



# ESG Policy

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### Introduction

Steadfast Business Consulting LLP with widespread presence across the globe and PAN India. The firm provides varied services including entry strategy, taxation, transaction advisory, forensic advisory, cyber security, accounting & compliances, consulting services to public, private, and non-profit establishments.

At SBC LLP, we appreciate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factor's increasing role in decisions of consumers, regulators, policy makers and investors. We understand that acting on ESG issues in a proactive way has lately become even more compelling due to heightened social, governmental, and consumer attention on the broader impact of corporations, as well as by the investors and executives who realize that a strong ESG proposition can safeguard a company's long-term success.

The firm believes that building a robust connection with indispensable elements of society generates wealth, facilitates top-line growth, reduces costs, minimizes regulatory and legal interventions, increases employee productivity and build resilience. We therefore, consider our ESG proposition to be a critical

constituent in serving our clients and engaging our workforces. In order to improve our ESG metrics, we ambitiously strive towards more sustainable and socially conscious corporate behaviour and are committed to offer our services in a manner that substantially curtails the risks to various environmental (E), social (S) and governance (G) factors.

Our ESG Framework is established on the model of inclusive development. We aspire to work with our clients to analyse their core business models, capabilities, and operations and advise them to create positive economic, environmental, and social impact. This policy outlines our ESG principles and serves as a memorandum for our employees, customers, partners, vendors and associated parties.

## **Our ESG Principles**

The three essential elements of ESG are invariably intertwined. The following practices and principles equip the firm to comprehend ESG issues that are likely to become financially material over time and to adapt to the changes.

### **Environmental Responsibility**

As a global firm working with clients in nearly every sector of the economy, we appreciate we have an important role to play in tackling sustainability challenges, including environmental considerations. Our commitment to the environment is evident through our steady efforts in reducing the environmental impact of our operations. SBC LLP necessarily conducts its business in accordance with the local and national environmental regulations. Furthermore, clients and vendors also adhere to these regulations. Highlights of our efforts include

#### **Energy Efficiency**

Given the nature of our business, our direct environmental impacts stem primarily from the operation of our corporate offices and buildings. We have established a number of efficiency measures in the office. For instance, our offices have energy efficient building management systems to control and monitor energy usages at our offices

#### **Commercial Travel**

Owing to Covid-19 pandemic, our business travel was significantly reduced. We further wish to minimize travel by leveraging technology in order to reduce the emissions from travel. When it is absolutely necessary to travel, our intention is to reduce our emissions by leveraging lower-carbon options

#### **Enhanced use of renewable energy**

To drive progress, we focus on enhancing sustainable consumption of natural resources by reducing use of water and paper at our office spaces.

We strive to purchase 100% of our paper from certified sources and only source renewable energy for 100% of our power needs.

### **Minimizing waste**

We recognize that responsible resource and waste management are vital elements of a sustainability strategy as it can lead to reduction of adverse impacts and also improve efficiency by reducing costs. Our focus is on reducing our water and waste footprint, coupled with responsible disposal of the waste we produce. We

graft to recycle paper, as well as non-paper waste, throughout our office buildings at all locations and client sites in a practical and cost-effective manner.

We also encourage our clients and business partners to develop internal programs, as well as

targets, to foster a culture of sustainability. We expect them to conduct their operations in a manner that meets industries best practices and standards with respect to reduction of energy and waste usage and waste disposal.

We, at SBC LLP, are mindful of the impact of our work on the various stakeholders and also help our clients become conscious of their social impact. We continuously strive to act in a manner that is consistent with relevant laws and regulations.

### **Building a Culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Divergent views and differing experiences are often valuable. We believe that diversity and inclusion strategies are the catalysts for success and innovation in the workplace. The hiring team at SBC LLP aggressively endorses such strategies to create exceptional teams by employing equitable processes and reducing unconscious bias in all our practices. We incorporate diversity into how we recruit, train and develop our employees and create opportunities for their advancement and growth. Within our own firm, we periodically introduce initiatives to advance women's career growth and representation at all levels. In addition, we also ensure that our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is more firmly embedded in how we render services to our clients.

## **Back Our Employees**

Our people are integral to our success. Our human capital strategy is focused on attracting, developing and retaining the high-performing workforce. We have a fair pay practice to ensure that our pay practice is competitive with the market for the same or similar jobs, qualifications and experience. Overall well-being is the foundation of our employee benefit programs. To meet specific needs of our employees and help them in balancing work, life and family matters more successfully, we offer a comprehensive benefits and wellness package including health care coverage, retirement benefits, flexible work arrangements, employee assistance programs, competitive leave policies and more.

## **Advancing Human Rights while making Partnerships**

We ensure absolute compliance with all human rights laws and do not tolerate any kind of physical violence, threats, bullying, or verbal abuse in the workplace. We invariably consider our core values – “vision, empathy, sustainability” in every project we choose to support and in the way we work together as an organization. We create partnerships with entities that share a commitment to sustainability. Accordingly, we require our suppliers or partners to act in a socially responsible way which prohibits all forms of forced labour, child labour and human trafficking, and requires compliance with all laws concerning discrimination or any kind of harassment.

