



THE DANISH  
INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT  
PRACTITIONER  
SUPPLEMENT

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE  
AND TOOLBOX

ROAD-TESTING VERSION

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PRACTITIONER SUPPLEMENT

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In [Stakeholder Engagement](#) you can find an overview of stakeholder engagement in HRIA.

In this Practitioner Supplement you will find:

- Steps and considerations for both prior and during the stakeholder interviews or meetings
- How to report back to HRIA participants
- Example template to guide stakeholder identification and mapping

This Practitioner Supplement is a part of the Road-testing version of the Human Rights Impact Assessment Guidance and Toolbox.

You can find the full version here:

<http://www.humanrights.dk/business/human-rights-impact-assessment-guidance-toolbox>

## 1.1 BEFORE THE INTERVIEW/MEETINGS

Table A. Examples of steps to take prior to the interview or meeting with stakeholders		
Steps	Process	Areas for further attention and considerations
<b>1. Reach out to rights-holders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensure that the HRIA Team can reach out to rights-holders, e.g. through intermediaries.</b> The most convenient way to reach out to rights-holders is to have a local representative on the team who can identify key organisations (community-based organisations, including women’s groups, sports’ association, local political parties, indigenous peoples’ organisations) and individuals (teachers, religious leaders, leaders of a community-based organisation, elders, activists, local elected representatives, traditional chiefs, etc.) within the different communities that in turn will facilitate access and contact to the individual rights-holders.</li> <li>• <b>Make sure that intermediaries understand and communicate the process to rights-holders. Provide enough time for this communication.</b> Sometimes rights-holders attend meetings without having any idea why they have been invited. Therefore, enough time should be allocated before the actual meetings/interviews, so that the process as well as the business project or activities is adequately communicated to those rights-holders. This gesture will allow them to have time to reflect on whether or not they wish to be part of it.</li> <li>• <b>Allow for additional time in the preparation phase to identify additional</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reflect on the number of individuals to engage.</b> The amount of right-holders to engage depends on the context; however, it should be considered a sufficient and critical number to ensure that the sources are plentiful and reflective of the individuals and groups’ views as well as of good quality in order for it to be reliable.</li> <li>• <b>Consider to use company interlocutors to reach out to rights-holders.</b> In some cases company interlocutors, such as the community liaison officer or community engagement officer can also play a role in identifying communities and making introductions. They are particularly helpful to connect with people from the community who are in favour of the project. These voices should also be captured.</li> </ul>

Table A. Examples of steps to take prior to the interview or meeting with stakeholders		
	<p><b>groups to engage.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Make sure that no individuals or groups are excluded from the process. Consider to reach out to sub-groups of rights-holders.</b> The HRIA Team may experience that all community members they meet belong to one specific group, and are therefore not representative of the diversity of groups and opinions. Take into account the differences among rights-holders and reach out to sub-groups based on criteria such as gender, age, social-economic status, religion, ethnicity, rural versus urban etc. in order to capture impacts related to these different individuals.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Determine the format, location, and time of the interviews/meetings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Choose appropriate formats of interviews/meetings.</b> Ideally, the HRIA Team should use a combination of both one-to-one semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions. Consult with the local team member(s) to check other culturally appropriate techniques of engagement, which help to gather information.</li> <li>• <b>Organise separate meetings for individuals and groups who do not feel represented in community discussions.</b> This may include vulnerable and marginalised individuals, but also those individuals and groups that are favourable to the business project when the majority is in opposition.</li> <li>• <b>Envisage women-only interviews and meetings.</b></li> <li>• <b>Choose a neutral location for the meetings where rights-holders feel comfortable.</b> It might be at a community-based organisation, the auditorium of the municipality, a school, inside or outside their own house if they so wish. Interacting with people at their house will allow one to reach out to those groups that generally do not participate, including women caring for children, elderly people, marginalised groups and so forth. Official buildings or company premises are generally not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consider preparing questionnaires:</b> These will serve as a guide for semi-structured interviews. Such questionnaires can be developed based on existing assessment tools. You may also want to have more open discussions, particularly if participants are wary of information being recorded.</li> <li>• <b>Prepare leaflets with information about your organisation, the objectives of the HRIA, and your contact details.</b> These can be handed out to the participants. They are to be ideally written in the local language.</li> <li>• <b>Consider to prepare consent forms.</b> It is important to obtain consent from interviewees, either orally or in writing. Where culturally appropriate, informed consent could be documented by having</li> </ul>

