



UN Global Compact Network UK Advisory Group Terms of Reference

About the United Nations Global Compact

As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations Global Compact is a call to companies everywhere to align their operations and strategies with ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption, and to take action in support of UN goals. With more than 18,000 companies and 3,500 non-business signatories based in over 160 countries, and over 70 Local Networks, it is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world.

About the UN Global Compact Network UK

The UN Global Compact Network UK provides the UK focal point for the UN Global Compact, connecting UK companies and other organisations in a global movement dedicated to driving sustainable growth. We work with them to create a world we want to live and do business in by inspiring business ambition, enabling action, and collaborating to shape the business environment.

Overview of the GCN UK Advisory Group

The GCN UK Advisory Group (AG) is an important component of the GCN UK governance structure.

Membership requires a strong commitment to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and the mission of the UN Global Compact Network UK.

Advisory Group members are expected to actively support the Network's strategic plan, programme of activity, and membership growth ambitions.

Members of the Advisory Group must be employed by a GCN UK participant company but serve in a personal capacity.

Advisory Group members are expected to abide by the [UN Global Compact Values & Behaviours Model](#).

1. Role of the Advisory Group

The Advisory Group provides strategic guidance to the GCN UK Chair, Board of Trustees, and Network Secretariat on issues including, but not limited to, the Network's thematic priorities, programme of activity, recruitment efforts, and fee structure.

While the Advisory Group is an important component of the GCN UK's governance model, it does not have legal standing. Group members do not have a formal fiduciary duty to Network members or exposure to any personal liability with regard to the GCN UK.

2. Responsibilities

It is required that Advisory Group members will:

- Complete the Onboarding Modules on the UN Global Compact Academy.
- Participate in person or by phone in at least half of the scheduled Advisory Group meetings and teleconferences within a 12-month period.

It is expected that Advisory Group members will:

- Attend the GCN UK Annual General Meeting and any other general meeting called by the GCN UK Board of Trustees.
- Participate actively in the Network's regular programme of activity.
- Respond promptly to AG-related emails from the GCN UK Secretariat.
- Promote the UN Global Compact and UN Global Compact Network UK within their sphere of influence and actively supporting the GCN UK's recruitment efforts.
- Support the onboarding of new GCN UK members by being available for occasional telephone/video calls.
- Support GCN UK programming by being available to speak at UN Global Compact events or otherwise contribute to programmatic outputs.

3. Membership

The Advisory Group will consist of up to 30 individuals, including the GCN UK Chair and Trustees. AG members serve in a personal capacity but must be employed by an organisation that is a participant of the UN Global Compact Network UK.

To ensure a diverse range of opinions and that all types of GCN UK participants are represented on the AG, membership in the AG should include proportionate representation from large companies, medium-sized companies, small companies, and non-business participants that represent a wide range of industry sectors.

The GCN UK Secretariat will maintain a skills and diversity matrix for the Advisory Group to ensure an appropriate range of skills and backgrounds are represented.

The GCN UK Board of Trustees appoints new members of the Advisory Group. When Trustees decide to fill a vacancy on the AG, there will be an open call to the GCN UK membership seeking expressions of interest in joining the AG. This call may refer to specific organisation types, industry sectors, skills, or diversity characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, etc.) to address under-representation in the AG. The Board will consider applications from all individuals, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, or socioeconomic background.

Before a list of nominations is finalised and presented to the GCN UK Board, the GCN UK Secretariat will conduct due diligence on each candidate to ensure there are no integrity concerns.

All qualified candidates will be considered by the Board. The Board will make appointments with reference to the current make-up of the AG, organisation type and industry, level of engagement in UN Global Compact activities both in the UK and abroad, and diversity across all protected characteristics.

4. Meetings

The Advisory Group will normally convene quarterly for 90-minute teleconferences. The Secretariat will aim to facilitate face-to-face meetings where possible.

There is a possibility that "emergency" meetings could be called, but normally urgent matters will be addressed by email.

Teleconferences/meetings will be convened at the request of the GCN UK Chair, though any AG member may apply to the Chair to convene a teleconference/meeting.

The GCN UK Secretariat will strive to schedule teleconferences to maximise participation by providing as much notice as possible and/or consulting members on their availability.

If an Advisory Group member cannot join a scheduled teleconference or face-to-face meeting, it is not possible to nominate someone else from their organisation. The aim of these meetings is to have a focus-driven Advisory Group in a trusted forum, where a change of people may distract from this aim. As noted above, AG members are appointed in a personal capacity and are not representing their employer.

The GCN UK will send AG members copies of the minutes to review at their earliest convenience.

5. Term & Dismissal

There is no term limit on membership in the AG. However, the Board will conduct an annual review of AG membership. Members may be asked to step down or be removed from the AG at the discretion of the GCN UK Board.

Reasons for dismissal could include inactivity, a need to diversify the AG, a recommendation from UN Global Compact HQ, or any other reason the Board deems appropriate.

6. Chair

The Advisory Group is Chaired by the GCN UK Chair. In his/her absence, the GCN UK Secretariat will ask another member of the Board of Trustees to act as Chair. Failing that, the longest-serving AG member present will be asked to Chair.

7. Decision-making

The AG is not intended to be a decision-making body, but rather a forum for discussion and sharing of views.

When a decision is required, consensus will be sought. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Advisory Group will defer to the Board of Trustees. On such occasions, the Board of Trustees quorum rules will apply. The quorum rules are provided in the Board of Trustees Terms of Reference.

The AG cannot commit the use of the GCN UK's financial and human resources without approval from the Board of Trustees.

8. Notes

The Network Secretariat will take notes on AG meeting discussions which will be shared via email to avoid taking time at subsequent meetings. Notes will be kept and stored in accordance with the Network's practice.

UN Global Compact Network UK

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