



# Investor Alliance for Human Rights Our Strategy

## Responding to a Changing Global Context

Since the Investor Alliance for Human Rights was established in 2018, global economic, social, and political shifts have made the connection between human rights and responsible investment more visible – and more urgent.

The ecosystem supporting investor responsibility has evolved significantly. Environmental, social, governance (ESG) and sustainability investment criteria, underpinned by the human rights responsibilities laid out for economic actors in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), have gained traction among investors. Increasingly, investors recognize that considering long-term investment value drivers, which include ESG issues, in investment practice is core to fulfilling their fiduciary duty. This trend is reinforced

by evolving regulatory frameworks, such as mandatory corporate disclosure and human rights and environmental due diligence laws in the EU and beyond. However, over the past two years, there has been a human rights and environmental policy and regulatory retreat, particularly in the U.S, which has largely been fuelled by anti-ESG sentiment. There is a renewed recognition that only a smart mix of measures can drive meaningful corporate accountability to protect rightsholders and other stakeholders. Market-based incentives remain valuable, but alone they are insufficient; robust, mandatory regulation must also play a central role.

Civil society organizations, affected communities, and other stakeholders have become more coordinated in pushing for corporate accountability, recognizing the role of investors and partnering with investor coalitions to mobilize investors as a lever for change. This presents a critical opportunity: by coalescing investor leverage with civil society demands, we can create a stronger, more coordinated push for corporate practices that align with environmental and economic justice.

The Investor Alliance has reflected on how to best build on this foundation and meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. In this moment, and through this strategy, the Investor Alliance works collectively to:

- Strengthen the role of investors as powerful agents of accountability and levers for change;
- Embed the responsibility to respect human rights at the heart of corporate governance and business practices; and
- Help shape a global economy where upholding human rights is a baseline expectation, not a voluntary aspiration.



# Vision & Objectives

***Our vision is that investors use their influence within the global economy to fulfil their human rights responsibilities under the UNGPs, embedding respect for fundamental rights in corporate conduct to improve people's lives, uphold communities, and sustain the planet.***

To achieve this vision the Investor Alliance anchors its work in its Theory of Change (on page 3) using the following objectives:

- **Drive Equity and Social & Environmental Sustainability**  
We ensure all our work explicitly improves people's lives, directly addressing the needs of affected individuals, communities, and society as a whole.
- **Confront Emerging and Egregious Human Rights Abuses**  
We prioritize the most severe and systemic human rights harms linked to business practices, guided by our core priority areas.
- **Hold Corporations Accountable**  
We will push for a world where corporations are accountable to all stakeholders – including workers, consumers, human rights defenders, and the impacted communities in which they operate.
- **Transform Investment Practices**  
We will press investors to embed human rights responsibilities across all products, portfolios, and assets they manage – making management of systemic risks the norm, not the exception.
- **Pursue Systemic Change**  
We will focus on changing the system toward equity and justice – not on shifting company behavior one business at a time.

## Our work is characterised by:

### Agility

Our rapid response enables investors to maximize their collective impact with both companies and policymakers on urgent and emergent human rights issues.

### Ground-truthing

Working with our CSO partners we ensure that our work is informed by the perspectives of impacted rightsholders.

### Rigor

Our engagements are held to the highest international business and human rights standards, including the UNGPs and OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises, to assess, disclose, and drive responsible business and investor conduct.



# Our Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change articulates **why** the Investor Alliance is needed, **what** changes are expected, and **how** those changes are expected to occur. The Investor Alliance works closely with civil society organizations to ensure that collective corporate engagement and policy advocacy activities integrate the perspectives of impacted people and communities and promote enabling environments for responsible business conduct.





# The Investor Alliance & the BHR Ecosystem

The Investor Alliance's human rights-centric approach to responsible investment and business conduct requires us to work with a variety of different stakeholders within the business and human rights (BHR) ecosystem. We serve as a connector among different key stakeholders who seek to collaborate and use their combined leverage to effect and catalyze systems change.

Stakeholders include:



# Strategic Priorities

The Investor Alliance has chosen four goals to guide its work:

## GOAL 1

**Investors have the tools and guidance they need to defend and build on the progress made in implementing their responsibilities under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, putting human rights due diligence into practice throughout all investment activities.**

Our members have increasingly integrated human rights considerations into initial investing decisions and exclusion criteria, due diligence processes, shareholder engagement and stewardship activities including proxy voting, and divestment considerations, supported by frameworks like the UNGPs and the OECD Guidelines.

However, in 2025, significant challenges remain:

- Inconsistent global and national regulatory standards, the absence of harmonized human rights metrics and data, and evolving enforcement mechanisms create uncertainty and undermine economic and social value for institutional investors who are globally invested.
- Responsible investors face challenges to sustainable forms of investment, for example resulting from the “ESG backlash”.
- Geopolitical instability continues to undermine rule of law, transparency, and accountability in high-risk and other markets.

These dynamics underscore the need for stronger collaboration between investors, companies, regulators, and civil society, to ensure that human rights commitments are effectively embedded into global business practices, which is essential for the creation of resilient economies and long-term business value. To that end the Investor Alliance:

- Leverages our [Investor Toolkit on Human Rights](#) and other investor guidance to turn human rights responsibilities into investment practices.
- Builds investors’ capacity to meet human rights responsibilities via webinars, conferences, trainings, and investor working groups.
- Coordinates collective investor engagements with companies to support putting investor human rights due diligence (HRDD) processes into practice on a range of issues.
- Supports investors in utilizing benchmark data, like the Corporate Human Rights Benchmark and Ranking Digital Rights, in data-based corporate engagements to increase corporate disclosures and due diligence processes to improve human rights performance throughout companies’ value chains.

