

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of a modern building's interior courtyard. The building's facade, featuring glass and white architectural details, frames the top and sides of the image. In the center, a large, leafy green tree stands against a bright sky. A sunburst effect is visible through the tree's canopy. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing the text.

UN GLOBAL COMPACT

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS 2021

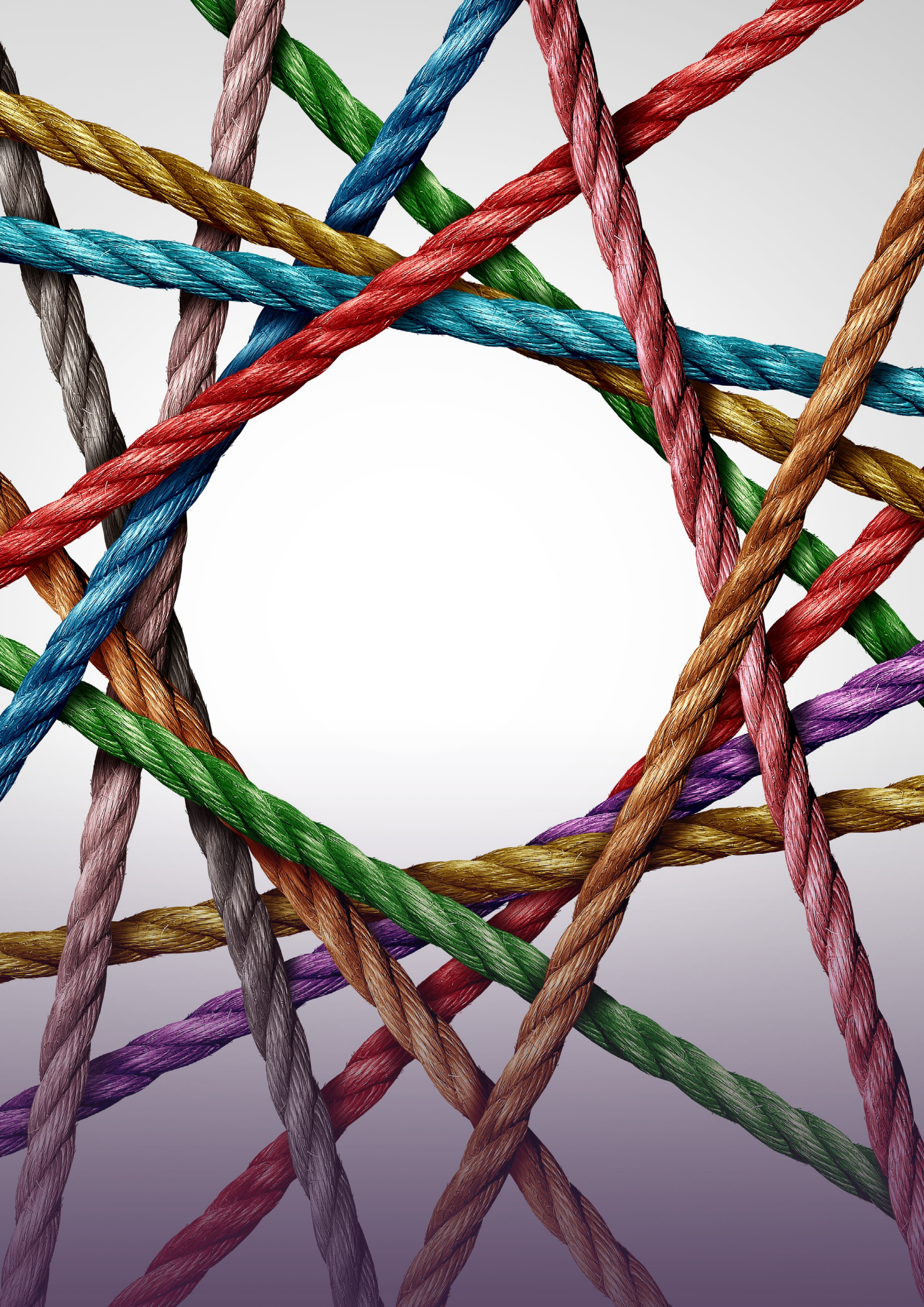


GOWLING WLG



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STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In 2020, Gowling WLG committed to support the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact. This was an important step for our international firm, one that gave new perspective to our core values while providing an opportunity to reflect upon our role as a member of the global legal and business communities.

