

FROM COMMITMENT TO IMPACT



**A Guide for Local Working Groups
on Business, Security and Human Rights**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE	6
PART 1	
CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL WORKING GROUP PROCESSES	7
Context	8
Setup	9
Growth	11
Sustainability	13
PART 2	
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS	15
Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI)	16
Existing In-Country Working Groups (ICWGs)	19
Future In-Country Processes	19

INTRODUCTION

Innovative local-level mechanisms for fostering implementation of good practices in the field of business, security and human rights exist in many contexts and are linked to different policy frameworks. This Guide provides good practices and insights to support the development and successful implementation of local and In-Country Working Groups (ICWGs). While this Guide focuses on ICWGs that support implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR), its application is of relevance to numerous international initiatives in the field of security, development and human rights predicated on effective implementation in often challenging environments.

ICWGs are diverse in their origin stories, implementation backgrounds, leadership, resourcing and objectives. However, the common thread that runs through all of them is the bringing together of national and local stakeholders from governments, companies and civil society to effect collective change on security and human rights in the natural resource sector. In practical terms, this means representatives from diverse backgrounds building sufficient trust to allow for open exchange on operational level challenges, address collective issue areas for advocacy or intervention, and generate best practices for reducing conflict risks in different sites and community areas.



ICWGs have been initiated in several countries (Colombia, D.R. Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Peru); however, there has been no mechanism developed to collect lessons learned and good practices from existing groups or from the development of the new groups. Though VPs implementation at operational sites is quite mature, it is frequently carried out in isolation from any broader, community- or national-level implementation that would involve governments, civil society, or affected communities and with limited knowledge sharing across stakeholders. This has created a knowledge gap. What makes ICWGs succeed and thrive? What preconditions are necessary for the establishment of ICWGs? How can stakeholders come together and structure dialogue in a meaningful, constructive and action-oriented way? How can we ensure that all voices are heard in driving implementation forward? How can we ensure sustainability of progress made?

In order to encourage and support the development of effective ICWGs that foster responsible business conduct, this Guide gathers lessons learned and recommendations of stakeholders' experiences from approaches that worked (or did not work) in the past. This Guide draws on the companion research study **“From Commitment to Impact: Experiences of Local Working Groups on Business, Security and Human Rights.”** This study is based on in-depth interviews and field research gathered from a wide range of key stakeholders participating in ICWGs. These two products were developed to provide guidance to existing groups, to encourage effective implementation of new In-Country processes, and more broadly to establish a rubric for how security and human rights multi-stakeholder processes can be implemented at the national and sub-national level worldwide.

The recommendations and lessons-learned proposed in this Guide are not intended to be prescriptive; stakeholders are invited to situate these suggestions within their local context and challenges, understanding that not all references may be relevant for all situations.

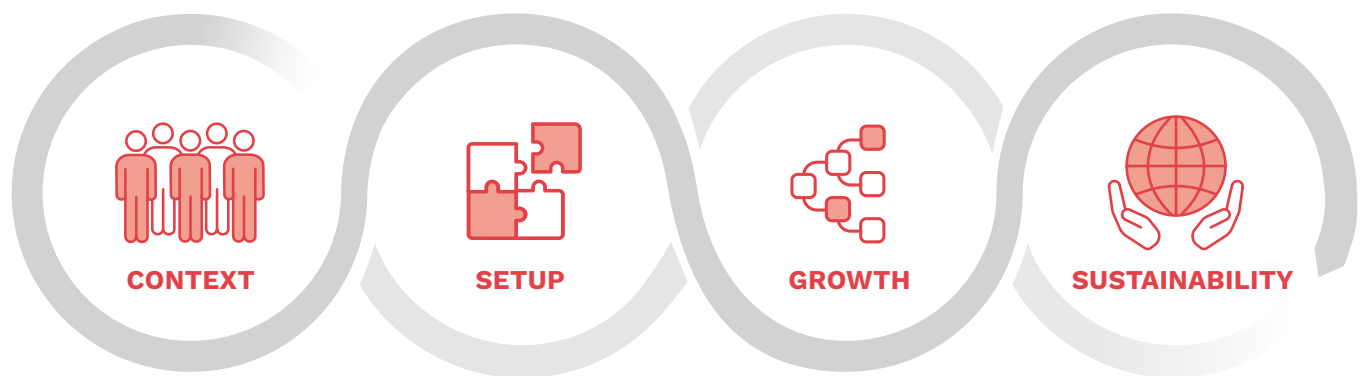
Link with Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR):

The VPSHR are a set of good practices that guide companies in observing their human rights responsibilities when securing their operations. The VPSHR support companies in conducting comprehensive risk assessments that are sensitive to community impacts, and ensuring that their security measures are based upon and informed by those assessments. The VPSHR further provide guidance on management of private security providers and engagement with public security forces to ensure human rights are respected. The Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) is the multi-stakeholder membership organization that supports the VPSHR. In 2016, the VPI made national-level implementation a priority of the Initiative's strategic plan, with ICWGs as a key mechanism for implementation. This guide and companion research study integrate the VPSHR and other international-level norms and seek to inform the development of further good practice guidance.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

PART 1

Contains a **checklist of lessons learned** which follows the life cycle of an ICWG. This section supports stakeholders with useful tips and guidance as they initiate, develop, grow and sustain ICWGs.



