



# Engaging the Corporate Sector

26 May 2025

AfriSIG 2025



20 YEARS OF

Business & Human Rights  
Resource Centre

# Targeting

1

Company  
engagement

2

Tools for  
engagement

3

Investor  
advocacy



# Profits of Tech companies

# Profits

## 1. Alphabet Inc. (Google)

- Net Profit (Q1 2025): \$34.54 billion
- Year-over-Year Growth: +46%

## 2. Apple Inc.

- Net Profit (Q1 2025): \$36.33 billion
- Year-over-Year Growth: +7%

## 3. Microsoft Corporation

- Net Profit (Q1 2025): \$24.7 billion
- Year-over-Year Growth: +11%

## 4. NVIDIA Corporation

- Net Profit (Q1 2025): \$14.88 billion
- Year-over-Year Growth: +628%

## 5. Amazon.com Inc.

- Net Profit (Q1 2025): \$17.1 billion
- Year-over-Year Growth: +64%

# Key Challenges in Africa

Business & Human Rights Resou X

www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/?&content\_types=articles&language=en&sectors=161&sectors=1


BHRCGetting StartedHome / TwitterWAT to Port Louis, ...Algorithmic amplific...ungp and ai - Googl...Amma finances sum...Iplicit - BHRRCRecovered file - Fin...Other

ARTICLE

## Kenya: Apple faces greenwashing lawsuit over carbon neutral claims

Apple's legal battle over carbon neutrality claims for its Apple Watch models has taken an unexpected turn, with the Environmental Defense Fund filing an amicus brief in support of the tech giant.

22 May 2025



ARTICLE

## Ghana: Meta faces lawsuit over alleged human rights abuses of contractor's content moderator

Part of [Ghana: Meta faces allegations over content moderators worker rights abuses hired by contractor](#)

27 Apr 2025

ARTICLE

## Ghana: East African Teleperformance content moderators at Meta's newly outsourced hub report extreme mental health issues, suicide attempts & dismissal; incl. Co. comments


Part of [Ghana: Meta faces allegations over content moderators worker rights abuses hired by contractor](#)

27 Apr 2025

ARTICLE

## Tanzania: Gov't shuts down access to X again, marking second blockade in under a year

21 May 2025



ARTICLE

## Nigeria: Meta lost its appeal against a \$220 million fine for breaching consumer protection


Part of [Nigeria: Accused of breaching local consumer protection and data privacy, Meta lost its appeal against \\$220 million fine](#)

25 Apr 2025

ARTICLE

## Social media platforms enable Nigerian sextort network targeting teen report reveals

11 May 2025



ARTICLE

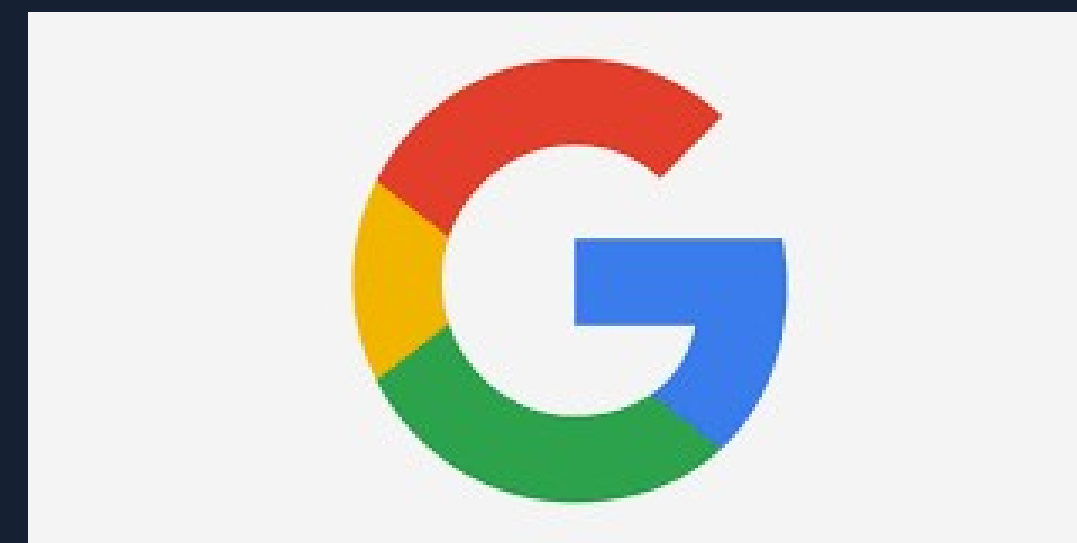
## Zambia: A new law adopted to tackle online fraud, child pornography

