



Valuing Respect Project

General Takeaways from 2018 Multi-Stakeholder Consultations

February 2019

This note sets out Shift's key takeaways from the multi-stakeholder, expert consultations we organized with our regional partners in the [Valuing Respect](#) project. It describes how these take-aways are informing the evolution of the project. The final section outlines next steps for 2019.

I. Background

In the course of 2018, Shift, along with the regional partners of the Valuing Respect project, hosted four multi-stakeholder consultations. The consultations took place in **New York, London, Singapore** and **Johannesburg**. The focus of the consultations was to:

- receive feedback on the goals and work plan of the project;
- inform the project team's analysis of the current reality and challenges with measurement of business respect for human rights; and
- learn from recent innovations in engaging affected stakeholders in evaluation.

This note distills the rich discussions from the consultations into three themes that are already impacting the focus and next steps of the project. The note is not intended as a summary of all the valuable and diverse knowledge, creative thinking and guidance that was shared at the consultations. These included suggestions for research, case studies, methodologies, frameworks and initiatives that the project could learn and build from. The project team is, of course, also using these inputs.

Summary reports of each consultation, including agendas and participant lists can be accessed on the Valuing Respect project portal at www.valuingrespect.org.

II. Key Takeaways & Project Implications

A. Different interests and different information needs

There is widespread interest in finding new ways to evaluate business respect for human rights. This comes from the view that current measurements and indicators tell us little about behavior change or outcomes, so they have limited value when it comes to strategy, decision-making and allocating resources.

However, the consultations reinforced that different actors are seeking improved information for different purposes. Not everyone is trying to measure the same aspects of corporate human rights performance. The different interests that surfaced during the consultations include:

- To know whether **interventions aimed at addressing specific human rights risks** are having the intended effects on the lives of affected people.
- To know whether **programs aimed at embedding respect for human rights** in business decision-making and practices are leading to the desired behavior change of business leaders (in corporate functions, in operations, and in the value chain).
- To understand if the **overall organizational culture and capabilities of a company** are a barrier or enabler for operating with respect for human rights.
- To have a robust, credible analysis of the **overall human rights performance of a company**.

Different interests, in turn, lead to different needs regarding the types of information gathered and the form in which information is presented. For example, consultations confirmed that those concerned with the effects of specific interventions on the lives of affected people have a strong interest in the experiences and perceptions of those people. There is a desire for better qualitative data, as well as openness to taking the time to interrogate and interpret that data. By contrast, mainstream investors tend to want to make investment decisions based on numbers, and often very quickly. This mode of decision making may require a company's human rights performance to be represented by a single, small set of numbers – even in the form of 1s and 0s on a computer terminal.

With this in mind, the Valuing Respect project will:

- ✓ Continue to connect research to specific evaluative needs to make the work practical – for example, how to integrate **stakeholder voice** when evaluating outcomes for people; how to assess the **quality of processes** based on how they change behaviors; and the potential to define and evaluate **rights-respecting culture and governance**.
- ✓ Begin to host **practitioner, expert roundtables** to seek solutions to specific needs. For example, we will host expert meetings focused on accounting, behavior change and stakeholder voice.
- ✓ Yet, at the same time, identify **how to avoid divorcing one set of evaluative conclusions from another**. This will be done, in part, through discussions at expert multi-stakeholder consultations similar to those hosted in 2018.

B. Opportunities to add value, and project products

Stakeholders identified that there are multiple opportunities for the project to add value, and that will likely require different types of project deliverables. For example, some noted that there is merit in highlighting the gaps in existing practice and disseminating learning from other disciplines (such as international development and management theory). Others urged the project team to develop simple, practical tools and methods that companies and stakeholders can use to build indicators and gather relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

A related recommendation was that the project – following the initial months of exploration – should begin to articulate the *likely* project products and how they connect to the research agenda. Many suggested that this will empower stakeholders to continue to engage fully in the project.

Finally, participants across all consultations welcomed that the project goal is *not* to create a new benchmark, index or reporting framework, while recognizing that the project's research, outputs and outcomes could – and perhaps should – inform the evolution of these types of product.

With this in mind, the Valuing Respect project will:

- ✓ Continue to **publish all landscaping research to set out the current state of play** regarding the evaluation of business respect for human rights. This includes both current practice, and inspiration for new ways of thinking and working. The format of outputs will vary between: Short, issue-specific research papers; fact sheets about the current use of metrics; and short case studies or blogs profiling innovative practices.
- ✓ Act as **a laboratory for learning and innovation for anyone interested in designing more meaningful evaluation and indicators** of business respect for human rights.
- ✓ Develop, field test and refine **the products** described in the table below.

Products	Uses
#1: A “Theory of Change” tool to support indicator development and use	This will support evaluative thinking, and the design of meaningful leading and lagging indicators in relation to interventions targeted at specific human rights risks, or at embedding respect for human rights in a company.
#2: Cross-industry indicators for leadership, governance, and business model human rights risks	The indicators will help senior business leaders, investors and civil society gather signals about a company’s leadership commitment, seriousness and competence to fully embed respect for human rights into the business.
#3: Principles and guidance focused on evaluating business culture and quality of processes	These resources are intended to help companies and their stakeholders gain a better understanding of what factors lead to positive and sustained change towards business practices and behaviors that enable better outcomes for people.
#4: Methodologies – supported by case studies evaluating outcomes at site, factory, and farm level	These will be developed largely through pilots that seek to apply a range of methods that involve stakeholder voice (and in some cases technology) in the process of monitoring and evaluation. The final products will be developed to support the evaluation of outcomes – primarily for people but possibly also for business – of efforts to address human rights risks.
#5: Proposals/recommendations for ways to include aspects of business respect for human rights in accounting	These will be targeted at business, reporting standards-setters, regulators and investors seeking to reflect corporate human rights performance within financial and non-financial accounting methods.

C. Inspiring innovations, and appetite for field testing

The consultations – alongside the first year of our research – surfaced many methods and organizations that offer promise for better evaluating business respect for human rights. Some innovations focus on measuring the qualities of intangibles within organizations, for example, through cultural assessments or examination of the human rights consequences of purchasing practices. Other innovations focus on engaging affected stakeholders in assessments of human rights outcomes. For example, evaluating the quality of a mining company’s relationships with local communities, or involving supply chain workers in indicator design, data collection and even data analysis.

A good number of business participants communicated a strong interest in being able to develop more meaningful indicators, and ways to gather information. Especially compelling is that business practitioners consistently voiced a strong interest in adapting and field-testing methodologies that have been proven in other contexts, such as customer satisfaction, development and humanitarian assistance.

With this in mind, the Valuing Respect project will:

- ✓ Profile – via case studies or blogs – those innovations that we believe can inspire and inform new approaches to evaluating business respect for human rights.
- ✓ Conduct pilot projects that marry a company’s interest to evaluate a specific intervention or interventions with an organization seeking to adapt its methodology to business and human rights challenges. The learnings from these will be published and inform the detail of project products.

III. Next Steps

Over the course of 2019 we will:

- Publish headlines from the project’s 2018 research into the current use of metrics and indicators;
- Publish a simple “tool” focused on applying theory of change thinking to evaluating business respect for human rights;
- Publish landscaping research into governance & culture, stakeholder voice, and accounting; and kick off research into business model red flags, the quality of processes and behavioral science;
- Convene with our project partners four multi-stakeholder consultations, plus a handful of single-stakeholder engagements in North America, Europe, ASEAN and Africa;
- Identify opportunities to co-create and pilot new methodologies for evaluation based on project research and learnings.