

HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE: ROLES AND  
CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY PROFESSIONAL  
IN THAILAND



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## 6584002751 : MAJOR POPULATION POLICY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

KEYWORD Sustainability Professional, Human Rights Due Diligence, ESG, STAKEHOLDERS, Company, Thailand

Pimpilai Rumthum : HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE: ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY PROFESSIONAL IN THAILAND. Advisor: CHADATAN OSATIS, Ph.D.

This study examines the role of sustainability professionals in driving Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) within organizations and provides valuable insights into their responsibilities, competencies, and impact. As there was no study done to understand this particular career that tends to be trendy for sustainability businesses to achieve their goals beyond financial efficiency. The study examines the tasks, competencies, and impact of sustainability professionals from different viewpoints of related stakeholders.

Using primary data gathered through semi-structured interviews, the research investigates the question that sustainability professionals positively contribute to HRDD processes. Through 9 interviews with key informants from diverse backgrounds, including sustainability officers, talent acquisition managers, HRDD experts, and Civil Society representatives. Content and thematic analysis were conducted using qualitative data analysis software from Atlas.Ti and the Knowledges, Skills, Abilities (KSAs) concept employed to better understand the role and capabilities of the sustainability persons through the code and theme mentioned by the interviews.

Found that sustainability professionals require diverse skills, encourage stakeholder engagement, interdisciplinary knowledge, adaptability, and policy experience to effectively carry out their HRDD duties. Involving sustainability experts in decision-making and cross-functional teams contributes to a thorough and integrated approach. They play a critical role in promoting ethical business practices and respecting human rights. Policy recommendations for businesses, job seekers, educators, and the public include clear company policies, compliance with Environmental Social Governance (ESG) frameworks, supplier engagement, skill development, curriculum development, and stakeholder collaboration for overall human development.

Field of Study:	Population Policy and Human Development	Student's Signature .....
Academic Year:	2022	Advisor's Signature .....

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
BHR	Business and Human Rights	Field focusing on the relationship between business activities and the protection and promotion of human rights.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	The ultimate decision-maker in a company, accountable for all business aspects including operations, marketing, finance, HR, etc. Key figure shaping strategic direction and overall success.
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	Business approach integrating social and environmental concerns into operations to positively impact society and stakeholders.
CSO	Civil Society Organizations	Non-governmental, Non-Profit entities driven by public interests, advocating for social causes, human rights, and community development. Operate independently of the government, contributing to participation and social progress.
ESG	Environment, Social, Governance	A framework for evaluating a company's sustainability and ethical practices. It considers environmental impact, social responsibility, and corporate governance to assess long-term value and societal impact.
HR	Human Resources	The department manages recruitment, screening, training, and benefits. It supports the company in finding and developing qualified employees.
HRDD	Human Rights Due Diligence	A systematic process for businesses to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for human rights impacts in their operations and value chains, aligning with international standards.
NAP BHR	National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights	Initiated by the Royal Thai Government to address human rights violations, including impacts by businesses. Aims to fulfill duty in responding to human rights concerns.
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	A set of 17 global goals adopted by UN member states to address social, economic, and environmental challenges by 2030.
SEC	The Securities and Exchange Commission, Thailand	Independent state agency established in 1992 to supervise and develop the Thai capital market. Aims to ensure efficiency, fairness, transparency, and integrity, focusing on orderly markets, investor protection, innovation, and competition.

Abbreviation	Full Term	Explanation
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Small-scale businesses with limited personnel and revenue, often operating below prescribed thresholds or size requirements.
UNGPs	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights	The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights is a comprehensive framework comprising 31 principles that operationalize the United Nations' "Protect, Respect and Remedy" approach. These principles are specifically designed to address the critical matter of human rights in relation to transnational corporations and other business enterprises.
UN	United Nations	Intergovernmental organization promoting peace, security, cooperation, and harmonizing global actions. Aims to foster friendly relations and facilitate international collaboration among nations.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

The global discourse on sustainability has significantly transformed due to the United Nations' 2037 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to address environmental, social, and economic challenges. These goals cover issues like poverty eradication, climate action, gender equality, and responsible consumption. As businesses drive economic growth and innovation, they must adopt approaches considering their broader societal and environmental responsibilities. This shift in mindset requires organizations to align their strategies with sustainable principles and embed them into core operations and decision-making processes. This paradigm shift presents both opportunities and challenges for the private sector.