Table A. Examples of steps to take prior to the interview or meeting with stakeholders		
	<p>appropriate places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Determine a suitable time taking into account people’s daily routines, religious rituals and/or job.</b></li> <li>• <b>Allocate enough time for capacity building.</b> This enables the HRIA Team to inform people of the HRIA who might not be familiar with human rights, and to build the necessary capacity to participate in the HRIA.</li> <li>• <b>Do not give any money or gifts to people.</b> In some contexts though, it will be expected that the HRIA Team provide or pay for a meal or a small per diem. This should be thoroughly discussed with the local team member to make sure that its neither offending nor coercing poor people into participating.</li> </ul>	<p>signed consent forms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consider providing transportation or paying for transportation and food.</b> This will make the participation of people coming from far remote locations more likely.</li> <li>• <b>Consider to mandate a third party to conduct the interviews.</b> In some cases, it might be preferable that a third party, such as an academic institution or respected individual expert in the sector, interviews the company representatives in order to ensure independence. The HRIA team can design and analyse the questions while a third party conducts the actual interviews.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Assess the security context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Conduct thorough background research on the local security situation.</b> Consider risks for both the assessment team and the interviewed persons by conducting a risk analysis looking at threats, vulnerabilities and capacities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take measures in case of risk of retaliation.</b> Retaliation can stem from businesses, state actors, non-state armed groups or other community members against the individuals taking part in the interviews. Therefore, the HRIA Team should take the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a system of coding so that the name of the interviewees cannot be linked to the content of interviewers’ notes</li> <li>• Secure digitalized notes/recording by a</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table A. Examples of steps to take prior to the interview or meeting with stakeholders		
		<p>password.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not take any pictures of people who might be at risk.</li> <li>• Make sure that the location the interview is being conducted at is safe.</li> <li>• Consider having only the local team member conduct sensitive interviews.</li> <li>• Think about how to include sensitive information in the report without it being traceable to the individual persons.</li> </ul>

## 1.2 DURING THE INTERVIEW/MEETINGS

Table B. Examples of steps to take during the interview or meeting with stakeholders		
Steps	Process	Areas for further attention and considerations
<b>1. Inform participants and capacity building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Present oneself and the HRIA.</b> Make sure that the people the HRIA practitioner/team engages with understand which organisation you represent, what the purpose of the study is, and the nature of the relationship between the HRIA practitioner/team and the company. Inform clearly about who is paying for the HRIA if an individual asks, or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Build the capacity of rights-holders through training on human rights,</b> the relation between human rights and business and other relevant topics for participants.</li> </ul>

	<p>inform them about the funding source(s). Leave personal contact details and contact details of your organisation or the reference group and explain how people can raise any question or issues they might have about the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use simple language and build capacity.</b> If interacting with people who do not know the concept of human rights, you should strive to communicate in simple terms that speak to the realities of people. Make sure that you make yourself understood, speak clearly, and do not use jargon. Use additional time and resources to build the necessary capacity.</li> <li>• <b>Ensure that the information presented is in an understandable format.</b></li> <li>• <b>Manage expectations.</b> Explain to interviewees what they can expect from the process and what they cannot expect. Don't make any promise that you cannot keep. Tell people when and how they can expect to hear back from the HRIA practitioner/team and/or the company.</li> <li>• <b>Explain how the information collected will be used and disseminated.</b> Explain specifically what will be reported to the company, the public and/or the authorities.</li> <li>• <b>Proactively communicate potential risks and impacts of their participation in the assessment to right-holders.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>2. Ensure voluntary participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Obtain consent from the rights-holders.</b> Participation should be voluntary, and consent should only be obtained after participants have been given sufficient information on the HRIA process. Where culturally appropriate, informed consent could be documented by having signed consent forms. Ask for specific approval for recording or photographing the participants or for disclosing their name in the report, or for attributing a specific statement to them.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensure possibility to withdraw consent.</b> Tell participants that they can withdraw at any time and have any of their data already recorded removed. Verify at the end of the interview that they still agree to not only that the material will be used, but also the way in which it will be used.</li> <li>• <b>Validate given information.</b> Validate your understanding of the discussion with interviewees at the end of an interview. Allow people to ask questions.</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Respect participant's privacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensure anonymity of rights-holders.</b> Unless they have given express permission to be named, anonymity should be protected and you should assure the participants that what they are telling you remains confidential.</li> <li>• <b>Do not insist on disclosure of information.</b> Especially in a group-setting, do not insist that they disclose information that they are reluctant to communicate; express that they are welcome to communicate with any member of the team after the interview.</li> <li>• <b>Give individuals the option to be interviewed privately instead of group interviews.</b></li> <li>• <b>Respect the participant's personal life.</b> Confine to the issues that are relevant to the HRIA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Address human rights abuses.</b> If you learn about serious human rights abuses constitutive of criminal acts, you should identify organisations that may assist the person to report those acts to the relevant authorities for the person to seek redress. You may want to report the acts yourself. You should seek the advice of the reference group for the HRIA if such a reference group is available.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Ensure security and safety – do no harm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss security issues openly.</b> Participants must be fully appraised of all possible risks and understand that the practitioner/team cannot guarantee their safety – although you will ensure confidentiality.</li> <li>• <b>Stop the interview if the person express she/he does not feel safe.</b></li> </ul>	



<p><b>5. Be respectful – communicate in a culturally appropriate manner</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Behave respectfully in the interviews.</b> Be conscious of one’s own and the HRIA team’s position, and behave in a respectful and humble way and remember to be a listener. If you have to interrupt someone/people that are behaving inappropriately, or where they do not let other people participate, do it with subtlety and respectfully.</li> <li>• <b>Be sensitive.</b> If the person expresses emotional distress during the interview, which is often the case of persons having experienced human rights abuses, you should express your sympathy and give the person time to gather herself/himself, and ask if they wish to continue on the same issue or move on to another set of questions. If the person wishes to end the interview, the practitioner should respect that. The practitioner should then identify follow-up assistance and counselling that might be available.</li> <li>• <b>Be open-minded.</b> Express willingness to learn about the local realities and perspectives. Do not express personal opinions or judgements, and treat all with compassion.</li> <li>• <b>Be mindful of power relations and inclusion.</b> Strive to include those who are less eager to express themselves in the interviews.</li> <li>• <b>Allocate sufficient time.</b> The assessment team as well as participants should have the opportunity to exchange views and information, to listen, and to have their issues heard.</li> <li>• <b>Be respectful of individuals’ local traditions and customs.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learn the basics of the local language.</b> This demonstrates respect for the people you are engaging with.</li> <li>• <b>Accept food and beverages when they are offered.</b></li> </ul>
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### 1.3 REPORTING BACK TO HRIA PARTICIPANTS

Table C. Considerations for reporting back to HRIA participants		
Activity	Steps	Areas for further attention and considerations
<b>1. Reporting back</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Share with HRIA participants</b> what the main findings and lessons learnt of the process are and ensure that their views are adequately reflected in the report.</li> <li>• <b>Discuss possible mitigation measures</b> and ensure these reflect preferred mitigations measures of rights-holders.</li> <li>• <b>Manage expectations</b> of participants regarding the report to avoid disappointment and frustration.</li> <li>• Ensure that the report is available in <b>relevant languages</b> and shared with participants in an accessible manner; if necessary through a summarized report.</li> <li>• Ensure that the <b>impact management plan</b> adopted by the company is <b>communicated</b> to rights-holders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consider using other means of engaging with participants on the HRIA report</b>, i.e. through media such as visual aids, orally or through participatory exercises, tailored specifically to engage with the participants.</li> <li>• <b>Consider holding separate meetings</b> for specific groups of stakeholders to ensure that they have the opportunity to express themselves on the recommended mitigation measures.</li> <li>• <b>Set a reasonable deadline</b> for receiving comments to the HRIA report from participants, given the extensive time it could take to receive comments from all participants.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Continuous engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the establishment of <b>participatory monitoring mechanisms</b> to allow rights-holders to be continuously engaged in the follow-up to the report. Suggest <b>regular meetings are held between the company and HRIA participants</b> to discuss progress in the implementation of mitigation measures as well as the impact management plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the company to request <b>ongoing feedback</b> on impacts from HRIA participants, for example through the company's internal and external grievance mechanisms.</li> <li>• Encourage the company to <b>publicly report on progress</b> made on the implementation of the mitigation measures in an <b>ongoing manner</b>.</li> </ul>

## 1.4 STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING

Table D, below, provides a template for identifying the various stakeholders during a HRIA. The table has been divided into the three general stakeholder groups: rights-holders, duty-bearers and other relevant parties, for further description of each see [Stakeholder Engagement](#). Within each of these general stakeholder groups there are examples of specific types of stakeholders to include e.g. affected community members, workers, investors, CSOs, etc.

For each identified stakeholder the following information should be filled out: entity and general characteristics (see examples provided below), relationship with the company and/or other stakeholders, influence on the business projects or activities (e.g. are they a vulnerable group in the community, and therefore will have little to no influence in voicing concerns), contact information and the type of engagement that will be conducted (e.g. the priority level of the engagement, the type of engagement whether it's an interview, focus group, etc).

<b>Table D. Stakeholder identification in HRIA</b>						
<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Specific types of stakeholders</b>	<b>Entity and general characteristics</b> <i>Examples provided</i>	<b>Relationship with company and/or other stakeholders</b>	<b>Influence on business project</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Type of engagement</b> <i>e.g. when and how</i>
<b>Rights-holders</b>	<b>Potentially impacted community members</b>	Characteristics include, for example residents living near the project, land owners, farmers, indigenous peoples, community associations/organisations, community or religious leaders, schools, local interest groups etc.; as well as community members living down-stream from operations or in the supply chain.				
	<b>Workers and trade unions</b>	Employees presently working for the company in question, former workers, workers in the company's supply chain, outsourced and casual/informal workers, individual workers, their representatives (trade unions), their families.				
	<b>Consumers/clients/customers</b>	Buyers and user of products and/or services of the company, direct and				

Table D. Stakeholder identification in HRIA						
Stakeholder group	Specific types of stakeholders	Entity and general characteristics <i>Examples provided</i>	Relationship with company and/or other stakeholders	Influence on business project	Contact	Type of engagement <i>e.g. when and how</i>
		indirect consumers and consumer protection groups and user groups that represent them.				
	<b>Human rights defenders</b>	Trade union, labour activists, and others like.				
<b>Duty-bearers</b>	<b>Host-government actors</b>	National authorities, local government representatives of specific government agencies or departments, policymakers and regulators.				
	<b>Company representatives</b>	Company representatives at the Head Office and country operations level, including top management, middle-management, and various business function heads, departments and subject matter experts.				
	<b>Business partners</b>	Joint venture partners, suppliers and subcontractors.				

<b>Table D. Stakeholder identification in HRIA</b>						
<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Specific types of stakeholders</b>	<b>Entity and general characteristics</b> <i>Examples provided</i>	<b>Relationship with company and/or other stakeholders</b>	<b>Influence on business project</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Type of engagement</b> <i>e.g. when and how</i>
	<b>Investors and shareholders</b>					
<b>Other relevant parties</b>	<b>Civil society organisations (CSOs)</b>	International and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, labour unions etc.				
	<b>International organisations</b>	UN agencies such as the ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organisation, etc.; regional bodies such as the European Union, African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as well as development banks.				
	<b>Home-government actors</b>	Including embassies in the host country.				
	<b>National Human Rights</b>	Autonomous body established by the State with a constitutional or legislative				

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Stakeholder group	Specific types of stakeholders	Entity and general characteristics <i>Examples provided</i>	Relationship with company and/or other stakeholders	Influence on business project	Contact	Type of engagement <i>e.g. when and how</i>
	<b>Institutions (NHRIs)</b>	mandate to promote and protect human rights; institutional forms commonly adopted include commissions, advisory institutes, ombudsman offices and public defenders' offices.				
	<b>Experts and journalists</b>	Including subject matter experts including academics and journalists on specific human rights issues or experts related to the business sector or technical issues.				
	<b>Industry</b>	Including industry peers, competitors, as well as industry associations.				
	<b>Public security</b>	State public forces.				

### **A NOTE ON THIS ROAD-TESTING VERSION**

As HRIA of business projects and activities is an emerging practice, this Road-testing version of the HRIA Guidance and Toolbox seeks to provide guidance to those working with HRIA, but also to contribute to a platform for dialogue about HRIA practice and standards in the business and human rights field. In this context, we welcome comments from stakeholders on the Guidance and Toolbox and on experiences with using it.

Please send comments, questions and suggestions to:

Nora Götzmann [nog@humanrights.dk](mailto:nog@humanrights.dk) and Tulika Bansal [tuba@humanrights.dk](mailto:tuba@humanrights.dk)

Authors: Nora Götzmann, Tulika Bansal, Elin Wrzoncki, Cathrine Poulsen-Hansen, Jacqueline Tedaldi and Roya Høvsgaard

© 2016 The Danish Institute for Human Rights  
Denmark's National Human Rights Institution  
Wilders Plads 8K  
DK-1403 Copenhagen K  
Phone +45 3269 8888  
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