PART 2

Contains specific **recommendations for different actors within ICWGs**: The VPI Secretariat/ Steering Committee, companies, governments and non-governmental organizations. These recommendations are tailored to the unique roles that stakeholders play in the success of ICWGs.

For a broader analysis of lessons learned in the existing ICWGs, users should consult the companion research study **“From Commitment to Impact: Experiences of Local Working Groups on Business, Security and Human Rights.”**

PART 1

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL WORKING GROUP PROCESSES



CONTEXT

- Companies championing implementation with support from other pillars
- Space for civic engagement
- Host and home government engagement and support



SETUP

- Build capacity
- Gather research and share knowledge
- Develop trust through both local and national multi-stakeholder activities
- Establish a coordinator/secretariat with resources and convening power



GROWTH

- Champions build momentum and ownership
- Common rallying issues / objectives
- Balanced pillar representation
- Analysis and reassessment of challenges, opportunities and priorities
- Added value with successes and quick wins; building too larger accomplishments
- Active chairs/ secretariat with bilateral follow-ups and action items



SUSTAINABILITY

- Local ownership and leadership
- Clear goals/objectives for the group
- Sustainable funding for administrative coordination and activity implementation linked to the group goals/ objectives
- Permanent coordinating structure with convening responsibilities
- Transparent communication to maintain trust

CONTEXT

INITIATING AN ICWG

- 1.** The rationale for ICWGs will vary from country to country but almost always includes: long history of allegation of abuse by security forces around extractive sites; recent crises or conflicts around extractive operations; prioritization of a wider human rights programme or responsible business agenda.
- 2.** A strong tradition of civil society engagement will help facilitate constructive action in ICWGs.
- 3.** Not all stakeholders in all States will have the same understanding of human rights/responsible business. Discussions on the vision and underlining principles of the ICWG should be culturally and contextually sensitive; broader discussions may be necessary to identify common ground.
- 4.** Formal Host Government membership in the VPI is not required for the establishment/success of the ICWG, and nor should the focus of the ICWG necessarily be promoting membership. The ICWG can certainly incentivize membership but it should not over-focus on it.
- 5.** As companies are the primary drivers of VPSHR implementation, constructive and engaged participation and buy-in by companies in the ICWG will broaden and improve the implementation of VPSHR.

SETUP

ESTABLISHING AN ICWG

1. DETERMINE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES:

- Fact-based scoping studies are crucial in determining needs and challenges of stakeholders as well as setting up expectations of the ICWG. These studies should also map potential partners and suggest priorities for activities.

2. SECURE RESOURCES:

- Seed funding is indispensable and can come from a variety of public or private sources. Resources from companies must be carefully considered and structured to preserve neutrality and credibility of the Working Group.
- Resources should cover both administrative arrangements (meetings, participation, travel) and implementation (the actual work of the ICWG).
- The ICWG should connect with existing networks in the business and human rights realm to build on synergies, avoid duplication of efforts, and coordinate with partners.

3. ARTICULATE A VISION FOR THE ICWG:

- The ICWG should develop a clear vision and mission based on pressing security and human rights challenges identified by the stakeholders. This will ensure real buy-in from members. In the past, each ICWG has adopted a different lens: for example, some ICWGs prioritize training, others focus on prevention of gender-based violence, etc.
- The ICWG should not just be a ‘talk shop’ but adopt concrete objectives and workplans.



4. BUILD TRUST WITHIN THE ICWG AND BUILD FAITH IN THE ICWG:

- The ICWG’s first priority should be to build rapport and trust by focusing on dialogue and sharing of experiences.
- The ICWG should ensure balanced participation across and within pillars. Participation should also be reflective of society, ensuring a gender balance as well as being representative of groups such as indigenous peoples, youths, elderly, other affected minorities.
- ICWG should engage closely with impacted communities and balance engagement between the capital and regional areas.
- Host governments are important participants. The ICWG should ensure the appropriate representatives/key decision makers from relevant ministries/offices buy in to the group and maintain participation.

