

GOVERNMENT PILLAR VERIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Background

The extractive sector often operates in countries or areas of elevated security risk and faces the difficult challenge of how to safeguard company personnel and property in a way that respects human rights and the security of local communities.

In December 2000, the United States and United Kingdom governments, along with a group of extractive companies and non-governmental organizations, agreed on a set of principles, known as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (“Voluntary Principles”), to guide companies on security and human rights. The Voluntary Principles provide an outline of actions companies should take to assess risks and implement public and private security measures in a manner that respects human rights. This document outlines the roles and obligations of Participants that are accountable for implementing and managing the Voluntary Principles.

Accountability Framework

The Accountability framework within the VPI consists of:

1. A formal participation criteria (Mandatory)
2. A formal reporting criteria (Mandatory)
3. Written annual report (Mandatory)
4. Internal complaints/grievance mechanism mediated by the Secretariat
5. Verification framework for verifying that a Participant is meeting their responsibilities
6. Public report prepared annually by the Secretariat (Mandatory)

Verification Process

Annual Report to the Plenary

Annual Report

Verification within the Voluntary Principles Initiative has been defined as “have a credible process to verify fulfillment, by all Participants, of their Voluntary Principles Initiative responsibilities, including public reporting and engagement where appropriate”.

Each Participant Government will submit an Annual Report to the Voluntary Principles Plenary. This report will include the Government’s verification process, which will assess Participant Government’s fulfillment of their roles and responsibilities as defined in the Participation Criteria, the roles and responsibilities for the Government Pillar, and, as applicable, the Government’s national plan. The report will be drafted in accordance with the reporting guidelines.

Participant Governments with national plans should address progress on execution in Annual Reports.

Participant Government should also address progress on points raised during peer review in Annual Reports (see below). This may include self-assessment on the same.

Publication of Annual Report

Government Participants submit a copy of their annual report to the Secretariat to be posted on the Voluntary Principles website. The version submitted for public release may be modified from the version submitted to the Voluntary Principles Initiative in advance of the Annual Plenary Meeting. Government Participants strive to use a consistent framework for their public reports. Government Participants also make national plans public on the Voluntary Principles website.

Presentation of Results

Within each five-year period, each government will present on Voluntary Principles (assisting to) implementation to Voluntary Principles Participants two separate, staggered times: one full presentation (in-person) at the Voluntary Principles Annual Plenary Meeting and one abbreviated presentation (virtual) to the Verification Working Group.

Presentations will be based on Annual Reports and responses to peer reviewers' documented comments, suggestions, and questions.

Peer review will be conducted by at least two volunteer Participants, one of which must be from another Pillar. Peer reviewers will be given an advance version of the presenting government's report and will provide questions/comments/suggestions to the presenting government with enough time for the presenting government to prepare responses for presentation. After the presentation, the presenting government will produce a document indicating their response to each suggestion submitted by the peer reviewers or other Participants, which will inform future Annual Reports.

Structure:

- Peer reviews will be done by two Participants, at least one of which is not from the government pillar.
- *Presentations to Verification Working Group and peer reviewers* - One-hour virtual presentation, consisting of a 15-minute presentation, followed by
- 15 minutes of responses to peer-review input, and up to 30-minutes of open Q&A (with priority given to peer reviewers for follow-up comments/questions).
- *Full Presentations at Plenary* – 30 minute presentation, consisting of a 10-minute presentation by the Presenting Participant, followed by 10-minutes of responses to peer-review comments/questions and 10-minutes of open Q&A among Participants.

Governments will also consider opportunities for in-country presentations along these lines.

Public Report by the Secretariat

In addition to Participant Government public reports, which will be made available on the Voluntary Principles website, the VPI Secretariat will produce annual reports on implementation of the Voluntary Principles, which will draw from the Annual Reports and the Presentations made during that year. Presenting governments will have an opportunity to edit any specific references to their Annual Report and Presentation.