

## **Annex 1: Operation of the network of experts of the National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.**

### **1. OBJECTIVE**

Since the revision of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises in May 2011, the need for specific expertise within the National Contact Point has increased significantly.

With the introduction of new obligations regarding corporate social responsibility in areas such as human rights, consumer rights, the environment, anti-bribery and corruption, the extension of supply chain responsibility, due diligence and the sectoral approach as part of a proactive action plan, the NCP does not always have the necessary expertise to be able to deal with all the issues referred to it.

The establishment of a network of experts is intended to fill this gap.

The creation of this network, made up of experts with a variety of skills and backgrounds, aims to cover all areas and techniques related to the OECD Guidelines and to provide the expertise required.

### **2. FUNCTIONING**

The network's experts may issue opinions or provide advice to the NCP, either on their own initiative or at the NCP's request.

These opinions may relate not only to general issues submitted to the NCP, but also to specific cases submitted to the NCP concerning Belgian companies that have allegedly failed to comply with the OECD Guidelines.

When experts are asked to attend NCP meetings, they have the opportunity to give opinions or make recommendations. As specified in the NCP's rules of procedure, experts do not have the right to vote.

The opinions and recommendations of the experts are extremely important, but are not binding on the decisions taken by the NCP, unless they are substantiated.

The NCP aims to work closely with the network of experts.

In this way, the NCP will be able to submit important questions or problems to the experts for their opinion, depending on their area of expertise, particularly in preparation for OECD meetings.

In addition, it is important for the experts to inform the NCP of new trends and developments in their field of expertise.

Regular meetings with the NCP and a general meeting at least once a year are therefore planned.

The expertise required to examine certain dossiers is sometimes very specialised, so the network of experts will also be called upon to find out which people or organisations should be contacted to obtain ad hoc expertise.

The NCP can also call on the experts to help prepare and run the thematic/sectoral roundtables it organises.

On their own initiative or at the request of the NCP, experts may make publications and/or reports available.

For its part, the NCP will bring important reports to the attention of the experts as a sign of close collaboration so that they can keep abreast of current issues.

The NCP requires that confidentiality be respected when experts are involved in certain cases.

### **3. STATUS AND OTHER PROVISIONS**

Network experts speak in a personal capacity. They do not speak or express any opinion on behalf of the organisation or company to which they belong.

Experts work on a voluntary basis and may inform the NCP at any time that they no longer wish to be part of the network. To do so, they must inform the NCP secretariat (Ms. Urpi Iannino, Federal Public Service Economy, City Atrium, rue du Progrès, 50, 1210 Brussels, Tel: +32 227 78 433, [urpi.iannino@economie.fgov.be](mailto:urpi.iannino@economie.fgov.be)).

The composition of the network is published on the NCP website and is systematically updated by the secretariat as new members join and leave the network.

All opinions and/or recommendations are addressed to the NCP and not to its members, even if the request for an opinion comes from one or more NCP members.

Consequently, communication between the network's experts and the NCP always takes place via the NCP secretariat.

Given the limited operating resources of the NCP, the experts normally provide their assistance free of charge.

However, experts are entitled to a travel allowance in accordance with the Royal Decree of 18 January 1965 (regulations on travel expenses of civil servants) when they attend meetings and events organised by the NCP.

Where the expertise provided in a specific case or subject is extensive or requires a considerable investment of time, the NCP Secretariat will pay an appropriate consultancy allowance to the expert(s) concerned. This fee will be set by mutual agreement.