



# United Nations Global Compact

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Communication on Progress 2020

## About NIRAS



NIRAS is a multi-disciplinary consulting engineering company with some 2300 employees in 27 countries around Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and we implement projects in more than 100 countries.

NIRAS' business areas include building, energy, utilities, environment infrastructure, process industry, urban planning, and development aid.

To NIRAS, it is crucial to develop a close and trusting relationship to our customers as well as helping them realize their sustainable potential. In everything we do, we strive to create value for our customers and create a positive impact on society through sustainable progress and technologies. Our values are: Listen, learn and deliver.

NIRAS employs highly skilled professionals and we strive to create a dynamic and professionally challenging working environment with special attention to work-life balance.

Our core values tie us together across national borders, sectors and professional expertise. Our unique trademark is an inter-disciplinary and innovative approach to projects, and we take pride in transforming clients' visions and challenges and facilitate sustainable progress.

We are not affiliated with contractors, manufacturers or suppliers, and we are a member of the Danish Association of Consulting Engineers (FRI) and the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC).

## Statement of continued support



Carsten Toft Boesen  
CEO

NIRAS has for many years been committed to improving social and environmental issues through the services we offer our clients and by the way we operate as a business and as an employer. We have systematically integrated UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals in our strategies and in the services and solutions we offer our clients, helping them to realise their sustainable potential.

2020 has obviously been a highly challenging year due to Covid-19. Our main priority has been to safeguard the health and well-being of our employees while securing to conduct our business according to the high sustainability standards we have set. We have taken a wide range of protective measures in our offices worldwide to avoid contagion, and our employees have worked from home to the largest possible extent.

In this time of extraordinary challenges, our employees have shown incredible flexibility and commitment, thereby secure high quality deliveries to our clients. Our desire to help our clients at all times has also helped us to be able to stay focused and take responsibility for our own global footprint even in a time of crisis, as well as helping our clients stay on course with SDG initiatives.

At NIRAS, we have continued our application of Corporate Value Chain Scope 3, which permits us to assess the complete environmental impact of both products and services from our suppliers. We have also improved our sustainability measures through for example, the increased use of electric cars across Scandinavia, acquisition of recycled furniture for a new office in Stockholm, or by reducing and recycling waste in many offices.

Furthermore, we have carried out awareness raising activities to prevent sexual harassment, and we are a signatory to the principles of Safeguarding Human rights and Duty of Care, Discrimination, Environment, and Compliance.

At NIRAS, we believe our expertise also implies an obligation to help finding solutions to some of the biggest challenges that our societies are facing. Therefore, we are fully committed to achieving the accomplishment of UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



Carsten T. Boesen, Chief Executive Officer

## Human Rights



### Principles

1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights
2. Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

### Actions and outcome

NIRAS considers the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the unequivocal and irrefutable international proclaimed rights of all human beings. NIRAS fully subscribes to international charters and conventions on human rights and gender equality. Our Integrity Management System guides the way we conduct business, both internally and in our external projects around the world. This is implemented through specific actions, such as alignment with national human rights laws in the countries where we work, and by transferring national standards into internal policies for human resource management and work related policies, such as signing a Modern Slavery and human trafficking statement in line with UK requirements. Likewise, NIRAS has a Safeguarding Policy and a Whistleblowing arrangement.

In 2020, NIRAS carried out development projects in more than 80 countries under the 17 SDGs. We mainstream rights issues into the design and implementation of our programmes, using a human rights approach and rights-based tools, such as gender mainstreaming, thus contributing to SDG 5 Gender Equality and identifying risks for discrimination to improve the situation for deprived groups. We have a Gender and Human Rights Unit leading projects to help improve women's participation, leadership, and economic empowerment, reducing gender based violence and ensuring gender aware national budgets. In 2020, NIRAS endorsed a new procurement policy, including a sustainability questionnaire for suppliers, and NIRAS in Sweden became a signatory to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

### Reference to policies

NIRAS subscribes completely to all charters and international conventions on Human Rights. This encompasses Rights of the Child, Rights of Indigenous People, gender-related issues including Elimination of All Forms of Decimation of Women as well as the Rights of LGBT+. NIRAS promotes a tolerant and inclusive work environment, by a set of specific guidelines on anti-bullying and prevention of sexual harassment that sets zero tolerance towards harassment or discrimination.

