

Sustain Supply Chain Code of Conduct v2025/12

We are committed to carrying out procurement activities in an environmentally, socially, ethically and economically responsible manner and to entering into agreements and contracts with suppliers that share and adhere to our vision. The standards in this Code are derived from established global conventions and standards, including the UN SDGs, ETI base Code, ILO Conventions and the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights.

To demonstrate this commitment, current and potential suppliers are asked to commit to Responsible / Sustainable procurement within their organisations and to acknowledge their compliance with the principles of the Sustain Supply Chain Code of Conduct, below, with respect to their organisation and their supply chain (reference to “Suppliers” in this code means Suppliers *and* their supply chains).

1 With respect to **Social Compliance** Suppliers must:

Not use forced, involuntary or underage labour

- 1.1 Ensure workers are free to choose their employment and leave that employment on reasonable notice without hold of financial deposit or personal items.
- 1.2 Not use forced, bonded or involuntary / prison labour.
- 1.3 Not engage in any way with human trafficking, nor support or work with organisations that engage in any way with human trafficking activities, organisations or persons.
- 1.4 Ensure recruitment fees, if applicable, are always borne by the employer only.
- 1.5 Actively exceed the requirements of any anti-slavery / modern slavery legislation in any country that they operate in and comply with any voluntary and mandatory publication schemes in place to provide transparency of this activity.
- 1.6 Support the effective abolition of child labour.
- 1.7 Comply with the national minimum age for employment, or minimum age 14, whichever is the higher unless a lower local minimum age is permitted under International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 138.
- 1.8 Ensure where any child is found to be engaged in or performing child labour, to provide support for that child to enable them to complete, as a minimum, their compulsory education (even if they shall cease to be involved in child labour), or an equivalent education level, as provided for under the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Such support by the supplier should recognise and not prove detrimental to the conditions of the child or those that their work supports.

2 With respect to **Working Environment and Terms** Suppliers must:

General

- 2.1 Ensure at least statutory minimum wages (or if none, a realistic living wage) are paid without discrimination to all workers, and all non-statutory deductions must be reasonable and with the consent of the worker.
- 2.2 Ensure that working hours are not excessive (not over 48 hours per week, excluding overtime) and must allow for at least 1 day off for each 7-day period on average or, where allowed by national law, 2 days off in every 14-day period. Working beyond this should be non-regular and of workers’ own will and not used to replace regular employment. Maximum working hours shall not exceed 60 hours including overtime, unless under exceptional circumstances and allowed by national law.

Collaboratively developed and reviewed by the Sustain Project, members including all UKUPC consortia, EAUC, HEPA, various HE/FE institutional Procurement and Sustainability leaders, NUS (and other student associations) and People & Planet. Coordinated by and copyright © managed by APUC Ltd, Incorporated in Scotland number SC 314764. (to be updated as more groups confirm adoption of the CoC). Full review of this code of conduct to be undertaken from Autumn 2027.

Health and Safety

- 2.3 Ensure a safe and hygienic working environment is provided, including any catering, washroom or accommodation areas. Any hazardous working, as defined by ILO, should only be carried out by persons aged 18 years or over.
- 2.4 Ensure all equipment is safe for use, and processes must allow a safe working environment. Workers must receive training (which must be mandatory to attend and be in a language they can understand) in safe operation of all equipment and tools. Training must be provided as frequently as required to remain effective.
- 2.5 Use best endeavours to eliminate (in the first instance) and to reduce the threat to workers health from all hazards, including any hazardous chemical agents used in manufacturing and/or supply chain activities and provide mandatory training (in a language workers can understand) in the safe use of any harmful chemicals.
- 2.6 Provide all personal protective equipment necessary to ensure the health and safety of workers.
- 2.7 Ensure policies and processes are in place for recording and eliminating occurrence/reoccurrence of health and safety related incidents and they should have regard to avoiding the cause of any mental health issues affecting workers.

