

Saliency Assessment

Executive Summary



Verizon's Saliency Assessment - Executive Summary

Introduction Verizon Communications, Inc. ("Verizon") is one of the world's leading providers of technology and communications services to consumers, businesses, and governmental agencies. The company's customers range from individual wireless consumers in the United States to global multinational enterprises.

Verizon is committed to operating with respect for internationally recognized human rights, as set forth in its [Human Rights Statement](#). In 2021, Verizon undertook its first enterprise-wide human rights saliency assessment to affirm the human rights issues most salient to Verizon's business and to lay a foundation for our future human rights work.

Verizon engaged Article One, a business & human rights consultancy, to conduct the assessment. Verizon has prepared this executive summary of the assessment's findings and recommendations.

Methodology The Article One team conducted desktop research, reviewed internal Verizon documents, and was also informed by extensive engagement with both internal and external stakeholders.

Salient Human Rights Issues and Opportunities The assessors identified the human rights issues set forth below as most salient for Verizon, given the nature of its operations. For each of these issues, the assessor noted that Verizon has existing governance processes in place to assess and manage risk, while also identifying recommendations to continue to strengthen Verizon's approach to human rights governance.

- *Right to Privacy* - The products and services that Verizon offers requires the processing of data, including consumer personal information. Verizon strives to offer products and services that meet changing consumer demands and are on the forefront of technological developments. For example, the development and use of new and emerging technologies such as 5G, IoT, and AR/VR may generate new considerations regarding privacy impacts.

Verizon seeks to operate with respect for individuals' right to privacy. We endeavor to communicate transparently on privacy matters, and respect individuals' choices about the use of their data.

- *Right to be Free from Discrimination* - Verizon's policies and practices related to non-discrimination and equality impact its employees and contractors, customers, and society more broadly. Verizon also assesses and manages questions regarding unfair bias in the context of the design and/or

deployment of AI-enabled applications and systems.

Verizon seeks to operate with respect for the right to non-discrimination. The company is committed to fostering an inclusive working environment, and celebrates diversity across all spectrums. In technology design and use, Verizon evaluates and addresses the risks of potential biases to prevent discriminatory outcomes and is taking steps to ensure that technology delivers benefits to all, including vulnerable and marginalized groups.

- *Right to Freedom of Expression and Opinion* - Verizon's customers produce, store, and share content using Verizon products and services. The policies that we set and implement, as well as disruptions to Verizon's services due to natural disasters or man-made attacks, can impact people's ability to express, receive, and impart information.

Verizon seeks to operate with respect for the right to freedom of expression and information, and recognizes that our network and technologies play an important role in enabling this right for our customers. Diverse parts of the company, ranging from our legal and policy teams to our network engineers, have a role to play in these efforts.

- *Rights in the Workplace and Supply Chain* - Verizon is a large employer and also works with diverse suppliers in an extended supply chain. Verizon's workplace policies and practices, and those of its suppliers, may impact a range of human rights related to working conditions and conditions of employment. Given the company's dependence on equipment manufacturers, forced labor is a risk in Verizon's supply chain.

Verizon seeks to operate with respect for the rights of our workers, which includes treating employees and contractors with respect and dignity. In addition, we expect suppliers to respect workers' human rights and to take steps to mitigate potential risks of forced labor, child labor, and other human rights violations.

Beyond identification of Verizon's most salient human rights issues, the assessors also identified opportunities for Verizon to integrate greater attention to human rights in the following key areas:

- Climate Change (Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment)
- Digital Safety
- Digital Inclusion

Recommendations and Next Steps

The results of the saliency assessment affirmed and expanded our areas of focus and will provide a strong foundation for our human rights efforts, led by our dedicated [Business & Human Rights Program \(BHRP\)](#), going forward. The saliency assessment also complemented and informed a parallel materiality assessment conducted by our wider ESG team (for more information see [our 2021 ESG Report](#)).

Looking ahead, Article One recommended several actions to support Verizon in managing its salient human rights issues. Verizon will continually assess these findings as it considers opportunities for progress over time. Below we highlight some of the recommendations from the assessment:

- **Continue to strengthen and invest in robust governance and oversight of human rights and our salient issues.** These efforts are underway as part of the ongoing work of the BHRP, which is continually supporting the development and facilitation of decision-making that takes account of human rights issues in a range of areas. This includes for instance, supporting AI governance processes to address issues related to the right to be free from discrimination.
- **Assess opportunities to embed human rights due diligence efforts into more functions over time.** The BHRP is working closely with the wider ESG team to integrate human rights considerations in a broad range of areas, informed by its saliency assessment. These areas include environmental/sustainability efforts, digital safety and digital inclusion.
- **Consider opportunities to strengthen access to remedy by reviewing the communication channels by which stakeholders may raise issues related to the human rights impacts of our activities.** The BHRP continually assesses Verizon's transparency efforts and communication channels, in collaboration with other relevant partners, to further the aim of affording stakeholders appropriate information on our policies and efforts, and to provide avenues for raising issues and seeking remedy as necessary.