These guidelines ensure all employees equal opportunities, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, nationality, ethnic and social origin, disability, political or sexual orientation, and family status. At NIRAS, we believe that diversity ensures our clients a better quality of service and creates an inspirational environment in-house. The culture and values of NIRAS are based on respect for the individual, which implies acceptance and tolerance of diversity among colleagues and clients.

## Labour



### Principles

1. Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining
2. Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour
3. Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour
4. Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

### Actions and outcome

The COVID-19 crisis has left its mark on how we work and relate socially. A committee with top-level management members took action to provide a safe work environment, i.e. guidelines for meetings and travel, and precautionary measures in case of contagion. Our measures also include regular information to employees on safeguarding, secure IT-solutions, and how to work from home. A survey aimed at all employees, show that they experience a safe working environment and a high level of information.

During 2020, we initiated activities aimed at both physical and mental health. Since many employees have worked at home for months, we concentrate on online activities such as short online physical exercises together with colleagues and other activities to maintain social relations and motivation.

Several years ago, NIRAS implemented a zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment and bullying. In 2020, we completed an update to maintain clear guidelines for both employees and managers. Following a debate on sexism in Denmark, we also conducted a small study within NIRAS, but found no challenges in this area.

At NIRAS, we back employees to reach their full potential. In 2020, we added to our development activities by conducting *Talent Management Programme*, *NIRAS Young Professional Programme* and *Leadership in a Practical Context*, which are all international programmes enhancing our professional expertise and company culture.

### Reference to policies

NIRAS wishes to take a holistic approach, making space for “the whole person” within a safe and healthy workplace, where employees are satisfied with their jobs and can develop. NIRAS has zero tolerance towards sexual harassment or bullying. NIRAS’ projects and in-house operations must be executed in such a manner that we to the highest possible extent secure the health, safety and welfare of all stakeholders or any other parties that could come into contact with our activities. Employees, who travel abroad, get comprehensive security assistance.

NIRAS’ employees are free to join trade unions and enter into collective bargaining with management. All our employees have individual contracts, and the employment conditions comply fully with current national legislation and requirements.

## Environment



### Principles

1. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges
2. Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
3. Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

### Actions and outcome

Sustainable Development is in NIRAS' DNA. We work across our own organization and with our clients to identify opportunities to create positive impact, socially, environmentally and economically. In sectors such as buildings, industry, infrastructure, energy, water and utilities we develop and employ sustainable solutions.

Since 2013, NIRAS has documented CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions and published a yearly Scope 1, 2 and partial Scope 3 Climate Account. Since 2018, we have included a full Scope 3 account, and in 2019 our internal Energy Audits were integrated. NIRAS is developing a comprehensive strategy for reducing our carbon footprint based on our Climate Accounts. We are also developing a strategy for increasing the positive sustainable impact in our organization across other key dimensions of the SDGs.

In 2020, our specific initiatives focused on waste handling and green mobility. We also entered the fight against food waste, and our employees can now buy food at reasonable prices to bring home that would otherwise go to waste. Also, waste sorting, recycling, and reusing furniture have been focus areas in 2020.

NIRAS wants to ensure sustainable mobility for our employees, and we have started replacing our office cars with electric cars. In 2021, we will look at other zero emission transport options. We want to inspire everyone to using electric cars and in 2021 we will thus establish our own charging station open to the public.

### Reference to policies

NIRAS takes our responsibility towards climate change, environment and society seriously in our approach to our services and operation of our business. NIRAS maintains an open dialogue with clients and stakeholders and seeks solutions that are compatible with the principles of sustainable development.

NIRAS supports the International Federation of Consulting Engineers' (FIDIC) recommendations on the environment and sustainable development.

## Anti-corruption



### Principles

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

### Actions and outcome

NIRAS' Integrity Management System (IMS) is currently being reviewed and updated. New initiatives, that improve the transparency in the use of funds and other resources, are taken. In 2020, NIRAS became registered at IATI, the International Aid Transparency Initiative which brings together governments, multilateral institutions, private sector, civil society organisations, and others, to increase the transparency and openness of resources flowing into developing countries.

