

# Communication on Engagement (COE) with the United Nations Global Compact

April 2019 - February 2021





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# 1. Statement of Continued Support by Director of LSTM

Dear stakeholders,

I am pleased to reaffirm Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's (LSTM) support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.



Our first Communication on Engagement comes in the time of a global pandemic, during which our colleagues and students have continued to work tirelessly to advance global health. We are proud of their efforts and pleased to communicate their achievements that support the UN Global Compact in this document.

We look forward to continuing to support the United Nations in its efforts to create a more socially and economically inclusive global marketplace and advance the collective goals of international cooperation, peace, and development.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Laloo'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Professor David Laloo MB BS MD FRCP FFTM RCPS (Glasg)  
Director of LSTM and Professor of Tropical Medicine**

# The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact

## Human Rights

**Principle 1:** Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

**Principle 2:** make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

## Labour

**Principle 3:** Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

**Principle 4:** the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

**Principle 5:** the effective abolition of child labour; and

**Principle 6:** the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

## Environment

**Principle 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

**Principle 8:** undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

**Principle 9:** encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

## Anti-Corruption

**Principle 10:** Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

## 2. Description of Actions

### 2.1. Human Rights

**Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and**

**Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.**

LSTM's mission is to reduce the burden of sickness and mortality in disease endemic countries through the delivery of effective interventions which improve human health and are relevant to the poorest communities. The outputs and outcomes of our work most closely support [Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), focusing on health.

Our research portfolio is diverse, and undertaken by four departments:

- **Vector Biology**, focusing on the control or elimination of vector borne diseases, including malaria, zika and lymphatic filariasis.
- **Tropical Disease Biology**, focusing on product discovery and development, translation of knowledge into practice and capacity strengthening to address unmet global health challenges, for example, emerging diseases, bacteria and neglected tropical diseases such as schistosomes and snakebite.
- **Clinical Sciences**, focusing on respiratory infections, tuberculosis care and control, malaria epidemiology and control, clinical infectious disease epidemiology, as well as child and adolescent health and evidence synthesis.
- **International Public Health**, focusing on maternal and newborn health, HIV and reproductive health, anaemia, blood transfusion and clinical laboratory systems and health systems development through human resource management and gender equality lenses.

We are also a partner in the [Decade of Health](#) campaign. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, it aims to ensure that the UK continues to prioritise health innovation and collaboration with the rest of the world to tackle the most important health challenges, such as pandemics and preventable diseases.

LSTM Research Ethics Committee (REC) reviews all studies which involve human participants to promote the highest standards of ethical practice within our research teams. REC members are guided by established ethical research principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice, as well as awareness of LSTM's role as an actor in Global Health. REC members carefully consider how participation might affect individual participants and their wider community, to minimise risks that research may pose to their rights or safety.

We continue to recognise our important role in safeguarding vulnerable adults and students in all aspects of our mission. Safeguarding training is included in our corporate induction and all colleagues are required to complete our online Introduction to Safeguarding course as well as sign our code of conduct. The REC review process also serves to actively promote LSTM's safeguarding policy to protect both participants and researchers.

LSTM has a concern reporting system, known as "Freedom to Speak Up". We aim to instil an open culture of speaking up about concerns in order to improve the safety, security and wellbeing of our research participants, patients and other people who come into contact with us, as well as that of our staff, students and other representatives. Engendering a positive speak up culture allows us to identify and improve our understanding of our risk environment and take appropriate action.

LSTM actively encourages staff, students and other representatives to report any issues of concern so that they can be investigated and dealt with quickly and appropriately. The portal is hosted externally to ensure the complete confidentiality of its users. The signposted categories of areas of concern are as follows:

- Safeguarding
- Staff conduct, behaviour and wellbeing
- Student conduct, behaviour and wellbeing
- Data Protection Concerns
- Research Integrity

During the Communication on Engagement reporting period, we have commenced a systematic review of our key people policies, including Dignity at Work, Disciplinary and Grievance, to further support a culture of fairness and mutual respect.

