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Companies rank Lions Club best NGO

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Companies rank Lions Club International the best non-governmental organisation worldwide with which to work, according to ratings compiled by the Financial Times in association with Dalberg Global Development Advisers and the United Nations Global Compact.

The assessment, published in the FT's Corporate Citizenship and Philanthropy special report today, highlights companies' growing interest in long-term partnerships to tackle an expanding range of social issues.

This will be a key theme for discussion by more than 1,000 business executives and representatives of NGOs and UN agencies at a two-day Global Compact leaders summit opening in Geneva today.

The rankings, based on assessments from 445 companies involved with non-governmental organisations and international agencies, identified 865 partnerships, with the largest number tackling education and the environment. Microfinance was judged one of the most successful areas of collaboration.

The assessments, prepared by Dalberg and ranked into a single list by the FT, attempt to increase transparency, accountability and evaluation in the fast-growing world of non-profits.

"There are so many NGOs that if you are a company it is very difficult to identify ones with the capability to operate in partnership," said Henry Skovby, founder of Dalberg. "This will provide information about those which are successful."

Companies questioned said the number of partnerships with NGOs and international agencies would grow in the next few years. Almost as many were motivated by efforts to meet core business objectives as for philanthropic reasons or for advocacy.

Lions Club International Foundation, established in 1968 to channel funds from Lions Clubs worldwide, focuses on humanitarian relief, especially the fight against preventable blindness.

From 34 global organisations rated most highly by companies, it came first when assessed by execution, communication, adaptability and accountability. A number of UN agencies as well as the US and German government's aid agencies performed well.

The FT/Dalberg rankings also show 38 more regional or local NGOs and agencies that were rated highly by their corporate partners.

About three-quarters of the more than 3,000 companies that have signed up to the Global Compact's 10 core ethical principles say they have worked with NGOs on specific projects. However, many NGOs are ambivalent about the Global Compact.
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