



# ESTABLISHING YOUR ESG POLICY COMMITMENTS

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ESGMARK®

## **Establishing your Environmental, Social and Governance policy commitments**

For your business to improve its environmental, social and governance practices and contribute towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, it is crucial to set a clear framework of ESG policy commitments. Without establishing clear standards across your organisation, it is difficult to implement your practices and to ensure that the practices of your colleagues, partners and suppliers uphold those company values.

The best and most straight forward way to set ESG standards across your business and its supply chain is to create an ethical code of conduct. A code of conduct is a set of core rules and principles that act as a benchmark against which the internal performance of the business can be measured and that can be used as a precedent for external partners. It defines how employees and members should behave at work but also sets out broader ethical considerations on what behaviours, practices and decisions are accepted and promoted across the business. A credible code of conduct is often based upon the conventions of the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation and promotes responsible conduct, decent working conditions, and environmental standards across a business's supply chain. It illustrates an organisation's commitment to human rights, workers' rights, the environment and anti-corruption.

Below is the ESGmark® template for structuring your own organisation's code of conduct. We have expanded on the UN and ILO principles to include further environmental, social and governance aspects that we feel are important to make sure our members are representing the very best ESG practices across industries. The template is not sector specific and will need altering to suit the specific needs/principles of your business.

It is important to note that this code of conduct is your formal commitment to upholding best practice. It will illustrate to your customers and partners the values your company upholds - crucially this is a commitment for your business to action these principles and ensure your partners also undertake the same commitment.

Once you have completed this template you will need to communicate these standards, support your staff and partners to put them into practice, and monitor outcomes to ensure your company is upholding these commitments. For updates on best practice, keep an eye on our 'Insights' section on our website – [www.esgmark.co.uk](http://www.esgmark.co.uk).

## **Considerations**

Before you start work on the policy itself, ensure you are clear on your organisation's values, principles and hoped for outcomes.

- Who does the policy apply to? Are you a subsidiary company or do subsidiary companies fall under your remit?
- Who are you responsible to? Your shareholders, stakeholders, customers, clients, ownership, employees etc?
- What is specific to your industry or sector that might need particular attention?
- Are you ensuring that the policies you are committing to are actionable in your day- to-day business?
- Are you prepared to publicly share the code and be held accountable to your standards?

## **ESGmark® Code of Conduct Template**

[Insert company name] code of conduct is based on ESGmark®'s environmental, social and governance standards for good practice. These principles are to be actioned across the whole of [insert company name]'s supply chain, by our employees, suppliers and partners. [Insert company name] are committed to working with our staff and partners to implement best practice and to work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We work within our direct organisation and with our suppliers and partners to go beyond these requirements where possible and make all of our products, operations and workplaces the very best for our workers and the environment.

### **Environmental Conduct**

#### **1.A. The Environment**

[Insert company name] is committed to promoting a prosperous and healthy environment for people, animals and planet. All employees, suppliers and/or partners are required to treat the environment with respect and adopt a credible, proactive approach to preventing negative impacts on the environment. We are committed to minimizing natural resource depletion through optimizing our processes and proactively tracking, assessing and reducing our negative impact on the environment. All suppliers/partners are required to be honest and transparent about the environmental impact of their activities.

[Insert company name], is committed to working with suppliers/partners to identify and prioritise areas of action and improvement.

The remainder of this document is exclusive to ESGmark® community members. To request access please click [here](#).