

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
FOR SECRETARIAT SERVICES FOR THE BRAZIL IN-COUNTRY WORKING GROUP  
RFP # VPSHR222

Issued by  
The Secretariat for  
The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Association (VPA)

## **1. Overview and Purpose**

### **1.1 Overview**

The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR or simply Voluntary Principles) are an internationally recognized set of principles that guide companies on how to conduct their security operations while ensuring respect for human rights. The VPSHR is implemented in over 150 countries around the world.

The Voluntary Principles were created in 2000 when companies, governments, and NGOs committed to work together to address security-related human rights abuses and violations in the extractive sector. Today, the Principles help companies in various industries.

To promote the implementation of the Principles, the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) was created. The Initiative is comprised of over 75 members including companies, governments, and non-governmental organizations that share best practices and mutually support the implementation of the Principles. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/>.

The Voluntary Principles Association (VPA), with whom the successful bidder will formally enter into a contract, is the formal not-for-profit legal entity, domiciled in the Netherlands, designed to address the basic administrative and financial needs of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI). The VPA is governed by the Articles of Association and the Board of Directors.

The VPI Secretariat, located in Ottawa, Canada, is responsible for the day-to-day business of both the VPI and the VPA.

### **1.2 Context – In-Country Working Groups (ICWGs)**

Since 2016, the VPI has been supporting multistakeholder In-Country Working Groups (ICWGs), intended to facilitate effective country-level implementation of the Voluntary Principles. These groups have proven effective in fostering multistakeholder dialogue on the ground through in-country coordination and engagement with national, state and local governments, embassies, companies (primarily in the mining and energy sectors), and civil society organizations. A key objective is building on-the-ground capacity to identify security-related risks and problems, to act on local in-country challenges related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles and working to identify collective solutions to those challenges. The VPI currently has ICWGs in Ghana, Nigeria, Myanmar (suspended), Brazil, and Chile along with partner working groups supported by companies or donors in Colombia, Peru, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The VPI members are supporting the creation of further ICWGs in the future.

The VPI In-Country Working Groups are embedded in the VPI's overarching goals. The core activities of the VPI ICWGs seek to realize the following ultimate objective: **In-Country Working Groups will continuously improve their promotion of and respect for human rights in the context of their security practices and will make every effort to prevent conflict.**

The VPI In-Country Working Groups also seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- Working Groups have increased capacity to accurately understand, predict, prevent and address human rights risks and existing impacts related to the provision of security.
- Companies and security providers have increased capacity to plan and implement security operations that respect the safety and human rights of community members.
- Working Group members have increased knowledge and capacity on how to effectively operationalize the VPSHR in their local context, including increased responsiveness to community concerns and management of security and human rights risks.

**In-Country Working Groups typically meet quarterly, discuss problems, generally develop an annual work plan and sometimes implement projects to further the above objectives.**

Experience over the past several years has shown that Working Groups can add tremendous value in providing a forum for stakeholder engagement and cooperation on the ground, as well as programming specific activities such as human rights training or awareness raising, according to need.

To further these aims, and in particular to support the effective implementation of the VPSHR on the ground, the VPI is supporting ICWGs by providing **Core/Administrative Funding on a renewable basis**, where these will further the outcomes and impact of the VPI in local contexts.

The seed **Core Funding** is generally provided for 3 (three) consecutive years to VPI created ICWGs for core activities required to support and sustain a working group. The Brazil ICWG has so far received one year of core funding and is eligible for two further years, plus there will be other potential funding opportunities from donors and members.

### **1.3 Brazil In-Country Working Group**

VPI Members strongly support the working groups and have identified Brazil as a country with significant potential for a successful ICWG and strengthened in-country implementation, mainly due to strong demand on the ground by the membership and the likely effects of collective efforts to positively impact issues related to security and human rights. Sixteen VPI Corporate Members currently have operations in Brazil: Alcoa, Anglo American, AngloGold Ashanti, BHP, bp, Chevron, Eni, Equinor, Exxon Mobil, Fortescue, Glencore, Pan American Silver, Rio Tinto, Shell, TotalEnergies, and Vale.

In November 2022, the Brazil ICWG held its first meeting and since then the group has been meeting regularly. The Brazil ICWG developed a workplan of activities and implementation is currently underway. Additionally, the ICWG commissioned a Baseline Assessment, which concluded in April 2025. The objective of the study was to enhance the capacity of the members of the Brazil ICWG to accurately understand and predict human rights risks, and understand existing impacts related to the provision of security in mining and energy sectors in different regions of Brazil. Additionally, the study offers analysis and recommendations to inform the Brazil ICWG's future strategy and work plans on Security and Human Rights. The Brazil ICWG is therefore well-placed to move forward together to implement recommendations from the baseline assessment, and have an impact on strengthening security-related human rights in Brazil.

