



Guidance for Global Compact Local Networks on National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights

As a result of the close relationship between the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the [human rights commitments](#) that UN Global Compact participants make through the Ten Principles, a number of Global Compact Local Networks (Local Networks) are getting involved, or may wish to get involved, in their country's development of a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. This document provides basic information about National Action Plans and the opportunity for Local Networks to get engaged. The UN Global Compact stands ready to provide advice and guidance to interested Local Networks.

1. What is a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights?

A National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights is a State's implementation plan for the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Guiding Principles). The United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UN Working Group), an expert body mandated by the United Nations Human Rights Council to promote and disseminate the Guiding Principles, considers NAPs a practical and powerful vehicle for States to effectively implement the Guiding Principles. While recognizing that implementation can take many forms and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, the UN Working Group has stated that it believes that a NAP can ensure:¹

- Greater coordination and coherence within Government on the range of public policy areas that relate to business and human rights;
- An inclusive process to identify national priorities as well as concrete policy and regulatory options related to business and human rights issues;
- Transparency and predictability for all stakeholders on the direction of the Government's implementation efforts;
- A flexible, yet common format that enables international cooperation, coordination, and exchanges of good practices and lessons learned; and
- A platform for ongoing multi-stakeholder dialogue, including in the review and follow-up process, as developing a NAP should not be a one-off exercise.

The UN Working Group has called on States to develop NAPs through inclusive multi-stakeholder processes, and has issued draft guidance for States on the NAPs process (see resources below).

2. Which States have developed or are planning to develop a NAP?

The States that have developed a NAP include:

- [Colombia](#)
- [Denmark](#)
- [Finland](#)

¹ Mandate of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises: [Substantive Elements to be Included in Guidance on National Action Plans to Implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).

- [Lithuania](#)
- [Netherlands](#)
- [Norway](#)
- [Sweden](#)
- [United Kingdom](#)
- [Germany](#)
- [Italy](#)
- [Switzerland](#)
- [USA](#)

The States that are in the process of developing a NAP or have committed to doing so include:

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| • Argentina | • Latvia |
| • Australia | • Malaysia |
| • Azerbaijan | • Mauritius |
| • Belgium | • Mexico |
| • Chile | • Morocco |
| • Czech Republic | • Mozambique |
| • France | • Myanmar |
| • Greece | • Poland |
| • Guatemala | • Portugal |
| • Indonesia | • Scotland |
| • Ireland | • Slovenia |
| • Jordan | • Spain |
| • Kenya | |

The States in which a National Human Rights Institution or Civil Society Organization has begun developing a NAP are:

- Ghana
- Kazakhstan
- Poland
- Republic of Korea
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- India

Bodies such as the European Commission and the Council of Europe have expressed strong support for the Guiding Principles and have encouraged their respective Member States to develop NAPs on Business and Human Rights. The Organisation of American States has also been supportive of the Guiding Principles and their adoption by States.

3. What opportunities are there for Global Compact Local Networks?

Local Networks are committed to promoting and helping various actors implement the Ten Principles of the Global Compact. As the first six principles of the UN Global Compact relate to human rights², there is an inherent interest among Local Networks in the topic of business and human rights. The development and implementation of NAPs on Business and Human Rights present a range of opportunities for Local Networks to engage in the national discussion on human rights. By contributing to the development of NAPs, Local Networks can raise the profile of their Local Network and its work, attract new participants and stakeholders to their Local Network, and help mobilize more support for their work in this area. A number of Local Networks have already engaged in or are engaging in the development and implementation of such NAPs. Such activities may include:

- **Where a NAP is not already being developed**, some Local Networks may wish to take a leading role in encouraging the development of one.
- **Where the development of a NAP has been announced**, a Local Network could contact the relevant official(s) responsible and offer to host a consultation and/or provide other inputs, including about the role that the Local Network is playing in the country or plans to play in helping businesses to understand their human rights responsibilities and commitments under the UN Global Compact. Local Networks could also mention, where relevant, activities relating to other UN Global Compact social sustainability guidance materials and engagement platforms such as the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#), [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#), [Indigenous peoples' rights](#), [Business for the Rule of Law](#), and/or [Business for Peace](#). Moreover, the Local Network could offer to play a key role in helping to implement provisions relating to the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, which is part of UN Global Compact principle 1.
- **Where the NAP has already been developed**, a Local Network should review it and see if there might be opportunities to leverage its contents to support or strengthen their work in the area of human rights or social sustainability generally.

Some examples of the different ways in which Local Networks have engaged with the development and implementation of NAPs within their own countries are set forth in the Annex to this Guidance.

4. Where can I get more information about NAPs?

- **UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights:** [State National Action Plans](#)
- **UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights:** [Guidance on National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights](#)
- **Business and Human Rights Resource Centre:** [National Action Plans](#)
- **The International Corporate Accountability Roundtable and the Danish Institute for Human Rights:** [Toolkit for the Development, Implementation, and Review of State Commitments to Business and Human Rights Frameworks](#)
- **The International Corporate Accountability Roundtable and the Danish Institute for Human Rights:** [Ten criteria for National Action Plans \(NAPs\) on Business and Human Rights](#)

² [Principles 1 and 2](#) of the UN Global Compact relate to human rights and [Principles 3-6](#) relate to labour rights. The Guiding Principles state that human rights encompass labour rights.

- **UN Global Compact:** [Submission by the UN Global Compact to the Open Consultation on the strategic elements of National Action Plans in the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)
- **UN Global Compact:** [Note on the relationship between the UN Global Compact's Principles and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)
- **The Global Business Initiative on Human Rights (GBI) & Clifford Chance:** [Briefing for companies on key elements of existing Natl. Action Plans on business & human rights](#)

5. Questions

For questions about NAPs, please contact the human rights team at the UN Global Compact at humanrights@unglobalcompact.org.

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ANNEX

LOCAL NETWORK	ACTIVITIES
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convened business roundtables, in partnership with the Government, as early input into the Government's consideration of UNGPs implementation.
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submitted a recommendation to the Universal Periodic Review, Human Rights Council for creating a NAP.• Organized a conference on the challenges and opportunities available for enhancing the contribution of Brazilian companies to the promotion and protection of human rights and for strengthening national incentives and monitoring mechanisms for human rights compliance by companies. The conference resulted in 3 proposals which will drive the National Conference of Human Rights that will in turn serve as a reference point for the creation of the Brazilian National Plan for Human Rights.• Met with the relevant high-level government officials to provide inputs for the business and human rights agenda as well as for the potential NAP.
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nominated to the National Advisory Committee by the State Department of Justice to help shape the NAP process over the next two years.• Held a breakfast briefing for the Kenyan business community on the development of a NAP in which the Global Compact Network Kenya:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provided participants with a background to the NAP process;○ Shared the two year road map that will culminate in the adoption of the national plan; and○ Shared lessons learned from other countries in developing their action plans