## 2.2. Labour

**Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;**

**Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;**

**Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and**

**Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.**

LSTM is committed to being an employer of choice, with an organisational culture which welcomes all, respects, and values differences and ensures that everyone can fully participate in employment, research and study.

We recognise our obligation to prevent slavery and human trafficking and are committed to endeavouring to ensure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. LSTM strives to work with suppliers or supplier's sub-contractors (the supplier) who treat their workers with dignity and respect, adhere to applicable laws and regulations, and make their products or provide services or works in an environmentally sustainable manner. It is LSTM's policy to request our suppliers to respect the principles of our [Supplier Code of Conduct](#) and adopt practices which comply with it.

Colleagues at LSTM are free to join a trade union and may be accompanied to formal HR meetings by a trade union representative. Our colleagues are represented by a range of different unions and professional bodies. LSTM participates in a national collective bargaining exercise relating to staff pay.

LSTM is committed to opportunities for career progression and development. In the past year we have signed up to the [Concordat on Researcher Development](#) (an international agreement between funders and employers to support research careers in HE). We will implement our plans widely across LSTM, not only the research cohort. We are also adapting internal processes such as recruitment and promotion to ensure they are in line with the [DORA](#) (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment) principles, and requirements, which are intended to improve the way in which research outputs are evaluated.

We have sought to engage with colleagues on important issues and have held townhall meetings to discuss work-life balance and flexible working. Increased homeworking due to COVID-19 has given LSTM and our colleagues a new perspective on agile working, and as a result a working group has been set up to create a long-term framework for institutional and individual benefit.

Across LSTM, further townhall meetings have been held by colleagues to discuss important issues such as community engagement, LGBTQ+ concerns and LSTM's environmental impact, and these led to the establishment of the LGBTQ+ staff network and an initiative to offer work experience opportunities. 2020 also saw the creation and launch of our BAME staff-led network.

Each of our staff-led networks have been invited to appoint a representative to sit on the organisation's Equality and Diversity Committee, co-chaired by the Director of the School and our Global Director of HR. An example of the work our networks are undertaking is our Black History Month 2020 events timetable where the network has collaborated with both internal and external colleagues to celebrate achievements and raise awareness. As COVID-19 changed plans for Pride marches in 2020, our LGBT+ network took part in the LCR MarchONline and ensured visibility through offering all colleagues and students the opportunity to wear an LSTM rainbow lanyard.

An [Equality in Science](#) symposium was held at LSTM in 2019, organised by a group of our PhD students and early career researcher colleagues and aimed to highlight strategies to promote equity within the scientific community. Hosted and supported by LSTM, the day included three sessions examining themes such as barriers to career progression for underrepresented groups. Although COVID-19 has caused the postponement of the 2020 symposium until 2021, our Equality in Science colleagues remain active on Twitter.

LSTM is also a member of Advance HE and use the [Athena SWAN](#) framework to guide our gender equality work. The framework aims to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research. We currently hold three bronze awards (two faculty and one institutional level) and are in the process of self-assessment for submission of an institutional level bid for a silver award in April 2022.



Following colleague feedback, the HR team has undertaken a full review of all fixed-term contracts and as a result of this, over 90 people transferred to permanent contracts throughout 2019-20. Whilst we continue to operate within the parameters of fixed term funding in many cases, we are committed to using fixed term contracts only where necessary.

COVID-19 has posed unprecedented challenges for LSTM and our staff. We have put the wellbeing of our colleagues at the heart of actions and embedded equality and diversity in our COVID-19 response. We recognise that COVID-19 will have affected our colleagues differently and as well as providing support for working through the pandemic, we have amended our Career Track, appointment, promotion and pay review processes to consider the longer-term impact on colleagues and their productivity.