More than anything, committing to the Principles underscored that there is significant work ahead of us – upholding human rights at home and abroad, championing an inclusive and equitable office culture, and coordinating with our industry peers to create a sustainable future. While we acknowledge our work in these areas is never finished, the UN Global Compact continues to inform our strategy, steer our decision-making and guide the day-to-day operations of our firm – all with a view to creating a better world for our people, our clients and our communities.

With these things in mind, we are pleased to share our first annual UN Global Compact Communication on Progress. The Communication below outlines the progress made by our offices in Canada, and in Russia, showcasing what we have achieved over the last year and highlights our key areas of focus in the post-pandemic years to ahead. More specifically, this Communication provides a contextual overview of the firm, articulates our vision, sets forth our values, and provides high level summaries of how we are involved in supporting our communities through Pro Bono work, supporting our people through equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives, describes our anti-corruption initiatives and articulates our commitment and work towards environmental sustainability.

PETER LUKASIEWICZ
Chief Executive Officer,
Gowling WLG (CANADA) LLP

✉ peter.lukasiewicz@gowlingwlg.com



FOREWORD

Gowling WLG Canada reaffirms its support for the [Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact](#), which our firm signed early in 2020. This commitment underscores our dedication to equity, diversity & inclusion (EDI), sustainability and corporate social responsibility in Canada, Russia and around the world. In this report, Gowling WLG Canada’s first annual Communication on Progress, we outline our plan to weave this commitment into every aspect of our culture, business strategy, and daily operations.

Gowling WLG (UK) LLP is filing a report that aligns with ours but focuses on operations in the UK and countries where it has offices.

This report sets out the ways in which Gowling WLG Canada has approached its obligations under the UN Global Compact across multiple areas.

We commit to sharing this information with our clients, partners, employees and other stakeholders.

OVERVIEW OF THE FIRM, OUR VISION AND VALUES

OVERVIEW OF THE FIRM

Gowling WLG is an international law firm, built to provide clients with legal services in Canada, the UK and around the world, and to help clients succeed no matter how challenging the circumstances. It comprises two combined entities – Gowling WLG (UK) LLP and Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP.

Collectively we believe in the power of relationships to deliver tangible business results. Strong relationships not only help us better understand our clients' world, but they make us more attuned and responsive to their needs. We build strong relationships by fostering a culture that is, above all, about people and teams, by creating an environment where everyone's contributions are valued and respected.



OUR VISION



What makes us different:

- Always striving to deliver a distinctive client experience, which combines technical and service excellence with deep relationships and innovative legal solutions.
- Recruiting and nurturing outstanding people, who are the heart of our distinctive client experience. Together, we create a great place to work and a strong culture of teamwork.
- We live in highly competitive, fast-paced and increasingly digital world. We embrace this to be bold and creative, Always striving to be better and bringing innovative solutions to our clients' problems.

