

WORKING GROUP ON THE ENGAGEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN GCLNs

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Working group mandate

“Until now, most Global Compact Local Networks (GCLNs) have no policy or practices in place to guide their interaction of engagement with civil society organizations.

During the recent ALNF in Bonn, GCLNs agreed to establish a Working Group to explore the various challenges and opportunities faced by GCLNs when it comes to the engagement of civil society organizations.

The Working Group is tasked with issuing recommendations re: the specific roles CSOs can play within a GCLN” (WG Agenda).



Objectives – Discuss and Issue Recommendations regarding...

- What is the current status of CSO engagement within the Global Compact at the global and local levels?
- What specific roles should civil society organizations play within a GCLN?
- How can GCLNs practically manage the participation of civil society organizations?
- How should civil society organizations report on their progress in implementing/promoting/advancing the principles?



GCLN Minimum Requirements

- “[A GCLN] (a) Commit[s] to the principles and practices of the Global Compact. This includes the ten principles themselves, the practice of learning by doing, dialogue, partnership and striving to bring together other stakeholders;” [Current version of the GCLN-GC MOU]

➤ The Working Group does not make any specific proposals for changes to the language of the minimum requirements.



Premises

Definition: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are “...non-governmental and non-profit entities that seek to bring about positive social and environmental change (...). The definition of civil society organizations used by the Global Compact does not include the private sector, academia, labour, or municipalities.”



Premises

CSOs play two different roles within the Global Compact:

- As Global Compact participants they have to implement the ten principles in their own operations and practices*
- As stakeholders of corporations they play an important role in fostering responsible business practices by acting in a constructive way either in collaboration with corporations or as one of the stakeholder groups holding companies accountable to their commitment to the Global Compact principles.*

Both roles have been considered by the working group.



Recommendations – For GCLNs (1)

- *GCLNs are strongly recommended to engage CSOs as much as possible within the networks (possibly as full participants);*
- *The WG encourages all GCLNs to test innovative instruments to engage CSOs within the local context;*
- *GCLNs are encouraged to facilitate and foster partnerships between companies and CSOs within the local dimension;*
- *GCLNs are encouraged to reference examples of CSO engagement by other GCLNs for ideas and inspiration.*



Recommendations – For GCO (2)

- *The WG recommends to require CSOs to report annually on their engagement, however, CSO COP requirements should be tailored to the specific functions that CSOs have within Global Compact and should not be the same as for companies;*
- *The WG recommends to create a best practice database to share information on CSOs experiences within the local context;*
- *The WG suggest the creation of a permanent working group which includes GCLN representatives to better define the different roles CSOs play within the initiative and to produce guidelines on CSOs engagement*

