



# Communication on Progress (CoP) Report 2017-2018

United Nations Global Compact



October 2018



## Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Statement of the Deputy CEO .....</b>     | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>2. About this report .....</b>               | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>3. AFEA at a glance.....</b>                 | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>3.1. Who we are.....</b>                     | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>4. CSR &amp; Sustainability at AFEA.....</b> | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>4.1. Sustainable Development Goals .....</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>5. Our progress.....</b>                     | <b>11</b> |
| <b>5.1. Human Rights.....</b>                   | <b>11</b> |
| <b>5.1.1. Our commitment .....</b>              | <b>11</b> |
| <b>5.1.2. Our actions.....</b>                  | <b>12</b> |
| <b>5.2. Labour .....</b>                        | <b>16</b> |
| <b>5.2.1. Our commitment.....</b>               | <b>16</b> |
| <b>5.2.2. Our actions.....</b>                  | <b>17</b> |
| <b>5.3. Environment .....</b>                   | <b>18</b> |
| <b>5.3.1. Our commitment .....</b>              | <b>18</b> |
| <b>5.3.2. Our actions.....</b>                  | <b>19</b> |
| <b>5.4. Anti-corruption .....</b>               | <b>21</b> |
| <b>5.4.1. Our commitment .....</b>              | <b>21</b> |
| <b>5.4.2. Our actions.....</b>                  | <b>21</b> |

## 1. Statement of the Deputy CEO



Dear readers,

During 2018, AFEA, incorporated the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and declared its support to those principles.

With this annual Communication on Progress report, we are glad to communicate the actions we have implemented to successfully integrate these principles into our business culture, decision making and daily corporate operations. All our actions are the outcome of our well-developed strategy on Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability and our commitment to our Polices and Code of Conduct.

This report is of major importance to our Company as it reflects our progress and strong commitment on each of the four areas of UNGC: Human rights, Labour rights, Environment and Anti-corruption. We acknowledge the importance of each of them and we treat each principle as a timeless aspect of our responsible operations.

We are committed to sharing our performance on these four areas to all our employees regardless their level and to all our stakeholders for their better and more intensive engagement and understanding of the current challenges. Additionally, we always aim to be transparent with our actions and strategies.

Until the end of 2018 and during 2019, we will further enhance our Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability strategy, we will continue investing in innovative developments, with the aim to provide services of added value for all our clients, and we will keep promoting our good practices and collaborate with others for the commonweal.

I, hereby, invite you to explore this report so you can learn more about what we do in practice in order to respond to the challenges of our business in alignment to UNGC principles.

Kind regards,

Dimitra Lignou

Deputy CEO

Head of Corporate Communications and CSR

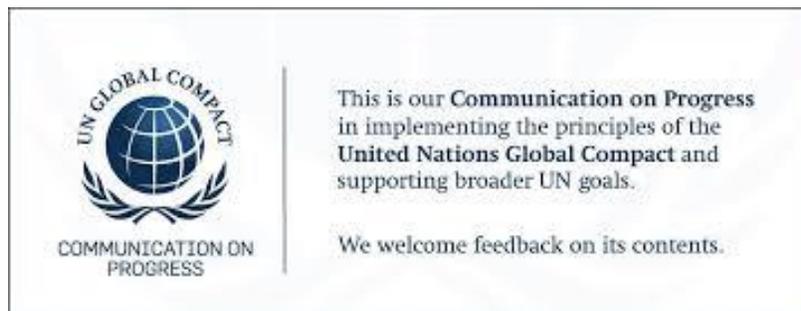
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## 2. About this report

This Communication on Progress report is AFEA's first stand-alone document on United Nations Global Compact. It covers the period September 2017 to September 2018. This report is a confirmation of our respect and commitment to the promotion of the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact in our everyday business.

We are, therefore, committed to the continuous contribution to the Sustainable Development, the engagement with our stakeholders for the creation of added value for all, as well as the compliance with the existing legislation and with the aim to maintain and pursuit transparency, integrity and inclusivity in all our actions.

This report was developed in cooperation with AIPHORIA Consulting and was approved by the Board of Directors of AFEA on 15<sup>th</sup> October2018.