During the period of lockdown, the use of our buildings changed dramatically, and as such our requirements for cleaning also altered. We worked closely with our cleaning contractor to understand the options available to us. Contract termination would have led to redundancies for all staff on the contract, and so, to avoid this we worked with the contractor to redefine room cleans and make the most of the contractual hours. This resulted in deep cleans of all areas and increased cleaning of regularly used areas to obtain optimum value from the agreed contract. This meant that the contractor's staff were able to retain their jobs and work safely in keeping our buildings clean and COVID secure throughout the period of lockdown.

## 2.3. Environment

**Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;**

**Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and**

**Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.**



The LSTM Group is fully committed to operating in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner. To support our commitment, a new Environmental Policy was introduced in 2019 and all refurbishment projects now incorporate environmental and/or energy improvements whenever practicable, such as replacement windows, improved roof insulation, LED lighting or improved BMS controls.

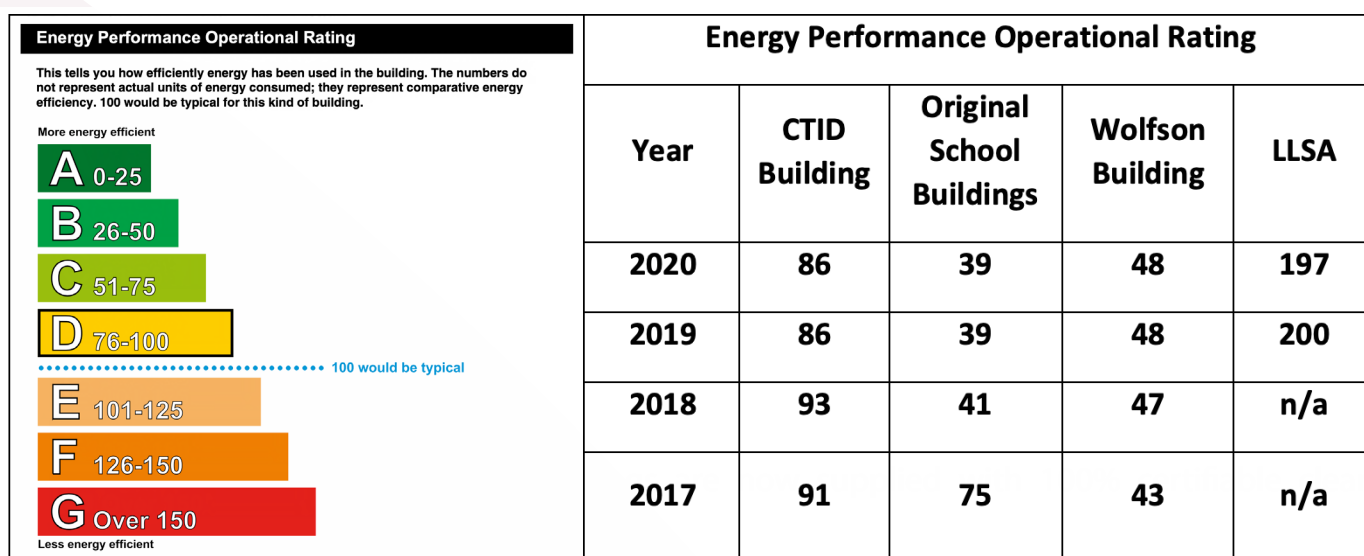
Our Investment Policy takes a socially responsible and ethical approach to all investments. The policy states that our Fund Managers should not knowingly engage with organisations associated with armaments to the military, that contravene human rights, engage in workforce exploitation, discrimination or other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010, or are involved in the manufacture or sale of tobacco products or fossil fuels. LSTM completely divested from fossil fuels companies during 2020.

The Estates Team undertakes regular and routine servicing to all its plant and equipment to ensure that it operates efficiently and effectively. Enhanced servicing and cleaning of the air conditioning systems, including cleaning filters more often and spraying coils with anti-bacterial spray has also been introduced as a result of COVID19. During the COVID19 pandemic the Estates Team also took the opportunity to close down plant and equipment wherever possible, to reduce energy consumption and wear and tear on plant operating unnecessarily.

