

Policy Statement IRBC – Brachot

International Responsible Business Conduct (IRBC) is doing business with a focus on “people, planet, prosperity” and “partnership”, in other words with a focus on people, the environment and society, but without losing sight of the profit motive. In fact, by doing business in a socially responsible way, you as a company are better prepared for the future and you yourself contribute innovatively to a sustainable sector.

The Brachot group has understood this well. That is how she started a few years ago with the search for sustainable natural stone. This commitment has grown year after year and we want it to be reflected in every facet of the company. This is not always easy and is a process of trial and error. Nevertheless, we are proud of where we are today. The Brachot group has therefore been a member of the TruStone covenant since its beginning. This covenant expects companies to make efforts with regard to international corporate responsibility and sustainable chain management. The framework for all this is the United Nations Guidelines and Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGP), the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECD Guidelines), and the ILO Fundamental Labor Conventions. The Brachot group is therefore committed to respecting the UNGP, OECD guidelines and core ILO labor conventions.

In the context of the TruStone covenant, the Brachot Group wants to carry out a thorough “human right” due diligence and, in the long term, also map out our entire supply chain up to and including quarries. Following the due diligence, an action plan will be drawn up to remedy the identified risks. This action plan will also include a prioritization of the risks. This prioritization will be done in consultation with the local suppliers. The effectiveness of the measures taken will be examined at least once a year. Based on this, the action plan will be adjusted where necessary.

The challenges of doing business internationally are manifold, but with the right attitude, we believe that the Brachot group can contribute to making the natural stone sector more sustainable. Sustainable development not only applies to us as a company, but also to the many countries in which we operate. It is therefore logical that we pay due attention to the sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

Good governance: Driven by values, we try to maximize returns, without putting other stakeholders at a disadvantage. Responsibility, objectification of decision-making and transparency are therefore the core values in the board of the Brachot group. We also ask our suppliers to respect these values.

Working conditions and decent work: The Brachot group attaches great importance to decent work. We therefore see it as a basic obligation to comply with the eight fundamental labor conventions of the ILO¹. We hereby commit ourselves to respect the right to freedom of organization, the right to collective bargaining, the right not to be subject to forced labor, child labor or discrimination. As an international company operating in high-risk countries, we also find it important to raise awareness among our suppliers of the ILO conventions on working hours, living wages and the health and safety of employees. This is done by signing a code of conduct. We expect our suppliers to adhere to these conventions.

If one of our suppliers does not work in accordance with the above-mentioned conventions, workers can report this via a complaints mechanism. This grievance mechanism is part of the TruStone

¹ Specifically, this is about conventions 87, 98, 29, 105, 138, 182, 100 and 111.

Covenant and makes it possible for employees to report malpractice in an accessible manner. Any complaint will be sent to us via a local organization and secretariat of the covenant. Complaints can also always be reported via the central reporting point: trustone-complaints@internationalrbc.org.

These complaints will be handled in a formalized way by the legal department together with the sourcing department. We can then, in dialogue with the supplier and employee concerned, look for the best possible solution.

Human Rights: The Brachot group is committed to respecting human rights in all of its activities. When we talk about human rights, we mean the rights described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the United Nations in 1948. We see these as one and indivisible.

Fair business: Leaving room for fair competition is essential to achieve an innovative and optimal market. The Brachot group is therefore not involved in anti-competitive behavior. We are committed to working with fair prices, where every link in our supply chain receives fair remuneration, and against which we are competitive in the European market. Dialogue, transparency and respect are central to our relationships with our suppliers. In this way we work for greater fairness in international trade. By paying a fair price and the participatory dialogue with our suppliers, we contribute to innovation, economic growth and an increase in the standard of living for all companies in the natural stone sector.

Consumer affairs: Responsible entrepreneurship does not only mean taking responsibility as a company with regard to production, you must also act responsibly towards the customer. Transparent and fair marketing is therefore central to the Brachot group. We inform customers honestly about all important features of our products. This concerns both the composition of the product, the availability, but also the risks.

Environment, raw materials, energy and emissions: The Brachot group recognizes that there are still many challenges in the natural stone sector with regard to the environment and climate. As a company, we do not want to ignore these challenges, but we do realize that it will be a long-term process. Biodiversity, CO2 emissions, energy, air, water and transport are all important themes that we work on internally. However, the input from our suppliers to work on these problems is very great. We are therefore committed to thinking together with our suppliers to minimize the impact of the natural stone production chain on the climate and the environment.

Community Involvement: As a business you don't operate on an island. The Brachot group, with its multiple offices in different countries, has an impact on its immediate environment. We therefore strive to maintain the best possible relationship with our direct neighbors at all our branches. As an international company, we are also part of different communities. This involvement is greatest in Belgium, but we also work within a particular society in the other countries where we operate. Respecting each of these communities and trying to strengthen them are Brachot's principles.

It is clear that the Brachot group does not see itself as an isolated company. We influence and are influenced by many groups and individuals. Shareholders, staff, customers, suppliers, but also the local neighborhood, government and NGOs are stakeholders with whom we interact as a company. Consultation and dialogue with each of these stakeholders is essential to arrive at a sustainable policy.

Innovation: The Brachot group has grown into one of the most important players in the European natural stone market. We have only been able to achieve this by being open to innovation and always thinking ahead. We want to continue to play this role of an innovative company in the future.