### 3. AFEA at a glance

AFEA Travel and Congress Services has been operating in the MICE and Corporate Travel industry for more than 40 years. The company is based in Athens since 1977 and since 2002 it also operates offices in Thessaloniki. AFEA provides services to a wide client portfolio such as major international corporations, private companies and enterprises, scientific and educational organizations, as well as public institutions, in Greece and worldwide.

We collaborate with an extensive network of partners and therefore we are able to recognize and respond accordingly to each client's needs with flexibility and immediacy by providing reliable services as well as creative ideas. The company is a leader in the corporate travel and meetings industry and is committed to provide "value for money" solutions with return on investments for its clients. We operate both as a partner and as a consultant for our clients by providing our expertise and know how, using to the maximum our tools such as the meetings and events capabilities, supplier negotiation ability, offline and online technological resources etc.

AFEA is a member of the most prestigious international meetings & travel associations, such as ICCA, IAPCO, EFAPCO, HAPCO, ACVB and IATA and is a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact. AFEA demonstrates leadership in its sector and aims to continue its daily operation based on values directly connected to CSR & Sustainable Development and to actively support the integration of sustainable business practices in the tourism industry by offering services that benefit society and environment such as promoting its new service: Sustainable Events.

### 3.1. Who we are

## VISION

Being a leader in the MICE and Corporate Travel Industry by providing added value services to our clients, while contributing to Sustainable Development.

## MISSION

We are committed to providing high quality services, to creating and promoting a culture of corporate responsibility, oriented towards today's needs and challenges, by adopting practices that promote Sustainable Development and innovation into the full range of our activities.

## VALUES

Innovation | High quality | Teamwork | Support for our employees | Open communication | Trust and responsibility | Integrity and transparency | Leadership

## Our Services

- Congress & Event Management – PCO
- Destination Management - DMC
- Meetings & Incentives
- Corporate Travel Services
- Luxury Travel Experiences

## Stats and facts

- **25.653** Corporate Travelers
- **189** Meetings
- **17.881** Delegates
- **59.225** Room Nights
- **250** active clients

## Our Tools

- Online Ticketing Management software
- Online Registration & Accommodation Management software
- Wide network of suppliers worldwide
- In-House Graphic design
- e Marketing tools, e.g. e-newsletter, website content management system
- Travel Agency ERP
- Reporting

#### 4. CSR & Sustainability at AFEA

Since 2017, AFEA has developed a Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability strategy and a comprehensive program for the implementation of its commitments in cooperation with ALPHORIA Consulting. The company aims to identify and manage issues related to its operations, and in alignment with Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development practices in the MICE and Corporate Travel industry.

With the aim to continuously and substantially improving AFEA's sustainability performance, we have developed and designed targeted processes and actions to incorporate the principles of Sustainable Development into the day-to-day decision-making process through clearly defined implementation and realization phases.

This way, AFEA, has a holistic view regarding the occurred impacts, internally and externally, and is aware of its performance abilities in order to be able to set current and future goals as well as to identify areas for improvement while uncovering new opportunities and minimizing business risks.

Within the framework of our Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability strategy, for 2017 we carried out a number of actions as follows:

- Development and communication of AFEA's **Vision, Mission and Values**
- **Stakeholders identification and mapping** to better engage with internal and external stakeholders and to address the decision-making management efficiently.
- **Employee training and awareness raising** on Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development and Environmental Management issues.
- Development and implementation of the **Environmental Policy, Policy on Labour Practices and Human Rights** and **Code of Conduct** which are communicated to all staff, subcontractors/partners and suppliers of the company.
- Development of a **new service** on the organization of **Sustainable Events**.

**AFEA received the Gold Recognition level accreditation from Ecovadis**

The intensive efforts of AFEA have resulted to the **Gold Recognition level** accreditation from Ecovadis, a third-party assessment platform. EcoVadis enables companies to monitor the sustainable performance of their suppliers. Annually over 30,000 suppliers from 150 sectors, 110 countries and 21 CSR indicators are evaluated based on 21 criteria across four themes: environment, fair labor practices, ethics/fair business practices, and supply chain. As a result, AFEA is ranked among the top 5% of companies from all sectors worldwide regarding its responsible business practices.

While we are proud of the progress we have made, we know there is still much work to be done. With the use of technologies and our innovative culture, we are confident that we will further accelerate our progress over the coming years and fully integrate the sustainability practices into our business plans.

