
Practitioner Guidance for Human Rights-Based AI Governance

May 2025



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**How can you take a human rights-based approach
to responsible AI?**

Responsible AI Practitioner Guides

- 1 **Fundamentals of a Human Rights-Based Approach to Generative AI**

- 2 **A Human Rights-Based Approach to Governance and Management**

- 3 **A Human Rights-Based Approach to Impact Assessment**

- 4 **A Human Rights-Based Approach to Risk Mitigation**

- 5 **Conducting Stakeholder Engagement**

- 6 **A Human Rights-Based Approach to Policies and Enforcement**

- 7 **Aligning Transparency and Disclosure Practices with Human Rights Responsibilities**

- 8 **Remedy for Generative AI-Related Harms**

BSR Speakers



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Agenda

1. **Review of key points from each practitioner guide**
2. **Key Takeaways**
3. **Q&A**

Guide 1:

Fundamentals of a Human Rights-

Based Approach to AI

The background of the slide shows a group of people, likely in a meeting or collaborative work environment, sitting around a table. They are looking at documents and using devices like tablets. A semi-transparent red rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the main text.

A human rights-based approach means embedding respect for human rights into the development and deployment of AI

Why a human rights-based approach?

1

International standards for governments and companies

- International human rights instruments
- The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business conduct

2

Established framework and methodology

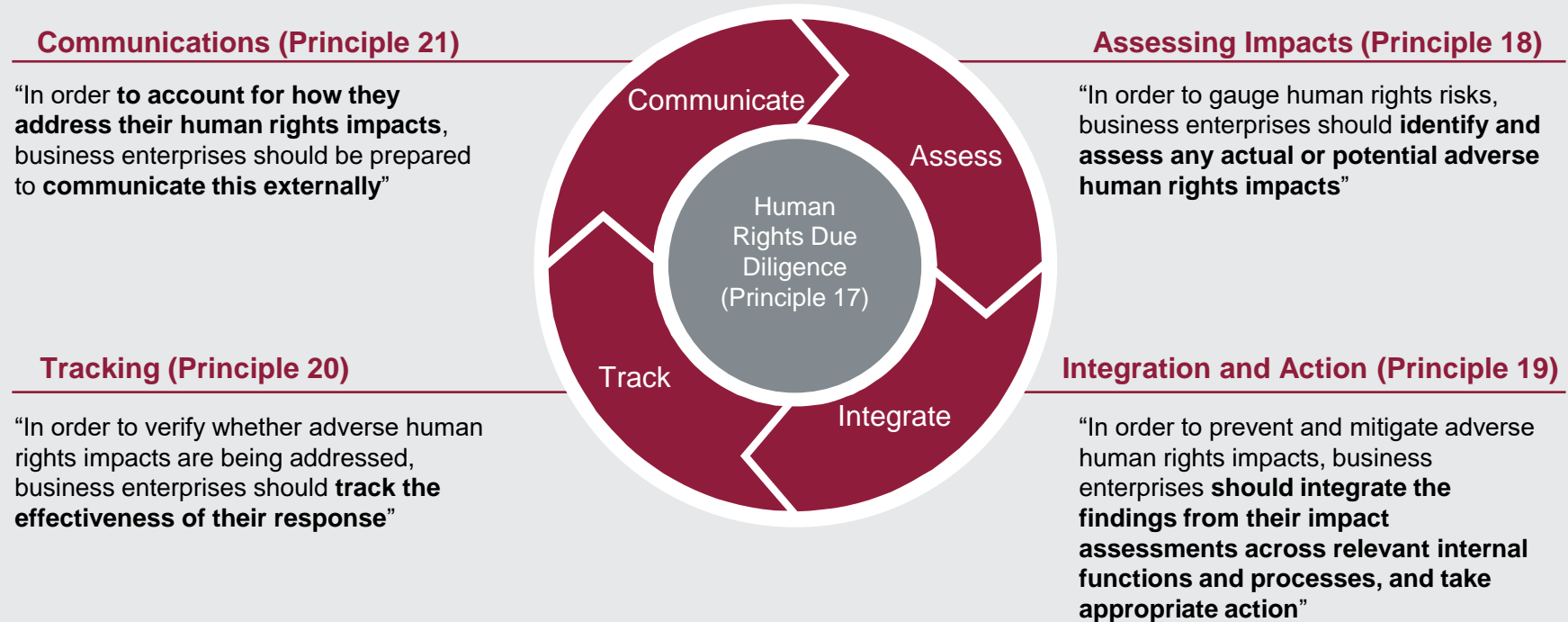
- The UNGPs provide an approach to identifying, assessing, prioritizing, and addressing risks to people

3

Human rights integration into AI regulation

- EU Digital Service Act
- EU AI Act
- Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
- Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive

The UNGPs require companies to conduct human rights due diligence



How is a human rights-based approach different from others?

Ethics

- Framework for decision-making in situations where right and wrong, good and bad, are not clearly defined
- Different “schools of thought” and standards that support different approaches and choices
- Different traditions, cultures, countries, and religions may choose different outcomes

Human Rights

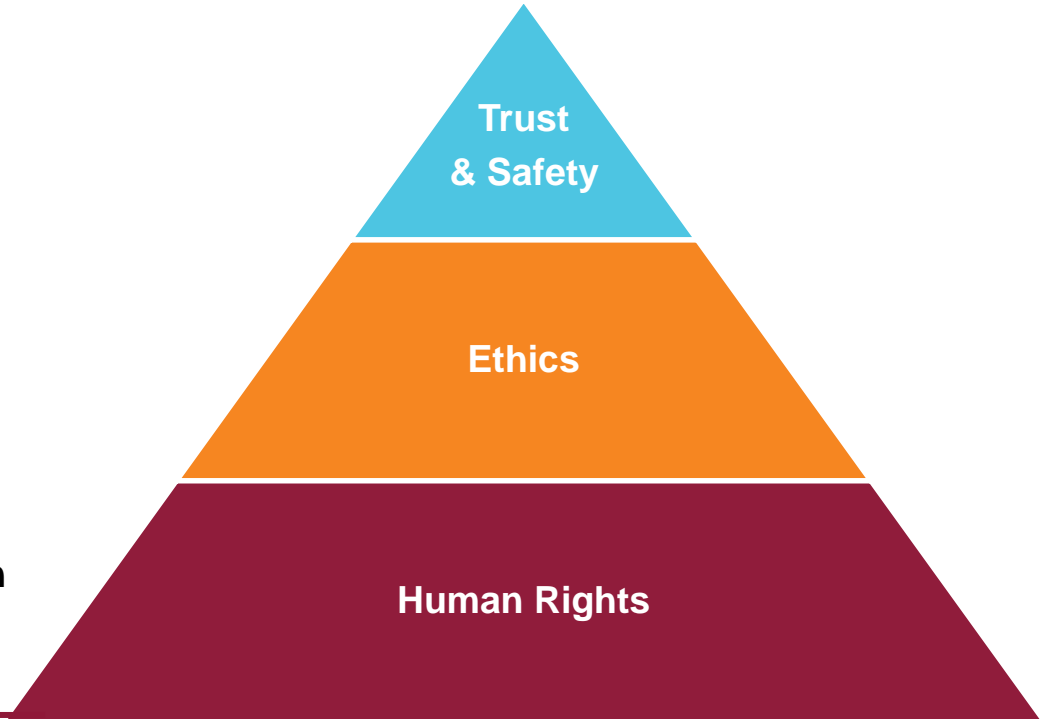
- Internationally defined framework for government and company responsibilities
- List of rights that should always be protected / respected regardless of context or culture
- Focus on the experiences of the most vulnerable
- Establish a floor rather than a ceiling—e.g., respect for human rights is a minimum requirement

Trust & Safety

- Function within companies to operationalize ethics / human rights / safety efforts
- Focused on practically ensuring genAI tools are “safe”
- Brings approaches and lessons learned from online platform content governance
- Anchored on pre-established risk taxonomies

How does it all fit together?