# Regulating for Responsible Action in Africa

1. **Data protection and privacy regulation** (Kenya: *Data Protection Act, 2019*  
Nigeria: *NDPR*)
2. **Digital Services & Online Content Regulation** (Tanzania: *Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, 2020,*)
3. **Taxation of Digital Companies** (Kenya: *Digital Services Tax (DST), 2021*) ⚠
4. **ESG-Related Regulations** (South Africa: *King IV Code on Corporate Governance* )
5. **Cybersecurity Laws** (Ghana: *Cybersecurity Act, 2020*)



# Enagaging Companies



# Looking back

## Challenges with engaging corporate actors

What have been your biggest challenges engaging with tech companies?





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The content is also available in the following languages: [español](#)

# Dismantling the facade: A global south perspective on the state of engagement with tech companies

acy



## Key challenges

- Opaque business practices
- Inaccessible company structures
- Limited capacity
- Lack of whistleblower protection
- Discriminatory practices



## Challenges tech companies face with stakeholder engagement

- Need to know what civil society wants specifically (not just “transparency”)
- If engagement is early and not product-specific, difficult to report back to colleagues
- High level of technical expertise needed to provide useful feedback on products
- Timing - don't want to start too early or too late
- Civil society capacity



## What we've learned

- Information is power - know the company you are trying to change
- Have a solid evidence base and clear, specific asks
- Anticipate how the company may respond and know their pressure points
- Form alliances and use a diversity of strategies



**Who are the actors we can engage with or target to move the needle on corporate accountability?**

**What information do you need for this engagement?**

# Corporate Information & Tools



# Finding Relevant Corporate Information



**The Company name is not  
always the same as its brands.**



# How can we find the companies behind the brands?

- Read Policies on the official website.
- If it is an App, check the information about the developer in Applications Markets (e.g., App Store & Google Play).
- Search in Trademarks Databases (e.g. <https://tmsearch.uspto.gov/search/>).
- Check ICANN's Registration data lookup tool (<https://lookup.icann.org/>).

uspto® An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ▾

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	<a href="#">BABYCENTER</a>	LIVE REGISTERED	IC 009: Providing on-line downloadable and electronic downloadable...	009, 041, 044	88403597	EVERYDAY HEALTH INC. (CORPORATION; DELAWARE, USA)
	<a href="#">BABYCENTER</a>	LIVE REGISTERED	IC 016: printed material, namely, magazines, books and pamphlets...	016	78487699	EVERYDAY HEALTH INC. (CORPORATION; DELAWARE, USA)



# Corporate Information

- Ownership & Investors
- Corporate Structure
- Financial and Non-Financial Reports
- Allegations against the Company

**This information can help us understand a company's history, business relationships, money flows, and the scope of the human rights implications of a company**



# Tools & Guides to Investigate Corporations



- Organize Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)
  - Provide a collection of public data sources by country  
<https://id.occrp.org/databases/>
- Follow the Money: A digital guide for tracking corruption
  - <https://exposingtheinvisible.org/en/guides/follow-the-money-handbook/>
- OpenCorporate
  - Database that aims to gather information on companies worldwide <https://opencorporates.com/>
- Yahoo Finance <https://finance.yahoo.com/>
  - Information Public Trade Companies:
    - Major holders
    - Key executives



# SOMO

<https://www.somo.nl/the-counter/>



**The Counter is a global helpdesk for communities, non-profits and activists**



The Counter is a global help desk providing corporate research and information to activists working to hold companies accountable for societal and environmental harms.