As can be seen from the Display Energy Certificates figures below, we are reducing our energy performance operational ratings in our original school buildings as a result of introducing the above improvements.

## Image 1: Energy Performance Operational Ratings

The score represents comparative energy efficiency, the lower the score, the more efficient the building is.



LSTM recycles at source, and the following demonstrates our continuous improvement in this area:

- In October 2017, we were recycling about 13% of our annual waste.
- By October 2018 this had increased to about 22% of our annual waste after we introduced dry mixed recycling euro bins for cardboard and paper only.
- By October 2019 we were typically recycling about 28% of our waste after introducing recycling at source (bins internally), dry mixed recycling for all waste i.e., cardboard-paper-plastics-cans etc.
- Between March 2020 and October 2020, we recycled 30% of the total tonnage of waste for that period.

We are increasingly choosing to reduce the print runs of our key corporate publications to further encourage growing downloads of digital versions. For example, the print run of our Annual Report has been reduced from 2,250 in 2018 to 750 in 2020.

2020 has seen the establishment of an Environmental Working Group ('EWG') at LSTM. The EWG works to enhance the LSTM Group's contribution to improving sustainable value. The group is divided into 5 subgroups, each focusing on a particular area of priority. The 5 subgroups are:

- Carbon and Travel; an employee survey has been carried out with a view to developing an action plan. This group has a cycling to work subgroup and LSTM provides facilities for colleagues who commute by bike, as well as a cycle to work scheme.
- Data Collection; currently assessing the impact of remote working on the group's environmental footprint.
- Communication and Engagement; working with the Carbon group on communicating the survey findings and converting the results into agreed actions.
- Green Working; the development of a "Green Labs" guide to deliver improvements in environmental working practices.
- Strategy; long-term planning activities revisited to deliver enhanced sustainability.

Our Estates Team has worked closely with our Procurement Team and focused on purchasing sustainable energy that represents best value for money via a flexible purchasing model. This switch has allowed LSTM to switch from using brown energy to using certifiable green electric energy that is audited through the Carbon Trust.

LSTM also works with local suppliers to ensure value is delivered to the local community whilst adhering to environmental standards. An example of this is working with a local taxi company that is using a carbon offsetting company to improve environmental performance. Our preferred suppliers adhere to the relevant required environmental standards and are asked to explain how they do this in their tender documents. Further information on our procurement processes is available in section 2.4 of this document.



## 2.4. Anti-Corruption

### **Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.**

The LSTM Group is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity throughout its activities in the UK and overseas. LSTM has clear statements of intent showing that it does not tolerate any form of fraud, bribery, corruption or dishonesty by its employees, agents or consultants, or by any person or body acting on its behalf.

To underpin the governance of this ethos, LSTM has in place institutional policies which are reviewed and reaffirmed each year. These policies clearly layout the organisation's statement position, explains how to recognise potential instances of fraud, bribery and corruption and what actions are needed if it is experienced. The policies are explicit in explaining that the consequences of becoming involved in such acts will constitute a serious disciplinary matter for the individual concerned and it may cause reputational damage to the organisation. LSTM reserves the right to refer alleged instances to the relevant employee disciplinary process and the police authorities.

The LSTM Fraud, Bribery, Corruption Policy also details broader areas of corruption such as money laundering, tax evasion, terrorism financing and aid diversion to ensure that the reader understands the wider implications of how corruption can potentially infiltrate business activities at all levels. LSTM staff work in locations all over the world and this isolation away from the main campus therefore could place them at greater risk of being exposed to corruption and unethical conduct, so the policy further explains and details the recognition of facilitation payments, gifts, cash payments etc. Examples are given to help raise awareness such as: unusual payments to third parties, unsubstantiated expenses, lack of invoice documentation so that individuals are fully aware and can recognise potential corruption activity.

LSTM also has established practices on the recognition and management of conflict of interest. Our policy is reviewed and reaffirmed each year, the reminder for staff to declare a potential conflict is a standard item on meeting agendas and all staff and board members must complete a return of their declaration each year. The Conflict of Interest Policy also covers the procurement activity with each supplier being required to declare a conflict as and when it arises.