Human rights should be the foundation for responsible AI upon which other approaches can be integrated.



Guide 2:

A Human Rights-Based Approach

Governance and Management

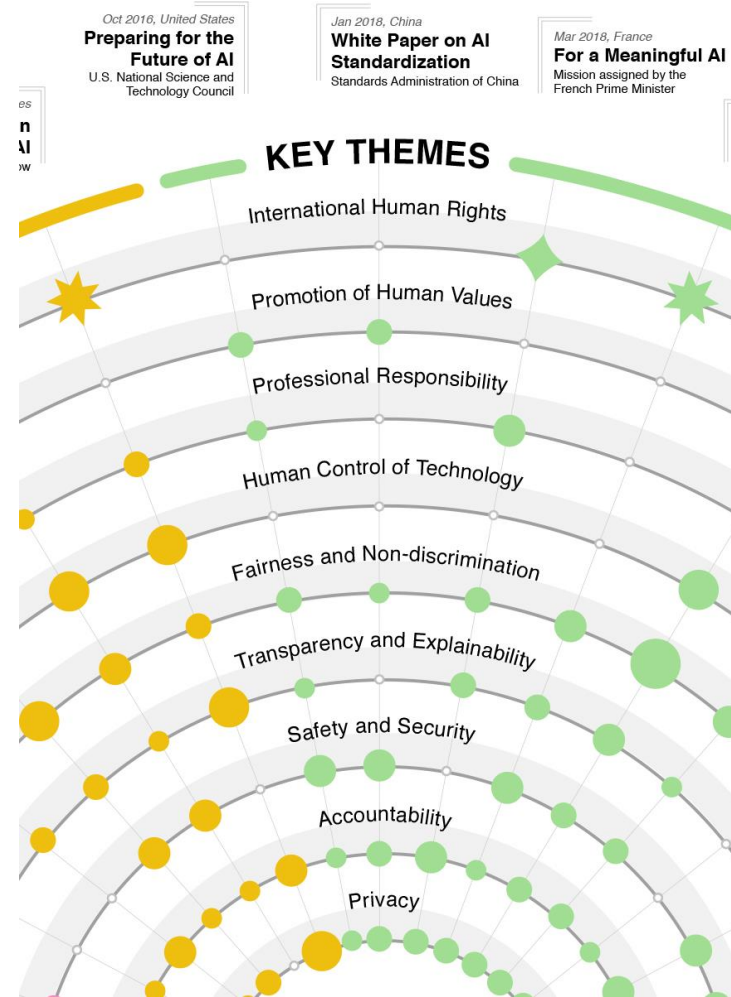
What are AI principles?

- A set of values that guide an organization's AI development / deployment

Why are they important?

- AI principles provide a **foundation for embedding responsible AI** across an organization (e.g. provide remit to responsible AI teams)
- Including human rights in AI principles provides a **foundation for a human rights-based approach** to responsible AI
- Including human rights provides **clarity and consistency** to nebulous principles

Source: Principled Artificial Intelligence: A Map of Ethical and Rights-Based Approaches to Principles for AI, <https://cyber.harvard.edu/publication/2020/principled-ai>



Example AI principles that include human rights

Google

AI Principles

2 Responsible development and deployment

Because we understand that AI, as a still-emerging transformative technology, poses evolving complexities and risks, we pursue AI responsibly throughout the AI development and deployment lifecycle, from design to testing to deployment to iteration, learning as AI advances and uses evolve. This means:

- Implementing appropriate human oversight, due diligence, and feedback mechanisms to align with user goals, social responsibility, and widely accepted principles of international law and human rights.

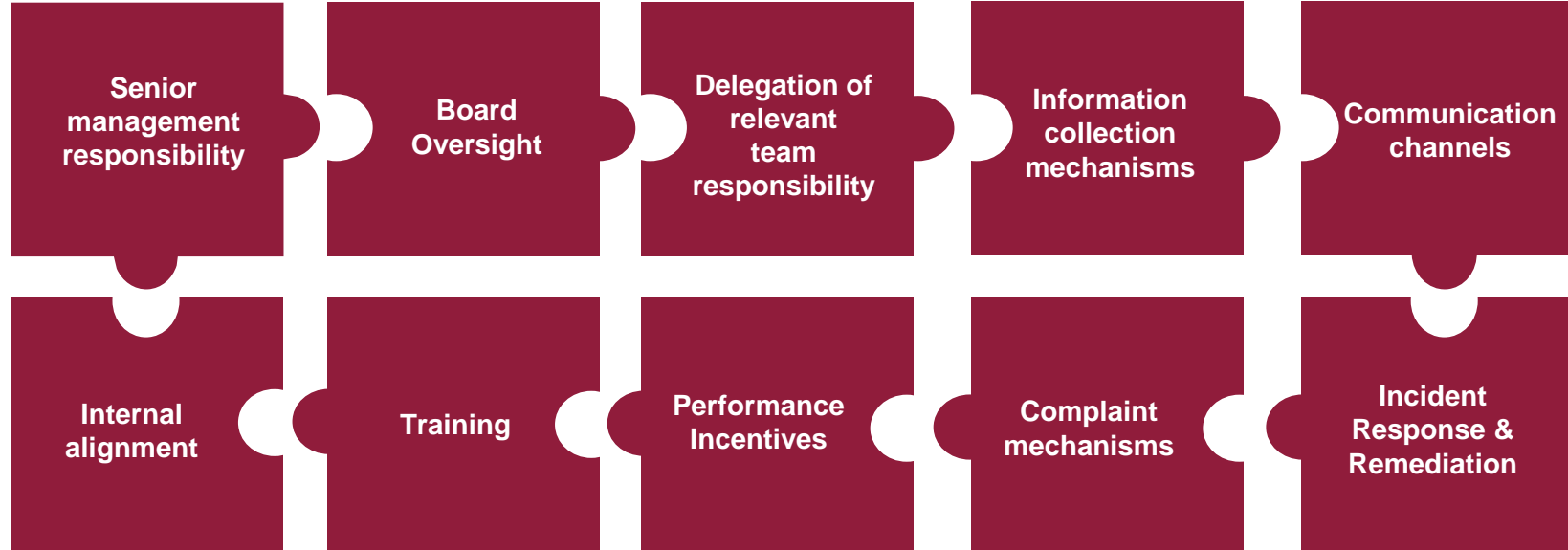
Example AI principles that include human rights