#### 4.1.Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They focus on the world’s major challenges such as the environmental protection and social inequalities. We at AFEA, we align those goals with our strategy on CSR & Sustainability. As part of our implemented program, we have mapped those actions, policies and strategies through which we contribute to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.



## 5. Our progress

The 10 principles of UN Global Compact play an active role in our sustainability agenda, while contributing in the long-term growth of our business. In order to succeed, among other fundamental factors, we demonstrate good governance in practice and we contribute to the sustainable economic development. Incorporating the 10 principles into our own operations is the first significant step we made. In addition, we participate in sectoral unions and organizations and we cooperate with other companies of our industry. We consider this approach as of strategic importance as we are able to develop partnerships that promote the common wealth. In this section, we present our commitments and actions for each theme for the period covered for this Communication on Progress.

### 5.1. Human Rights

**Principle 1:** Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

**Principle 2:** make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

#### 5.1.1. Our commitment

We, at AFEA, acknowledge that we owe our success to our people. We believe that the implementation and the commitment to our “Labour Practices & Human Rights Policy” is essential part of our culture and responsible operations and it supports a working environment of mutual trust and respect.

Taking into consideration the United Nation Global Compact on human rights as well as the International Labour Organization (ILO) we commit to:

- “be against any type of discrimination.”
- “provide equal opportunities for all regardless gender, age, political or religious believes, nationality or sexual preferences.”

- “respect, protect and put in practice the fundamental and internationally recognized human and labour rights.”
- “provide personal development and career opportunities through continuous training.”
- “be against any type of child and/or forced labour.”
- “protect employees’ Health & Safety” by forming a suitable working environment.”
- “promote a culture of balanced working-personal life.”

This policy covers all our operations and we seek its implementation from our partners and employees.

#### 5.1.2. Our actions

##### Human rights



Human rights and gender equality are fundamental rights and we absolutely respect them. It is part of our business culture to prevent all sorts of discrimination at work by providing equal opportunities to all regardless of gender, age, political or religious beliefs, nationality, race or sexual orientation.

##### Education and training



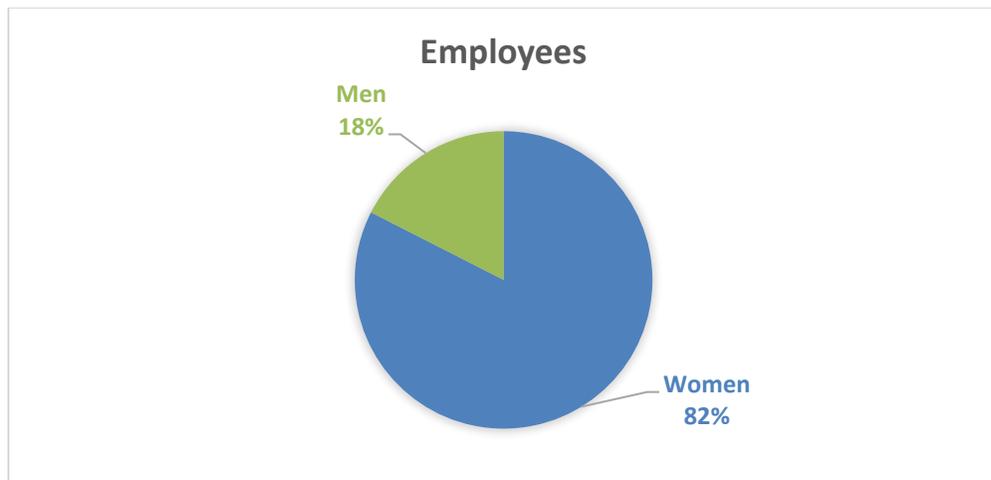
Investing in education and training is essential and it results in a more skilled workforce, while increasing productivity and driving business growth. We, at AFEA, ensure inclusive, equal and quality training and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all our employees, men and women, younger and older. We provide our employees the opportunity to learn new skills, further develop their knowledge and upgrade their skills through trainings and seminars based on their needs. This period, 12 employees had been trained in 11 workshops and seminars related to the following topics; training on airtickets softwares and technologies, digital marketing and social media, education on meetings trends and new technologies, GDPR, CSR & Sustainable Development, new venues familiarization trips etc.

