

CHECKLIST ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER & SANITATION FOR SMALL SCALE SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROVIDERS

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Introduction: What are the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation?

In 2010, the UN General Assembly declared the right to drinking water and sanitation as essential to the full enjoyment of life and all human rights. In 2015, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed the right to water and the right to sanitation, recognising them as distinct rights, although related and both stemming from the right to an adequate standard of living. Human rights obligations related to access to water and sanitation are included in different human rights treaties. It is States that are primary responsible for the realisation of the human right to water and sanitation.

The human right to water entitles everyone to have access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use, while the right to sanitation entitles everyone to have physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, that is safe, hygienic, secure, and socially and culturally acceptable and that provides privacy and ensures dignity. Those rights shall be delivered in a participatory, accountable and non-discriminatory manner.

Who has a human right to sanitation?

Human rights are the inalienable fundamental rights to which each person is inherently entitled. Human rights are conceived as universal (applicable everywhere) and egalitarian (the same for everyone). They embody the basic standards without which people cannot realize their inherent human dignity. Recognising access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right therefore means that everybody is entitled to these rights.

What are the human rights to sanitation principles and criteria?

Human rights criteria (availability, quality, acceptability, accessibility and affordability) and human rights principles (non-discrimination, access to information, participation, accountability and sustainability) shape the content and scope of the right and guide its implementation process. All these elements give meaning to the human rights to water and sanitation and must be taken into account for its implementation.

Why do human rights matter to small scale sanitation providers?

The United Nations Human Rights Council (2011) endorsed the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework. These Guiding Principles apply to all States and to all business enterprises, NGOs and community-based organisations regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership and structure.

The Guiding Principles recognise that:

- 1 States have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights;
- 2 Business enterprises and other suppliers/operators are required to comply with all applicable laws and need to respect human rights. They should avoid infringing on the human rights of others and should address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved; and
- **3 Rights and obligations** need to be matched by appropriate and effective remedies when breached.

This means small scale water operators have to comply with local laws and are responsible to respect human rights, including the rights to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

▶ Responsibilities of non-State service providers

Non-State actors must comply with the laws and regulations of the country in terms of a general legal obligation: they have a basic responsibility to respect human rights. The distinctive responsibilities of companies in relation to human rights are summarised under the concept of 'due diligence.' Companies are required to exercise due diligence in relation to human rights while operating. 'This concept describes the steps a company must take to become aware of, prevent and address adverse human rights impacts¹.

▶ Private enterprises in the sanitation and hygiene sector

Private enterprises in this sector will need to comply with the due diligence framework. At the same time, the provision of water and sanitation services is characterised by a special feature: the services relate directly to the fulfilment of human rights. Thus, while private enterprises may contribute to the realisation of the rights to water and sanitation, the activities of services providers may also potentially result in abuses of the rights to water and sanitation. The following special challenges have been identified considering the human rights-based approach in the sanitation sector²:

- Guaranteeing transparent and democratic decision-making
- · Addressing power asymmetries in the bidding and negotiation process
- Reaching the poorest and the most marginalised
- Ensuring affordable services
- Avoiding disconnections in case of inability to pay
- Ensuring the quality of services
- Ensuring monitoring and follow up
- Ensuring effective complaint mechanisms
- Addressing corruption

Objective of this checklist

The objective of this checklist is to provide a self-assessment tool based on human rights for informal providers or entrepreneurs delivering services in the sanitation and hygiene sectors (waste collection trucks, sanitation waste treatment, menstrual hygiene product disposal, collection and treatment, maintenance services, household waste collection services and treatment, and others). This checklist aims to assist these entrepreneurs to carry out their business activity in compliance with human rights.

By encouraging water suppliers to comply with the human rights to water and sanitation, their positive impact improves, including an increase of their economic and political power (integration in larger development frameworks, possibility to partner with larger institutions, and other benefits). It also provides social businesses with a tool to measure impact.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: this document is a self-assessment for notice only and does not engage its authors in any kind of liabilities. It has been designed for small scale organisations acting in the field of access to water only. Meeting the criteria does not replace a full human rights due diligence process, but only introduces a human rights-based approach to thinking. For a process including a full human rights due diligence process, or for further information, please contact WaterLex.

