B-Tech Peer Learning Platform

INTRODUCTION

The UN Human Rights B-Tech Peer Learning Platform (PLP) was launched on 8 February 2023, as a series of webinars open to participants from a diverse range of tech companies from different geographic regions.

Sessions provide introductions and insights into the UNGPs to companies at various stages of engagement with the UNGPs. Many may not yet have developed formal human rights policies or may benefit from the opportunity to engage with peer tech companies facing similar challenges in operationalizing the UNGPs. The PLP provides an anchor opportunity to expand discussions on application of the UNGPs, engage with other tech companies with varying levels of capacity, and consult with and learn from experts.

BACKGROUND

The B-Tech Project aims to prevent and mitigate human rights risks relating to the development and use of digital technologies. This is done through promoting effective implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights ("UNGPs) in tech. Over the past years, the B-Tech Project has engaged with several companies in the sector through the Tech Company Community of Practice (CoP), which has greatly informed and enhanced the many different B-Tech outputs. To expand engagement to more companies from diverse geographic regions, the B-Tech Project introduced the PLP to be open to any company from the tech sector or with an interest in the application of the UNGPs to the sector.[1]

GOALS

• Broaden tech companies' engagement with the UNGPs, informed by B-Tech foundational guidance;

• Support capacity building within these companies;

• Broker connections among human rights functions across the industry; and

• Foster geographic outreach to tech firms headquartered globally.

[1] Participation in the Peer Learning Platform is limited to representatives from industry to foster an open, peer learning environment. B-Tech offers a separate opportunity for civil society representatives, as well as various multi-stakeholder engagements and events.

MODALITIES

Held in two sessions at 10 am CET and 9 am PST to accommodate participants in different time zones, the PLP welcomes a wide array of companies in the tech space, including those engaged in information technology, social networking and messaging, telecommunications and media, artificial intelligence, and content delivery, among others. Participants express a variety of reasons for attending the PLP sessions; including learning how to incorporate human rights principles into tech policies, workflows, product development cycles, and social sector research, and building their network, learning about resources and B-Tech initiatives, and understanding how to conduct human rights due diligence, engage vulnerable groups, and provide remedy in the tech sector.

While the CoP was a small setting for tech companies in North America and Europe to convene and discuss challenges, the PLP will broaden the accessibility of these resources to include companies focusing on users in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as well.

THE WAY FORWARD:

The PLP offers opportunities for connection and dialogue through an engagement setting. The PLP sessions are subject to change and may be amended based on participant input and demand. The B-Tech Project welcomes participants to share their ideas for particular dilemmas or urgent topics to be covered in future PLP sessions. Participants may join in any or all of the sessions of the PLP, which do not constitute a linear course. B-Tech will post brief summary notes, such as this one, of the issues covered in each session, on our website. As per the Chatham House Rule, these notes will have no attribution.

For additional information about the B-Tech Peer Learning Platform, please contact OHCHR-b-techproject@un.org.

For more information about the B-Tech Project, including past and upcoming activities, please visit the B-Tech project portal.

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