climate on the 'shop-floor' of Elkem Thamshavn smelter in Norway 75 percent cleaner. [Read more](#)

[Hearts on screen](#)

With the patient's heart displayed on a screen, cardiac specialists and engineers can run simulations of a variety of surgical procedures and predict their effects prior to an operation. This will save lives. [Read more](#)

[How about a Power Road?](#)

In the future our roads and bridges will be paying back the energy used to build them. Power Roads are on their way! [Read more](#)

[Combating multi-resistant bacteria with nanotechnology](#)

Researchers are developing novel drugs against multi-resistant bacteria in order to make more effective treatments available to tuberculosis and staphylococcus aureus patients. SINTEF is contributing with the development of antibiotic-loaded nanoparticles and their efficacy testing against MRSA. [Read more](#)

[Intelligent clothing for extreme weather](#)

Norwegian laboratories are developing technical clothing that can "sense" how your body is responding. This will make working under extreme weather conditions safer. [Read more](#)

[Solar cells in the roof and nanotechnology in the walls](#)

Cars and vehicle traffic do not produce the greatest volumes of climate gas emissions – it is our own homes. New research can put an end to all that. [Read more](#)

Documenting how dementia sufferers benefit from GPS

A new study of 200 dementia sufferers in Norway reveals that almost all experience greater peace of mind and increased levels of physical activity using GPS devices. [*Read more*](#)

Ecological food to have longer 'life'

Have you heard about the method that keeps salmon fresh for a whole month, without the use of chemicals? [*Read more*](#)

Hybrid vessels will soon be on the market

Hybrid cars have been a success. The shipping industry is now moving in the same green direction. [*Read more*](#)

Food factory for baby fish is first of its kind

Norwegian company C-Feed – a spin-off from SINTEF - builds world's first industrial plant for copepods – a fish-fry feed for the production of ballan wrasse, tuna, halibut and other marine species. [*Read more*](#)

A friendly robot

Researchers have developed a robot that adjusts its movements in order to avoid colliding with the people and objects around it. This provides new opportunities for more friendly interaction between people and machines. [*Read more*](#)

Self-training to discourage the jobless from returning to the benefits system

Unemployed people who have spent long periods on benefit become passive, and surrender responsibility for their situation to others. Researchers develop a system to help them obtain a sense of empowerment. [*Read more*](#)