# Finding the Right Contact



- Visit the company website:
  - To find the most appropriate contacts, look in the sections About Us, press releases/news (media contacts), Contact Us, Investor Relations, and Corporate Responsibility, or look for financial or non-financial reports on the company website.
- Visit the company's LinkedIn page:
  - In the People tab, Use the search engine to find the employee who works in the department or has a relevant role in the company.
- Contact searching tools: e.g. RocketReach and Hunter
- Consider understanding the email structure of a company
- Call the Company

**Manage security risk:** When searching contact information (e.g. LinkedIn), and when sending emails. (e.g., Generic Emails, Team members out of high-risk zones, etc.) consider the risk of engaging with the companies.



# TOOLS



## Business & Human Rights Resource Centre



# 10,000+

Data on Tech sector  
human rights  
implications




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# BHRRC's DataBase

<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/>



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## Latest News


Our library of curated information relating to the field of business and human rights contains over 200,000 pages – increasing daily.


For targeted results, use [filters](#) based on our taxonomy: the terms we apply to pages when we add them to the website. These might include the country where news or alleged abuses took place, the companies linked to the news, the sector where alleged victims were working, or the human right that is said to have been infringed. You can add a keyword to further refine your search.

Our search results are organised chronologically, with most recent appearing first. Use date range filters to set a time frame for when the page was published/reported incident took place.


You will see results in the site language you're currently using. To see results in all our languages, switch the 'Show all languages' toggle at the top of the page to ON.





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Companies 


Does article include allegations 

OR operator 

Tags 

Regions 

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Select Start Date


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# Using our Tech Company Dashboards



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## Oosto (formerly AnyVision)

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Israel

<http://www.anyvision.co>

From the Resource Centre ?

0%

Response Rate

2

Response Requests

N/A

HRD Attacks

N/A

Lawsuit Profiles


N/A

Allegations

Stories with associated response requests ?

Privacy and discrimination concerns over AnyVision facial recognition technology at Palestine checkpoints; company did not ...

This story contains 2 items



Access Now raises concerns about the sale of surveillance technologies in Latin America & calls ...

This story contains 24 items


Associated top issues

Surveillance

Right to Privacy

Migrants & Immigrants

Freedom of Association

 Racial, ethnicity, caste or origin discrimination

Oosto (formerly AnyVision) latest news

Updated: 12 Dec 2023, 12:24Refresh

Access Now calls on mass surveillance tech companies operating in Latin America to respond on human rights concerns

Article7 Oct 2022

Scrutinising migration surveillance: Human rights responsibilities of tech companies operating in MENA

Briefing28 Sept 2022

# Company Response Mechanism

## Company Response Mechanism

9,790

Total Company Responses tracked in the portal

[Explore the database](#) →

Since 2005, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre has invited companies to respond to allegations of misconduct raised by civil society, when we find no evidence that they have otherwise responded to the concerns. This process encourages companies to publicly address human rights concerns, and provides the public with both the allegations and the company's comments in full. In some cases this process helps to bring about resolution of the issues. In other cases it has led to dialogue between the company and those raising the concerns. In all cases it has increased transparency.

We indicate response rates in the [company sections](#) of the site. While this is not a reflection of a company's actual conduct, and while the quality of responses varies, it is an important indicator of a firm's openness to engaging with human rights concerns being raised by civil society.

### Find Company Responses

Search



### Download All Company Responses

Sectors



Regions



Countries



Date range

[Download filtered data](#)



[Download all data](#)



# A Decade Tracking Tech Company Responses

- January 2013-December 2023 we have invited 339 tech companies to respond to 722 human rights allegations.
- We received responses to only 347 (48%) of these allegations, leaving 357 (52%) without a company response.
- 70% of the allegations concerned affect vulnerable groups (migrants, children, workers, women, LGBTQI+ individuals, and human rights defenders, among others.)
- 77% of the tech companies associated with human rights allegations worldwide are headquartered in Global North countries.
- Nearly (30%) of the invitations to respond to allegations involved technology companies in conflict-affected zones(Including Myanmar, Israel's war on Gaza, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and Nigeria, etc.) Almost 80% of those allegations were linked to tech companies headquartered in Global North countries.
- Positive correlation between the presence of human rights policy commitments and transparency with respect to responsiveness to allegations of abuse.



