

Updated corporate social responsibility guidelines for New Zealand companies

Multinational enterprises are being reminded of what constitutes good corporate behaviour and social responsibility in the substantially updated OCED Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

The Guidelines are voluntary but all businesses, in any way they can, are encouraged to adhere to them. All OECD member countries and 12 additional countries have endorsed the updated Guidelines.

The Guidelines set out an expected code of conduct for multinational enterprises – including New Zealand companies – that encourages responsible business conduct in the areas of human rights, disclosure, employment and industrial relations, the environment, bribery and extortion, consumer interests, science and technology, competition and taxation.

By recognising that the business community shares responsibility for restoring growth and trust in markets, these guidelines help businesses to grow responsibly by promoting human rights, protecting the environment, avoiding corruption, practicing sustainability and boosting social development around the world.

New to the updated Guidelines are increased guidance on human rights, and the expectation that businesses will use whatever leverage they have with any of their business partners or employment relations to positively influence corporate behaviour.

The Guidelines help to create a global level playing field for multinational enterprises by:

- ensuring that the operations of enterprises are consistent with local law
- strengthening mutual confidence between enterprises and the societies in which they operate
- improving the foreign investment climate, and
- encouraging multinationals to contribute to sustainable development.

Multinational enterprises have the ability to exert influence on all points of their supply chain and the potential to really promote good corporate behaviour and social responsibility.

The Ministry of Economic Development is the national contact point for the OECD Guidelines. Part of the Ministry's role is to look into any issues raised about the behaviour of a New Zealand-owned multinational enterprise, in terms of compliance with the Guidelines.

Further information is on [the Ministry of Economic Development website](#) and [the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development website](#).

Source: MED