Overview

The Tech Company Community of Practice (CoP) is an initiative of UN Human Rights B-Tech Project to advance business respect for human rights in the technology industry. It exists to:

- Inform B-Tech project guidance and recommendations on human rights due diligence related to end-use and access to remedy in the technology industry, consistent with the normative expectations of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as re-articulated in B-Tech foundational papers.
- Advance practical understanding and capacity among technology companies to implement respect for human rights through a) creating a safe, confidential space to exchange practices and challenges; and b) facilitating tech company engagement with leading responsible business and human rights experts.
- Share insights publicly in the form of short briefing notes, blogs, and non-attributable case studies, and dilemma scenarios – on human rights due diligence and remedy.

In 2021, the following companies participated in the CO: Apple, Cisco, Cloudflare, Ericsson, Facebook, Google, HPE, Microsoft, Salesforce, Twitter, Verizon, Vodafone.

The CoP is one of many mechanisms for companies to engage with the work of the B-Tech project. It is not intended to displace the central role of multi-stakeholder dialogue and consultation in informing project recommendations and outcomes. Further, companies do not pay a fee to be part of the CoP though some participants may provide a donation to the B-Tech Project to be applied across all of B-Tech’s focus areas and activities. Further information about the principles and modalities of company engagement in B-Tech can be found here.
How it works

The CoP is structured around three different modes of engagement. These are virtual meetings spread across the calendar year:

- **Core Sessions** focused on specific aspects of HRDD and remedy. There are approximately three of these per-year, each taking place over 2-to-3 two-hour meetings. Each core session is summarized via a short learning report.
- **Special Briefings** focused on specific issues or policy and legal developments. There are with experts from across the UN system, civil society and the Business and Human Rights field.
- **Outreach Dialogues.** These are focused on engaging peers from across the sector, users of technology, States, CSOs and investors.

Company Commitment

The success of the CoP rests on meaningful commitment of companies to the community and its aims, manifested through active preparation and participation in activities. In practice, company participants are asked to:

- **Nominate two individuals** who will lead the company’s engagement in the CoP, including via bi-annual update calls with the B-Tech team, and (as needed) dialogue around human rights issues facing the company.
- **Participate in all Core Sessions** and consider a leadership role in at least one Core Session. This implies presenting, in as much detail as possible and subject to appropriate confidentiality measures, company progress and challenges related to the issue of focus.
- **Pro-actively support the community goal** of sharing learning and practice.
- **Secure CEO or other relevant executive participation** in an end-of-year dialogue with the UN High Commissioner.

Expert Advisors

In each Core Session, two or three experts participate in discussions and are asked to:

- Bring expert knowledge and experience of UNGP implementation by companies from within and beyond the technology sector.
- Act as critical friends to the community of company practitioners, such that leading business practice is advanced.
- Advise the B-Tech team in designing, delivering, and developing outputs from Core Sessions.