## Sector Group: All Sector Groups

Number of CRMs: 1,083  
Response Rate: 43%

### CRM

Region of HQ \*

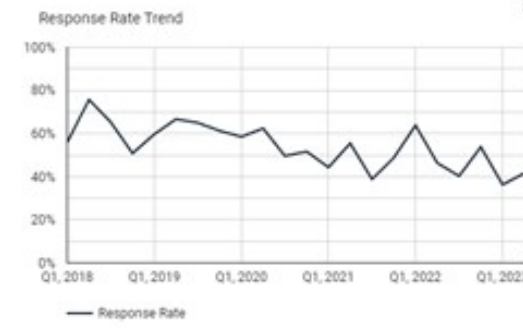
Region of Abuse \*

Sector Group \*

Responses Sought  
**1,083**  
↑ 18.4%

Response Rate  
**43%**  
↓ 13.8%

Figures for FY22/23. Comparisons for the preceding FY.



## Sector Group: Technology

Number of CRMs: 137  
Response Rate: 36%

### CRM

Region of HQ \*

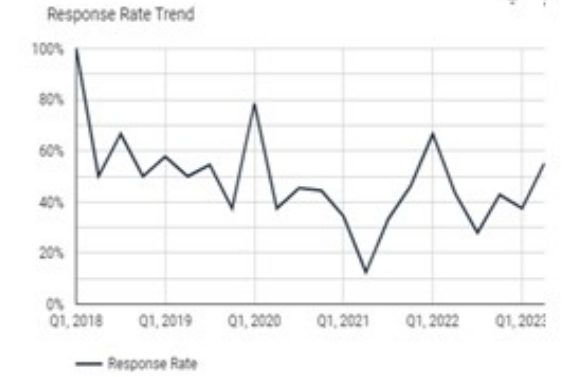
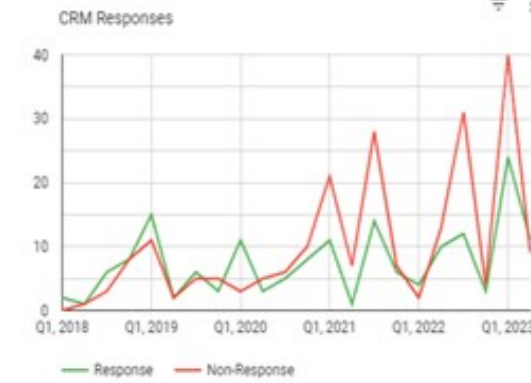
Region of Abuse \*

Sector Group: Technology (1) \*

Responses Sought  
**137**  
↑ 98.6%

Response Rate  
**36%**  
↓ 1.3%

Figures for FY22/23. Comparisons for the preceding FY.



## Sector Group: Natural Resources

Number of CRMs: 133  
Response Rate: 34%

### CRM

Region of HQ \*

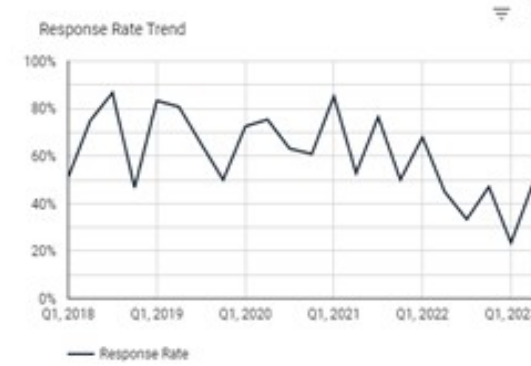
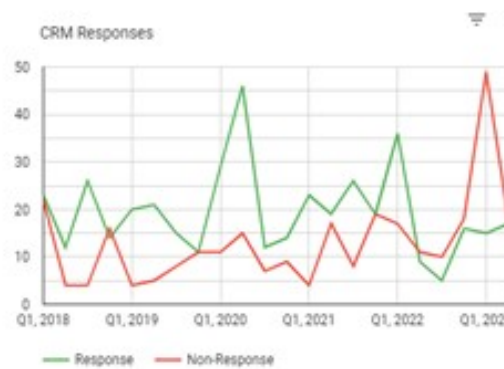
Region of Abuse \*

Sector Group: Natural reso... (1) \*

Responses Sought  
**133**  
↓ 17.4%

Response Rate  
**34%**  
↓ 45.5%

Figures for FY22/23. Comparisons for the preceding FY.



