CONDUCTING DUE DILIGENCE UNDER THE UN GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

To meet their responsibility to respect human rights, business enterprises should put in place a human rights due diligence processes to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights. Due diligence should be undertaken as early as possible when developing a new business activity or relationship.

1. Identify and assess your human rights impact

The goal of identifying and assessing impact is to understand the effect of a businesses on specific people or places, and allows the business to mitigate negative human rights impact that result, or could result, from activities or business relationships.

Businesses should draw on internal and/or independent external human rights expertise and be sure to involve meaningful consultation with affected groups. Special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups. Where direct and transparent consultation is not possible, experts like members of civil society or human rights defenders could consulted.

2. Track and act upon findings

If a business identifies that it has caused or may cause a negative human rights impact it should take steps to stop or prevent this impact. Business enterprises should act upon findings of their assessments and take appropriate action by integrating findings into processes and functions of their work.

3. Track responses

Business enterprises should track the effectiveness of their responses to verify whether they are addressing any actual or potential negative human rights impacts appropriately and effectively. Tracking should: (a) Be based on appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators; (b) Draw on feedback from both internal and external sources, including affected stakeholders.

4. Communicate how impacts are addressed

Business enterprises should communicate and report transparently about how they are addressing potential human rights impacts. Communications should be accessible and provide enough information to be able to evaluate the adequacy of business’ response. Communicating can include conducting meetings, online dialogues or consultations with affected groups as well as formal reports.

What is due diligence?

The UN Guiding Principles outline four elements of due diligence: assessing actual and potential human rights impacts; integrating and acting upon the findings; tracking responses and communicating how impacts are addressed.