NIRAS' Compliance Unit has streamlined its reporting to NIRAS' Board of Directors by supplementing its annual report with an overview of all whistleblower cases, their status, actions taken and outcome. The overview is being updated and made readily available for all ordinary board meetings, starting in December 2020. The number of participants in NIRAS' online anti-corruption course has increased significantly. By December 2020, the course had been completed by 433, mainly internationally working internal and external employees. This is more than double compared to the year before. The challenge in 2021 is to include NIRAS employees, whose work is confined to Denmark and the Nordic countries, in the training.

In order to raise awareness about the importance of complying with NIRAS' IMS, also among the Nordic working employees, an on-boarding platform with instructions and links to the IMS, has been launched for all new NIRAS employees. NIRAS has not in 2020 experienced any severe internal violation of our Business Integrity and Ethics Policy.

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that corruption has taken or is taken place in public or donor funded projects, NIRAS is obliged to report such incidents to the respective donor or public organization's anti-corruption/ fraud office, who then, if it find grounds for the suspicion, will initiate its own investigation. In 2020, NIRAS has not been approached by any government agencies asking for bribes. This, we consider as a sign, though not statistically underpinned, that NIRAS' zero-tolerance policy and our immediate reporting to the donor organisations actually works. NIRAS has met the performance and targets for 2020 satisfactorily.

### Reference to policies

On behalf of all companies in The NIRAS Group, we hereby declare that NIRAS has a zero-tolerance policy to corruption, tax evasion and fraud as well as to any form of modern slavery, discrimination and harassment. NIRAS' anti-corruption policy includes an obligation of NIRAS to fight corruption in all of its forms. NIRAS Business Integrity and Ethics Policy as well as NIRAS' Code of Conduct are compiled into NIRAS' Integrity Management System. The System and Policy are in compliance with the international anti-corruption instruments defined by OECD, FIDIC, Transparency International and the United Nations.

## Sustainable Development Goals



NIRAS' mission is to secure sustainable progress. We have integrated the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in our strategy within all our services. The 17 SDGs set an ambitious agenda for the world, but the goals can only be achieved if governments, NGO's and the private sector work closely together.

Consequently, we pursue new services and solutions in co-operation with our clients in order to contribute to the fulfilment of the development goals. In many ways, most of the 7,000 ongoing NIRAS projects reflect one or more of the 17 SDGs set by UN in 2015. A few recent examples are:

- **SDG 2 – Zero Hunger**  
NIRAS works on many projects worldwide aimed at stopping hunger and malnutrition, such as the United Kingdom funded Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) programme in Nepal, Uganda and Malawi.
- **SDG 5 – Gender Equality**  
NIRAS finalised a 4-year project financed by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency to promote gender mainstreaming and equality between women and men in Kosovo. A total of 80 entities (ministries, civil society, donors etc) has been involved in making the gender equality programme.
- **SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation**  
NIRAS forms an integral part of a water project that will enable Carlsberg's Fredericia Brewery in Denmark to recycle 90% of all process water and halve its overall water usage, making it one of the world's most water efficient plants.
- **SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy**  
In 2020, NIRAS has been involved in multiple offshore wind projects around the world, providing engineering solutions, conducting Environmental & Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) to international standards and advising investors on environmental and social risks.
- **SDG 8 – Good Jobs and Economic Growth**  
The UK funded Green Economic Growth Programme for Papua Provinces is developing green businesses and supporting small-holder farmers and entrepreneurs, while protecting the area's vulnerable forests.
- **SDG 12 Responsible Consumption**  
NIRAS is helping international juice company innocent build the world's first carbon-neutral drinks factory. Placing the factory in the Food Hub of the Port of Rotterdam reduces road miles travelled by 25%. The factory will use as little water as possible, and reduce, reuse and recycle waste that is created.
- **SDG 13 - Climate Action**  
NIRAS is leading a large, complex climate change adaptation project in central Copenhagen. The project will result in a 1,300 meter cloudburst tunnel stretching under buildings and roads, and crossing metro lines and drainage.
- **SDG 16 – Peace and Justice**  
In the last five years, NIRAS has implemented some 180 projects in 35 of the world's most fragile and conflict-affected states. We identify, train and support candidates deployed as part of Denmark's Peace and Stabilisation Response (PSR) roster to places like Libya, Iraq, Palestine and the Sahel region.