## Sector Group: Apparel and Textile

Number of CRMs: 143  
Response Rate: 66%

### CRM

Region of HQ \*

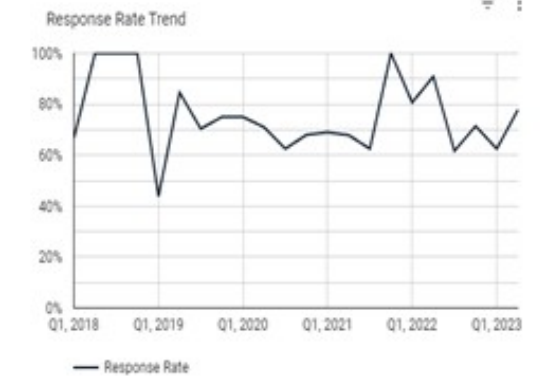
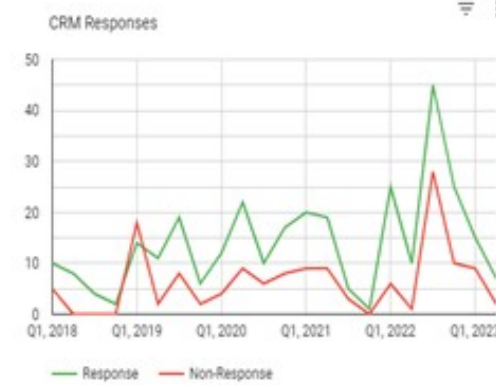
Region of Abuse \*

Sector Group: Apparel & te... (1) \*

Responses Sought  
**143**  
↑ 110.3%

Response Rate  
**66%**  
↓ 9.7%

Figures for FY22/23. Comparisons for the preceding FY.



# Investor engagement



# Types of Investors

# Taking CTRL: Pathways to effective investor engagement



## Advocating for state action to mitigate investment into rights-abusing spyware

Working in coalitions to push for effective embargos on companies with problematic track records

## Leveraging Cellebrite's IPO to push for accountability

Coordinated campaigns targeting key moments of financial importance to companies and leveraging the momentum to address regulatory gaps.

## Advocacy campaign landing Sandvine on a US Government blacklist

Leveraging evidence to effectively cause companies to end relations with states abusing technology and be placed on a blacklist.

## Engaging with Limited Partner investors

Focusing on specific class of investors and building on public awareness of challenges

## Protecting .ORG from being bought by private equity

Defending the right to use key infrastructure for civil society by advocating with different decision makers.

## Creating explanatory materials for an investor audience

Enabling better understanding of measures and checks investors must take to ensure respect for rights.

## Working with investors to harness the power of benchmark data

Pushing for specific changes in company practices based on findings in key benchmarks.

## Addressing human rights risks associated with Palantir and its Initial Public Offering (IPO)

Targeting key financial moments of companies and learning the need for more candid engagement

# Investor Engagement

**Frequency of meetings is averaged at 1-3 times per year, and seems to be on an ad-hoc basis, rather than part of a sustained strategy. Only 2 organisations are meeting with investors on a regular basis (multiple times per week/month).**



## Key challenges for digital rights advocates in meaningfully engaging with investors

1. Barriers in access  
& communication
2. A lack of capacity & resources
3. A lack of transparency
4. Imbalance of power
5. Engagement with civil society  
is not designed/executed  
effectively
6. A lack of follow through  
to demonstrate impact

**Less than half  
(15 out of 32)  
of the organisations  
surveyed have been  
consulted by investors for  
the purpose of human  
rights due diligence**