Meet Salesforce's Trusted AI Principles

Responsible

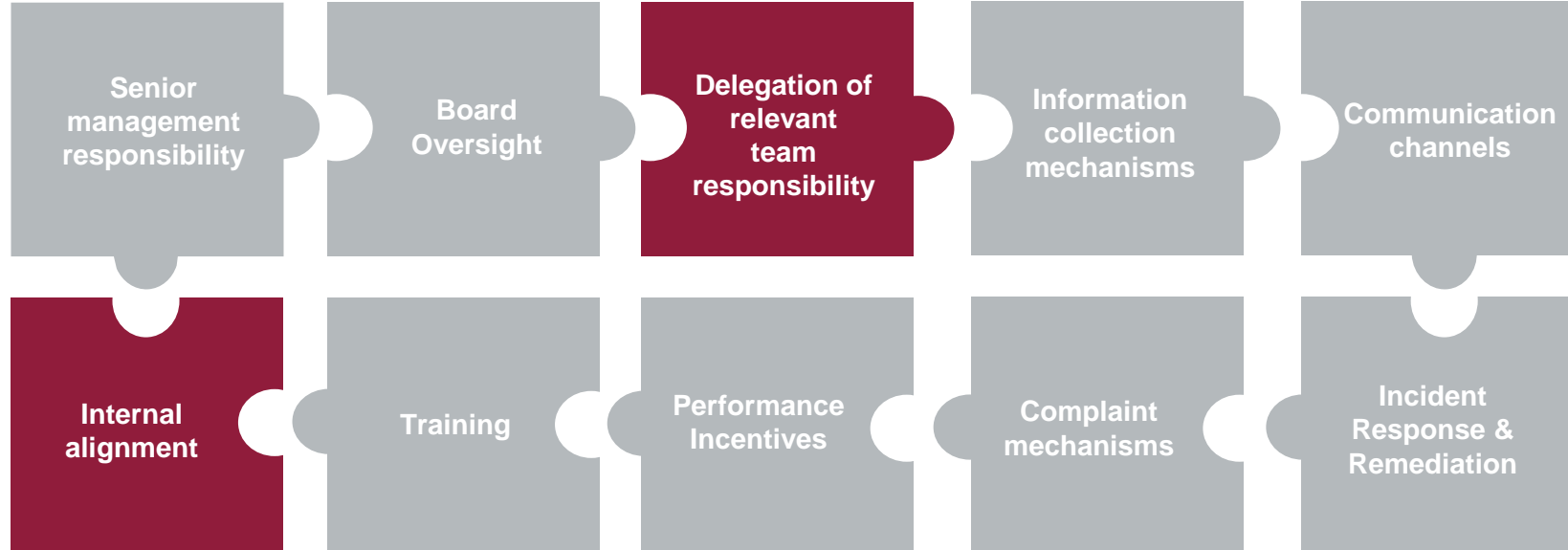
We strive to safeguard human rights, to protect the data we are trusted with, observe scientific standards and enforce policies against abuse. We expect our customers to use our AI responsibly, and in compliance with their agreements with us, including our [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

Applying Human Rights Governance Principles to Responsible AI



Source: OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct

Applying Human Rights Governance Principles to Responsible AI



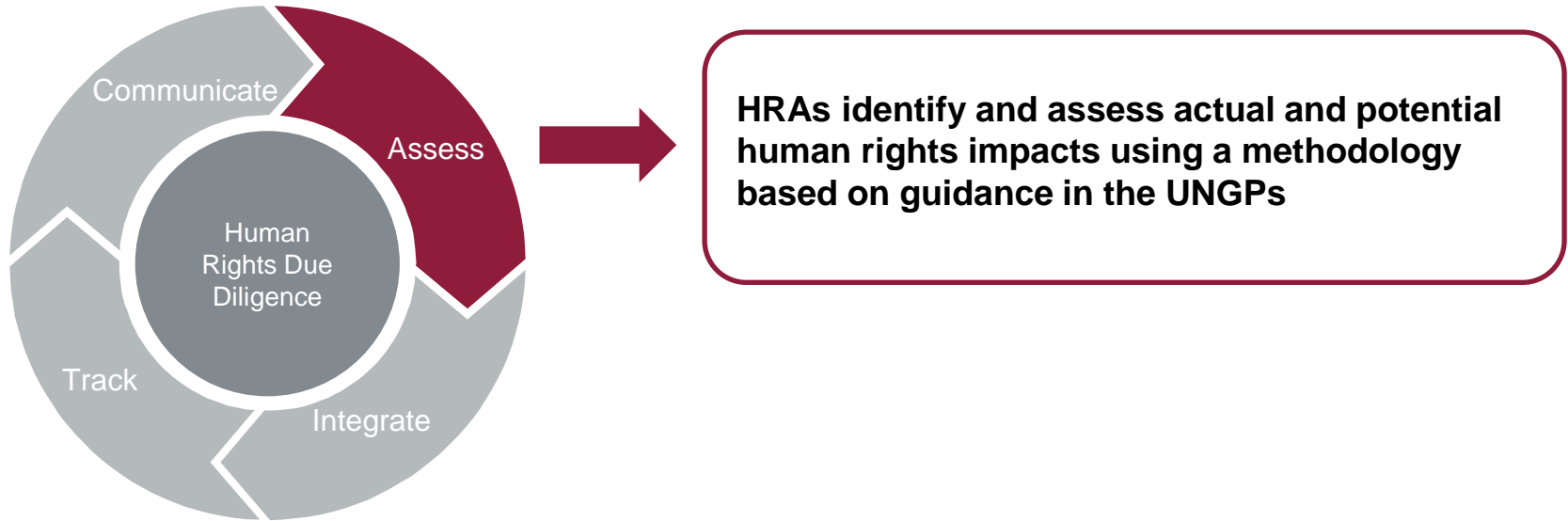
Source: OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct

Guide 3:


A Human Rights-Based Approach to

Impact Assessment

What are human rights assessments?




Core Elements of a Human Rights Assessment

- 
- Identifying impacts human rights impacts using all internationally recognized human rights as a reference point

List of Internationally Recognized Human Rights

- Right to equality and non-discrimination
- Right to life, liberty, and personal security
- Freedom from slavery
- Freedom from torture and degrading treatment
- Due process and fair trial rights
- Freedom from arbitrary arrest and exile
- Right to privacy
- Freedom of movement
- Right to asylum
- Right to a nationality and the freedom to change nationality
- Right to marriage and family
- Right to own property
- Freedom of thought
- Freedom of religion and belief
- Right to remedy
- Freedom of opinion, expression, and access to information
- Right of peaceful assembly and association
- Right to political participation
- Right to social security
- Labor Rights (e.g. safe working conditions, adequate remuneration, right to join unions)
- Right to rest and leisure
- Right to adequate living standards
- Right to health
- Right to education
- Right to participate in the cultural life of the community
- Right to benefit from scientific advancement
- Right to internet access
- Right to a healthy environment
- Disability rights (e.g. right to accessibility)
- Child Rights

Core Elements of a Human Rights Assessment



- Identifying impacts human rights impacts using all internationally recognized human rights as a reference point



- Assessing and prioritizing impacts based on severity to people



- Emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized groups; stakeholder engagement