^{1.} Report of the independent expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque A/HRC/15/31

^{2.} Report of the independent expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque A/HRC/15/31

OPERATION OF SERVICES

HUMAN RIGHT PRINCIPLES / CRITERIA	CHECKLIST FOR SMALL SCALE SANITATION ENTREPRENEUR	
AVAILABILITY Sanitation facilities are only considered to be safely managed if they are available to each	Do I have a strategy to respond to sanitation emergencies? What is it?	☐ Yes☐ No
household, and not shared with other families. (as defined by the targets	Do my facilities have regular operating hours?	☐ Yes ☐ No
outlined in SDG ³ 6.2 and the JMP Sanitation ladder)	Am I aware of any inadequacies in the sanitation services for my clients?	☐ Yes☐ No
	If yes, is there a governmental mechanism by which the issue may be raised?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	 Check if you meet the requirements of country's national regulations Have the same opening hours every allow for continuous service and infor 	day to
	about regular opening hours.Have partnerships with local authorities, local NGOs and other providers.	
	If there are insufficient services to meneeds:	et client
	advise authoritiesexplore opportunities to improve supp	oly.

^{3.} Sustainable Development Goal 6.2 on sanitation in the Agenda 2030

Sanitation and hygiene facilities must be safe to use and prevent contact between people and human sanitation and waste products and excreta. Sanitation treatment should be treated and disposed in situ; or Stored temporarily and then	Do I carry out quality control within my company to ensure that the services delivered by my business meet national quality standards and national legislation?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Are the staff able to conduct quality checks? And if so, do I provide regular training to staff so that they know how to ensure quality?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No
emptied and transported to treatment off site; or Transported through a sewer with wastewater and treated off site.	Is the service that I am providing to my clients checked on a regular basis to make sure that it is meeting quality standards?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Is the waste water product periodically tested by a qualified independent laboratory or expert before it is released?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Does my business have a modern and efficient maintenance system?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Does my business have a monitoring mechanism in place to rapidly detect leaks, contact of excreta with people, or contamination of water supplies?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Does my business have a mechanism in place to swiftly react to contamination?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Does my business treat waste water before its disposal to make it safe?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Is my business certified on a recognised standard for the quality of the water I am delivering?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Is my business registered with the local authorities in charge of waste water or sanitation management (e.g. ministry, municipality, etc.)?	☐ Yes☐ No

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EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ You are responsible at all times for the safety of the waste that you handle. The best way to achieve quality and safety is a combination of good operating practice, preventive maintenance, independent surveillance and quality control. Make sure the waste is kept separate and treated to avoid polluting other water bodies.
- ► Make sure that equipment used for storage and delivery is always clean and prevents contact with people and excreta. Wash the containers thoroughly on a regular basis.
- Train your staff regularly on quality checking and compare your results regularly with international standards.
- ► Contact qualified, independent laboratories for quality testing.
- ▶ If possible or required by the applicable law, register your business with the competent local authority and share data and information.

Is the service I am providing well ☐ Yes →) ACCEPTABILITY accepted by my clients (type of facility, □ No location, gender-separate, etc.)? Sanitation facilities and services Do I enable feedback from clients must be culturally and socially ☐ Yes as to their satisfaction with the type acceptable. and standard of the service and ☐ No Sanitation and hygiene facilities maintenance? must meet social or cultural norms from a user's perspective, for Do I discuss options and opportunities example, the privacy of sanitation ☐ Yes with local communities to make facilities, the design of the facility. the business well accepted and ☐ No integrated? ▶ Ask your clients and other community members to explore what is acceptable to them. **EXAMPLES AND ADVICE** ► Try different treatment systems to see which FOR IMPROVEMENT IN is preferred. **IMPLEMENTATION** ► Have participatory discussions with the community.

	T	
Sanitation services must be accessible to everyone in the	Is it physically easy to have access to the toilets (no physical barriers for people to access e.g. steps, long distance)?	☐ Yes☐ No
household or its vicinity on a continuous basis, as well as in schools, health-care facilities	Am I including remote communities among my clients (for waste collection)?	☐ Yes☐ No
and other public institutions and places.	Am I including school, healthcare facilities and other public institutions	☐ Yes
Physical security must not be threatened during access to	among my clients?	LI NO
facilities, especially important for women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.	Do I have a system in place to reach out to groups with special needs, such as those with physical disabilities?	☐ Yes
Menstrual hygiene treatment facilities need to be accessible in the female toilet enclosure.	Explain:	□ No
There is no 'improved' physical access when you have to leave the house or building to access the facility.	Do I have a system in place to ensure the waiting time of my clients does not exceed 30 min. in total? Explain:	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE	Collect waste from remote communitie truck (home delivery) or via decentrali facilities.	-
FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	Establish priority services (e.g. for the elderly, pregnant women, people with disabilities etc.).	
	Monitor any potential difficulties for users to access different locations.	
	If necessary, install specially designed ities for people with particular needs (ramps, handrails etc.).	
	The sanitation facilities have to be cle private, and sometimes different for m for women	