5. BUILD RESILIENCE AND AGILITY:

- To withstand changes in host government representation, the ICWG should engage on an institutional or whole-of-department level. The ICWG can also engage with different levels in the government.
- Home governments and other foreign partners can support through providing resources, venues for meetings etc. and create linkages to related processes. Priority must be given to local ownership of the ICWG.
- The VPI and other international partners can provide guidance, share lessons learned and knowledge resources.

GROWTH

DEVELOPING ICWGs

1. DEMONSTRATE ADDED VALUE:

- After the initial period of establishing trust, the ICWG should adopt a task-oriented approach and work on achieving collective goals. ICWG meetings should be well structured and organized with clear action points and commonly agreed ways forward. The Secretariat performs a key leadership role.
- Baseline studies are critical for assessing and evaluating challenges, mapping entry points and priority activities. The industry often evolves rapidly and the ICWGs should ensure that activities are informed by research and data.
- Where possible, complementary working groups at a more operational level can be developed to ensure that local challenges are adequately addressed.

2. MAINTAIN PARTICIPATION:

- It is important that the process is supported by decision makers in companies (such as high level management).
- The technical focal points participating in the ICWG should be consistent to ensure continuity of meetings and activities.
- All stakeholder groups must continue to be represented, as equally as possible.

3. LEVERAGE SYNERGIES AND CROSSCUTTING PARTNERS:

- Depending on the local context, the ICWG could consider engaging with other sectors or companies where security-related challenges may be cross cutting.
- Other international or regional frameworks could be leveraged, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), or the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA). Depending on local perceptions and sensitivities, the ICWG may wish to position itself in a complementary role to these initiatives.

4. ENSURE CONTINUOUS TRANSPARENCY AND FAIRNESS:

- The distribution of resources within the ICWG should be managed in a transparent and fair way through a collectively agreed and neutral administrative mechanism.
- The ICWG should be led by local stakeholders. International NGOs could partner with national NGOs or actors to build up capacities and ensure local ownership. ICWGs should take into account the resource constraints of small organizations and ensure that their representation is facilitated in meetings and activities.

5. ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION FOR LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY:

- The ICWG should give careful thought on how to ensure sustainability. Planning and initiating fundraising is key. ICWGs can also foster closer links with the VPI at the international level.



SUSTAINABILITY

ENSURING THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF ICWGs

1. BUILD LONG TERM COORDINATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY:

A secretariat or coordinating function is important, so long as there are safeguards in place for ensuring continuous learning, smart rotations in leadership, and avoiding overconcentration of knowledge or influence.

2. MANAGING INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF ICWGs:

The ICWG should ensure a productive and positive atmosphere within ICWGs. This may include ensuring that participants are aware of the prioritization of resources.

3. MAINSTREAM LESSON-LEARNING AND ENCOURAGE INNOVATION:

The ICWG should continuously re/assess whether implementation can be further enhanced and improved, either by political or resourcing support. Furthermore, there is a need to evolve and innovate both membership and approach to maintain interest, dynamism and impact. Continuous research and data gathering are critical in ensuring an informed approach.

4. RESULTS BASED APPROACH:

The ICWG should establish short, medium and long-term goals. Outputs and outcomes should be assessed against indicators structured around the shared objectives. It is also important to communicate and highlight successes and impacts to internal and external stakeholders.

5. FOSTER A LEGACY OF IMPACT:

The ICWG can establish a sustainable footprint by developing practical guidance tools, workable knowledge products, applied good practices and practitioner -friendly translations of security and human rights norms.



PART 2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

The following recommendations are divided into three sections. First, for members of the VPI that play various roles in identifying and supporting ICWGs. Second, for members of the ICWGs themselves, to continue to evolve and remain sustainable platforms for addressing change. Third, considerations are set out for stakeholders inside and outside the VPI who seek to establish In-Country processes.

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE (VPI)

SECRETARIAT / STEERING COMMITTEE:

- **More sustained international support and guidance** from the VPI, especially from the Secretariat and Steering Committee, to existing pilot groups. Through avoiding a top-down approach, support scoping and baseline studies at the different points of the processes, define possible outcomes for In-Country implementation group, facilitate sharing of information and guidance relevant for the ICWG, and facilitate sharing of experience in between ICWG. International partners like DCAF and FFP can be a key source of implementation support. FFP has supported the development of ICWGs since 2007. Additionally, the VPI and DCAF have recently developed a new Memorandum of Understanding identifying DCAF as a preferred implementation partner for VPSHR in country implementation. This could be leveraged in order to apply a strategic approach to In-Country implementation across the initiative.
- **Ensure a sustainable and cost-efficient funding mechanism** that could address some of the shortfalls in funding, especially coordination and secretariat functions, and reduce administrative burdens of coordinating funds from multiple organizations/funders.
- **Adoption of this lessons learnt report**, and application of its conclusions and recommendation to support on going and future groups.
- **Ensure that new ICWGs are set up with the support of the VPI after a thorough analysis of the needs and consultation** with In-Country partners and that baseline studies are conducted to support all existing working groups.
- **Encourage coordination/linkages with other initiatives** where possible at the international and national level, for example the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA), the OECD, or initiatives present at the local level, to ensure sustainability of ICWG.