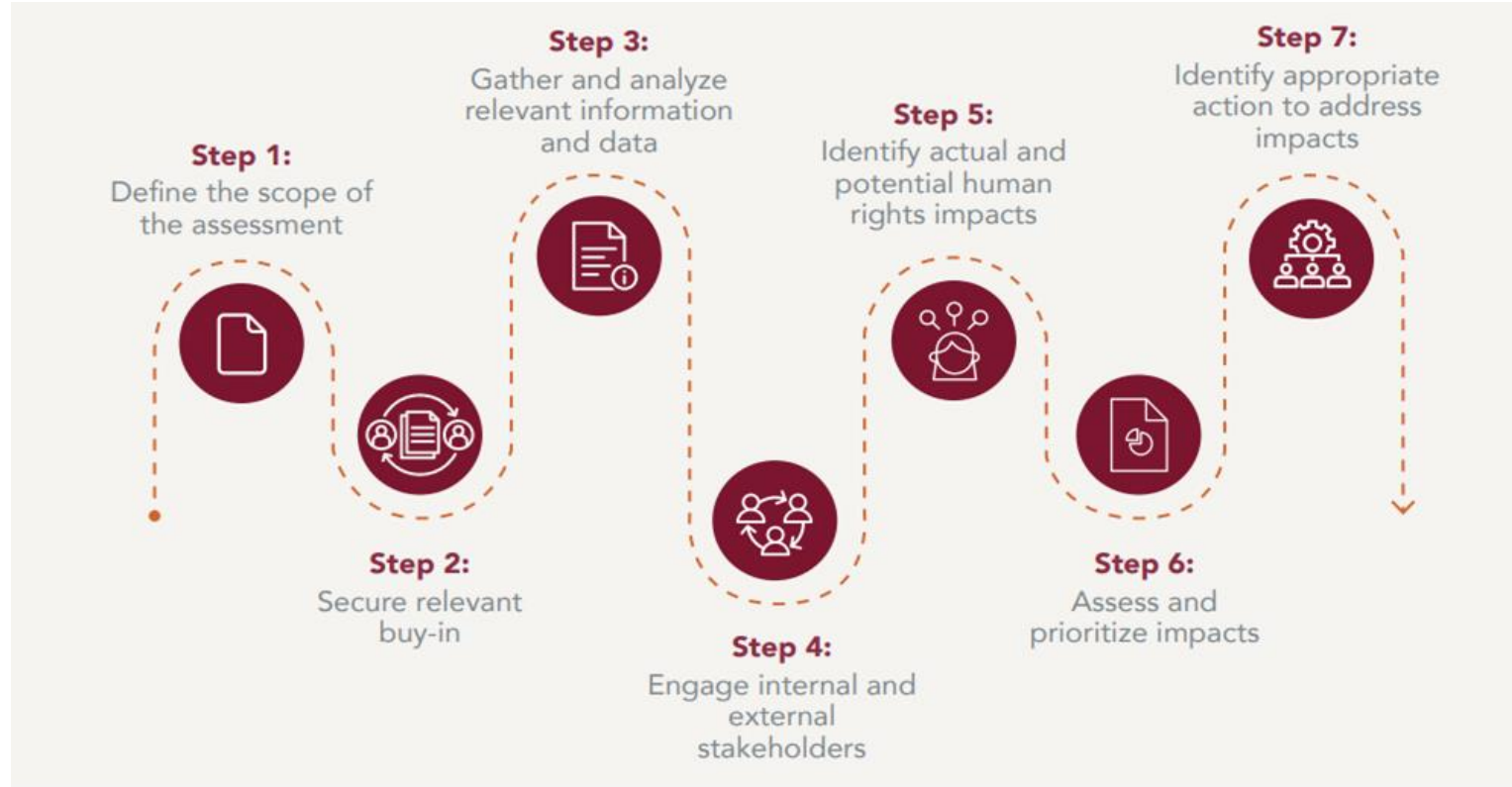


- Considering interconnectivity between rights



- Accounting for context

BSR's Human Rights Assessment Process



Why HRAs for AI?

Benefits of HRAs	Limitations of HRAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on impacts to people• Comprehensiveness of risk / impact identification• An approach to prioritizing impacts• An established, internationally accepted methodology• Adaptability to a variety of contexts• Assistance with regulatory compliance	

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Integrating human rights into other AI impact assessments

Assessment Type	Description	How to Integrate Human Rights
Algorithmic Impact Assessments / Audits	Systematic examination of the algorithms and data used in an AI system to assess their fairness, accountability, transparency, and ethical implications.	Utilize the list of internationally recognized human rights (see the appendix) as a foundation for brainstorming to help identify impacts or create a risk/harm taxonomy. Consider severity when assessing impacts.
Model / Application Evaluations	Empirical assessments of an AI system's performance or impact on people and society.	Utilize human rights as a foundation for identifying impacts/harms to evaluate.
Fairness Testing	Assessment of whether an AI system exhibits biases or discrimination against certain groups of individuals based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, or age. Often includes model/application evaluation.	Utilize the vulnerable groups framework to help identify groups for the basis of testing. Consider how additional human rights may be impacted as a result of identified fairness issues.
Data Quality Reviews	Examination of the data used to train AI models to look for issues such as incorrect labels, representativeness, accuracy, and bias, that may lead to inaccurate or problematic outputs.	Consider how different data quality issues could lead to human rights impacts, and consider the severity of those impacts to help prioritize corrective actions / mitigation of related impact.
Red Teaming	A range of assessment methods for AI systems that involves using adversarial techniques and approaches to test the security, robustness, and resilience of AI systems.	Identify pathways to human rights impacts as part of the red-teaming process. Include red teamers with a background suited to identifying risks to people, as well as people representative of, or familiar with, risks and needs of vulnerable groups.

Integrating human rights into other AI impact assessments

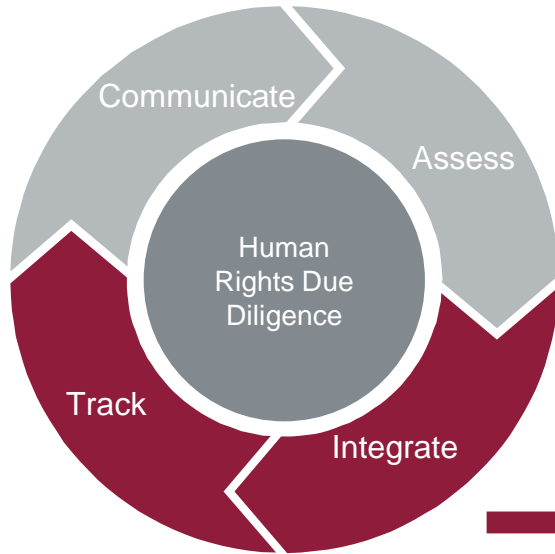
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Guide 4:

A Human Rights-Based Approach to

Risk Mitigation

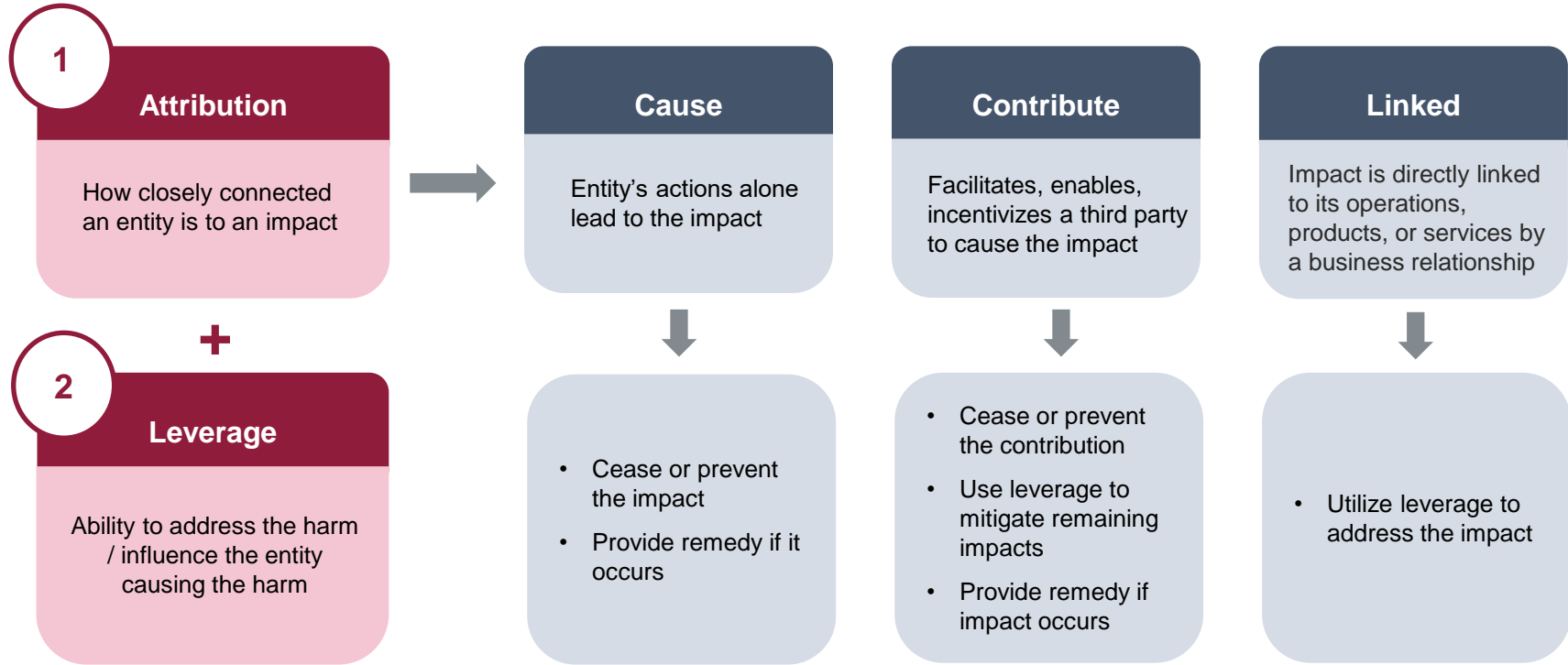
Where does risk mitigation fit?



Risk mitigation entails:

- **Integrating and acting upon the findings from impact assessments**
- **Tracking the effectiveness of mitigation measures**

What human rights concepts can inform AI risk mitigation?



Other human rights principles for AI risk mitigation

- Risk tolerance and “offsetting” risks and benefits is not acceptable in a human rights context
- Tensions and trade-offs (aka competing equities) can be worked through using "counterbalancing"
- Think broadly about risk mitigation—technical / product actions, policies, process, transparency / communications
- Identify risks that arise from mitigations
- Integrate risk mitigation across the organization
- Track the effectiveness of risk mitigation over time

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Example risk mitigations across the generative AI value chain

Foundation Model Developers	
Example Mitigation	Managed model rollout
Description	The process of making informed and calculated decisions about model release on a gradient from closed to open source, which may include receiving feedback from relevant stakeholders to drive model fine-tuning
Risks It Addresses	<p>Upstream: gaps in training data that lead to model performance issues, such as unequal performance across demographic communities or outputs that are not representative of or the user base</p> <p>Downstream: applications of foundation models associated with adverse impacts on people</p>
How to Integrate a Human Rights-Based Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how human rights could be adversely impacted by the application of foundation models into technology range of use cases Consider how human rights could be adversely impacted by limiting access and availability of the foundation model Identify any tensions in the above scenarios (i.e., advancement from closed vs. open source) Consider what leverage the foundation model developer has to mitigate and provide remedy for harms resulting from downstream applications of the model Establish decision-making processes for navigating human rights trade-offs related to types of model release that secure the fullest possible expression of the competing rights without unnecessarily limiting them

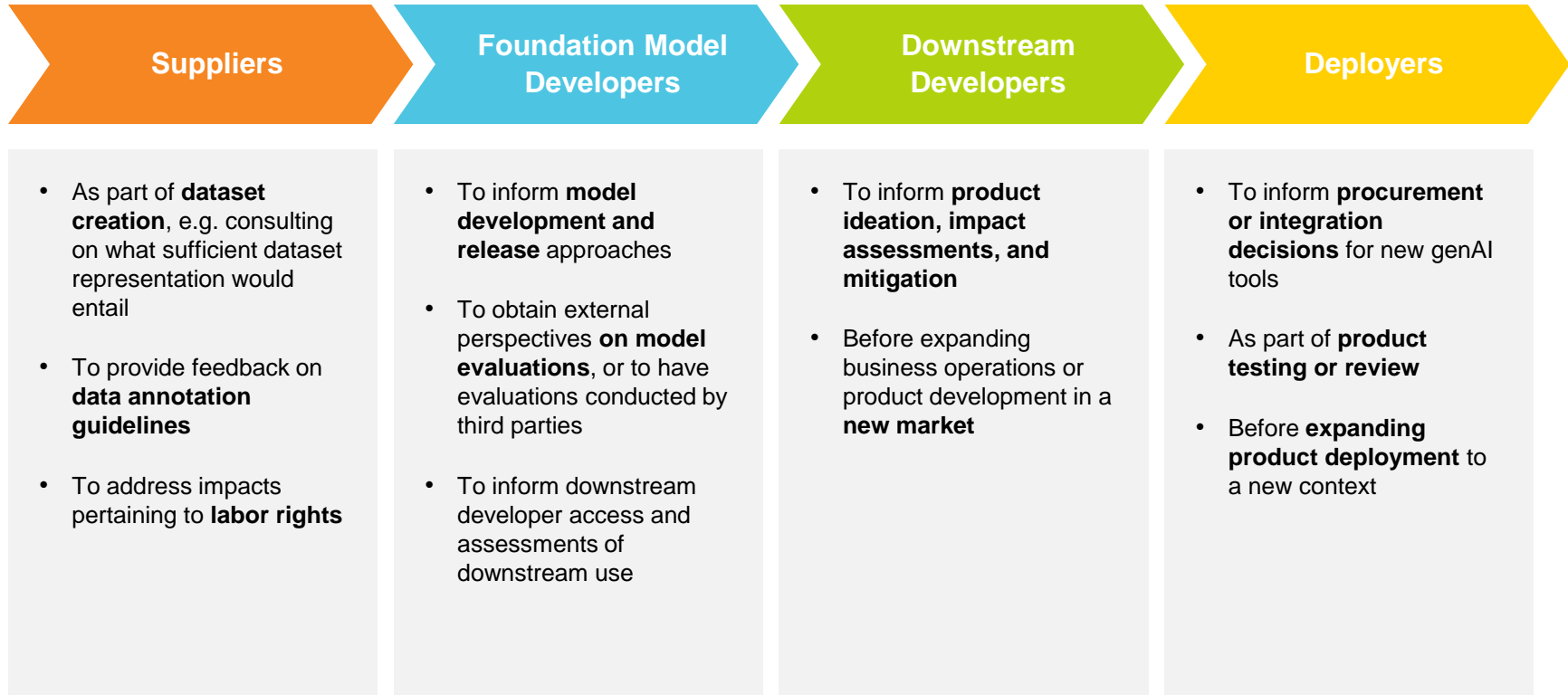
Deployers	
Example Mitigation	Human oversight
Description	The process of human verification and/or approval of AI-generated predictions, decisions, or other outputs
Risks It Addresses	<p>Upstream: instances in which programmed safeguards fail to prevent inaccurate, inappropriate, biased, or otherwise harmful system outputs</p> <p>Downstream: unintended adverse impacts on people associated with AI outputs</p>
How to Integrate a Human Rights-Based Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how the integration of genAI tools into operations, processes, or workflows could cause, contribute to, or be directly linked to potential adverse human rights impacts Be aware of issues that could increase the likelihood of adverse human rights impacts (e.g., inaccurate or biased outputs, harmful behavior specific to the use case and application domain, etc.) Ensure users/operators are adequately trained on how genAI works, aware of potentially harmful outputs and behavior, and review outputs accordingly Establish processes for flagging and escalating harmful outputs Establish decision-making processes for navigating human rights trade-offs that secure the fullest possible expression of the competing rights without unnecessarily limiting them