Access to sanitation and menstrual hygiene facilities and services must be done at a price that is affordable for all people, without forcing them to resort to other	In case I have a contract with authorities or with another supplier for service provision, does this contract specify pricing arrangements?	☐ Yes☐ No
	In my opinion, is the service provided by my enterprise affordable for everyone (without exception)?	☐ Yes☐ No
unsafe alternatives. Access to sanitation and hygiene	Do I set prices based on what families can afford (versus individuals)?	☐ Yes☐ No
must not compromise the ability to pay for other essential necessities guaranteed by human rights, such as food, housing and health care. The fact that sanitation and hygiene must be affordable does not mean that it should be free, but that no person can be deprived of the right to sanitation for economic reasons.	Am I able to offer services at reduced prices for the marginalised, poor and most vulnerable members of the communities where I supply (e.g. orphans, homeless, etc.)?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Have I checked with local authorities to see if there are any subsidies or grants available to help me to reduce costs for vulnerable people?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Do I have procedures in place in case my clients are not able to pay so that they are not left without?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	 While fixing your price, consult with the community (with the help of local part NGOs) and with your clients to be a set an affordable price Request subsidies (or other forms of fine anti-yea/ayamaticana) from the State 	iners, ble to financial
	incentives/exemptions) from the State at a more affordable price to the more ginalised and vulnerable communities	e mar-
	▶ Join a public sanitation service development strategy, or contact the Ministrategy of sanitation affairs, to establish income household pricing scheme".	vel- try in

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Non-discrimination is central to human rights. Discrimination on prohibited grounds including race, colour, sex, age, language,	Do I make sanitation services available to the user without direct or indirect distinction (based on sex, race, colour, age, disability, etc.) to anybody?	☐ Yes☐ No
religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, physical or mental disability, health status or any other civil, political, social or other status must be avoided, both in law and in practice. In order to address existing discrimination, positive targeted measures may have to be adopted. In this regard, priority must be given to the most marginalised and vulnerable to avoid exclusion and discrimination. The human right to sanitation entitles everyone without discrimination to physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, which is safe, hygienic, secure, socially	Do I ensure that people with disabilities, marginalised people and people in need have access to the sanitation services that I am distributing? How? Give examples: Do I employ a range of people from different backgrounds in my organisation, including gender, race,	☐ Yes☐ No☐ Yes☐
and culturally acceptable, which provides for privacy and ensures dignity.	colour, age, disability, etc.?	□ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION IMPLEMENTATION INVestigate (with the help of local NGC other community partners) whether are ments of the community are excluded buying your services due to social original purchase power or marginalisation (su women, poor, elderly, or disabled).		ny seg- d from igins,
	Make sure that you don't ask any unrinformation that could be discriminated birth certificate, property title, former ership of the land, working status, or unnecessary questions).	ory (e.g. own-
	► Employing people of different gender backgrounds enables a more empath understanding of the customer needs cially in sanitation and hygiene.	netic

ACCESS TO INFORMATION This includes the right to seek, receive and impart information	Am I communicating clearly and to all potential clients the service and price of the service I am selling, and any other information that may be relevant to them?	☐ Yes☐ No
concerning water issues. To reach people and actually provide accessible information, multiple channels of information, that	Do my clients have the possibility to request further information about my business?	☐ Yes☐ No
consider cultural communication preferences, have to be used. Moreover, capacity development and training may be required –	Do I provide adequate notice to my clients in case of changes in the schedule of delivery that could affect the regularity of supply?	☐ Yes☐ No
because it is only when existing legislation and policies are understood, they may be utilised, challenged or transformed.	Do I provide clear information with respect to the opening hours of my facilities?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Do I advertise my business?	☐ Yes☐ No
	If so, do I include information about service quality in the advertising?	☐ Yes☐ No
	If I have relevant information that affects the quality or availability of water as a result of waste disposal, do I provide this information to the authorities (municipality, river basin organisation, the institutions contracting my business)?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Is water quality data for the water that I test recorded in a registry held by a public authority?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	 Provide an information board with essential information (quality, opening hours, price, grievance mechanism etc.) visible to everybody. Provide a phone or email notice service for updates. Adapt your communication to the capacities and special circumstances of clients (e.g. indigenous or minority languages); verbal or pictograms rather than written announcements in cases of illiteracy). If possible or required by the applicable law, register your business with the competent local authority and share data and information with it. 	