COMPANIES:

- **Demonstrate shared leadership and involvement within the ICWG.** Though companies lead on site-specific VPSHR implementation, NGOs and Governments are often more active in leadership and participation when it comes to collective engagement through the ICWGs at the broader community, national, or international level. Companies should be active during ICWG meetings in sharing experience, challenges and good practices.
- **Encourage** companies to play an active role, for example by convening pillar level meetings In-Country. These meetings can extend beyond VPI member companies.
- **Encourage lessons learning between operations** and functions within the company to ensure that efforts are sustainable and not personality driven.

HOST GOVERNMENTS:

- **Demonstrate commitment** to improved security and human rights practices through **active engagement with ICWG**, to foster positive dialogue between the government, companies and civil society organisations.
- **Ensure that all relevant ministries and/or administration bodies are engaged and participate actively to ICWG meetings.** Inasmuch as ICWGs are a great tool to ensure coordination of activities between pillars, they can also be useful for coordination between actors within pillars, such as interagency interaction within government. Further, governments should think broadly about which ministries or agencies should be involved – entities such as the Ministries for Natural Resources, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Environmental Protection, and Attorney-General, as well as the Army, Navy, and Police, can all have an important role to play.
- To ensure constant presence and continued dialogue, each of the ministries should **nominate a contact point at a mid-management level**, tasked with active participation to the meetings. Even where the responsibility of VPSHR implementation (or related issues) is shared across multiple ministries or agencies, there needs to be one key focal point.

HOME GOVERNMENTS:

- **Promote awareness with Embassy counterparts** about the importance of the VPSHR, including more permanent and consistent senior level buy-in (Ambassador / Head of Mission level) and maintain this over time.
- Ensure **greater coordination between diplomatic missions** to provide a coherent voice about the importance to implement VPSHR and avoid 'overkill' on messaging VPSHR to host governments.
- Ensure **coordination of programming and funding** between headquarters and embassy counterparts to maximize collective impact. Identify linkages to wider security and development programming to realise synergies and promote larger-scale programming to assist with greater sustainability and value.

NGOS:

- **Encourage local partners** to join the ICWGs and fostering local CSO awareness, even informally during the implementation of the ICWG's activities.
- Foster greater **collaboration to further common goals**, encouraging sharing resources between CSOs within groups, to avoid potential for discord through resource competition.
- **Build a VPSHR component in peace and development programming** when possible, leveraging broader security, conflict and peacebuilding work.
- Ensure **wide understanding and knowledge of VPSHR** within the organization and with partners, to assist in mainstreaming VPSHR across programs to increase the sustainability of initiatives.

EXISTING IN-COUNTRY WORKING GROUPS (ICWGs)

- Define **clear group goal/objectives** and make concrete plans towards achieving them to ensure that members are interested and keep on participating in the group. Consider undertaking a baseline study to identify objectives / priorities in a structured manner.
- Develop clear **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)** metrics to more systematically measure successes and impact of the group's activities.
- **Ensure a balanced participation to the WG across the three pillars.** This can be done through a greater support for local NGOs by government and company pillars In-Country.
- Focus on **sub-national activities/platforms**, such as in hotspot natural resources areas, so that the WG is locally rooted, and responds to concrete challenges.
- **Diversify roles/responsibilities** to ensure when 'champions'/specific individuals leave the group momentum is not lost.

FUTURE IN-COUNTRY PROCESSES

- Focus on supporting organic, **local initiatives** led by companies, government and/or civil society In-Country as opposed to "top-down" centralized approaches – In-Country initiatives should be demand-driven, not command driven.
 - Rally around **current issues/flash points** to establish interest when initiating the WG. This will help getting support for the WG from all the stakeholders.
 - **Start small** – ICWGs can begin as practical information sharing and relationship-building initiatives between practitioners, and do not need to be focused on getting the home government to sign onto the VPI.
 - Set a **clear goal/objective** for the group, based on consultation with the three pillars to establish common shared issue areas within the broader frame of security and human rights.
 - The **group name** does not need to be framed under the banner of "security and human rights" – rather it should be tailored to the context and take into account any potential sensitivities.
 - **Coordinate with other initiatives** where relevant. This helps avoid silos, duplication, and most importantly local stakeholder fatigue. Plus, it can be helpful to leverage the convening power of existing platforms and increase value for all initiatives involved.
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