Guide 5:

Conducting Stakeholder Engagement

aka “Participatory Approaches”

Stakeholder Engagement Across the GenAI Value Chain



Best Practices for Stakeholder Engagement

Engage at multiple levels

Ongoing organizational engagement, one-off engagement on an issue, and product-level engagements based on risk

Identify staff to own engagement

Dedicated, trained, and resourced staff should own engagement processes

Prepare well

Preparation ensures engagement goes smoothly and positive relationships are developed

Build and maintain relationships

Invest in relationships over time that are built on a foundation of trust, respect, and provide mutual benefit

Consider compensation

Be creative about compensation models to avoid the perception of an extractive relationship

Guide 6:

A Human Rights-Based Approach to

Policies and Enforcement

Policies and enforcement as AI risk mitigations

Product Policies

Terms of service (ToS)

Acceptable use policies (AUPs)

Model Policies

Content Policies

AI Principles

Organizational Policies

Privacy / data protection policies

Security / data access policies

Quality assurance policies

Compliance policies

Procurement policies

Elements of a human rights-based approach to policies and enforcement

- Policies should reference human rights when relevant

- Policies should address impacts to all human rights

- Policies and enforcement approaches should adhere to human rights principles

- Policy development and enforcement should be informed by stakeholder engagement

- Policy development should address the most severe impacts first

- Policies and enforcement should honor human rights principles when faced with conflicting requirements

- Policies enforced in conflict-affected areas should receive enhanced attention

- Reporting and appeals channels should be established to help identify policy violations and correct enforcement errors

- Policies should be updated and enforcement reviewed on an ongoing basis

Elements of a human rights-based approach to policies and enforcement

- **Policies should reference human rights when relevant**

- Policies and enforcement should honor human rights principles when faced with conflicting

- Policies should address impacts

“Usage Restrictions” in Microsoft Enterprise AI Services Code of Conduct

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- Policy development should address the most severe impacts first

“Customers, users, and applications built with Microsoft AI Services must NOT use the services [...] to make decisions or take actions without appropriate human oversight as part of an application that may have a consequential impact on any individual’s legal position, financial position, life opportunities, employment opportunities, or human rights, or may result in physical or psychological harm to an individual.”

Benefits of integrating human rights into policies and enforcement

1

**Global approaches
across geographic
borders**

2

**Enforcement that is
thoughtful, consistent,
and rights-informed**

3

**Flexibility to adapt to
evolving rights over
time**

Guide 7:

Aligning Transparency and Disclosure Practices with Human Rights Responsibilities

Key Definitions

A **disclosure** is information that an entity reveals about itself that would not otherwise be available or easily discoverable

Entity / Company-Level Disclosures

- Governance
- Strategy
- Risks and impacts
- Indicators / metrics / targets

Model / Product-Level Disclosures

- Model / system cards
- Datasheets

The human rights disclosure landscape

Voluntary Standards

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Principle 21)

OECD Due Diligence Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Foundation's Sustainability Disclosure Standards

Mandatory Standards

EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)

European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS)

Benefits of AI Disclosures

- **The discipline of putting together disclosures that meet standards can improve responsible AI workflows**—e.g. help prioritize key issues, establish baselines, craft mitigations, track progress, and guide resource allocation
- **Creating disclosure workflows helps prepare for external audits or evaluations**, which are increasingly being adopted into regulation
- **Disclosures can address investor and other key stakeholder concerns**, reassuring stakeholders you are tracking key issues and taking steps to address risks
- **Disclosure about impacts to people spurs progress on disclosure across the AI industry** by motivating peers and
- **Disclosure improves knowledge/understanding of the public and policymakers** about nuanced and complex issues, informing public policy and regulation

