



Measuring Business & Human Rights (MB&HR) is an innovative research project that aims to advance the capacity of business managers and corporate stakeholders to assess the extent to which companies meet their responsibility to respect human rights.

MB&HR meets a growing need within the business and human rights community. In 2013, more than a quarter of the respondents to the UN-sponsored Corporate Questionnaire selected public benchmarking on human rights performance as one of the top three areas of support that can enable companies to take forward their corporate responsibility to respect human rights. One year later, the UN Working Group on business and human rights clearly affirmed that “the assessment of businesses performance is a matter of utmost importance”.

The Project

The international endorsement of the GPs has spurred widespread interest in how to measure *whether* and *how much* corporations meet their responsibility to respect human rights. The production of valid and reliable measurement tools of corporate behavior can be useful for:

- *companies* that want to track their progress in the implementation of the GPs,
- *investors* who wish to take into account the human rights performance of their investees,
- *auditors* who are asked to verify human rights policies and due-diligence processes,
- *governments* that want to adopt evidence-based protective measures,
- *local communities* that are interested in the human rights footprint of the companies operating in their neighborhoods, and
- *human rights advocates* who monitor the human rights impacts of corporate actors.

Notwithstanding these benefits, measuring business and human rights also raises challenges and risks. For instance, it is no easy task to assess and compare the incisiveness of due diligence processes or the severity of human rights impacts. In addition, quantifying specific aspects of the corporate responsibility to respect human rights might end up giving unwarranted prominence to easily measurable (but not necessarily more important) issues.

The purpose of MB&HR is to highlight that producing business and human rights indicators, ratings, indices and benchmarks poses:

- *normative* questions (e.g., how to weigh different dimensions of human rights impacts?);
- *methodological* puzzles (e.g., should we measure corporate respect for human rights on a 1-5 or a 1-100 scale);

- *practical* difficulties (e.g., how to obtain data on corporate human rights performance?; and
- *political* risks (e.g., what are the consequences of quantifying corporate respect for human rights?).

MB&HR aims to clarify these challenges, and offer realistic strategies to create (and improve) valid measurement tools.

Tools

MB&HR provides the following practical tools:

- *List of initiatives featuring business and human rights indicators*: the objective is to offer a transparent and comprehensive picture of the business and human rights measurement landscape;
- *LSE blog on measuring business and human rights*: the objective is to create a public forum for an open discussion on how to improve the way in which corporate respect for human rights is measured; and
- *Initiative cards and explanatory notes*: the objective is to critically analyze the distinctive features of the most important measurement initiatives.

Team

MB&HR is led by Ann Sofie Cloots (University of Cambridge), Charline Daelman (KU Leuven), Damiano de Felice (London School of Economics) and Irene Pietropaoli (Middlesex University).

What leaders have said

“That MB&HR aims to trigger an evidence-based discussion on the challenges of producing and using indicators is a laudable objective that can help to identify best practices and bring transparency to an issue which is not only consequential, but also controversial. This project has immense potential and the UN Working Group looks forward to its findings.”

- Michael Addo, Member of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights -

“The proliferation of initiatives and the absence of an overall result that enables any meaningful comparison (by the public) of the “performance” of business organisations with regard to children’s rights illustrates the need for this project (MB&HR) to continue its work in bringing a greater focus on the effectiveness in practice of current efforts in this area.”

- Roger McCormick, Director of the Sustainable Finance Project (LSE) -

The objective of MB&HR is to move the discussion forward, from *if* we can measure respect for human rights by corporations to *how* to produce valid and reliable information.

The MB&HR's webpage is hosted by the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. If you are interested in learning more about us, surf to <https://tinyurl.com/measuringb-hr!>