The successful bidder will join a dynamic, global network of In-Country Working Group Secretariats, which meet online quarterly and in person annually at the global annual plenary (travel and accommodation covered by the VPI). Many of these ICWGs have made significant impacts in improving human rights in their countries through multistakeholder collaboration and implementation of projects, and government and corporate buy-in which can have transformative effects.

There is also potential for the new ICWG Secretariat to expand their work, influence and potential funding opportunities in this area in future years. Many ICWGs entrust the same NGOs/CSOs year after year to provide ICWG Secretariat services (almost 10 years for the Nigeria and Ghana ICWGs) and have been successful at obtaining funding mandates from other donors and companies for core and activities to further the Working Group's aims for many years.

#### **1.4 Scope of Work for Secretariat Services:**

The VPI is looking for an organization to provide secretariat services for the Brazil ICWG for a period of twelve months (one year), renewable by mutual agreement.

The secretariat of the Brazil ICWG will provide policy leadership regarding the group's work, and the logistical and administrative support that enables the group to function effectively.

The ICWG Secretariat will organize a minimum of four ICWG meetings per year and provide policy leadership and direction in the group's meetings and activities. The ICWG Secretariat will also be responsible for providing the administrative, logistical, and operational support necessary for the effective functioning of the Brazil ICWG, ensuring the smooth coordination of meetings, communication, documentation, and the implementation of decisions made by the ICWG.

The Secretariat will have the following **key responsibilities**:

- **Meeting Facilitation and Management:**
  - Facilitate at least 4 annual meetings of the ICWG either online or in-person, with a minimum of two in-person meetings. The location of the in-person meetings is determined by the ICWG; however, common locations are Brasilia and cities with a high presence of stakeholders in the extractive sector such as Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, and São Paulo.
  - Organize and coordinate all meetings providing logistical and administrative support, including scheduling, venue arrangements, sending out invitations to participants, coordinating speakers and presentations, preparing and distributing agenda, etc.
  - Prepare the meeting agenda in consultation with relevant stakeholders, aiming for meeting topics that are relevant and interesting to members, including where possible, guest speakers or content to build the knowledge of the group.
  - Foster an environment where all stakeholders are encouraged to contribute and participate, aiming for balanced, inclusive, and respectful discussions.
  - Guide the group through any decision-making processes, encouraging constructive dialogue to bridge differences, helping to achieve consensus where possible.
  - Keep an up-to-date email list of all ICWG members, their affiliations, titles and contact information. Make this list available to ICWG members.

- Manage travel support for NGO members to attend the Working Group meetings, based on their needs.
- Ensure the proper management of the financial resources or budgets allocated to the ICWG.
  
- **Policy Leadership**
  - Generate ideas to support the members in the development and implementation of its annual workplan, help members with policy direction and development; propose ideas for projects or activities, if applicable.
  
- **Documentation and Reporting:**
  - Record and prepare minutes of ICWG meetings, ensuring accuracy and clarity of the discussions and decisions. Maintain accurate and organized records of the ICWG documents.
  - Follow-up on the group's implementation of decisions and recommendations as required, in coordination with the relevant stakeholders.
  - Keep track of the group's activities, including monitoring progress against the group's goals and objectives.
  - Document and report back to the VPI Secretariat on the achieved work, best practices, and case studies.
  
- **Communication and Coordination:**
  - Ensure regular and effective communication among all ICWG members, including sharing documents, updates, and relevant information.
  - Promote implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Brazil via participation and/or organization of local human rights panels, webinars, meetings and events when suitable and aligned with the ICWG priorities.
  - In partnership with the VPI Secretariat, develop content about the ICWG activities and achievements to be shared on the VPI website and other communication materials.
  - Share experiences and lessons learned with the VPI Secretariat and other In-Country Working Groups, or through posting the lessons learned and best practices on the ICWG Network Platform, an online platform accessible to all ICWGs members for information sharing.

To achieve these objectives, the VPA will cover the core expenses of the ICWG such:

- Personnel costs for time spent implementing this project.
- Program activities, including cost of the meetings (venue, catering).
- Travel costs to support the participation of the ICWG Secretariat and NGO members who are not able to cover costs to attend the in-person meetings, if needed.

## **2. Technical Support**

Throughout the year, the VPI Secretariat will provide ongoing technical support to the Brazil ICWG Secretariat. Additionally, the Brazil ICWG will be able to draw on the experience of other working groups

around the world, including Ghana, Nigeria, Chile Peru, Colombia, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of Congo which have successfully strengthened on-the-ground collaboration and dialogue between companies, communities, government officials and civil society organizations.

