



The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct („Guidelines“) are recommendations addressed by governments to multinational enterprises. They are an important instrument of **Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)**. The main objective of the Guidelines is for businesses to contribute to sustainable development wherever they operate. Through their responsible behaviour, they should promote positive contributions to economic, environmental and social progress and minimise adverse impacts on humanity, the environment and society in general. In this way, they can also contribute to the achievement of several of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

The Guidelines have been developed by OECD members in cooperation with representatives of employers' and employees' associations and the non-governmental sector and contain voluntary principles and standards for responsible business in accordance with applicable law. The Guidelines were developed in 1976 as an integral part of the *OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises*. Since then, the Guidelines have been supplemented and amended several times in the light of societal challenges and the evolving context of international business and the need to implement the RBC. The latest edition of the updated Guidelines in June 2023 reflects ten years of experience since their last revision in 2011 and responds to the pressing social, environmental and technological priorities facing society and business entities today - substantial changes have been made in particular in the chapters on **Environment** (Green Transition) and **Science, Technology and Innovation** (Digitisation of Society).

[Updated OECD Guidelines](#) for MNE on RBC (Edition June, 2023)

[OECD Guidelines](#) for MNE (Edition 2011)

The recommendations contained in the Guidelines are in line with legal provisions and international standards in the field of RBC and have been adopted by 51 states, both member and non-member states of OECD. Compliance with the recommendations embodied in the Guidelines is voluntary on the part of companies and is not legally enforceable.

Guidelines Chapters in a Nutshell:

I. Concepts and Principles

Compliance with national laws is a primary obligation for companies. The OECD Guidelines do not replace and should not be considered superior to national laws and legal standards. They represent best practices for all companies.

II. General Policies

This chapter contains specific recommendations for companies. As such, it is important to set the tone and establish common guiding principles for specific recommendations in subsequent chapters.

III. Disclosure

Companies should act transparently and provide clear and comprehensive information about their activities. This will enable different stakeholder groups to better understand their activities and their relationship with society and the environment. The chapter covers disclosure in two areas:

- information about the company, including its financial position, performance, ownership and management
- information in areas where reporting standards are still evolving, such as social, environmental or risk management.

IV. Human Rights

In practical terms, the business activities of companies can affect a range of internationally recognised human rights. Companies, regardless of their size, sector of operation, context of operation, ownership and organisational structure or location, should respect human rights. This chapter refers to the *United Nations "Protect, Respect, Remedy" Framework* and the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. This chapter of the Guiding Principles encourages companies to incorporate a due diligence process into their operations that will enable them to identify any adverse human rights impacts that their activities may have.

V. Employment and Industrial Relations

Under this chapter, within the framework of applicable employment laws, regulations and legal practices and applicable international labour standards, companies should respect the right to form or join trade unions, contribute to the abolition and elimination of child labour and forced labour, and adhere to the principle of equal opportunity and equal treatment. The terminology used in this chapter is consistent with that of *International Labour Organization (ILO)* documents.

VI. Environment

The basic premise of that chapter of the Guidelines is that companies should act promptly and proactively to avert serious or irreparable environmental damage caused by their activities. Businesses should have a sound management set-up for the sustainability of natural resources and the preservation of the ecosystem, which should include activities aimed at controlling the direct and indirect environmental impacts of business activities in the long term and should include elements of pollution control and resource management.

VII. Combating Bribery and Other Forms of Corruption

Companies should not, directly or indirectly, offer, promise, reward or solicit bribes or other improper benefits in order to obtain unfair business or other advantages. Companies should actively combat corruption.

VIII. Consumer Interests

Consumer rights emphasise the use of fair commercial, marketing and advertising practices, as well as ensuring the quality and reliability of goods and services. This approach includes the provision of accurate information about the products and services provided and adequate protection of personal data.

IX. Science, Technology and Innovation

The aim is to promote the dissemination of research and development results and to ensure that companies' activities are compatible with countries' science and technology policies and plans. To

act in a way that contributes to the long-term development perspective of the host country when licensing the use of intellectual property rights or in the case of other types of technology transfer.

X. Competition

In order to protect competition, governments call on companies to comply with fair competition rules and to conduct their activities in accordance with the laws of the countries in which they operate.

XI. Taxation

Companies should comply with their tax obligations in a timely manner and in accordance with the legal binding tax rules in the country in which they operate. Companies should provide information to the competent authorities to enable the correct assessment of taxes and avoid the transfer of profits/losses outside their territory.

KEY UPDATES in Guidelines for MNE on RBC

The updated Guidelines were released on 8 June within the context of the [2023 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting](#). Key updates include:

- Recommendations for enterprises to align with internationally agreed goals on climate change and biodiversity
- Inclusion of due diligence expectations on the development, financing, sale, licensing, trade and use of technology, including gathering and using data
- Recommendations on how enterprises are expected to conduct due diligence on impacts and business relationships related to the use of their products and services
- Better protection for at-risk persons and groups, including those who raise concerns regarding the conduct of businesses
- Updated recommendations on disclosure of responsible business conduct information
- Expanded due diligence recommendations to all forms of corruption
- Recommendations for enterprises to ensure lobbying activities are consistent with the Guidelines
- Strengthened procedures to ensure the visibility, effectiveness and functional equivalence of National Contact Points for Responsible Business Conduct

The updated Guidelines will also serve to support the ambition set out in the [Declaration on Promoting and Enabling Responsible Business Conduct in the Global Economy](#) adopted at the 14-15 February 2023 [Ministerial meeting on Responsible Business Conduct](#).