Applying human rights and sustainability disclosure best practices to AI

Report Content



PRINCIPLE 1
MATERIALITY
AND
CONCISENESS



PRINCIPLE 2
STRATEGIC
AND FORWARD
LOOKING



PRINCIPLE 3
SUSTAINABILITY
CONTEXT



PRINCIPLE 4
KEY
PERFORMANCES
INDICATORS AND
NARRATIVE



PRINCIPLE 5
COMPLETENESS

Report Quality



PRINCIPLE 6
STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT



PRINCIPLE 7
BALANCE



PRINCIPLE 8
ASSURANCE

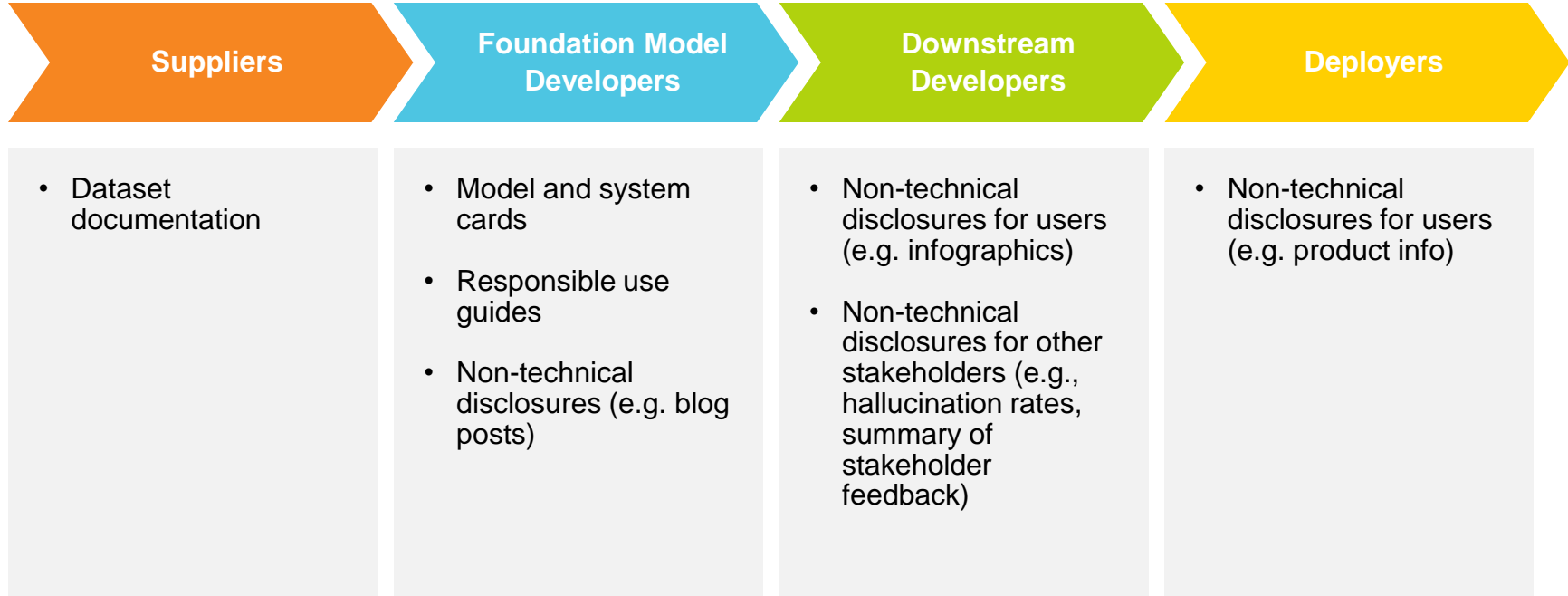


PRINCIPLE 9
CONSISTENCY
AND
COMPARABILITY



PRINCIPLE 10
CONNECTIVITY
OF
INFORMATION

Disclosure Examples Across the Value Chain



Guide 8:

Remedy for AI-Related Harms

Why is remedy important?

- **Mitigating business risks** – Remedy mitigates business risks (e.g. lawsuits, public shaming campaigns)
- **Source of business intelligence** – Remedy mechanisms can be a useful source of business intelligence (e.g. how products are impacting people in the world)

Remedy in the UNGPs

- Individuals whose rights have been harmed by businesses must have access to remedy
- Companies should provide or cooperate in remediation for impacts they cause or contribute to.
- Companies should establish or participate in effective operational grievance mechanisms

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Five Categories of Remedy

Satisfaction

Ceasing the violation, acknowledging the harm, disclosing the truth, providing an apology, and sanctioning those responsible

Restitution

Restoring, to the extent possible, whatever has been lost and returning the rightsholder to the state before the harm occurred

Guarantees of non-repetition

Changes to policies and procedures to prevent future harms, or the taking of disciplinary action

