Phase 5: Analysis & follow-up measures

Step 5.1: Coding & analysing findings

How to prioritise human rights issues according to their impact severity?

After using the phases to assess the human rights impacts of your operations in a specific country or destination, you now have a good overview of the main human rights issue areas (potentially) occurring along your specific value chain assessed. The last step before defining concrete follow-up measures is to prioritise the issue areas identified. While you might intuitively want to prioritise the topics, you have most influence over[1], international standards require you to first evaluate the **'severity'** of the human rights impacts identified. This means understanding how severe the impacts might be on the people (potentially) affected, independent of your ability to influence.

To assess the 'severity' of each impact area, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Scope:** How widespread would an impact be, e.g. number of people affected?
- **Scale:** How grave or serious would an impact be?
- **Irremediability**: What are the limits to restoring the individual impacted to at least the same, or equivalent to, her or his situation before the adverse impact occurred?

While it is not necessary for an impact to have more than one of these characteristics to be considered 'severe', it is often the case that the greater the scale or the scope of an impact, the less it is 'remediable'.[2] It is important is to have a rights-holder perspective rather than a business perspective.

The table below suggests how the parameters to assess severity might be applied in a human rights impact assessment.

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[1] The download on identification of leverage in the step follow-up measures of phase 5 provides you with relevant information on your ability to influence potentially negative impacts.

[2] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2011): Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/GuidingprinciplesBusinesshr_eN.pdf, p. 20, 31.

Assessing impact severity[3]

Examples how to evaluate impact severity		
Severity of impact	**Scale** (including consideration of vulnerability)	Potentially more severe: An 18-year-old housekeeper sexually harassed by a foreign tourist
		Potentially less severe: A 14-year-old helping in the restaurant of his or her parents
	Scope	Potentially more severe: A whole community is affected by forced relocation due to a big tourism-related infrastructure project (e.g. construction of a new airport or highway)
		Potentially less severe: Three or four individuals working at a restaurant are affected by the opening of a new restaurant
	Irremediability	Potentially more severe: A worker contracts an incurable disease due to a lack of appropriate health and safety measures
		Potentially less severe: A worker is fired on a discriminatory basis but can be promptly reinstated with appropriate compensation, apologies and guarantee of non-repetition

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[3] Danish Institute for Human Rights (2016): Analysing impacts practitioners supplement, https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/business/hria_toolbox/phase_3/phase_3_analysing_impacts_prac_sup_final_jan2016.pdf, p. 9.