Additionally, during the period of this CoP, we invested in our employees’ training on our Policies and Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability program to further strengthen our commitment

to our mission and goals. Lastly, we are very proud to have implemented an internship and to have given the opportunity to a young undergraduate student to develop his skills in practice.

During the reference period, AFEA was not notified of any human rights violation related to its activity.

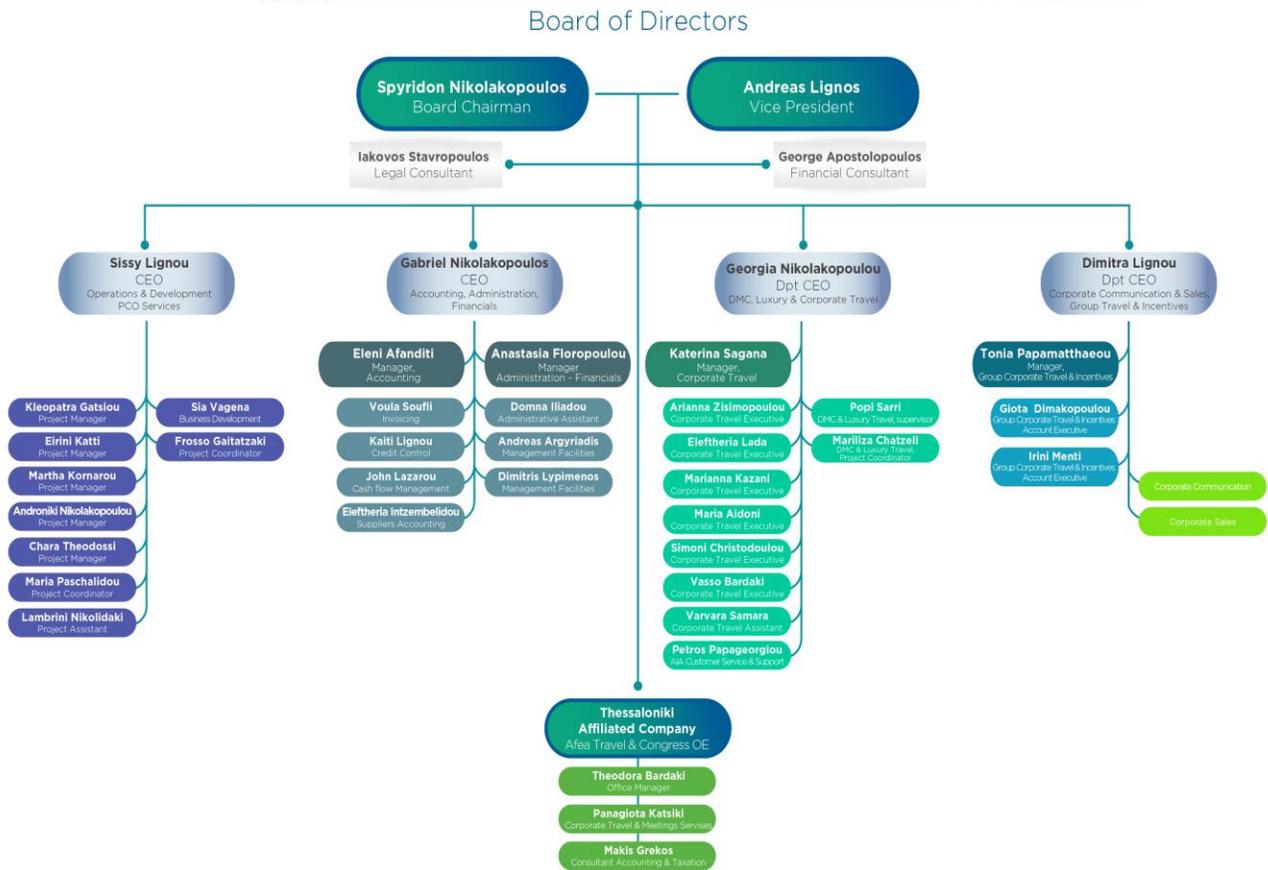
| Number of employees              |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| <b>Women</b>                     | 33 |
| <b>Men</b>                       | 7  |
| <b>Total number of employees</b> | 40 |



| Distribution of employees by age |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| <b>&lt; 30</b>                   | 3  |
| <b>30-50</b>                     | 30 |
| <b>&gt;50</b>                    | 7  |

\*all employees are of Greek ethnicity

## Organisational Chart



**Good practice: “Health for all”**

As part of our ongoing Corporate Social Responsibility program, AFEA supported actions aimed to preserve the health of vulnerable social groups. Under the “Health for All” program, AFEA offered support to primary health care and social care systems with local public services for the benefit of local, socially vulnerable populations.