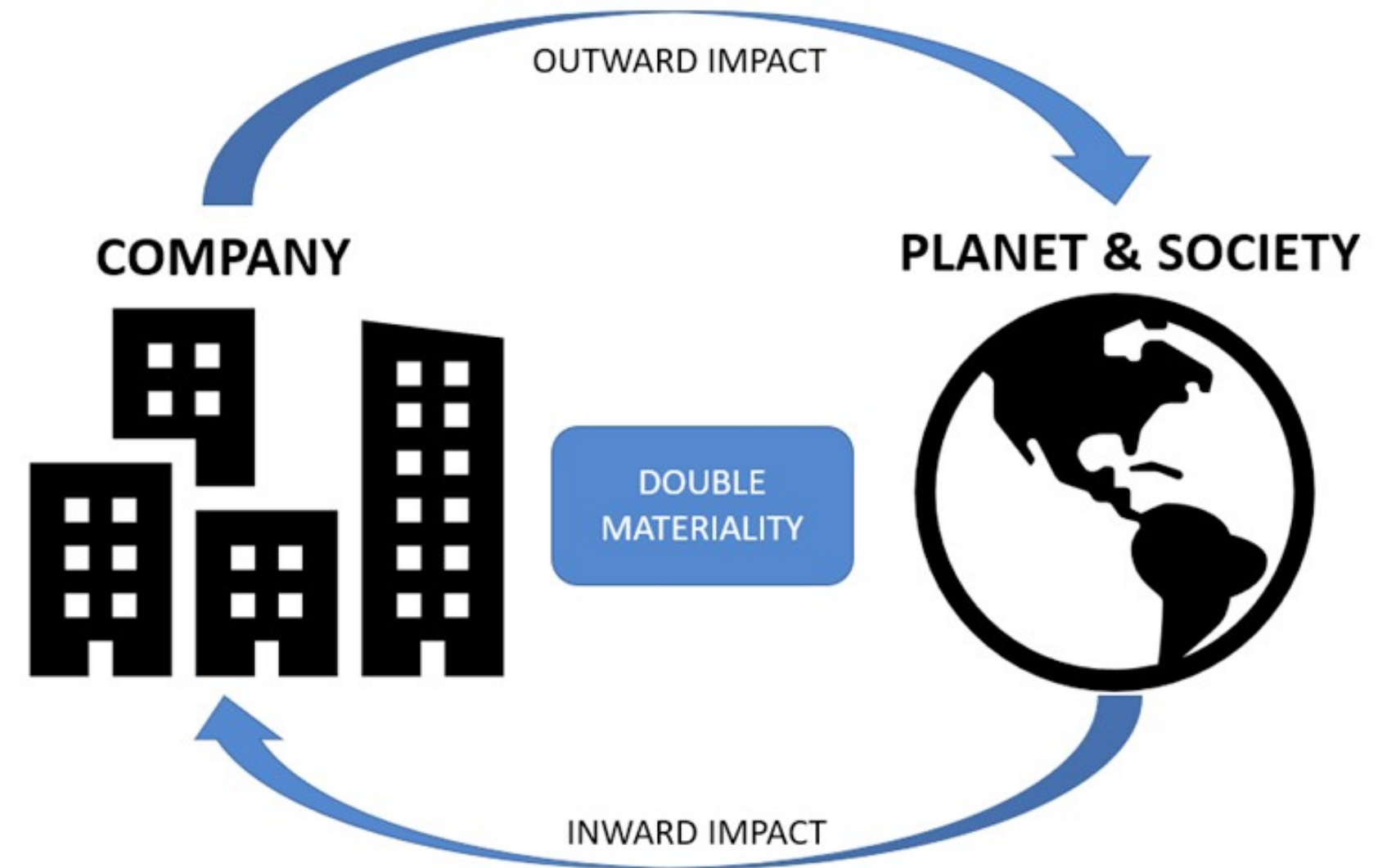
# What is Materiality?

**Legal definition** - “a substantial likelihood that the ... fact would have been viewed by the reasonable investor as having significantly altered the ‘total mix’ of information made available.”

**Impact materiality** - information regarding a company’s impact on the economy, environment, and people associated with operations

