

How can tech companies become involved with the B-Tech Project?

Q 1: What is the UN Human Rights B-Tech Project?

The B-Tech Project is an inclusive, collaborative project led by UN Human Rights aimed at developing guidance to both companies and policy makers **on how to effectively identify and mitigate risks to people from digital technology in order to fully harness the potential of digital technology to be a force for good.**

The Project uses the ***UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)*** as the foundation for its work. The UNGPs is the authoritative international standard for how to manage human rights risks related to business. The principles provide a framework for action by both governments and companies to identify, prevent, mitigate and remedy human rights harm related to digital technologies. The premise of the B-Tech Project is that using the lens of all three pillars – Protect, Respect, Remedy - of the UNGPs can offer roadmaps to:

- Guide what responsible business conduct looks like in practice regarding the development, application, sale and use of digital technologies;
- Guide policy makers in applying a smart mix of regulation, incentives and public policy tools - providing human rights safeguards and accountability without hampering the potential of digital technologies to address social, ecological and other challenges; and
- Develop workable models for remedy and accountability when harm has occurred.

See the [B-Tech Project scoping paper¹](#) for more details.

Q 2: Who can be involved with the B-Tech Project?

The B-Tech Project is open to all relevant stakeholders from business, government, civil society and academia. Active involvement by companies from the tech sector is of particular importance for the legitimacy of the Project and to ensure that the outcomes and deliverables are informed by – and respond to – the practical realities and real-life challenges of the sector. To ensure that the Project outcomes are globally relevant and applicable, a particular effort will be made to also involve stakeholders from regions other than Europe and North America in the Project.

Q 3: What are the B-Tech Project process and deliverables?

The Project's process will be dynamic, with outputs made available on an ongoing basis during its lifespan. The different deliverables will mostly be short and action-oriented, with a focus on policy as well as practical applications, and be applicable across different technologies and companies. The Project consultations, research and outputs will incorporate a focus on specific, real-world practices, issues and incidents. Yet, the overall objective is to provide broadly applicable roadmaps and principled guidance that can inform responses to a range of challenges and dilemmas across different technology companies and rights.

¹ <https://bit.ly/38w5IH8>.

Q 4: How can companies be substantively involved with the B-Tech Project?

Companies from all parts of the digital technology industry are invited to participate in B-Tech Project convenings, consultations and webinars. Staff representing these tech companies should be expected to contribute regularly (precise time commitment TBD) to conversations both in-person and remotely and to share group findings with their corporate teams with the purpose of integrating human rights frameworks and processes into actionable work plans. Information about engagement opportunities can be found on [the B-Tech Project Portal](#) on the UN Human Rights website.

As one mechanism to engage, the B-Tech project will be facilitating a Technology Company Community of Practice (CoP). This will be a mechanism to ensure company practices and challenges inform the substance of B-Tech work, with an initial focus on Human Rights Due Diligence and End-Use. The CoP will be made up of approximately 15-to-20 technology companies, ideally from a diverse range of countries and regions. This group will be supported by a handful of expert advisors drawn from across Civil Society, academia and business experts.

Companies can also contact the B-Tech Project team directly to hear more about the Project and engagement opportunities, and explore ideas for deeper engagement with the Project, for example through contributing to development of case studies or dilemmas, or participating in groups or networks (single or multi-stakeholder) working collaboratively around the Project activities. Please contact BTechproject@ohchr.org.

Q 5: How is the B-Tech Project funded?

The B-Tech Project will be funded through a combination of government and company contributions. Financial contributions cover project management costs including project staff, research support, staff and stakeholder travel to Project-related events, layout and design costs to make Project outputs accessible and practical, and core Project running costs.

Q 6: How can tech companies contribute financially to the B-Tech Project?

Tech companies can contribute financially to the Project. UN Human Rights has established a “consortium” model whereby any individual corporate contribution is subject to a cap of USD 50,000 per year, but any lesser amount is welcome. In addition, a minimum of four different companies must pledge to contribute funds before any corporate contributions can be received.

To make a contribution to the B-Tech Project, please contact the Donor and External Relations team at dexrel@ohchr.org for further details about how to proceed.

For more information about the UN Human Rights approach to engagement with the business sector, including through accepting financial contributions to its work, please consult <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/EngagementWithBusinessSector.aspx>

Note that making a financial contribution to the running of the B-Tech Project is in no way a pre-condition for company involvement with the Project.

Note also that making a financial contribution to the B-Tech Project does not result in any particular privileges, roles or benefits in the governance of the Project.

Q 7: How will UN Human Rights report on contributions?

UN Human Rights will report on the project through its annual report while B-Tech staff will provide updates in the course of the project.

For more information or for clarification on any or all of these questions, please contact B-Techproject@ohchr.org.