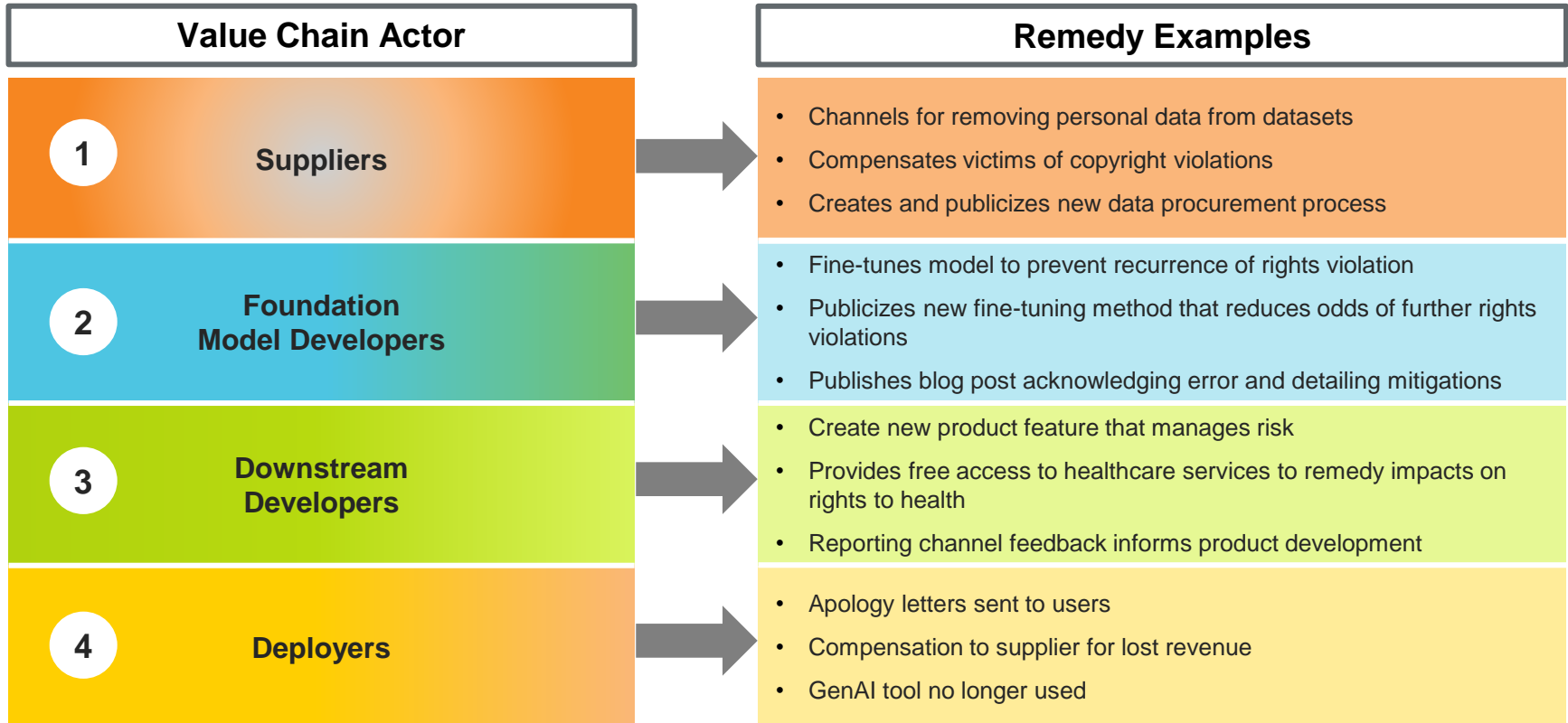
Rehabilitation

Medical, psychological, legal, social, or other services to restore the victim

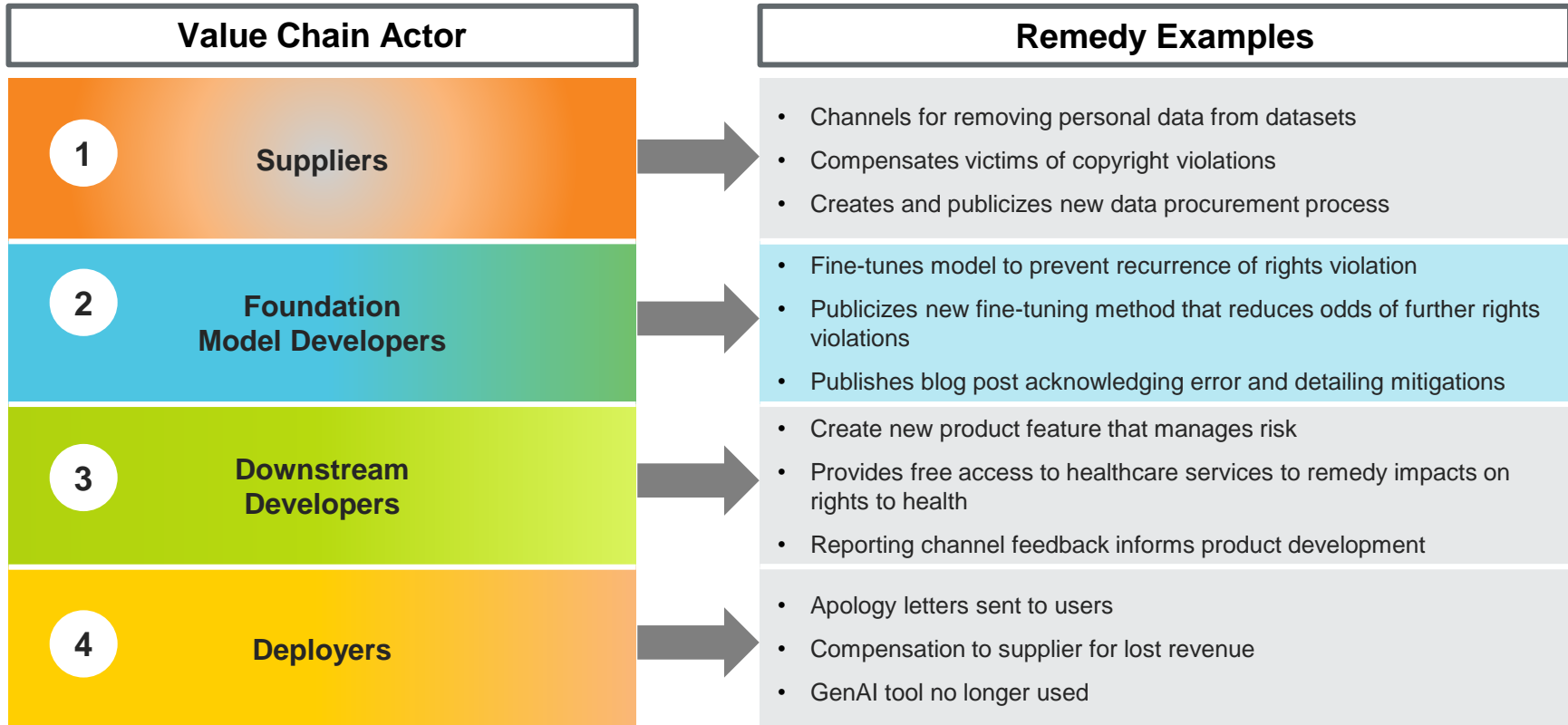
Compensation

Money or other benefits, where damage can be financially assessed

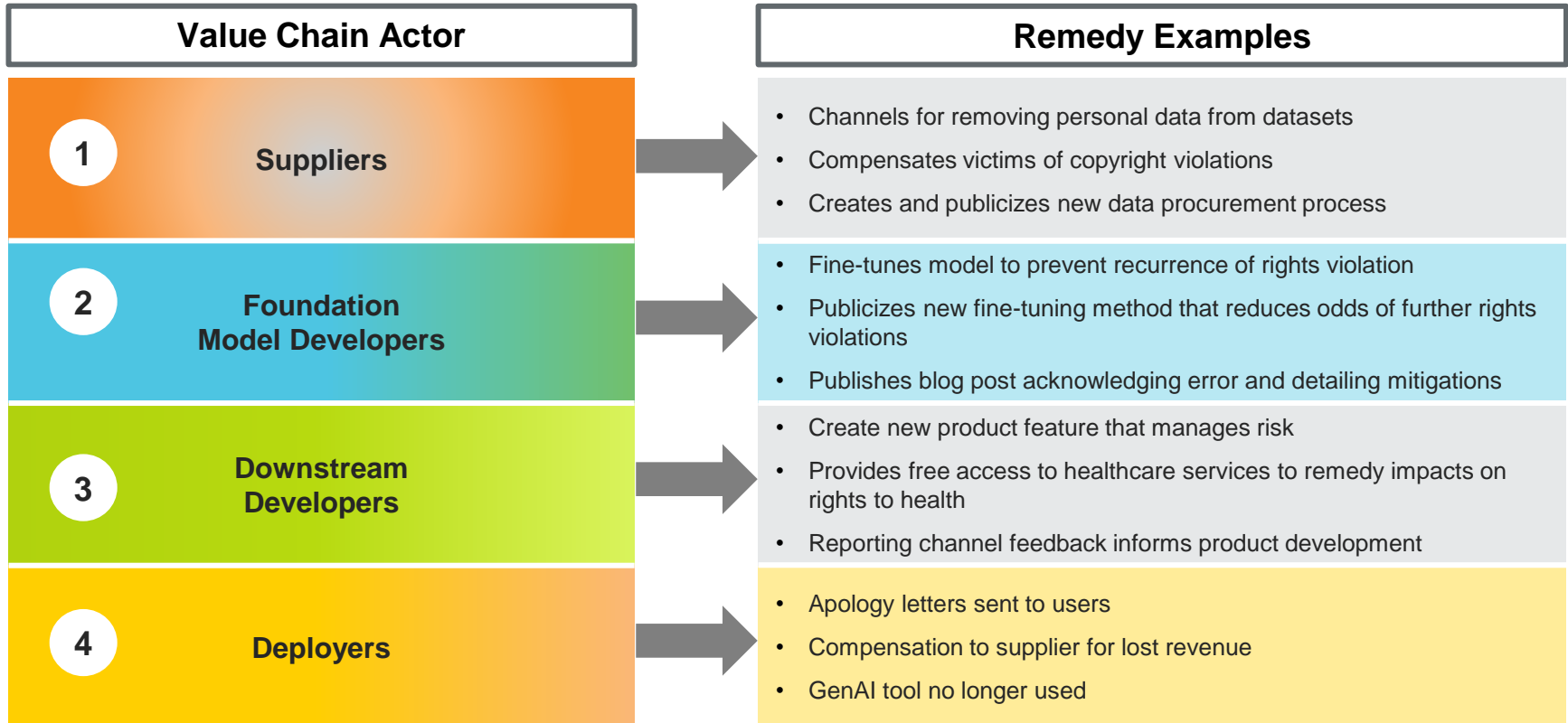
Remedy Across the GenAI Value Chain



Remedy Across the GenAI Value Chain



Remedy Across the GenAI Value Chain



Remedy and the single point of contact

The duty to coordinate remedy for harms that require business action should lie with a single point of contact.

- The single point of contact will usually be **the value chain entity that is directly interfacing with the affected stakeholder.**
- There will be cases, where entities from the broader remedy ecosystem, such as law enforcement or social services organizations, must play a role in effective remedy.

Key Takeaways

1

Human rights should
be the foundation for
other approaches

2

Human rights
concepts and
frameworks can
augment responsible
AI workflows

3

You don't need to be a
human rights expert to
take a human rights-
based approach

Q&A

5
9