

Press release

BKW boosts its commitment to sustainable conduct

OECD dialogue on further development of corporate responsibility

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Sustainability has long occupied a key position in BKW's corporate strategy. Earlier this year BKW became a member of the United Nations Global Compact, boosting its commitment to sustainable conduct in all its business activities. BKW used the opportunity presented by a dialogue with the Society for Threatened Peoples through the OECD's National Contact Point to incorporate the perspective of an NGO working in the field of human rights into the development of its corporate responsibility guidelines.



BKW became a member of the United Nations Global Compact in February 2021, underlining the company's willingness to boost its commitment to sustainable conduct in all its business activities. For BKW, implementing the requirements that arise from this involves further developing the Group's corporate responsibility. And while the Responsible Business Initiative was rejected, the Swiss Federal Council's counterproposal shows that it has similar expectations of the corporate world. Finally, the international standards of the OECD's "Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises" have considerable overlap with the requirements of the UN Global Compact.

In January 2020, the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) lodged a complaint against BKW with the OECD's National Contact Point (NCP). In its complaint, the STP claimed that BKW's corporate responsibility guidelines were inadequate and unequal to the likes of the OECD guidelines. The NCP's remedy in such cases is a confidential dialogue under its moderation. The goal of the dialogue is a forward-looking solution to the complaint and, ideally, joint conclusions between the two parties. BKW and the STP entered into dialogue in later summer of 2020.

Constructive dialogue with mutual findings

BKW used the OECD-moderated dialogue as an opportunity to bring the perspective of an NGO working in the field of human rights into the further development of its corporate responsibility guidelines. The dialogue proved constructive, resulting in joint conclusions between BKW and the STP. These essentially encompassed the following four points:

1. BKW will adopt a commitment to observe human rights into its Code of Conduct, in particular the principle of "free, prior and informed consent" (FPIC) with respect to vulnerable groups.
2. BKW will intensify its stakeholder and due diligence processes in acquisitions to ensure that the rights of indigenous people are observed.
3. BKW will ensure that contractual partners focus on the observance of human rights in power plant projects, and will include an option to exit projects as a last resort.
4. BKW will introduce a complaints procedure in relevant projects.

The joint conclusions are compatible with the provisions of corporate responsibility under the UN Global Compact and the OECD's guidelines. The OECD's National Contact Point officially communicated this agreement with a "[Final Statement](#)". This brings the OECD dialogue to a close.

BKW

The BKW Group is a Bern-based international energy and infrastructure company. It employs approximately 10,500 people. Its company network and innovative technologies allow it to offer its customers a full range of skills in the areas of infrastructure, buildings and energy. The Group plans, builds and operates infrastructure to produce and supply energy to businesses, households and the public sector, and offers digital business models for renewable energies. Today, the BKW Group portfolio comprises everything from engineering consultancy and planning for energy, infrastructure and environmental projects to integrated offers in the field of building technology and the construction, servicing and maintenance of energy, telecommunications, transport and water networks.