### **3. Reporting**

The ICWG Secretariat is requested to submit:

1. Mid-year progress reports: narrative on the progress of the ICWG and budget for the first 6 months.
2. Final report: narrative and budget.

Additionally, the ICWG Secretariat will conduct regular check-in meetings with the VPI Secretariat.

Reporting should be in English as it will be shared with the VPI Members.

### **4. Eligibility**

Bidders must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- a) Be a registered non-profit organization based in Brazil such as an NGO, civil society organization, academic institution, foundation, think tank, etc.
- b) Be able to demonstrate the administrative capacity, and expertise and knowledge of human rights issues (ideally, security and human rights).
- c) Demonstrate a high degree of fluency in English, with proven ability to draft documents and communicate in English.

### **5. Requirements, Templates, and Timeline**

Organizations interested in acting as the Secretariat of the Brazil ICWG should submit:

1. A proposal, based on the requirements in this RFP, including an explanation of the institutional capacity of the organization to act as the secretariat of the Brazil ICWG, including administrative capacity and expertise and knowledge of human rights issues (ideally, security and human rights). The template is attached (Annex A).
2. [A detailed budget](#). The budget must include each person that may perform services and their title, the proposed rate, and the level of involvement (ie: number of hours per month) anticipated for each component.
3. CV(s) of the team that will implement the project and their functions.
4. Signed Declaration (Annex B)

#### **5.1 Timeline**

Publication of RFP	Friday, August 1, 2025
Deadline for submission of questions	Friday, August 22, 2025
Publication of answers to questions on website	Tuesday, August 26, 2025
Proposal due date	Friday, September 12, 2025, 5:00pm EDT
Review and evaluation	Friday, September 19, 2025
Notification of shortlisted bidders, negotiation and award notification	Friday, September 26, 2025
Expected start date of contract	October 6, 2025

Please note that these dates are subject to change at the discretion of the VPI Secretariat.

## **5.2 Submission of Questions & Publication of Answers**

Please send any questions regarding the RFP to [tenders@voluntaryprinciples.org](mailto:tenders@voluntaryprinciples.org). Responses to questions will be posted on the VPI website according to the timetable.

## **5.3 Electronic Submission**

Proposals shall be submitted electronically in pdf format to the VPI Secretariat at [tenders@voluntaryprinciples.org](mailto:tenders@voluntaryprinciples.org). Submissions should include the RFP number in the subject line. Please attach the Proposal and the Budget as separate pdf documents.

## **5.4 Receipt by Bid Due Date**

The VPI Secretariat must receive the Proposal no later than 5:00pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on the Proposal Due Date set forth in Section 5.1 of this RFP.

## **5.5 Bidder Contact Information**

Bidder is to enter its correct entity name and full address in their Proposal, followed by the signature and designation of the person authorized to bind the Bidder in this matter, and the date. The name and title of each signatory shall be typed or clearly printed below the signature.

## **5.6 Declarations**

Each Bidder shall include a signed Declarations form (Annex B) confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements and will comply with VPA expectations regarding proper conduct. To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, any successful bidder must disclose any and all commercial relationship(s) with existing VPI participants and VPA members and propose a plan for mitigation.

## **6. Evaluation**

When the proposal and budgets are submitted, the Evaluation Team will evaluate them based on the following criteria:

1. Proposed core activities implementation, based on the scope of work.
2. Submitted budget.

3. Experience on working on similar projects, for example, experience in multistakeholder consensus-building, experience leading collaborative groups, and experience in working on human rights issues.
4. Capacity of the team that will implement the project and their functions.

Interviews of shortlisted bidders may be held.

An Evaluation Team will select the winning proposal based on the best proposal overall under the above criteria. After selection, the VPI Secretariat will negotiate an agreement with the selected bidder.

## **7. Budget**

A budget template for the Core Funding can be found [here](#).

Core funding is usually up to 35,000 USD per year for an in-country working group.

## **8. Reservation of Rights**

This RFP should in no way be construed as an offer of purchase, but rather is a request for services, products, fees, and expenses information, which will assist the Evaluation Team (on behalf of the VPA) in selecting a vendor for supplying the scope of services listed in the RFP. The VPA reserves the right to alter the timeframes published in this RFP. The VPA hereby assumes no financial responsibility, direct or indirect, for the cost of preparing any proposals, or amendments thereto. The VPA has the right to retain all proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The VPA makes no commitment in or by virtue of this RFP to purchase any services.

## **9. Debriefing**

An unsuccessful bidder may request a debriefing within 10 business days of award notification.



