# B-Tech Africa Project - A part of UN Human Rights B-Tech Project

## B-Tech Africa project overview

The United Nations (UN) recognizes technology's contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the overall development efforts in Africa. At the same time, there is an understanding that the use and development of technologies at scale can have civic, social, economic, political, and environmental impacts that may sometimes be unintended or unplanned, resulting in the infringement of human rights. To prevent and mitigate such risks, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) plans to engage with African governments, technology companies, startups, civil society, academics and investors under the B-Tech Project to proactively pledge to and implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

## What is the goal of B-Tech Africa?

Under the Africa component of the B-Tech Project, UN Human Rights will engage strategically with technology company operators, investors and other key digital economy stakeholders, including civil society, across Africa in a set of African economies and their tech hubs to create awareness of implementing the UNGPs on BHR. This will be achieved through three key activities:

- **Part 1**: Analysis of legislative and policy framework to address technology-driven human rights harms to inform a meaningful framing for stakeholder engagement.
- **Part 2**: Strategic and impactful policy engagement with governments in the region and coherent policy responses to technology-driven adverse human rights impacts.
- **Part 3**: Engagement with the tech community and key stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities for effective implementation of the UNGPs.

We will build on B-Tech Project's foundational papers (available on the B-Tech portal) and contextualize key concepts of responsible business conduct –highlighting their relevance and importance in supporting the responsible development and use of technologies in African markets.

## Why does it matter for tech companies operating in African markets?

Not only are many tech businesses operating in African economies still young, some of them also make it their core mission to contribute to the Sustainable Development Agenda. A sustainable digitalization in African markets can only be achieved if it builds on corporate respect for human rights. The UNGPs set out a principled approach for all companies –regardless of industry sector,

size, structure, or operating context– to conduct business responsibly, identify risks to people and take action to address them. For technology companies, this includes that they anticipate and address issues that might occur related to the use of their products and services. The UNGPs are a powerful tool for guiding technology company conduct because they are internationally agreed upon and supported by diverse stakeholders, including businesses, governments, and civil society worldwide. For entrepreneurs and executives in all parts of the tech industry, the UNGPs provide a roadmap for operationalizing respect for human rights as part of how they do business, no matter the enterprise's focus, size or complexity.

*We are open for engagement with all stakeholders. For more information, please contact our team by emailing: OHCHR-B-techproject@un.org*

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