

## Overall sustainability guidelines: Worker and human rights

SpareBank 1 SR-Bank has sustainability as one of 14 strategic targets for the group. Central to the work on sustainability is respecting international worker and human rights, and this is therefore important for the group. These guidelines are rooted in our Sustainability strategy and our [General sustainability guidelines](#).

Below are specified some of the most central conventions, frameworks and guidelines in the area of human rights. It does not mean that other human rights are not important. These are also relevant to us and our customers and business connections to varying degrees, depending on industry and whether or not you have a national or international business or supply chain. Accordingly, how these guidelines are operationalised in the individual group's business areas is outlined in the guidelines for the area in question, as well as in any guidance, procedural descriptions and checklists where necessary.

### International framework for human rights and business

- International law establishes that it is first and foremost the role of states to protect their citizens against human rights violations. However, through the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, adopted in 2011, the global community has established that businesses and entrepreneurs have an *independent responsibility* to respect human rights. According to principle 15, all businesses should have guidelines, "policy commitments," on human rights, perform due diligence to avoid contributing to violations, and have processes in place to correct potential human rights violations. They should also encourage their own business associates, especially in their own supplier chains, to do the same. This applies to all businesses, including SpareBank 1 SR-Bank and our business associates. The UN Guiding Principles specifically refer to what is called "The International Bill of Human Rights". This contains the 1948 UN Universal Declaration and the two Covenants of the 1966 on economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights, respectively. Refer to the ILO "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work".<sup>1</sup> Businesses must, however, comply with the rights that are relevant to them depending on the context and industry in which they operate. The government has created a Norwegian action plan for follow-up of the UN Guiding Principles.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2000, the UN launched the Global Compact, a global network for businesses that want to work based on social responsibility and a sustainable business practice. The Global Compact is today the world's largest initiative for corporate social responsibility, and contains ten principles that are derived from UN conventions. The principles therefore form a global frame of reference for corporate social responsibility, and represent a common value basis for business globally. SpareBank 1 SR-Bank is affiliated with the Global Compact and sits on the board of the newly formed Norwegian network.<sup>3</sup> As a member, we report annually to the UN Global Compact.

<sup>1</sup> UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, page 13.

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Business and human rights. National action plan for follow-up of the UN Guiding Principles The Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/naringsliv/ud\\_naeringsliv\\_og\\_menneske\\_uu-versjon2.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/naringsliv/ud_naeringsliv_og_menneske_uu-versjon2.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Global Compact Norway. <http://gcnordic.net/about-the-nordic-network/countries/norway/>

- Norway is a member of the OECD and is committed to promoting the OECD guidelines for multinational companies. The guidelines are recommendations from OECD countries for all business sectors. We seek to follow these guidelines, as well as the OECD guidance on how business should perform due diligence assessments, as well as their sector guidance, in particular for finance. <sup>4</sup>Complaints can be filed with the OECD against any business that does not comply with OECD guidelines. The Norwegian point of contact handles cases in which Norwegian companies are involved, and cases arising against foreign companies with operations in Norway.<sup>5</sup>

### Workers' rights

- ILO is the UN's international specialised agency for the workplace. It is a tripartite organisation consisting of *employees* represented via trade unions, *employers* represented by employer organisations and the 187 member states' *authorities*. All three parties are represented in the ILO's governing bodies. The purpose of the ILO is to promote social justice and rights in the workplace.
- The ILO conventions are internationally binding; they are a legal instrument that regulates most areas within the workplace. By ratifying a convention, states commit themselves to fulfilling the conventions, and simultaneously accept monitoring via the ILO's inspection system. ILO's eight core conventions constitute a minimum of rights that must be respected in the workplace. They are divided into four main categories:
  - child labour (ILO convention no. 138, 182 and 79, ILO recommendation no. 146),
  - unionisation and collective negotiations (ILO convention no. 87, 98, 135 and 154),
  - discrimination (ILO convention no. 100 and 111)
  - forced labour/slave labour (ILO convention no. 29 and 105).

All ILO member states must report their compliance with the ILO core conventions, regardless of whether they have ratified them or not. <sup>6</sup>

- It is important that companies work to follow the ILO conventions, particularly if operating in or dealing with a high risk country. This particularly applies to the ILO conventions on wages (10 different conventions on wages, including no. 131), working hours (including no. 1 and 14), HSE (no. 155) and regular employment, including for migrants (ILO convention no. 95, 158, 175, 177, 181).<sup>7</sup>

### Vulnerable groups

- Vulnerable groups have their own human rights conventions and require special attention in issues of human rights.
- Businesses should pay particular attention to respecting women's rights. It is important to recognise that women and men are affected differently in the case of human rights violations. The Convention on Women will ensure that women are free from discrimination and have the same rights as men.<sup>8</sup> Globally, it is a problem that women are often not listened to and/or allowed to participate

<sup>4</sup> How to comply with the guidelines OECD point of contact in Norway.

<https://www.responsiblebusiness.no/oecds-retningslinjer/hvordan-etterleve-retningslinjene/>

<sup>5</sup> Dialogue and mediation. OECD point of contact in Norway. <https://www.responsiblebusiness.no/dialog-og-mekling/>

<sup>6</sup> ILO system of human rights. The government

<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utenrikssaker/menneskerettigheter/-ilos-menneskerettighetssystem/id447081/>

7 ILO conventions. The United Nations Association of Norway. <https://www.fn.no/Om-FN/Avtaler/Arbeidsliv/ILO-konvensjoner>

8 The UN Convention on Women. UN Women <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

in decision-making processes that concern them. All companies should have zero tolerance towards all forms of gender discrimination, including verbal, physical and sexual harassment. It is also important to strive for equal treatment of men and women, through equal wages for equal work, and seeking equilibrium of women and men in leading positions, where this is possible and natural.

- Businesses should also have special awareness of the special needs and rights of the child. As of 2018, there are 152 million children's workers in the world, and around half are involved in potentially dangerous and harmful child labour.<sup>9</sup> The special rights of the child are embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2007, the UN General Assembly approved a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, prepared through collaboration between states and indigenous groups. This contains provisions that apply to both fundamental needs such as food, health and education, as well as provisions on the use of traditional resources and land areas.<sup>11</sup> Central to the declaration are indigenous people's right to participate in the decision-making process in issues that could affect their rights. In addition, collaboration must occur with indigenous people to achieve their "free, prior and informed consent" before adopting projects that could affect them. Also of importance is ILO Convention no. 169, on indigenous people's right to maintain and develop their own culture, which Norway was the first country to ratify.<sup>12</sup>

#### **International humanitarian rights, the Geneva conventions**

- The rules were established in four Geneva Conventions, with two supplementary protocols, and were ratified by 196 states, including all UN member states. These contain rules of war and conflict, and will preserve individuals' rights, among other issues. The fourth convention contains provisions concerning occupied areas, including economic activities.<sup>13</sup>

9 Child Labour. ILO. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

10 Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/crc/>

11 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples The government. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/urfolk-og-minoriteter/samepolitikk/internasjonalt-urfolksarbeid/fns-erklaring-om-urfolks-rettigheter/id87024/>

12 The ILO Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples The government.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/urfolk-og-minoriteter/urfolkryddemappe/ilo-konvensjonen-om-urfolks-rettigheter-/id487963/>

13 The Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, (Convention IV). Lovdata.

[https://lovdata.no/dokument/TRAKTAT/traktat/1949-08-12-4/KAPITTEL\\_3-1#KAPITTEL\\_3-1](https://lovdata.no/dokument/TRAKTAT/traktat/1949-08-12-4/KAPITTEL_3-1#KAPITTEL_3-1)