

THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

As part of its legal mandate to protect and promote human rights, the Danish Institute for Human Rights – Denmark’s National Human Rights Institution can advise private sector actors on human rights. When advising private sector actors including through direct engagement with companies, the Institute works in accordance with its Corporate Engagement Principles.

While states have the primary duty to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, businesses have an independent responsibility to respect human rights in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Beyond this responsibility, the Institute recognises that businesses have significant potential to contribute to the increased enjoyment of human rights by supporting long-term sustainable development within their own operations and in the societies where they operate.

All engagements between the Institute and corporate actors are conducted with the following mutual understanding between the Institute and the corporate actor:

- 1) The Institute is a National Human Rights Institution mandated by law to protect and promote human rights. The primary objective of the Institute in its corporate engagements is to advance respect for human rights by corporate actors.
- 2) The work of the Institute is guided by a human rights-based approach¹.
- 3) Corporate actors engage with the Institute in good faith with the aim of avoiding and addressing their negative impacts on human rights and contributing to sustainable development.
- 4) The Institute is an impartial, independent human rights institution, and does not offer public endorsements of specific corporate actors. Further, an engagement between the Institute and a corporate actor does not imply endorsement by the Institute.
- 5) The Institute carries out screenings of all corporate actors ahead of potential engagements and will not engage with corporate actors which are subject to international sanctions and exclusions.²
- 6) All external communication by a corporate actor touching on its work with the Institute must be agreed to prior to publication. Any use of the Institute’s name or branding must also be agreed to prior to publication. All communication must be factually correct and must not indicate endorsement by the Institute.
- 7) The Institute will disclose the identities of the corporate actors with which it engages and will disclose information on the content of the engagement with companies through the Institute website.
- 8) Corporate actors with which the Institute engages must communicate externally on how they address their human rights impacts, including by disclosing project outputs from their cooperation with the Institute where relevant.
- 9) The Institute publicly disseminates knowledge and experiences gained through its corporate engagements to advance human rights in the wider corporate sector.
- 10) The Institute continuously monitors, reviews and assesses the results of its work with corporate actors, as well as the broader human rights performance of the corporate actors, and may discontinue concrete corporate engagements if the results achieved over time are not satisfactory.

These principles are annexed to the Institute’s corporate engagement contracts. The Institute continuously monitors engagements to ensure compliance with these principles. Non-compliance with these principles will be considered a material breach of contract.

¹ A human rights-based approach means that individuals and communities should know their rights. It also means that they should be fully supported to participate in the development of policy and practices which affect their lives and to claim rights where necessary.

<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/fagen.pdf>

² As a point of departure the Institute will consider similar criteria for exclusion as the United Nations Global Compact:

<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/participation/join/who-should-join>