Worker Rights and Behaviours

- 2.8 Allow all workers, without hinderance, the freedom of association to join (but not be forced to join), or be represented by, a trade union or similar organisation of their choice, and be free to leave such organisations. Representatives of workers must be elected by the relevant workers, not appointed by management.
- 2.9 Not discriminate or unfairly treat any worker for any reason including education, social class/caste, nationality, trade union membership, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, culture, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 2.10 Provide a workplace free from all types of discrimination, bullying, harassment, violence or victimisation.
- 2.11 Ensure the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are fully respected for all workers, treating all workers with respect and dignity, and not accept inequality as justifiable for any reason.
- 2.12 Remunerate all workers equally at the same employment grade, regardless of any characteristics listed above, unless statutory conditions require otherwise.
- 2.13 Ensure effective worker engagement practises are in place to such an extent that all workers are clear of their duties and their employment rights under local and international laws, both prior to and during their time as workers.
- 2.14 Ensure all representatives of suppliers, whilst on or near the institution's premises, or while interacting with any member of staff, student, or member of the public, behave in a respectful and polite manner and in accordance with the institution's equality, diversity and inclusion standards.

3 With respect to Ethical Compliance & Economic Development Suppliers must:

- 3.1 As a minimum, comply with all laws, regulations and financial/tax legal requirements of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with, as applicable, and honour all contractual obligations including terms of payment with sub-suppliers.
- 3.2 Not be involved in any way with acts of corruption or bribery, participate in anti-competition practices/cartels or support acts of violence or terrorism or abuse of individual people or communities.
- 3.3 Not force unsustainable or unfair contract terms on their suppliers, or throughout their supply chain, nor allow unfair exploitation of a dominant market or customer position.

Collaboratively developed and reviewed by the Sustain Project, members including all UKUPC consortia, EAUC, HEPA, various HE/FE institutional Procurement and Sustainability leaders, NUS (and other student associations) and People & Planet. Coordinated by and copyright © managed by APUC Ltd, Incorporated in Scotland number SC 314764. (to be updated as more groups confirm adoption of the CoC). Full review of this code of conduct to be undertaken from Autumn 2027.

- 3.4 Support fair trade conditions for producers, where applicable.
- 3.5 Always act with respect and integrity, including open and transparent accounting.
- 3.6 Provide a mechanism for, and allow workers protection if reporting misconduct or raising concerns with respect to their own, or another organisation, and ensure all affected workers are treated in a fair and transparent manner.
- 3.7 Have undertaken due diligence of their supply chains and impacts caused by their activities, and actively seek out ways in which to minimise such negative impacts.

4 With respect to **Environmental Compliance** Suppliers must:

General

- 4.1 As a minimum, comply with all local and national environmental laws, regulations and directives of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with, as applicable.
- 4.2 Actively avoid causing environmental damage and/or negative environmental impact through raw material source, manufacturing processes, supply of the goods or services and disposal of supply chain waste.
- 4.3 Suppliers must protect and minimise use of clean water sources through reduced use of pollutants and toxic chemicals, and increase water use efficiency through measures such as recycling and re-use of grey water in manufacturing, desalination, water harvesting and waste-water treatment.
- 4.4 Work towards developing and innovating more environmentally friendly products/service solutions and take manufacture, use and disposal into consideration, including the possibility of circular supply chains.
- 4.5 Have a business plan in place, and be acting on it, to minimise their environmental impact year on year and adopt or work towards internationally recognised environmental standards, measuring and monitoring its environmental impacts, and ensure measures are in place to effectively reduce identified environmental impacts (e.g. recycling, circular economy practices, reduced waste, reduced / eradication of harmful chemical use and energy efficiency measures).
- 4.6 Take active steps towards the elimination of excessive packaging and single use plastics through volume reduction and increase of recycled content in plastics and packaging materials.

Global Climate and Ecological Emergency

- 4.7 The Supplier must have clear and verifiable ambitious plans and actions in place for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Scopes 1, 2 and 3 of the GHG Protocol) , where to do so is reasonable and proportionate to the nature of the goods and services provided.

Supplier Commitment

I, the undersigned, acting as a representative of the Company, hereby commit to Responsible / Sustainable procurement and confirm that the Company adheres to the Sustain Supply Chain Code of Conduct and shall ensure its supply chain adheres to this Code of Conduct also, in order to promote sound social, ethical, environmental and economic practises.

Signed

Name of Company.....

Position.....**Date**

Collaboratively developed and reviewed by the Sustain Project, members including all UKUPC consortia, EAUC, HEPA, various HE/FE institutional Procurement and Sustainability leaders, NUS (and other student associations) and People & Planet. Coordinated by and copyright © managed by APUC Ltd, Incorporated in Scotland number SC 314764. (to be updated as more groups confirm adoption of the CoC). Full review of this code of conduct to be undertaken from Autumn 2027.