



## Food and Agriculture Business Principles FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***Why do we need the Food and Agriculture Business Principles (FAB Principles)?***

As the world's population grows to 9 billion by 2050 and demand on global food systems intensifies, business will be a critical partner for Governments and other stakeholders to design and deliver effective, scalable and practical solutions for secure food systems and sustainable agriculture. With farming and food occupying a pivotal position in sustainable development, the FAB Principles provide a holistic framework that enables companies to work collaboratively with the UN, Governments, civil society and other stakeholders to meet this challenge.

### ***Where do the FAB Principles come from?***

The UN Global Compact has facilitated the development of voluntary [Food and Agriculture Business Principles](#) (FAB Principles) to help realize the goal of sustainable development as described in the Rio+20 outcome document ([The Future We Want](#)), and to empower the private sector to make a substantial contribution in the post-2015 era. [The Future We Want highlights opportunities in the 'green economy' to eradicate poverty, contribute to food security, and better manage water and natural resources.]

The FAB Principles respond to the call from Rio+20 for sustainable intensification of food production by increasing local investments, access to local and global markets, and reducing waste in supply chains. They also build on commitments received at the UN Global Compact's [Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum](#).

### ***How were the FAB Principles developed?***

The FAB Principles are the outcome of a nearly two-year broad and inclusive multi-stakeholder process. Over 20<sup>1</sup> consultations have been conducted globally, including more than 1,000 businesses, UN agencies and civil society organizations involved in agriculture, nutrition and food systems.

View the White Paper, which identified key factors and outcomes for the FAB Principles, and served as the basis for input to the consultation process. The Core Advisory Group members and other relevant participating organizations are included in the Annex:

[http://unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues\\_doc/agriculture\\_and\\_food/SABP\\_White\\_Paper\\_July13.pdf](http://unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/agriculture_and_food/SABP_White_Paper_July13.pdf)

To read a third-party synthesis and analysis of the consultation process, click here:

[http://unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues\\_doc/agriculture\\_and\\_food/Validating\\_FABPs\\_CDI.pdf](http://unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/agriculture_and_food/Validating_FABPs_CDI.pdf).

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<sup>1</sup> Since June 2012 – Preparatory (2) and Core Advisory Group (3) meetings, and Local Network Consultations (17).

### **What are the FAB Principles?**

1. AIM FOR FOOD SECURITY, HEALTH AND NUTRITION – Businesses should support food and agriculture systems that optimise production and minimise wastage, to provide nutrition and promote health for every person on the planet.
2. BE ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE – Businesses should support sustainable intensification of food systems to meet global needs by managing agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry responsibly. They should protect and enhance the environment and use natural resources efficiently and optimally.
3. ENSURE ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND SHARE VALUE – Businesses should create, deliver and share value across the entire food and agriculture chain from farmers to consumers.
4. RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS, CREATE DECENT WORK AND HELP COMMUNITIES TO THRIVE – Businesses should respect the rights of farmers, workers and consumers. They should improve livelihoods, promote and provide equal opportunities, so communities are attractive to live, work and invest in.
5. ENCOURAGE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY – Businesses should behave legally and responsibly by respecting land and natural resource rights, avoiding corruption, being transparent about activities and recognising their impacts.
6. PROMOTE ACCESS AND TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY – Businesses should promote access to information, knowledge and skills for more sustainable food and agricultural systems. They should invest in developing capacities of smallholders and SMEs, as well as more effective practices and new technologies.

### **What do the FAB Principles offer to business, the UN and Governments?**

The FAB Principles establish the attributes of well-functioning and sustainable global food and agriculture systems, and in doing so offer a framework for principle-based partnerships between companies and the UN, Governments and other stakeholders.

- The FAB Principles articulate common understanding of the resources, ecosystem services and socio-economic impacts needed to build resilience into food and agricultural systems and the markets that they serve.
- The Principles are a direct outcome of common agreement sought by responsible business practitioners and policymakers. They serve as a bridge between policies and practices for outcomes desired by Governments, businesses and other stakeholders.
- As a statement of business goals for sustainability of the food and agriculture sector, the FAB Principles support better engagement between UN agencies and responsible businesses involved in food and agriculture, and reinforce expectations stated in The Future We Want.
  - Businesses using the FAB Principles are directly oriented toward achieving broader UN goals.
  - The FAB Principles are designed to impart to stakeholders, particularly businesses, collective consistency, coherence and utility in contributing to UN goals, with UN agencies and UN instruments.

### **How can UN Global Compact companies use the FAB Principles?**

The Principles provide a common basis for UN Global Compact corporate participants from the food and agriculture sector to report on their sustainability policies and practices in their required annual [Communication on Progress](#) (COP). This public disclosure is frequently the most visible expression of a participant's commitment to the Global Compact and its principles.

Given that the Principles incorporate widely-accepted language which has been clearly developed and refined in consultation with companies and stakeholders across the industry, however, the FAB Principles can serve as the basis for *all* companies operating in the food, nutrition and agricultural sectors to develop substantive their sustainability reports.

**NOTE:** Companies (and other stakeholders) are not required to ‘sign up’ to the FAB Principles if they are already UN Global Compact participants. Their annual COP will illustrate how their organization’s policies and practices are aligned with the FAB Principles, and will demonstrate activities and achievements that contribute to meeting the global challenges of food security and sustainable agriculture.

### ***What value do the FAB Principles offer existing industry initiatives?***

The FAB Principles are designed to complement existing multi-stakeholder initiatives that advance sustainability in food and agriculture, and serve as an umbrella over voluntary standards and technical compliance platforms. The Principles respond to the need for a common understanding between existing standards and industry initiatives by providing agreed global language on what constitutes sustainability in food agriculture for businesses and other stakeholders.

- Existing commodity or geography-specific initiatives and certification standards can adopt the FAB Principles to contextualize their individual efforts.
- By defining widely-accepted business principles and desired outcomes, the FAB Principles fill the gaps between crop-specific initiatives developed and led by industry and Government.
- The Principles express a high-level commitment and philosophy of an organization to instil policies and practices that are responsible and sustainable – some of which may be evidenced in the certifications standards they choose for their specific business.

### ***Why should companies commit to implement both the UN Global Compact and its FAB Principles?***

Businesses that commit to the UN Global Compact and to the FAB Principles present their management’s intent and overall orientation toward corporate responsibility, in a way that is greater than any single (or multiple) certification(s) can provide. The UN Global Compact welcomes all farmers and agribusinesses – regardless of size, crop or location, including the majority of the world’s small farmers – to make this principle-based commitment.

The FAB Principles offer a comprehensive framework that should be viewed as a whole. It is acknowledged that trade-offs may be required between each principle depending on context and circumstance.