Processes related to planning,	Does the local community have a role in the development of my business?	☐ Yes☐ No
design, construction, maintenance and monitoring of sanitation and water services should be participatory. This requires a	Do I share with my clients the results of the tests carried out on waste water and how it affects local water bodies?	☐ Yes☐ No
genuine opportunity to freely express needs and concerns and influence decisions. Also, it is crucial to include representatives of all concerned individuals, groups and communities in participatory processes. Poor people and members of marginalized groups are frequently excluded from decision-making regarding water and sanitation, and hence their needs are seldom prioritized. Community participation in the planning and design of water and sanitation programmes is also essential to ensure that water and sanitation services are relevant and appropriate, and thus ultimately sustainable.	Are my clients involved in decisions at community/regional level that seek to improve the quality of services? How often?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Do my clients participate in decisions that affect their access to improved sanitation and hygiene services at community/river basin level?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Is participation also possible for marginalised and vulnerable people (including people with disabilities, use of appropriate language at meetings, and location accessibility)? What special allowances do you make to do this?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	 Have a suggestion box available for your clients. Participate in mechanisms (together and with the help of local authorities and communities, NGOs) to allow your clients to express their needs and concerns on decisions related to sanitation and hygiene services (type of facility, management of water maintenance, cleanliness etc.). 	
	Involve members of the local commun monitoring access to sanitation.	nity in

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The realization of human rights requires responsive and accountable institutions, a clear designation of responsibilities and coordination between different entities involved. States should be held accountable for meeting these obligations and ensuring that non-State actors respect them. Persons or groups denied their HRWS should have access to effective judicial or other appropriate remedies, like courts, national ombudspersons or human right commissions.	Do my clients have the possibility to file complaints about my business e.g. disposal of waste safely, regularity of supply, quality of the service?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Do I make the complaint mechanism easy to use for those with incapacities such as illiteracy, language barriers, disabilities? What do you do?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Are my complaint mechanisms available for the public and easy to access? How?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Can such complaint mechanisms enforce changes in the way that I do my business?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Am I required to report to public authorities on how I comply with local and/or national laws and regulations?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	Establish grievance mechanisms that your clients to complain (quality of the safe disposal, etc.) such that you can to the complaints and concerns of you tumers.	e service, respond
	Make sure that this complaint mechan accessible for your clients (e.g. that it easy to find).	I
	Inform your clients about the possibili a complaint (e.g. information board et	-
	Inform your clients about the possibili sort to external grievance mechanism regulatory authority, National Human Institution or similar entities).	s (court,

	Have I assessed the sustainability of	
The human rights obligations related to sanitation have to be met in a sustainable manner. This means practices have to be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable so that future generations can enjoy the right too. Environmental factors are	my business, including identification of possible internal and external risks in the following areas? Economic Social Environmental	☐ Yes☐ No
	Do I have a mechanism to ensure effective maintenance of the infrastructure or technology used?	☐ Yes☐ No
paramount, to ensure that water bodies are not contaminate by untreated waste such that other	Is my service dependent on external financial support?	☐ Yes☐ No
human rights are not negatively affected (e.g. quality of drinking	Do I budget in advance for next year?	☐ Yes☐ No
water, health, healthy environment) The achieved impact must be continuous and long-lasting.	Have I explored all possibilities to obtain funding from public authorities / organisations?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Do I have any processes or checks in place to make sure that I don't limit availability of services?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	 Make sure that you avoid water source tamination (environmental sustainabilities). Consider changes in local circumstance number of people) when providing seen under the people when providing seen under the sustainability and take into account the costs of ing operation, management and investor to ensure continued functioning (econsustainability). Work together with local communities source skilled labour for your business train your staff. Work together with local communities groups (with the help of local NGOs) to antee social ownership. Explore and assess all the possibilities obtain public funding from local and no authorities and from supranational inside. European Union). 	ty). ces (e.g. rvices. on etc.) ongo- otment nomic to s and and o guar- s to ational

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DECISION MAKING

The responsibility to respect not only requires service providers to ensure that their own action does not result in human rights abuses, but also includes the avoidance of complicity, which means that they must avoid being indirectly involved in human rights abuses committed by other actors, including the State.