## **Annex A – Proposal Template**

### **Core Funding Proposal – Brazil In-Country Working Group**

<b>Contact Information</b>	
Organization:	
Contact Person and Title:	
Email:	
Telephone Number:	
Mailing Address:	

<b>Project Overview</b>	
Project Title:	
Submission Date:	
Duration (months):	
Start Date:	
End Date:	
Project Location:	
Funding Requested from VPA (in USD):	
Other Sources of Funding for same initiative (if any):	
Project Objectives:	

<b>Institutional capacity of the organization to act as the secretariat of the Brazil ICWG:</b>	
Can you please describe the experience of the organization on working on similar projects.	
Can you please describe the capacity of the team that will implement the project and their functions.	
Please add any relevant information to show the institutional capacity of the organization to act as the secretariat of the Brazil ICWG.	

#### **Project Description**

##### **1- Problem statement and context analysis:**

*Please provide a short description of the VPs related problem/gap this project will address. This should include a brief outline of the country or regional context and the most relevant actors, causes and trends.*

##### **2- Proposed activities:**

*Briefly describe how the proposed project will address this problem and the theory of change that the project will follow to resolve the identified gap. For example, you may wish to focus on the “who, what, why, where and how” of the proposed project.*

Ultimate outcome:

Objective 1:

Activity 1.1:

Activity 1.2:

Objective 2:

Activity 2.1:

Activity 2.2:

**3- Beneficiaries:**

*Who are the beneficiaries of this proposed project? Have the beneficiaries been consulted?*

**4- Expected results and targets:**

*Please indicate below which project indicators you will report on. Please consider the timeframe of the intervention when evaluating what is feasible.*

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Definition/Remarks
<i>Example: Number of ICWG multi-stakeholder meetings throughout the project period.</i>			

**5- Timeline:**

*Please complete the chart below with (x), indicating the expected completion date for each activity.*

Month/ Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1												
1.2												
2.1												
2.2												

**6- Risk Assessment:**

*Briefly identify any project level contextual or institutional risks and the risks of the project increasing or creating tensions, plus any mitigating strategies to address risks.*

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Strategies to address/mitigate risk</b>

**7- Gender equality analysis:**

*Provide a brief analysis of any project impacts on gender equality.*

**8- Collaboration and engagement between pillars:**

*It's sometimes challenging to get all the pillars to collaborate and engage. Explain how your organization will get different pillars: government, companies, and other non-governmental organizations operating in the area to collaborate.*

**9- Budget:**

*Please complete and attach the budget (proposal budget template provided).*

## **Annex B: Declaration**

We, the undersigned, offer to provide the services for the Secretariat Services for the Brazil In-Country Working Group in accordance with your Request for Proposal No. VPSHR222 and our Proposal. We are hereby submitting our Proposal, including also a Budget proposal.

We hereby declare that we meet all eligibility requirements as set out in section 4. We declare that we have a corporate sexual harassment policy in place or will have one before entering any contract that may result from this process.

We hereby declare that our firm, its affiliates or subsidiaries, including any joint venture/consortium /association members (as applicable):

- a. will comply with all applicable laws in our jurisdictions of registration and operation, including, without limitation, laws against bribery of foreign officials;
- b. have no conflict of interest and/or any potential conflict has been declared (e.g. a commercial relationship with a member of the VPA) and a plan for mitigating provided;
- c. have not declared bankruptcy, are not currently engaged in bankruptcy or receivership proceedings, and there is no judgment or pending legal action against them that could impair their operations in the foreseeable future;
- d. undertake not to engage in illegal practices, including but not limited to corruption, fraud, coercion, collusion, obstruction, funding of terrorism, or any other practice that exposes the VPA to undue financial, operational, reputational or other risk;
- e. are not under sanction for an offence involving fraud, bribery or corruption imposed by a government or an international organization; and
- f. are not engaged in practices or transactions that would violate the sanctions laws and regulations of the United Nations, the European Union, or the United States.

We declare that all the information provided, and statements made by us in this Proposal are true and we accept that any misinterpretation or misrepresentation contained in this Proposal may lead to our disqualification and/or sanctioning by the VPA. We offer to provide services in conformity with the Bidding documents and in accordance with the Statement of Work. Our Proposal shall be valid and remain binding upon us for 120 days upon receipt. We understand that you are not bound to accept any Proposal you receive.

We declare that any supplier or subcontractor to be used in connection with this project shall be contractually required to make representations substantially similar to the declaration set out herein.

I, the undersigned, certify that I am duly authorized to sign this Declaration on behalf of the Bidder.

Name:
Title:
Date:
Signature: