The Valuing Respect Project
Call Note for International Advisory Group (IAG)
Introductory Calls on 19th April and 1st May 2018

The Shift team leading the Valuing Respect Project hosted two introductory calls for members of the project's International Advisory Group (IAG) on 19 April and 1 May 2018. The following represents a summary of the issues discussed.

IAG Attendees**
Mike Ashley, Barclays
Nor Azimah Abdul Aziz, Malaysia Companies Commission
Phil Bloomer, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
Allison Burger, Gold Fields
Cathy Feingold, AFL-CIO
Christian Heller, BASF
Rosey Hurst, Impactt
Piotr Kazmierkiewicz, Centralny Dom Maklerski Pekao
Brendan LeBlanc, EY
Wilhelm Mohn and Caroline Eriksen, Norges Bank Investment Management
Maddalena Neglia, FIDH
Shameela Soobramoney, Johannesburg Stock Exchange
Rachel Wilshaw, Oxfam
Filippo Veglio, World Business Council for Sustainable Development

Project Team and Partners
Caroline Rees, Mark Hodge, Sara Blackwell, Shift
Josua Loots, Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria
Beata Faracik, Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business
Thomas Thomas, ASEAN CSR Network

** For the full list of IAG members and biographies, please see valuingrespect.org

A. Project Overview

The Shift team introduced the project's purpose and process as well as its approach to 'crowd-crafting' of products. The outline provided followed the information set out here on the project.

Discussion points included:

- **whether the project would produce one product around which all 'users' could converge or more differentiated products**. The Shift team underlined that the challenge of better evaluation is too broad and the needs too diverse to assume one output could address them all. And the project did not aim to provide a single 'answer' but to produce varying outputs that stakeholders could use and tailor to their own needs in the context of evaluation. The project therefore focuses deliberately on a robust process, of wide and deep research and consultation, involving stakeholders from diverse geographies, perspectives and areas of expertise. Through this process, we would work to identify promising outputs that could carry broad consensus, but which would almost certainly address different aspects of the evaluation problem, and perhaps be of differing value for different users.

- **whether the focus was on measuring change within companies or what others are doing to make change happen**. The Shift team underlined that the ultimate purpose of the project was to be able to better evaluate outcomes for people affected by business activities. But that would include looking at what to evaluate within companies – from governance and culture to qualities of process to behaviors – and also what would could reasonably and effectively be evaluated from outside companies, by civil society, investors, regulators and others, when trying to advance positive change.

- **whether there would be a focus on certain geographies or sectors**. The Shift team clarified that the scope of the project was global and cross-sectoral, but through the project partners we would have particular focus for research and consultation in N. America, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. In addition, certain research would necessarily be applied at both a country and sector or even company level to get really granular and practical, then looking for interesting insights and practices that could be scaled and transferred more widely.

- **whether living wages would be part of the research base** – an area where there is already lots of research but little real action. The Shift team confirmed that this would be part of the research picture and we would be looking to learn from some of the pilot work being conducted by companies and multi-stakeholder groups on evaluating progress towards living wages and the resulting outcomes for companies as well.

- **how project developments would be communicated to enable contributions from diverse stakeholders**: The Shift team noted that this will be critical for the success of the factor given that developing better ways to evaluate what is working and not working must be informed by diverse experiences (for example those within companies and affected rights-holders). Further, the project will need to draw on diverse disciplines outside of the business and human rights field. The intent is to continually update the project page, invite (via mailings and social media) inputs to papers/products and ensure diverse representation at consultations

- **how buy-in would be gained**, given that there are already some good practices, but a lack of implementation. The Shift team concurred that a priority for the project would be to find the leading practices in evaluating and demonstrating outcomes for people, and which could be scaled and transferred and therefore brought to much wider implementation.

B. IAG Role and Modalities

The Shift team outlined the key aspects of the IAG's role to offer both: a) strategic guidance and challenges; and b) cluster around areas of substance to guide research and eventual outputs.

In discussions, the project team emphasized that it would welcome IAG members attending any consultation(s) they would wish, depending on their locations and diaries. The project team also raised its intention to announce the IAG publicly in terms of both the group's participants and role, and to have summary notes – without attribution of discussion points to individuals – that could be posted publicly on the project's webpage. These summary notes will be shared in advance of publication with the group for comment. In response to a question, the project team confirmed its wish to have one-to-one calls with interested IAG members as well to tap into their individual expertise and advice.

C. Early Research Priorities

The Shift team set out the near-term goals of the research agenda and the specific areas that the project will start to delve into in 2018. Goals include:

- Alignment of thinking around the current state of play on how business respect for human rights is evaluated;
- Identification of areas where new outputs/products will be useful; and
- Setting the foundations for a broad conversation, by having some early research outputs that can foster discussion and engagement.

The Shift team outlined early stage research areas. See the FAQ for an overview.

Items raised for future attention and discussion included:

- **the UNEP FI work on positive impact principles**, and the opportunity to learn from or build on some of the ideas being developed there.

- **the relationship to the Sustainable Development Goals and SDG targets**, including thinking about SDG reporting. The project team highlighted Shift's related work on [how respect for human rights contributes to SDGs](#) – in both concept and through case studies (forthcoming in June 2018); and on [human rights content in sustainability/SDG reports](#), and agreed on the importance of linking the question of evaluation also with the SDGs, not least in countries where the SDGs are strongly framing the debate on responsible business.

- **consideration of the power dynamics and imbalances in company-stakeholder relationships** as part of the research into how to evaluate the quality of these relationships. The project team confirmed this would be an important factor in the research.

- **consideration of how business associations operate** – whether as leaders or laggards human rights. The project team noted that one focus of research would be on the evaluation of human rights risks inherent in business models and strategies, and which could include lobbying at individual company and business association levels.

- **the relationship to companies' reporting**, and whether the project would enable the evaluation of good and bad reporting. The project team agreed on the relevance of company reporting when looking at the evaluation of business respect for human rights. They stressed that the project was looking much more broadly than just through the lens of company disclosure. But early stage research included a review of the types of indicators and metric companies are disclosing in their reports, looking for trends and patterns as well as interesting outliers. They highlighted [Shift's separate work on a sliding maturity scale of human rights reporting](#), which may also be a useful reference point for thinking about evaluation in the context of reporting.

- **whether the project would look at the ways companies are rated and ranked** and the metrics and indicators used. The project team confirmed this was an early stage piece of research, which was focused not on praising or critiquing any particular ranking or rating tool, but on looking at what types of indicators and metrics they use, and what this tells us both about the status quo of evaluation and any interesting innovations from which we could learn.

Finally, Shift undertook to share with IAG members an overview of the project's initial research areas in order that they can indicate the areas of greatest interest to them, and/or where they would like to be involved.