1. Human rights policy

Inclusion in policy		Evaluation
In addition to compliance with national laws, the baseline responsibility	Does the company have a corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy, a code of conduct that it applies to all its commercial relations and all geographical areas? If yes, is this policy public?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No
of companies is to respect human rights.	If the answer to the first question is yes, which human rights are especially mentioned in this policy? See below list.	
To this end, companies should	Human rights to water and sanitation	☐ Yes ☐ No
adopt a human rights policy.	Human right to food	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Labour rights	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Human right to a healthy environment	☐ Yes☐ No
	Does the policy apply to all commercial relations?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN	Establish a code of conduct that mentions that your business respects human rights and expects your business partners to do so.	
IMPLEMENTATION	Include the respect for the human rights to water and sanitation.	
	➤ CSR is mainly addressed to large corporations. However, it could benefit your business as it may be a way to compete against bigger commercial entities. Showing that you give back to your community may help you to foster the relationship with your customers and to retain them.	

2. Democratic, participatory and transparent processes

Process of negotiation, bidding and tendering Evaluation		
Any instrument delegating service provision to private	If you concluded an agreement with the State (state local authorities, state owned company) on de provision of services, would you qualify the process.	legating the
enterprises must meet human rights standards. The	Democratic?	☐ Yes ☐ No
tendering, bidding and contract negotiations must be transparent,	Transparent?	☐ Yes ☐ No
must be transparent, democratic. Service providers are expected to exercise due diligence in this regard.	Participatory?	☐ Yes☐ No
	During the negotiation process, did you receive adequate and sufficient information concerning the process, your obligations and the requirements to meet the obligations in the contract?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Are the terms of reference of service delegation available to the public?	☐ Yes☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	➤ Team up with local NGOs and ask local community members if the contract negotiation process was transparent and if they could participate in the process.	

3. Delegation of Services from the State

Content of the contract on delegating service provision		
Private enterprises must exercise due diligence, to become	If you concluded a contract with the State (national authority, local authorities, state owned company) on delegating services, does the contract:	
aware of, prevent and address adverse impacts on human	Define the responsibilities?	☐ Yes ☐ No
rights.	Allocate risks?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Service providers shall ensure that the water they sell is safe quality,	Set delivery targets?	☐ Yes
ensure regularity of supply, not discriminate	Set coverage targets?	☐ Yes
in their operations, adopt fair and transparent procedures etc.	Does this contract specify process in case of non-compliance?	□ No □ Yes □ No
	Do you benefit from subsidies or any other similar instruments to ensure cost recovery?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Do you have the possibility to set the geographical coverage of your service provision according to the contract?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Does the contract confer exclusivity in service provision in terms of certain geographical coverage or certain parts of the community?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Does the contract require you to provide services to previously unserved or underserved areas?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Does the contract prevent you from providing services to slums or to other similar places?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Does the contract set forth an obligation to prioritise certain neighbourhoods in the provision of services?	☐ Yes ☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	of service provision and engage proactively with the State authorities to ensure that you are not contributed indirectly to human rights abuses (e.g. make suggest on how to ensure that services are affordable also to poorest, offer flexible payment schemes to adapt to need of the poor etc.).	
	In case you are aware of any human rights violations, proactively engage with relevant authorities to address human rights concerns.	

4. Human rights impact assessment

What is it?		Evaluation
Companies must take proactive steps to understand how existing and proposed activities may affect human rights. The scale of human rights impact assessments will depend on the industry and national and local context.	Are you aware of any potential negative impact of your business on the human rights of the local community?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Does your company engage with local communities and/or with public authorities to analyse the potential human rights implications of your business?	□ Yes □ No
	Does your company consider the human rights risks of a business partner before entering into a commercial relation with it?	☐ Yes☐ No
	Are you aware of any potentially negative impact of your service provision on marginalised and vulnerable communities, such as:	
	Poor?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Elderly?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Women?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Children?	☐ Yes ☐ No
EXAMPLES AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION	► Engage with the local communities to verify the human rights risks and impacts of your business.	
	Make sure that during the assessment, you do not exclude the impacts on vulnerable and marginalised populations.	
	► Use the opportunity to train your staff.	
	➤ Team up with local NGOs and ask members of the local community who can provide informa- tion on the impact of your activities.	