The adoption of the SDGs, as well as the increased emphasis on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, has significantly impacted responsible corporate practices, particularly in the context of human rights. Integrating ESG considerations, which include human rights, into corporate decision-making is critical for organizations to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. ESG frameworks assist businesses in evaluating their performance across environmental, social, and governance measurements, allowing them to identify and manage any human rights issues. Adopting SDGs and ESG principles improves a company's reputation, builds stakeholder trust, and boosts long-term business resilience. Aligning with the SDGs and ESG principles displays a commitment to human rights, attracting socially conscious consumers, investors, and partners, resulting in expanded market potential and financial sustainability. Adhering to the SDGs and ESG principles, on the other hand, poses hurdles for companies. A fundamental shift in thinking and organizational culture and major expenditures in resources, systems, and processes are required. Companies must engage in capacity building and training to provide their workers, especially sustainability professionals, with the information and skills needed to drive responsible business practices effectively. Furthermore, effective implementation necessitates engagement and partnerships with stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations, to use their expertise and ensure meaningful inclusion of human rights issues.

Many countries implement the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) to promote responsible business practices. The UNGPs, established in 2011, outline the obligations of states and businesses to uphold, safeguard, and provide remedies for human rights violations in business activities. The framework consists of three pillars: state responsibility to protect human rights, corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and access to redress for victims. This promotes corporate responsibility, ensuring businesses integrate human rights

considerations and undertake Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) to mitigate risks and uphold the rights of individuals and communities affected by their operations. Where dimensions of sustainable development invoke values that inevitably conflict in any complex social interaction to derive strategies for collective action. (Ratner, 2004).

To respond and make Human Rights concerns out of the country's prosperity, Thailand is trying to change and enable a responsible business environment through business governance towards sustainability achievements. United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) is a framework that specifies the duties of states and businesses to respect, protect, and remedy human rights violations in business activities. The UNGPs were developed in 2011 and is based on three pillars:

1. Protect: the state's responsibility to protect human rights
2. Respect: the corporate responsibility to respect human rights
3. Remedy: the need for victims of human rights abuses to have access to remedies

The UNGPs have become a widely recognized and influential framework for addressing human rights issues associated with business activities, promoting corporate responsibility, and ensuring that business operations respect human rights. Thailand, as a member of the United Nations, has committed to upholding the principles of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) since its adoption in 2011. Several measures have been taken by the Thai government in order to comply with the UNGPs.

The 2019 launch of Thailand's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP) outlines the nation's commitment to promoting business respect for human rights. Based on the UNGP, the NAP describes a series of actions to be taken by the government, businesses, and civil society in order to enhance human rights outcomes in the context of business activities. The NAP acknowledges the significance of providing investors and stakeholders with complete and accurate information regarding the sustainability performance of companies, including their efforts to respect human rights. As mentioned in Benjamin & Maria (2018) that "A NAP is a guide on how states can protect and how businesses can respect human rights. It also provides a guide on how access to effective remedy can be granted to victims of abuses. Its implementation rests on the operationalization of the recommendations through changes in law and policies established by different ministries and offices in government. This is a sign that Thailand have fully commit to protect the rights of all stakeholders that could be impacted from Business.

As the result from NAP, in 2021, The One Report was introduced by the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The purpose of the report is to expedite reporting requirements and provide investors with

more comprehensive information about the sustainability performance of businesses. Significantly influenced by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP) and the country's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (see detail in Table 1), it is required listed companies to report on their ESG performance using a standardized framework. It seeks to provide investors with more comprehensive information on the sustainability performance of companies while simplifying reporting requirements. The One Report initiative's reporting framework is founded on international standards, including the United Nations Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards.

**Table 1:** Thailand's Advancement of Responsible Business Practices

Year	
June 2011	The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) was launched. Provide a Framework for businesses and governments to mitigate business-related human rights consequences.
May 2016	Thailand's initials interact on UNGPs. Thailand suggested to develop, enact, and implement its National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights.
October 2019	The Securities and Exchange Commission, Thailand introduced the concept idea of "one report 56-1", the annual reporting on ESG performances*
December 2019	The first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2019-2022) was officially announced.
March 2022	Mandatory submission of One Report 56-1, listed companies must publish their sustainability performance <sup>1</sup> using the One Report framework in their annual report beginning in fiscal year 2021.

Source: Created by the author based on Dokho, M., & Thame, C. (2019).<sup>1</sup>

The table summarizes Thailand's journey towards promoting business sustainability and human rights, including its actions on Business and Human Rights, its commitment to developing National Action Plans, the introduction of ESG reporting requirements, and the announcement of the first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

It must be accepted that the current requirements and trades can lead to different actions and perceptions on how businesses should be conducted. According to

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<sup>1</sup> The Securities and Exchange Commission of Thailand merges two reports; the annual registration statement (Form 56-1) and annual report (Form 56-2), formally referring to them as the Form 56-1 One Report, take into account the impact on society and the environment including data on greenhouse gas emissions and respect for human rights. It was applicable to the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021. Thirathon, U., & Mitrapanont, K. (2022). Effects of a Governing Body on Internal Audit Quality: Empirical Evidence from Thailand.



