



# OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises

April 2009

## A tool for businesses operating globally

### What are the Guidelines?

[www.oecd.org/daf/investment/guidelines](http://www.oecd.org/daf/investment/guidelines)

The OECD Guidelines are an internationally agreed code of ‘corporate social responsibility’ recommendations, and are part of the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises. They are intended to help multinational enterprises work within the policies and expectations of the countries in which they do business. The Guidelines cover eight areas: information disclosure, employment and industrial relations, the environment, combating bribery, consumer interests, science and technology, competition and taxation.

The Guidelines apply to multinational enterprises that operate in, or from, an OECD Member country or one of the additional countries that have chosen to adhere to the Guidelines. The current total is 41 adhering countries, and this is continually increasing.

Businesses are encouraged to comply with the Guidelines, but their participation is voluntary and not legally enforceable. The Guidelines are not a substitute for national law nor do they override the law. The success and effectiveness of the Guidelines depends on the good faith of all parties involved with their promotion and implementation.

### What is a National Contact Point?

Each country applying the Guidelines is required to have a ‘national contact point’ (NCP). The NCP has three roles: promoting awareness of the Guidelines, helping to resolve any issues arising from the Guidelines, and reporting on its activities to the OECD. The NCP is expected to be visible, accessible, transparent and accountable.

### New Zealand’s National Contact Point

[www.med.govt.nz/oecd-nzncp](http://www.med.govt.nz/oecd-nzncp)

The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) hosts New Zealand’s NCP, and is assisted by an advisory Liaison Group that includes representatives from other government departments and non-governmental stakeholders. The Liaison Group meets twice a year to promote the guidelines and identify areas for further attention.

### Raising an Issue under the Guidelines

Under the Guidelines, it is possible to raise an issue about the misconduct of a multinational enterprise. The issue should be raised with the NCP of the country where the activity took place (the ‘host country’). If that country does not have a NCP, then the issue should be raised with the NCP in the country in which the business is headquartered.

# The Guidelines – a summary

## General Policies

This section sets out general principles for good corporate behaviour, including respect for human rights.

## Disclosure

This part requires multinational enterprises to provide reliable and relevant information on their activities.

## Employment and Industrial Relations

This section advocates positive relations between employers and employees. It requires respect for the rights of employees, including their freedom of association, right to collectively bargain, right to consultation and information, occupational safety and health. The section opposes practices such as discrimination, forced labour and child labour.

## Environment

This section encourages multinational enterprises to establish and maintain environmental management systems and take into account the environmental impact of their actions.

## Combating Bribery

This part aims to eliminate bribery by or of multinational enterprises.

## Consumer Interest

This section seeks to ensure that multinational enterprises have respect for consumer rights, including taking all reasonable steps to ensure quality and safety of products.

## Science and Technology

This part encourages multinational enterprises to play a development role in fostering local knowledge without compromising their intellectual property rights.

## Competition

This section promotes respect for competition rules and avoiding anti-competitive behaviour.

## Taxation

This section directs that multinational enterprises comply fully with national tax laws and regulations.

## You can contact the New Zealand NCP by:

**emailing the NZ NCP at:**

[oeed-npc@med.govt.nz](mailto:oeed-npc@med.govt.nz)

**writing to the NZ NCP at:**

New Zealand National Contact Point  
for OECD MNE Guidelines  
Competition Trade and Investment Branch  
Ministry of Economic Development  
PO Box 1473, Wellington 6140