

**Request for Proposals:
Research Report on Emerging Regulation on
Corporate Human Rights Risk Assessment/Due Diligence**

Overview

The Global Network Initiative (GNI) was established in 2008, bringing together information and communication technology (ICT) companies, civil society organizations, academics, and investors working to enhance respect for freedom of expression and privacy in the face of government pressures, restrictions, and demands. GNI's approach is reflected in the GNI [Principles on Freedom of Expression and Privacy](#) (Principles) and a set of associated [Implementation Guidelines](#) (Guidelines), both of which are consistent with and build on the broader [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs). Like the UNGPs, the GNI framework centers the concept of Human Rights Due Diligence as means for identifying and avoiding/mitigating human rights risks associated with corporate activity, and emphasize broader principles of transparency and remedy.

At the core of GNI's approach is a unique accountability process designed to facilitate the confidential sharing of non-public information by ICT companies in order to evaluate, share lessons about, and foster collaboration around their efforts to respect freedom of expression and privacy. This "[assessment process](#)" utilizes third-party [assessors](#) accredited and trained by GNI to review non-public information, conduct interviews, analyze case studies, and produce confidential reports that are used to by GNI's multistakeholder board to determine whether member companies are implementing the Principles and Guidelines "in good faith, with improvement over time." A detailed guide to the methodology of GNI assessments can be found [here](#).

As governments move to further regulate around the topic of responsible business conduct, a number of legislative and regulatory instruments have emerged which require or incentivize companies to conduct risk assessments and/or due diligence, to conduct third-party audits of those efforts, and to produce transparency reports. Some of these laws apply specifically to ICT companies, while others address companies that reach certain geographic, size, and/or risk criteria, regardless of sector. The range of issues/subject areas that these laws and regulations are meant to cover can also differ, with distinctions also emerging regarding the use of standards, types of audits, and enforcement mechanisms.

Research Purpose and Objective

The emergence of mandatory risk assessment/due diligence audits and reporting creates the potential for both synergy and redundancy with the GNI assessment process. GNI seeks a qualified and creative researcher to conduct research and produce a report that: (i) analyzes global legislative and regulatory frameworks that will create ongoing audit and reporting obligations that will apply to ICT companies; (ii) identifies potential overlaps and gaps between those obligations and GNI's assessment process; (iii) explores opportunities for synchronizing

GNI assessments with mandatory risk assessment/due diligence activities, including but not limited to potential recognition/accreditation of GNI assessments by relevant regulatory bodies and/or incorporation of mandatory audits into the GNI assessment process.

Methodology & Timeframe

Proposals should include a draft methodology, which may include any of the following information: an outline and justification of existing/proposed legislative frameworks to be reviewed; an outline of planned desk research; suggested list of GNI staff, members, and/or assessors to be interviewed; suggested list of other business and human rights multi stakeholder processes to be engaged; and any proposed outreach to relevant law makers and/or regulators.

Depending on the methodology proposed, we estimate that this research will require between 60-100 hours. GNI is seeking proposals by December 16, 2022 and intends to finalize a contract by mid-January, 2023, at the latest. The chosen contractor will work with GNI staff to promptly finalize the methodology and research plan in order to produce a complete draft report by the end of March, 2023. A final report and presentation thereof will constitute the end of the contract period and should be concluded by the end of April, 2023.

Qualifications

Proposals will be evaluated utilizing the following criteria:

- Contractor(s) background and expertise on relevant topics, including: business and human rights; tech policy; regulation/co-regulation; GNI; ESG and/or management system standards and audit; and regulatory development
- Contractor(s) experience conducting sophisticated research projects in a timely manner
- Contractor(s) reputation and relationships with relevant experts
- Proposed methodology
- Cost

Application Process

Please indicate your interest in this RFP by email to “info@globalnetworkinitiative.org” with “Regulatory Report RFP” in the subject line and include:

- Resume
- Portfolio of work
- Outline of proposed methodology
- Names of 2 references who can speak to relevant expertise and professionalism

The deadline for applications is December 16th, 2022.