Whistleblowing systems are set up and monitored closely, with policies detailing how to report an incident. The system ensures that the reporter can remain anonymous, if they wish to do so, to encourage the reporting of incidents and the system is clearly labelled on the LSTM internet and intranet and widely publicised at regular intervals.

LSTM undertakes a rigorous due diligence on our partners and subcontractors and part of this assessment is to review the organisation's approach to corruption. We will work with our partners to ensure that they have satisfactory policies, processes and procedures in place.

## **Freedom to Speak Up**

Whilst anti-corruption is not specifically signposted through our Freedom to Speak Up system (see section 2.1), being covered by the separate Whistleblowing policy, this tool is another secure avenue for LSTM staff, students and other representatives to raise concerns through this platform and there are robust referral mechanisms to ensure that concerns are dealt with by the appropriate specialist teams.

## **Procurement**

LSTM's policies and procedures are designed to mitigate against the inherent risk of corrupt procurement activity.

The purchase value used to determine the procurement route is calculated by aggregating the forecast contract expenditure over a two-year period, or the period covered by the contract if earlier:

- For procurements in the lowest category of purchase value, the buyer has discretion to decide whether to obtain written quotations, although value for money must always be secured.
- For procurements in the middle category of purchase value, a minimum number of written quotations must be obtained and the reasoning supporting the ultimate selection decision retained.
- For procurements in the highest category of purchase value, a full tender in accordance with LSTM tendering procedures and, where applicable, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 must be undertaken.

The procurement thresholds are set by LSTM and tailored to individual group entities to ensure that the purchase value hierarchy is in line with local materiality and regional economic conditions. Under exceptional circumstances, deviations from LSTM's policies and procedures are permitted on submission and acceptance of a written justification paper and subject to approval by Senior Management.

LSTM fosters a culture of procurement compliance through its dedicated procurement team and the development of user-friendly tools to support the procurement processes. In August 2018, LSTM launched an integrated e-procurement platform that guides buyers through the complete procurement process. The system has in-built surveillance functionality and preventative controls that trigger online approval steps in line with the procurement framework. On completion of a purchase order confirmation, the e-procurement system automatically issues an order confirmation accompanied by LSTM's terms and conditions which include anti-corruption provisions in line with LSTM's Fraud, Bribery, Corruption policy.

The e-procurement platform gives users access to latest price lists from LSTM's contracted suppliers. LSTM also leverages the collective bargaining power afforded through access to the North West Universities purchasing consortia frameworks.

Tendering exercises are conducted electronically with all document exchanges taking place on the LSTM eTendering portal.

The terms and conditions of LSTM's standard contract for the engagement of consultants was also recently updated in line with LSTM's Fraud, Bribery, Corruption policy.

## LSTM Supplier Code of Conduct

The LSTM group requires approved suppliers to sign up to its Supplier Code of Conduct which covers the following areas:

- Employment Practices
- Environmental
- Health and Safety
- Ethics and Integrity

The Ethics and Integrity section contains the following anti-corruption provisions:

- The supplier must not offer or give, any gift or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for doing or refraining from doing or for having done or refrained from doing, any act in relation to the obtaining of any contract with LSTM, or for showing or refraining from showing favour or disfavour to any person in relation to the Contract or any such other.
- The supplier must comply with all anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws applicable to our business, including the Bribery Act 2010 and the Prevention of Corruption Act 1889 to 1916.

LSTM's Supplier Code of Conduct was published in 2015 and became a prerequisite during 2019 for new purchase orders placed with suppliers. LSTM's e-procurement platform has enabled a more integrated approach to ensuring that LSTM Suppliers are in receipt of LSTM's up-to-date terms and conditions package with each new order confirmation.

The Supplier Code of Conduct is also published on LSTM's external website. LSTM reserves the right to request details of how suppliers comply with the Code and expects its suppliers to apply the principles of the Code throughout its supply chains.