OUR VALUES

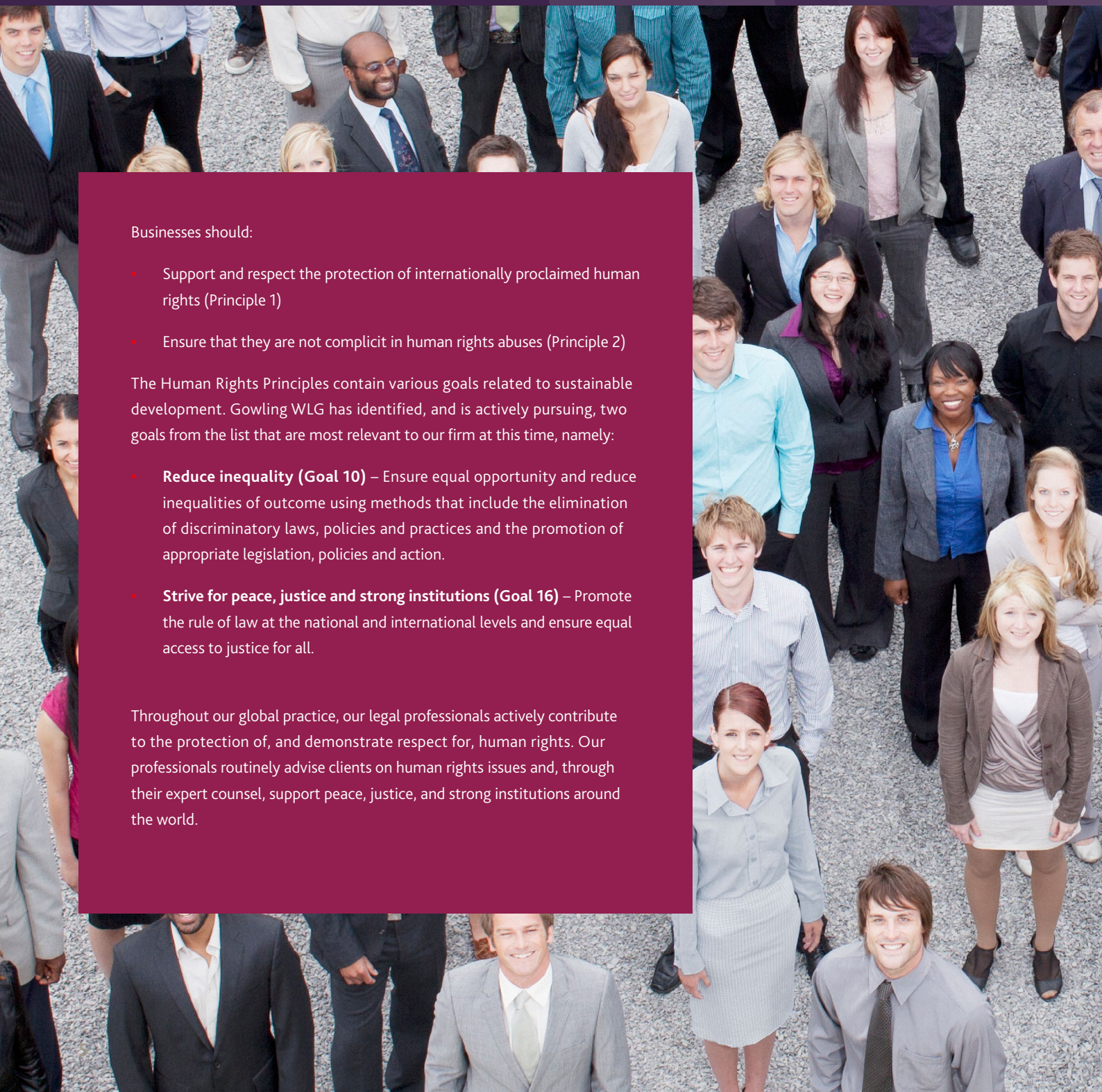


Our values guide everything that we do and are fundamental to our culture:

- The power of teamwork - We believe we can achieve much more if we work together as a team with our clients and colleagues – however talented we are as individuals. We collaborate seamlessly across services, sectors and offices – focused on the greater good for the client and the firm.
- Always striving to be better - We are always striving to improve our service to clients and the way we run our own business – ambitious to improve in a highly competitive market.
- We all bring something different - We all bring different backgrounds, strengths and perspectives to the team. This diversity and openness make us more relevant and valuable to our clients.

With this in mind, this first communication of progress focusses on selected areas with a specific focus on community, people and the environment.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES



Businesses should:

- Support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights (Principle 1)
- Ensure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses (Principle 2)

The Human Rights Principles contain various goals related to sustainable development. Gowling WLG has identified, and is actively pursuing, two goals from the list that are most relevant to our firm at this time, namely:

- **Reduce inequality (Goal 10)** – Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome using methods that include the elimination of discriminatory laws, policies and practices and the promotion of appropriate legislation, policies and action.
- **Strive for peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16)** – Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

Throughout our global practice, our legal professionals actively contribute to the protection of, and demonstrate respect for, human rights. Our professionals routinely advise clients on human rights issues and, through their expert counsel, support peace, justice, and strong institutions around the world.

These values not only inhere in the services we offer clients, but also shape the culture within our organization. Our EDI manager, human resources departments and leadership team across our offices champion human rights in a number of ways – including by providing proactive training on unconscious bias and workplace respect to all members of our team.

