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# The National Contact Point *is a success story* – this deserves recognition

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## At a glance

- The Swiss National Contact Point for Responsible Business Conduct has received an excellent evaluation from the OECD.
- Its recipe for success: dialogue, mediation, and trust – rather than sanctions and coercion – must be safeguarded in the context of sustainable corporate governance, especially now.
- The counterproposal to the new Corporate Responsibility Initiative must not undermine this proven instrument by introducing a new supervisory authority with the power to impose sanctions.

The OECD has given the Swiss National Contact Point (NCP) for Responsible Business Conduct an excellent evaluation. As part of a review – conducted by the National Contact Points of the United Kingdom and Iceland in collaboration with the OECD Secretariat – the report published yesterday attests to the NCP's high level of professionalism and effectiveness. Government agencies, the business community, labor unions, NGOs, and academia perceive the NCP as competent, fair, and trustworthy. Particular praise is given to the solution-oriented dialogue and mediation processes, as well as the NCP's strong integration into the federal administration. The OECD's recommendations aim to further develop the NCP – increasing its visibility and transparency and providing more targeted support for SMEs.

## Why the NCP Works

The NCP is the cornerstone of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the most comprehensive internationally recognized code of conduct for corporate sustainability. Its strength lies in a clear approach: It does not rely on sanctions and confrontation, but rather on dialogue, mediation, and conciliation. When complaints regarding alleged violations are filed, it serves as a neutral platform that brings companies and affected parties together, rather than pitting them against one another. It is precisely this cooperative nature that underpins its credibility and success. It works because it does not act as a regulatory authority with coercive powers, but rather as a mediating body – a protected, non-judicial space that the parties seek out for precisely that reason.

## Its Significance in Light of the Discussion on Corporate Responsibility

This success story takes on particular significance in the context of the consultation draft of the Federal Council's counterproposal to the Corporate Responsibility Initiative (NUFG). The draft provides for a supervisory authority with enforcement and sanctioning powers, as well as new arbitration procedures and far-reaching liability provisions. At the same time, the NCP and its track record of success are being ignored. Caution is warranted here: The proven, dialogue-based NCP must not be supplanted by new, untested liability instruments or a supervisory authority empowered to impose sanctions. If the NCP were devalued by a parallel structure, it would undermine the very trust that sets it apart. The NCP serves as a model for how to address environmental and human rights issues in the complex landscape of the globalized economy. The counterproposal to the new Corporate Responsibility Initiative calls for new instruments and thereby risks destroying the very added value of the NCP – a protected space in which solutions emerge that would remain unattainable through confrontational procedures.

### Stick with what works, rather than jeopardizing it

The OECD report shows that Switzerland already has an internationally exemplary instrument in the NCP. The OECD's recommendations aim to further develop this instrument – not to shift the system toward liability, sanctions, and regulatory enforcement. Anyone who wants to strengthen responsible corporate governance in Switzerland should build on the NCP's successful model, rather than jeopardize it with an overreaching new supervisory framework or new liability provisions under the NCFG. The National Contact Point is a success story – it deserves to be protected and expanded, not tightened or undermined.



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