



B-Tech

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Embassy of Switzerland in the Republic of Korea



Business roundtable
**“Governing innovation responsibly –
Responsible business conduct and digital rights”**

16 August 2024, 10 - 11.30 AM

Embassy of Switzerland in the Republic of Korea
77 Songwol-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03165

The steady advancement of technological innovation has sparked debates globally on how to govern digital technologies, and specifically AI and generative AI. A plethora of approaches for doing so co-exist, while several States such as under the auspices of the [G7 Hiroshima Process](#), the [OECD AI Group of Experts](#) as well as [Net Mundial in Brazil](#) have been endorsing a human-rights based approach. There has also been an increased focus on regulating AI, with the European Union adopting its AI Act, the Council of Europe adopting a Convention on AI and other States such as Brazil and Kenya considering their regulatory approaches to AI.

Over the past 30 years, South Korea has made building its digital sector a high priority. The country is a world leader in semiconductor chip production and has one of the highest broadband rates in the world. It has also made significant strides in the field of AI, and in 2019, South Korea launched its National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence. In early 2023, the National Assembly and the Ministry of Science and ICT initiated a law on AI and debates about it are still ongoing, as well as other proposed amendments to existing laws that may impact the use and development of AI in the country. In May 2024, South Korea co-hosted the AI Seoul Summit building on the inaugural AI Safety Summit in Bletchley, U.K.

While key decision-makers contend with concrete policy making choices regarding AI, international human rights law (IHRL) provides a crucial common normative baseline from which to depart. Frameworks based on IHRL like the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs), including the guidance emerging from the [OHCHR B-Tech Project](#), along with the [OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises for Responsible Business Conduct](#) serve as a solid foundation to help shape responsible AI governance, including responsible business practice and rights-respecting regulation in the technology space.

OHCHR is seeking an opportunity to engage with regional business stakeholders perspectives under the auspices of the [B-Tech Project](#) about emerging challenges, and best practices regarding responsible AI governance and promote digital rights in this area. This event will be co-hosted in cooperation with S Embassy of Switzerland in the Republic of Korea and the Seoul National University’s AI Policy Initiative (SAPI). Please note that this roundtable will be conducted under Chatham House Rule.

Objectives:

1. Expand the engagement with technology companies in the region regarding the understanding/uptake of digital rights, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
2. Learn from technology companies in the region about their current practices on responsible AI and digital rights.



This roundtable is facilitated with funding from the European Union.



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Agenda

- 10.00am Opening remarks & welcome, Embassy of Switzerland in the Republic of Korea
- 10.10am Introduction to the B-Tech Project and UN Human Rights work on technical standard setting, Dr Isabel Ebert, Yoojin Kim, UN Human Rights
- 10.20am Landscape of Trustworthy AI and the role of human rights, Seoul National University AI Policy Initiative (SAPI), Prof. Stephan Sonnenberg
- 10.30am Roundtable discussion (each company representative is invited to present their work on AI governance for 2-3 minutes)
- 11.20am Follow-up and concluding remarks

Questions for discussion:

- Setting the scene: What is the state of play? Which are the key trends of policy and regulatory approaches applying human rights to shape AI governance?
- What is the status quo of company practice in the region regarding responsible AI governance?
- What does due diligence for the development and deployment AI entail with regard to risk to people, and how does it differ from approaches for earlier iterations of digital technologies? What is the role of technical standards in this?
- How can digital rights inform AI risk assessment and mitigation methodologies and what are lessons-learned from existing risk assessment and risk mitigation methodologies?

Background on B-Tech Business Engagement: The role of the UNGPs in guiding responsible business conduct in AI development and deployment

The [B-Tech Project](#) provides authoritative guidance and resources for implementing the UNGPs in the technology sector. In 2019, UN Human Rights launched the project after consultations with civil society, business, States, and other experts about the scope of the B-Tech Project, including consultations hosted in Seoul. The engagement this year will build on these initial conversations and deepen the exchange about responsible business conduct in the technology sector, with a specific emphasis on AI. The process-oriented and risk-based approach of UNGPs speaks to the governance and management systems that companies have to have in place to identify, prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on human rights, including for the development and deployment of AI.

How can companies be substantively involved with the B-Tech Project?

Companies from all parts of the digital technology industry are invited to participate in B-Tech Project convenings, consultations and webinars. Staff representing these tech companies should be expected to contribute to conversations and to share group findings with their corporate teams with the purpose of integrating human rights frameworks and processes into actionable work plans. Information about engagement opportunities can be found on the B-Tech Project Portal on the UN Human Rights website.

Background on OHCHR's work on technical standards and human rights:

Mandated by the Human Rights Council Resolution [47/23](#), OHCHR organized an expert consultation at the Human Rights Council (HRC) followed by a report examining the relationship between technical standards and human rights ([A/HRC/53/42](#)) presented to the HRC in 2023. It explores how human rights considerations can be integrated into technical standard-setting processes, such as related to AI.



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