Further, through our pro bono work, financial giving, and in-kind voluntarism, we help sustain legal clinics (including access to justice initiatives), NGOs, charitable and not-for-profit organisations that support respect for human rights. The table below reports the hours and the value of the Pro Bono work we have contributed to Canadian communities over the past five years:

Additionally, through our webinar programs such as celebrations of Pride, International Women's Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and Day of Pink, as well as our Reconciliation Action Plan, we further work to advance the objective of community service.

One example of our Pro Bono work that intersects with our EDI work is our three year partnership with the Canadian Centre for Gender &

Sexual Diversity (CCGSD) in an ongoing pro bono project that offers support for transgender and non-binary individuals seeking to change the gender markers on their official identification documents.

A crucial dimension of our support for our communities in Canada is our work towards Indigenous reconciliation through our Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan. This Plan is a document designed to help the firm address Canada's mistreatment of Indigenous peoples by outlining clear ways it will make meaningful contributions to authentic reconciliation efforts.

Gowling WLG holds longstanding relationships with Canada's Indigenous peoples, having served as counsel to First Nations, Inuit and Metis groups across the country for more than half a century. With these vital relationships top of mind, the plan commits the firm to supporting reconciliation through the many ways it delivers legal services to clients – Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike – by its legal professionals and staff, and aims to ensure that everyone is culturally attuned to Indigenous-related issues, opportunities and goals. To advance awareness of Indigenous history, the Indigenous Law Group of Gowling WLG Canada has put together an online

Year	Hours	Fee Value
2016	4197	\$1,590,909
2017	3742	\$1,491,176
2018	5379	\$2,118,654
2019	5346	\$2,347,960
2020	6162	\$3,039,127

training educational webinar about the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, entitled "Full Circle." Originally developed as an educational program for professionals and staff in our firm, the presentation has now also been delivered to the executive leadership and staff of a number of our clients in the private sector and in government. Through this presentation, participants gain a better understanding of Indigenous people and learn how to place current events in their broader historical, social and legal context. Participating organizations will also meet a key element of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's "Call to Action" directed at the private sector—namely to "provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations."

Canada's Indigenous peoples, businesses and governments are essential stakeholders in the work we do as a firm. Our Reconciliation Action Plan is an expression of our profound respect for Indigenous history, culture, traditions, laws and institutions. It reflects our desire to help right past wrongs, build cultural competency and move forward together in a positive and impactful way.

- Improving the overall understanding of the detrimental impacts of the imposition of colonial laws and policies on Indigenous peoples
- Fostering greater respect for Indigenous peoples, institutions and laws
- Increasing appreciation for the applicability of Indigenous laws within Canada's legal system
- Engaging with Indigenous communities and organizations to better understand their unique needs and support their economic development goals
- Undertaking strategic collaborations to provide intercultural competence training for firm personnel, enhance the availability of culturally competent legal services, and offer pro bono legal services that advance reconciliation
- Recruiting and supporting Indigenous staff, lawyers and law students
- Ensuring firm events are more inclusive of Indigenous people
- Creating inclusive spaces for Indigenous staff, professionals and clients



AN INCLUSIVE FIRM, SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

Businesses should uphold and support:

- Freedom of association and recognition of collective bargaining (Principle 3)
- The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour (Principle 4)
- The abolition of child labour (Principle 5)
- The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (Principle 6)
- Work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery (Principle 10)

At Gowling WLG, our processes are tailored to ensure that discrimination and bias do not interfere with the recruitment and advancement of candidates. Measures are continuously taken to ensure that our processes preclude discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnic origin, disability or other grounds.

In 2018, with the assistance of outside advisors, we undertook an analysis of our partnership admission process. That analysis generated meaningful insights and recommendations for process changes and best practices to reduce the risk of unconscious bias in evaluating candidates for admission to the partnership. Over the past two years, by implementing the recommendations arising from our review, we have made significant progress towards eliminating the risk of unconscious bias in our partnership admission process.

In late 2019 and early 2020, as part of the next phase of accelerating inclusion in the firm, with the assistance of outside advisors, we conducted an analysis of the broader associate lawyer experience in the firm. The purpose of the analysis was to get a clearer picture of the opportunities and challenges associate lawyers encounter and, specifically, to identify any real or perceived barriers that may be limiting the opportunities female and other diverse associates have to advance within the firm as compared to the opportunities afforded to their male and non-diverse counterparts. In 2021, we began to implement the recommendations arising from this review.

