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Part 3

# Putting Respect for Human Rights into Practice

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The following sections set out the six core elements of the corporate responsibility to respect human rights and apply them to the activities and business relationships of oil and gas companies. The core elements are:

- ▶ **A human rights policy commitment:** the company's overarching, public commitment to respect human rights, and the processes for **embedding** that commitment into the company's culture. (See [Section I](#))
- ▶ **Human rights due diligence:** the set of on-going processes through which the company "knows and shows" that it is respecting human rights in practice.

This involves:

- **Assessing** actual and potential human rights impacts; (See [Section II](#))
- **Integrating** the findings **and acting** to prevent or mitigate the impacts; (See [Section III](#))
- **Tracking** how effectively impacts are addressed; (See [Section IV](#))
- **Communicating** how impacts are addressed. (See [Section V](#))
- ▶ **Remediation:** the processes through which the company actively engages in the remediation of impacts it has caused or contributed to. (See [Section VI](#))

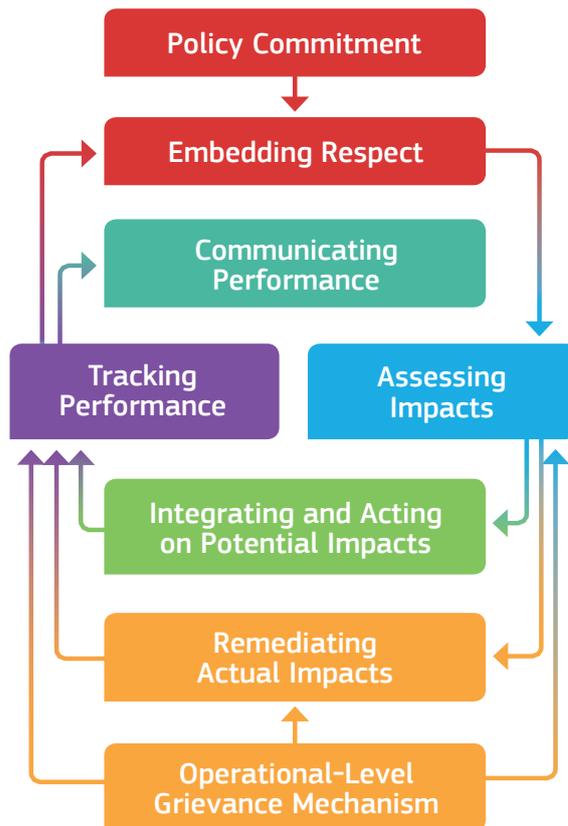


Figure 1: Key Elements of the Corporate Responsibility to Respect

Figure 1 to the right illustrates the relationship between the six elements of the corporate responsibility to respect human rights.

## Understanding Human Rights Due Diligence

Before exploring each of the six elements of the responsibility to respect in detail in the rest of this Guide, there are some important points to note about the concept of human rights due diligence.

- **Why is human rights due diligence important?** Human rights due diligence helps a company understand how its human rights risks can change over time and how to respond. It provides processes for looking both at external and internal factors that may raise human rights risks, and at external and internal resources that can help address them.
- **When should human rights due diligence happen?** Human rights due diligence should start at the earliest pre-contract stages of a project's lifecycle and continue through operations, to the project's decommissioning and post-closure stages. It is about on-going processes, not one-off events such as an impact assessment at the start of a new project, or an annual report.
- **How does human rights due diligence relate to a company's existing due diligence systems?** For many companies, there will be existing due diligence systems they can draw on or build on to develop their human rights due diligence. Examples include environmental or health and safety due diligence, "privilege to operate" reviews, peer reviews or other regular risk review processes. It is up to O&G companies to decide whether to have a stand-alone due diligence process for human rights, or to integrate human rights into their existing processes. Either way, it is usually most helpful to adopt approaches that are familiar to staff – and will therefore be easy for them to work with – while ensuring they take account of the unique features of human rights.

### How does the Responsibility to Respect Apply to Smaller Companies?

Smaller companies will typically have simpler management systems and need less complex human rights due diligence processes. Moreover, issues such as internal communication will usually be less challenging. However, those that operate in challenging contexts, such as conflict-affected areas, will still need systems that can manage the greater level of risks present. In any situation, they will need to include the same six elements of the responsibility to respect.

The European Commission has published [guidance for small and medium-sized enterprises](#) on applying the UN Guiding Principles available in multiple languages and with accompanying case studies.