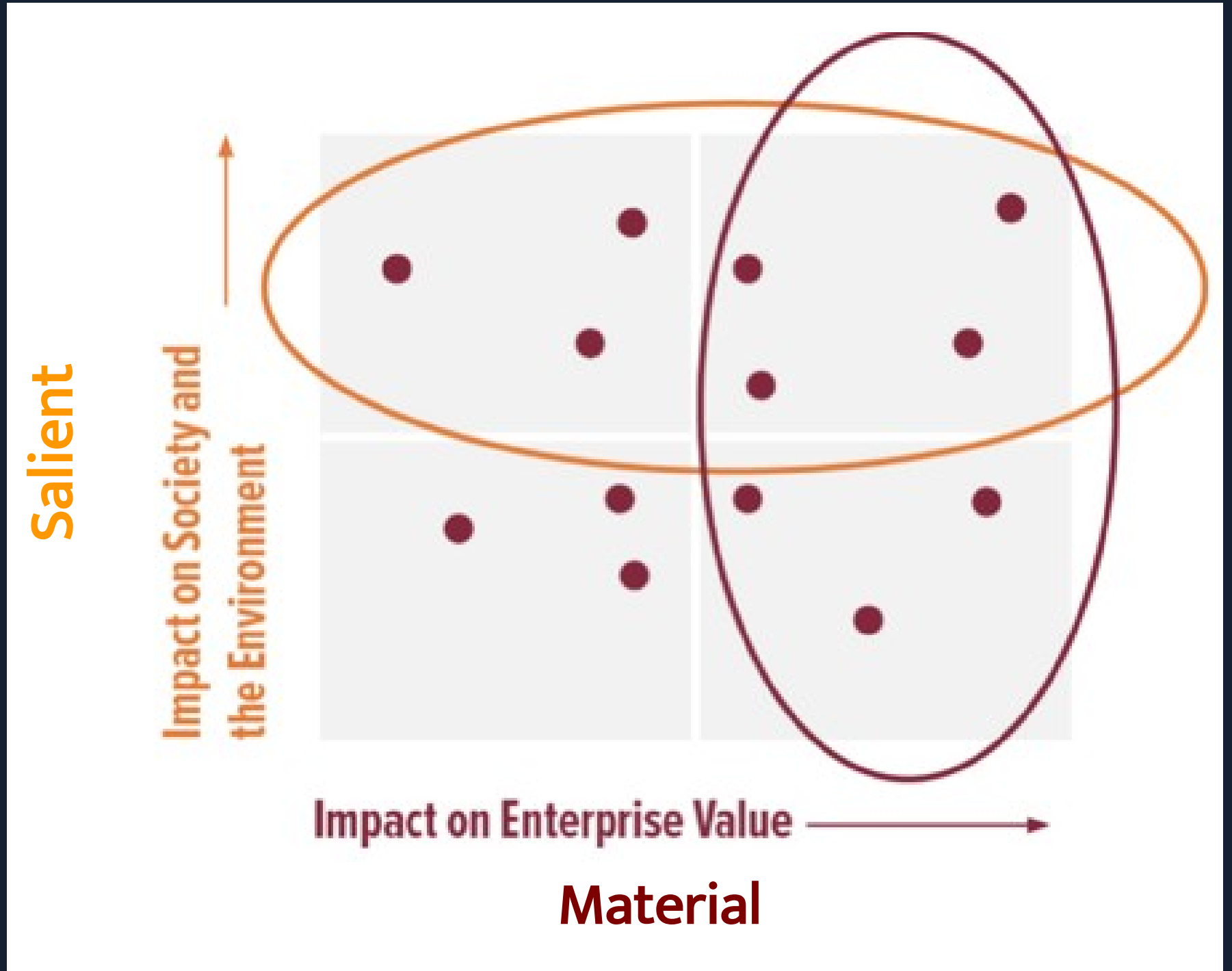
**Double materiality** - information that demonstrates both an impact on the economy, the environment, or people associated with operations and financial performance

Slide courtesy of Heartland Initiative



# Saliency-Materiality Nexus?

- Legal risk - arising from lawsuits, legal actions, or non-compliance with contractual obligations.
- Regulatory & Compliance risk - in violation of already established laws or regulations.
- Operational risk - inadequate or failed internal processes, systems, people, or external events that disrupt business operations.
- Reputational risk - damage to an organization's public image and reputation, which can lead to financial loss or decreased stakeholder trust.



Slide courtesy of Heartland Initiative

# Incident Reporting Template

Being developed by the  
Business & Human Rights  
Resource Centre and  
Heartland Initiative

[Link to draft](#)



Incident reporting template for investors – Version 1  
Surveillance tech

*This document is intended to help report on incidents of human rights violations linked to the investor or their portfolio companies. This is meant to be a guide and you can edit the contents based on your needs and expected outcomes.*

**1. Organisational details:**

Name of organization / person submitting:  
Link to organisational website:  
Description about you and your work:  
Contact details (optional):  
How did you connect with impacted rightsholder (if it someone other than yourself):

**2. General details about the incident or ongoing situation**

**Nature of the incident or situation:** Describe what happened, or what is still happening (if an ongoing situation).

**Timeframe:** When did this happen, or when did it begin? Are there any important dates/events to note since the deployment of the technology?