As a complement to these initiatives, Gowling WLG continues to partner with the [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#) (CCDI) to develop EDI metrics for our firm through an ongoing self-identification census. We were one of the first law firms in Canada to launch such a census, the results of which provide an important benchmark to help us assess our current position, our successes and areas where we need to concentrate our efforts. We also work with the Youth Futures Program in Ottawa, as well as partnering with the LFDIN (Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Network) on "Avenue", an internship program to help Black undergraduate students gain experience in the legal industry.

The mental health of our people is of crucial importance to our firm's success and is a priority in our work. In 2018, we launched our "Our People First: Mental Health Strategy", a national strategy that outlines how Gowling WLG develops and implements programs and policies that promote mental health and support team members who are dealing with mental health issues. This strategy guides our work to secure our people's collective resilience and emotional well-being. With a strong emphasis on awareness, resilience and empowerment, the strategy is centred on training and education, the development of coping skills, and fostering a culture of well-being in the workplace. As part of its focus on resilience, the firm has increased the coverage for psychological benefits offered through its group insurance plan. In addition, the benefits now cover a wider range of mental health support counselling services. In keeping with this policy, Gowling WLG was one of the first Canadian law firms to offer mental health first aid training to its personnel.

These, and other components of the firm's Canadian EDI strategy, are overseen by a national EDI Council. The council comprises our Canadian CEO, director of human resources, director of legal talent, national EDI manager, and representatives from each of our offices. In 2021, we are bringing a new Head of EDI on board to bolster the strength of our EDI team.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Our legal professionals offer a slate of services that promote work against corruption. Our [White Collar Defence & Investigations Group](#) is recognized for its strength and depth of experience in asset tracing, financial services, contentious trusts, insolvency and anti-bribery and corruption. We pride ourselves on giving commercial and practical advice in complex situations.

This team brings together professionals from multiple jurisdictions with the sophisticated experience required to minimize corruption risk and advise corporations and individuals as to how to conduct business appropriately and in ways that avoid criminal or regulatory breaches.

To ensure compliance and uncover potential risks, our professionals help clients implement comprehensive compliance programs in addition to reviewing their existing policies, procedures and controls. We also advise on – and help establish – whistle-blowing avenues and corresponding protocols and processes. To this end, we design and deliver comprehensive training programs to directors, management teams, employees, customers, suppliers and other business partners on a regular basis.

Internally, our firm takes a proactive approach to ethics and anti-corruption. Members of our firm are expected to perform their duties with the upmost integrity and in compliance with the rules of professional conduct that govern our professionals.



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH

Businesses should:

- Support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (Principle 7)
- Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility (Principle 8)
- Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies (Principle 9)

Gowling WLG draws from the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and related research in shaping our internal environmental action plans. Planet Plus, the environmental and sustainability initiative – launched by our UK offices and in which our Canadian offices are now collaborating – underscores the firm's commitment to these areas.

We seek to:

- Avoid polluting
- Promote energy efficiency, environmental protection and performance
- Meet (and when possible exceed) environmental compliance obligations
- Commit resources to support our Planet+ goals
- Procure goods and services with energy savings and environmental sustainability in mind

- Make environmental information readily available
- Develop guidance to communicate our goals and commitments
- Communicate our goals and strategies in detail, promoting best practices
- Report progress openly and transparently, and correct or redirect if we deviate from our goals
- Embed good environmental practices across the organisation at all levels.

Through our various office-level "green committees," we strive to work with supplier companies that prioritize environmentally friendly production and commodities. We buy energy-efficient electronic equipment and other environmentally friendly office supplies. We encourage paperless work as much as possible, a propensity that the COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated in recent months.

Outside of our own practice, our legal professionals represent a wide range of clients involved in the development of environmentally friendly technologies. We support environmental sustainability externally through this work.

To learn more about our firm's approach to equity, diversity & inclusion in Canada, contact [Rebecca Bromwich](#), Canada EDI manager.

Learn more about [equity, diversity & inclusion at Gowling WLG](#).



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Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP is a member of Gowling WLG, an international law firm which consists of independent and autonomous entities providing services around the world. Our structure is explained in more detail at www.gowlingwlg.com/legal.

