# FACT SHEET: GETTING TO KNOW THE GLOBAL NETWORK INITIATIVE (GNI)

- GNI was launched in October 2008, following two years of discussions and negotiations among diverse stakeholders.

- GNI is a coalition of more than 60 information and communications technology (ICT) companies, civil society organizations (CSOs) (including human rights and press freedom groups), investors, and academics.

- GNI is based in Washington, D.C., and Amsterdam, with team members also located in Boulder, Colorado.

## MISSION

The mission of the Global Network Initiative is to protect and advance freedom of expression and privacy rights in the ICT industry by setting a global standard for responsible company decision making and serving as a multistakeholder voice in the face of government restrictions and demands.

GNI implements its mission through four strategic pillars under the direction and operations of its governance structure. The strategic pillars are:

1. Provide a framework for responsible decision making
2. Foster accountability to generate trust
3. Empower policy to promote human rights
4. Enable learning to shape best practices

## GOVERNANCE

GNI's Governance Charter defines the roles and responsibilities of participants. GNI's Executive Director and a small staff manage the day-to-day activities of GNI and an Independent Chair leads a Board of Directors composed of equal numbers of company and non-company representatives. GNI is registered as a non-profit organization under U.S. law

## MEMBERS

GNI's growing membership includes leading ICT companies, civil society organizations, academics and academic institutions, and investors from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, and the Middle East.

All members share a commitment to the GNI Principles and the core GNI documents, while contributing to shared learning, accountability, and collective action among GNI participants.

## LINKS

- Core Commitments
  - GNI Principles
  - Implementation Guidelines
  - Accountability, Policy, and Learning Framework
  - Governance Charter
- Board of Directors
- List of Members
- Company Assessments
  - Assessment Toolkit
  - 2018/19 Public Assessment Report
- Annual Reports
- GNI's Ten-Year Anniversary
- Sign up for Quarterly Email Updates

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# CORE COMMITMENTS & FRAMEWORK

- The GNI Principles state the overarching commitment of members to collaborate in the advancement of user rights to freedom of expression and privacy. The Principles provide high-level guidance to the ICT industry on how to respect, protect, and advance user rights to freedom of expression and privacy, including when faced with government demands for censorship and disclosure of user's personal information.

- The Implementation Guidelines offer more detailed guidance to ICT companies on how to put the Principles into practice, and also provide the framework for collaboration among companies, CSOs, investors, and academics.

- The Principles and Implementation Guidelines are grounded in international human rights law and informed by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Companies are held accountable through a system of independent third-party assessment of company compliance with the Principles and Implementation Guidelines. Companies are expected to demonstrate good-faith implementation of the Principles and Guidelines, with improvement over time.

The assessment process takes place every two years. There was a delay between the 2015/16 and 2018/19 assessments due to the process of revising the assessment methodology, developing the Assessment Toolkit, and planning assessments for an increased number of member companies

## POLICY

We leverage GNI's unique, multistakeholder voice on policy priorities that our members have identified, including content regulation, surveillance, and network disruptions. We issue statements, comment on relevant regulatory proposals, engage policy makers, and participate in global initiatives such as the Freedom Online Coalition and the Christchurch Call to advance those priorities.

## LEARNING

GNI regularly facilitates opportunities for members to share their expertise and foster confidential learning across constituencies on emerging technologies, responsible business practice, and challenging situations.

*GNI publishes an annual report of its activities and a public assessment report upon completion of its periodic assessment process. GNI also posts statements and other publications on its website and releases a quarterly email newsletter. You can follow GNI on social media on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.*

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