**Location:** Where did this occur / or where is it occurring, e.g. name of village, town, country, significant landmarks.

**Type of surveillance technology deployed:** Describe the product or service causing the harm in more detail. Was the surveillance technology connected to mass or targeted surveillance? What are the technical abilities of the technology that are facilitating the harm, if known?

**How the surveillance technology was deployed:** Describe how the surveillance technology was used against the impacted rightsholder.




**Device or deployment:** Was a particular device implicated in or affected by the deployment of surveillance technology? Was the surveillance technology deployed through a particular type of government or private infrastructure (i.e. border crossing security, city-wide security system, smart cities)?

**People affected:** Who has been impacted? How many rightsholders have been or could potentially be affected? Are you able to directly name the impacted parties?

**At-risk groups:** How has the deployment of the technology impacted particularly at-risk individuals or groups? Is this impacting historically marginalized or at-risk groups (i.e. women, children, human rights defenders, indigenous groups, other minority groups)?

**Impact on communities:** How has it affected the larger community? Is this impacting democratic processes? Has the deployment of the technology impacted underlying social tensions or drivers of conflict-related risks?

# Existing Spaces for Engagement with Investors on Tech

	# Investors	Notes on opportunties
 <b>World Benchmarking Alliance</b>	60+	Collective Impact Coalition for Ethical AI
 <b>GLOBAL NETWORK INITIATIVE</b>	9+	Work in development
 <b>INVESTOR ALLIANCE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS</b> AN INITIATIVE OF ICCR	240+	Tech & HR Working Group that meets quarterly

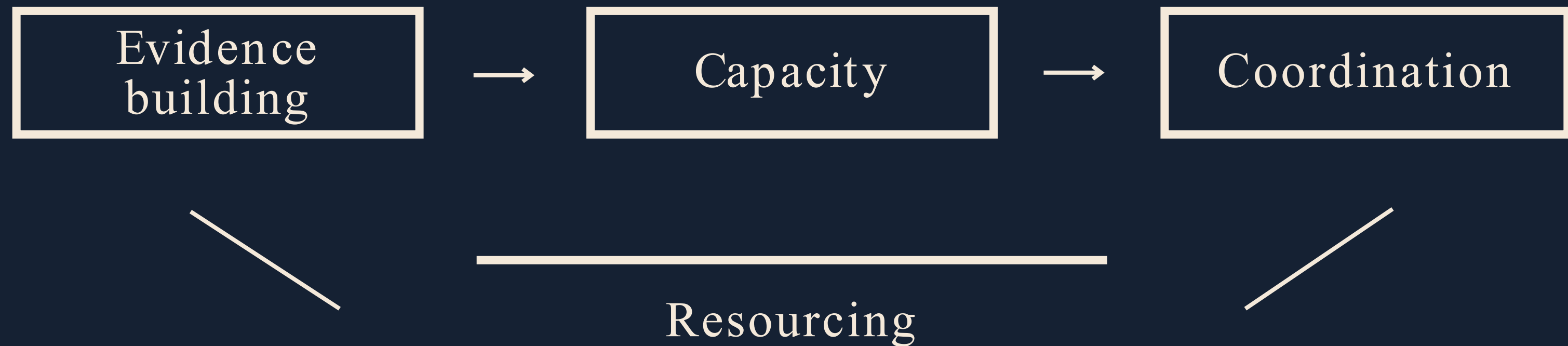




# Ways Forward

- Further capacity building and knowledge sharing
  - For example: Sharing tips on messaging that may resonate with different types of investor audiences
- Improve coordination and resource sharing
  - For example: Using an 'inside' and 'outside' approach to influencing investor policies, procedures and material risk
- Develop more targeted, investor-specific advocacy and awareness raising materials
  - Coming soon! Saliency Materiality Nexus for Spyware
- Explore new spaces for engagement or adapt procedures for existing ones

# Areas for strengthening



# THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Feel free to send in any questions  
to

[khandhadai@business-  
humanrights.org](mailto:khandhadai@business-humanrights.org)



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