## **Treating Clients Fairly**

Building lasting associations requires that we treat our clients in a fair manner and communicate with them transparently. We have formulated internal policies and procedures aimed at simplifying our disclosures and communications and aligning our practices with client’s interests. Besides, we have taken a slew of measures for shielding our clientele from financial abuse and discrimination. As we expand our business, we intend to further improve our social impact across our organization and within the greater community.

## **Governance Responsibility**

Ethical business practices coupled with a robust governance structure is a key imperative to achievement of our goal for long-term value creation for stakeholders.

Our Code of Business Conduct and Ethics serves as the foundation for high standards of integrity and ethics and promotion of compliance with applicable regulations. Our internal system of practices, controls, and procedures assist us in making rational and prudent decisions to meet the needs of external stakeholders. To ensure transparency and good governance, the firm has adequate number of independent directors and a governance structure that promotes accountability, transparency and ethical behaviour.

As we expand our ESG initiative, we will seek ways to further optimize our governance process

### **ESG Integration in Our Business**

The analysis of ESG factors is becoming an imperative of the investment process to gain a fuller understanding of the businesses in which they invest. Investors are more and more applying these non-financial factors as part of their analysis method to identify material risks and growth opportunities. The coronavirus pandemic, in particular, has intensified deliberations about the interconnectedness of sustainability and the financial system. SBC is leading the financial industry by producing valuable research, convening experts and practitioners for discussion, and setting standards to align the client's financial goals and strategy with ESG consideration. Our ESG strategy is formulated to support our clients in making a positive difference and is underpinned by our acknowledgement of accountability to make a positive impact on the world. We relentlessly endeavour to embed ESG in the organization and client solutions in order to drive measurable change.

#### **Advisory**

The firm's approach to advising clients is very personalized. We engage in extensive conversations with clients to understand their financial goals and values. Our aim is to align our client's goals with their ESG objectives by developing and adopting sustainable strategies. We help our clients meet

their environmental commitments and plan their decarbonisation journey by assisting in identifying opportunities and risks arising from climate change, energy usage, human rights laws and several other factors.

### **Assurance and Accounting services**

As all concerned stakeholders push for more ESG information, companies are obliged to increase their disclosures. The ESG information needs to be collected, consolidated, and disclosed with the same rigor as financial information.

We endeavour to provide our clients with information to assess how ESG issues can impact their financial performance and ability to create long-term value. We encourage our clients to make accurate and reliable ESG data disclosures and also help them develop policies, internal controls and governance in this respect.

### **Employee and Client Education**

The opportunities offered by ESG are significant. However, the notion of sustainable corporate behaviour is at a nascent stage in India. Therefore, we relentlessly engage with our clients and build an understanding of ESG propositions through meetings, workshops, webinars etc.

ESG training is provided to our people to ensure that everyone is empowered to be a catalyst of positive change.

### **ESG Governance**

SBC LLP has an “ESG Central Committee” which helps in identifying ESG related risks and their financial impacts for the firm. It has also established a comprehensive monitoring mechanism to oversee and manage the environmental, social and health & safety risks. The committee comprises of senior directors from all functional domains and an Executive Director (ED) who is in-charge of the effective functioning of the ESG Mechanism and periodical reviews and other ESG related undertakings including education, reporting, training, and client education. In case of any observed non-compliance or irregularities, we encourage all concerned parties to notify our “ESG Core Committee” in order to take necessary corrective actions

### **Transparency & Accountability to Stakeholders**

By way of the Whistle Blower policy, the firm will continue to empower and enthuse various stakeholders including employees, clients, suppliers, vendors, shareholders and other stakeholders to bring to the notice of the “ESG Central Committee” any issue involving compromise/ violation of our code of conduct/ ethical norms, legal or statutory provisions without distress of reprisal, retaliation, discrimination or harassment.



## India Office Locations

- Hyderabad** Suite 5, Level 3, Reliance Cyber Ville, Madhapur, HiTech City, Hyderabad - 500081
- Delhi** C-699A, 1st Floor, Sector 7, Palam Extn., Dwarka, New Delhi, Delhi - 110075
- Mumbai** Flat No. 3, Plot No. 226/227, Slon East, Mumbai - 400022
- Chennai** New No. 13B, New Bangaru Colony first street, KK Nagar West, Chennai - 600078
- Bangalore** 90/1, 3rd Floor, Pasha South Square, Rathavilas Road, Basavangudi Bangalore - 560004
- Vizag** Level 3, Kupilli Arcade, Akkayyapalem, Visakhapatnam 530016, Andhra Pradesh
- Vijayawada** 56-11-3, Sri Devi Complex, Y.V.R Street, MG Road, Patamata, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh
- Tirupati** H. No: 6-154/1, Syamala Nilayam, Near Water Tank, Akkarampalli, Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh
- Kurnool** #21, Top Floor, Skandanshi Vyapaar, New Bus Stand Road, Kurnool 518 003, Andhra Pradesh



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