## GOAL 2

**Investors hold tech companies to account for their responsibility to respect digital rights of users and society, including through the responsible development and deployment of technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI).**

Digital rights risks – including privacy, freedom of expression, and non-discrimination online – lie at the intersection of human rights and technological developments, such as AI. These risks stem from the business models, operations, and partnerships of tech companies, and they affect every aspect of our daily lives. From challenges to political participation and democratic processes to concerns about security and conflict, child safety online, unlawful surveillance, spyware, and workers’ rights, the impact of these risks is both broad and profound. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into society, where companies across every sector of the economy are adopting AI in carrying out their operations and provision of goods and services, addressing these risks is essential for safeguarding human rights.

The Investor Alliance brings together investors with civil society stakeholders, impacted rightsholders, and digital rights experts to provide valuable technical expertise and present original research and findings to help underpin engagements.

Our ongoing and planned workstreams supporting this goal are:

- Capacity building and open dialogue sessions with civil society and digital rights organizations through our [Technology and Human Rights working group](#), looking at digital rights risks across sectors and globally and addressing critical and urgent issues.
- Facilitation of the coordinated [Digital Rights and AI accountability engagements](#) with companies developing and deploying technology, with plans to deepen engagement with rightsholders including in the Global Majority.
- Driving change in early private equity investing in generative AI and defense AI with research from ongoing collaborations with CSO working groups.
- Publishing [salient risks briefings](#) on the impact of technology on human rights to build investor capacity to manage such risks throughout their investment activities.

### GOAL 3

**Amid a steady increase in the number and intensity of global conflicts, investors learn how their portfolio holdings may be exposed to human rights risks in conflict-affected and high-risk areas (CAHRA) and hold companies accountable for their responsibilities to mitigate these human rights risks.**

The expectation that both investors and companies undertake heightened human rights due diligence (hHRDD) on investments and business activities in CAHRAs – to better identify and manage human rights and conflict-related risks – is established in international normative frameworks, such as the UNGPs.

In response to crises, the Investor Alliance is working with investors in collaboration with civil society experts to identify and address – in a conflict-sensitive manner – the human rights and humanitarian legal risks associated with business activities in these environments, and to ensure that portfolio companies have the policies, processes, and governance needed to address CAHRA risks in a systematic fashion across various geographies.

Our ongoing and planned workstreams supporting this goal are:

- Coordinating [investor engagement](#) of portfolio companies in tech, renewable energy, and other sectors with significant CAHRA footprints.
- Releasing [guidance](#) on good practices for CAHRA risk management and building investor capacity to manage CAHRA risks throughout their investment activities.

### GOAL 4

**Investors advocate for rights-respecting laws, regulations, and policies that mandate corporate disclosure, human rights due diligence, and accountability.**

The Investor Alliance advocates for a smart mix of voluntary and mandatory measures (both at national and international levels) to enable corporate and investor human rights responsibilities and accountability.

The European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) marks a transformative shift by legally requiring large companies to identify, prevent, and mitigate adverse human rights and environmental impacts throughout their value chains. This directive strengthens the alignment between investor expectations and corporate risk management

and accountability, providing a more consistent regulatory foundation to drive sustainable investment. However, the CSDDD and other elements of the Green Deal such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation, are currently being challenged by the proposed omnibus legislative package. At the same time, we see progress towards mandating due diligence in other jurisdictions such as South Korea, Japan, Canada, and Mexico.

The need for rights respecting policies and legislation that supports ongoing mHRDD efforts, is also important. With the rapid development and deployment of technology like AI including generative AI, and with the extensive power and control that Big Tech has over online interactions, be they commercial, social or political, investor leverage as a financial stakeholder must be harnessed to respect human rights.

Our ongoing and planned workstreams supporting this goal are mobilizing investor support for:

- [Mandating human rights and environmental due diligence \(HREDD\)](#) as a basis for driving rights-respecting business activities globally
- [Tech and AI Policy](#) regulations and incentives for responsible development and deployment of AI and alignment with global AI standards

## Learn More About the Investor Alliance

### Our Team

Our [staff](#) are business and human rights experts with diverse international experience across academia, the private sector, law practices, and grassroots advocacy.

### Our Governance

The Investor Alliance is advised by an [Advisory Council](#) comprised of investors, civil society partners, and other stakeholders with expertise in business and human rights and corporate engagement. As an initiative of ICCR, we are governed by ICCR's [leadership team](#) and [board](#).

### Our Members

The Investor Alliance is a membership-based initiative that brings together a global network of investors committed to advancing human rights. Our growing membership—currently over [250 institutional investors](#) in 21 countries representing nearly \$21 trillion in assets under management—benefits from tailored support, expert guidance, and strategic opportunities to engage on critical human rights issues.



## Join the Investor Alliance

Membership in the Investor Alliance is currently open to all institutional investors. To learn more about membership, please read our [membership principles](#) and send an email to [investoralliance@iccr.org](mailto:investoralliance@iccr.org).

The Investor Alliance for Human Rights is an initiative of the [Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility \(ICCR\)](#).



**INVESTOR ALLIANCE  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**  
AN INITIATIVE OF ICCR

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