In efforts to raise awareness towards the need for equal participation of vulnerable social groups in health information exchange, health care, support and rehabilitation, and strengthen the participation of these groups in health issues, AFEA sponsored the “Health for All” program in the municipality of Naxos and the Small Cyclades, where volunteers offered health services to the mountain area villages of Naxos including Apeiranthos, Koronida, Koronos, Filoti, and on the Small Cyclades: Schoinousa, Iraklia, Donousa, Koufonisia over the March 28-April 1 period.

Under the auspices of UNESCO Chair on Adolescent Health and the universities of Athens, Crete and Patras, the “Health for All” program had among others covered medical exams and vaccinations for 4,154 children, dental checkups for 114 children, gynecological exams and Pap tests for 779 women, medical exams for 1,974 adults, and Hepatitis B screening of 476 inmates.

**Good practice: Cooperation for a better future**

Through the organization of seminars, such as the “IAPCO EDGE Seminar 2017”, we cooperate with other companies of the MICE industry, including our competitors, aiming to highlight the professionalism of Greek Congress and Meeting Industry and to showcase the modern face of Athens and our country, to an audience of young professionals. This way, we practically show that through collaboration and knowledge sharing we are able only to do more but also do better.

## 5.2. Labour

**Principle 3:** Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

**Principle 4:** the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

**Principle 5:** the effective abolition of child labour; and

**Principle 6:** the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### 5.2.1. Our commitment

AFEA is committed to improving workplace practices beyond legal compliance. Decent work, workplace security, social protection, personal development, social integration, equal opportunities, non-discrimination and freedom to express workplace concerns are some of AFEA's core values regarding workplace practices.

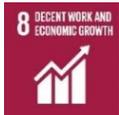
We implement the "Labour Practices & Human Rights Policy" in accordance with United Nation Global Compact as well as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and we are committed to continue respecting the employees' rights. We therefore, ensure that all our employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

### 5.2.2. Our actions

#### Working environment



We ensure and we provide a working environment that promotes respect and equal opportunities for all such as the participation of women in leadership roles and in the decision-making process. Specifically, 50% of the board of directors is comprised by women, whereas the 90% of the management team are women. This way, AFEA empowers women which is pivotal to the health and social development of families, communities and nations. We also acknowledge the fact that companies which focus on women's empowerment experience greater business success showing an increase in productivity, organizational effectiveness, return on investment and higher consumer satisfaction.



At AFEA, we ensure responsible, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making processes at all levels of the company, through consultation with our employees. Moreover, we respect, protect and put in practice the fundamental and internationally recognized principles for the human rights and labour practices including a safe and healthy workplace free of any type of harassment, including physical, verbal, sexual or psychological harassment, abuse or threats. We are against any type of child and/or forced labour and we expect our partners and suppliers to act likewise.

#### Freedom of association and collective bargain



In our company, there is equal pay for equal work for all employees regardless of gender and age. We comply with the National General Collective Labour Agreement (2016) regarding the minimum wage and benefits standards. We provide the legal public medical insurance as described by the National Organization for the Provision of Health Services (Greek acronym EOPYY). Moreover, we offer our employees competitive wages and benefits such as parental leave, in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. During the period of this CoP, 37% of our employee were eligible for parental leave to which they are re-entitled to receive 4 days per year. Additionally, all employees receive bonuses in the form of cash checks to be used for grocery shopping.

### 5.3. Environment

**Principle 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

**Principle 8:** undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

**Principle 9:** encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

#### 5.3.1. Our commitment

##### **Code of conduct and environmental policy**

It is clear now more than ever that regardless the business sector all companies should act against climate change. We are dedicated to positively contributing to the protection of the environment. We are able to foresee that addressing climate challenge creates new opportunities for societies to grow and prosper. Hence, we seek to reduce all negative environmental impacts in our daily operations and to increase the positive ones. Our vision for the future is, as a result of our operation that the natural environment will be on a better state than before. In this context, through our Environmental Policy and Code of Conduct, we commit to saving energy and reducing GHG emissions, to minimize the use of materials (natural resources) in our daily operations and to implement recycling practices aiming to the reduction of the waste generated by our operations. Moreover, we understand that it is essential for companies to contribute to the development of a sustainable supply chain, and for this reason we commit to applying environmental criteria to procurement practices and raising awareness among our partners and suppliers, regarding environmentally friendly practices and precautionary measures. Finally, we commit to continue developing and promoting services that take into consideration the protection of the environment.

### 5.3.2. Our actions

#### Energy



We keep track of our energy consumption and we take appropriate measures to reduce it by setting targets on improved energy efficiency for the consumption in our offices. For example, in 2017, in order to improve the energy efficiency in our offices, we installed Energy Class A equipment and LED lamps.

#### Waste



At our offices, we recycle the paper we use on a daily basis and we are constantly trying to reduce the amount of paper needed for our operations. In particular, during the reporting period we estimated that we recycled 500kg paper and 100kg plastic and aluminum. In addition, we recycle tonners and other chemicals deriving from our printers. In addition, in 2017, we offered our employees a training on environmental awareness and protection. Eight employees of the management team participated in this training.

#### **Good Practice: Offering new service to enhance sustainability: Sustainable events**



Events, small or large, have significant impacts on the environment as usually they are related to extensive resource (materials, energy, water, etc.) use and therefore waste generation. Using less of everything by increasing efficiency and choosing products, suppliers and processes with an improved environmental profile, benefits the environment, trains attendees, inculcates environmentally friendly behavior and builds credibility for the organizations involved. A responsible or sustainable event, is the event which is designed in a way that potential negative impacts are managed and minimized, while it leaves a beneficial legacy for the host local community and all parties involved, including raising awareness and maximizing positive experience for all.

AFEA, launched its new service: **Sustainable Events**, with the aim to support its clients on the organization of their future sustainable event, conference or corporate meeting. This new service promotes the respect to the environment and practices of responsible behavior and consumption.

More information regarding the service can be found [here](#).

## 5.4. Anti-corruption

**Principle 10:** Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

### 5.4.1. Our commitment

AFEA provides a range of services of high quality, reliability and professionalism. For us it is a non-negotiable commitment to conduct ethical business and to respect national and international laws and regulations in every case. Corruption is considered to be a serious obstacle to economic and social development around the world. It has negative impacts on sustainable development and particularly affects business growth, escalates costs and poses serious legal and reputational risks. It also undermines fair competition, impedes long-term foreign and domestic investment, and distorts development priorities. For this reason, AFEA adopts robust anti-corruption measures and practices to protect both its reputation and its stakeholders' interests. In particular, bribery, of any form, is a negative practice and completely opposite to AFEA's business ethics as it does not reflect, at any form, Company's culture and policies. On this basis, AFEA operates in alignment to its Code of Conduct which has been communicated to all stakeholders including employees, partners, suppliers, third parties such as lawyers etc. with the aim to operate on these guidelines and principles.

### 5.4.2. Our actions

#### **Anti-corruption measures**

AFEA assesses the risk of corruption on its daily business practices. We have developed a specific mechanism to prevent illegal actions in all forms. As part of our strategy, we evaluate the possibility of corruption and we take measures to prevent any incident. For this reason, we pay special attention on the transparency of the contracts and transactions we made as well as in the selection of our partners. In case of any suspicion of involvement in incorruption or fraudulent activities, the Board of Directors is responsible to



resolve the issue. AFEA has endorsed the EU General Data Protection regulation and maintains a system of internal accounting controls and record keeping for all transactions.

**Training on business integrity**

In 2017, AFEA employees participated in the New Third Party Intermediary HCBI Anti-Corruption TPI training and received the corresponding certificate.

AFEA continuously demonstrates good governance practices by integrating corporate sustainability principles into its operations and relationships with others, providing this way greater transparency, accountability and inclusiveness. It also contributes to the development and implementation of international norms and standards, for instance, by committing to the UN Global Compact. It operates ethically, respects the laws and regulations in every case. As a result, no incident of corruption has been reported to the company during the reference period of this report.

### **Contact information**

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