Achavanuntakul (2022), "Thai companies are currently facing challenges in implementing HRDD and integrating its findings into their business operations. The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) study on Mapping Private Sector Engagement in Human Rights in 2019 revealed that only 12% of Thai companies listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand carry out HRDD. Additionally, only 2.2% announced their acceptance of the UNGPs, usually large companies." This demonstrates that, despite the detailed framework, private entities still need help to achieve sustainability toward human rights.

In contrast, what could happen if no mechanism identifies human rights concerns? This example in April 2015 could be a lesson learned when the European Union issued a cautionary notice to Thailand regarding its insufficient efforts to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The issue of human rights in Thailand has been brought to the forefront due to the association between illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and instances of forced labor and human trafficking within the fishing sector. As Chantavanich et al. (2016) found that through the recruitment to employment processes, migrant workers were exploited and taken advantage of. Not only are businesses responsible for these concerns, but on the other hand, the government is mandated to ensure regulation to mitigate and eliminate this issue. In response, the government implemented measures, including structure change, legal amendments, and passage of new laws and other instruments. This is one of the cases that could happen in different businesses in Thailand.

However, government action alone is often insufficient in addressing complex human rights issues like forced labor and human trafficking in the Thai labor market. These problems are deeply rooted and require a multifaceted approach involving the active engagement of sustainability professionals. Sustainability professionals are essential in addressing human rights challenges in Thailand. They drive change within businesses, advocate for responsible practices, conduct human rights due diligence, and collaborate with stakeholders to protect workers' rights. Their expertise and dedication are crucial for implementing sustainable solutions and promoting a fair and ethical labor market. By working with governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and international partners, sustainability professionals contribute to Thailand's more sustainable and just labor market, ensuring human rights protection, worker dignity, and responsible business practices.

Various frameworks and reporting matrices serve as reference guidelines for private businesses to consider and disclose their analysis and planning. However, there is still a literature review gap indicating that while requirement processes are publicly identified, companies must also identify personnel capable of fulfilling this regulation and managing internal talent in this situation. Midwinter (2019) study that discusses innovation as an instrument of the Human Rights Due Diligence mechanism then suggested "An analysis of sustainability teams and the factors for success in respecting human rights." It should be studied assuming that multiskilled individuals may be one

positive input to the HRDD mechanism, but it should not be only one factor. He recommends studying specific positions, namely sustainability workers/teams from private companies, to determine if they are an essential internal driver of the company's HRDD mechanism. Furthermore, a deeper investigation of the relationship between particular careers from private human resources can reduce the limitation of academic papers.

## **1.2 Significance and contribution of the study**

This study seeks to identify the relationships between stakeholders, human rights due diligence, and emerging professions to fill the gap left by Midwinter's research and produce significant results. These relationships can significantly advance the population studies field by revealing business changes that will impact future employment in the business sector.

First, as suggested in Human Rights Due Diligence, it can improve comprehension by offering more profound insight into the connection between stakeholder engagement and a growing profession. To a greater level of awareness, this comprehension can be of assistance to organizations and stakeholders in making decisions that are better informed, taking into consideration the interests of stakeholders.

Second, the research has the potential to have an impact on practice by providing organizations and policymakers with valuable insights and recommendations for how to incorporate stakeholder theory and Human Rights Due Diligence into their practices and policies, as well as how to foster the development of careers that are relevant to these areas. Hopefully, this study can assist businesses and be relevant in promoting sustainable practices that balance the interests of various stakeholders, such as employees, consumers, and investors.

## **1.3 Objectives and research questions**

To identify personnel capable of fulfilling HRDD regulations and managing internal talent. This study aims to determine whether particular job roles, such as sustainability professionals, are significant internal drivers of the organization's HRDD mechanism. So that this research prioritizes this central question:

**"What beneficial effects do sustainability professionals? have  
have on a company's Human Rights Due Diligence?"**

The advances knowledge may offer valuable suggestions for businesses and policymakers on how sustainability professionals can positively contribute to company mechanisms to identify Human Rights risks through their due diligence processes. This study hopes to identify the findings of the main question along with the following questions;

1. What specific tasks or responsibilities related to HRDD, do sustainability professionals typically undertake within the company?
2. What are the key competencies or skills do sustainability professionals need to effectively drive HRDD within the company?

The first question could focus on understanding the precise HRDD-related duties and responsibilities that sustainability experts carry out inside the organization. The second inquiry might examine the critical talents or skills required for sustainability experts to successfully push HRDD throughout the organization once these duties and responsibilities have been defined. This would make it easier to pinpoint the precise knowledge, skills, and ability of sustainability professionals required to support the company's HRDD efforts effectively.

#### **1.4 Relevant concept and theory**

This study considered the stakeholder perspective and offers an alternate viewpoint when considering value creation between businesses and individuals. Stakeholder theory emphasizes that companies should prioritize the interests of all those affected by their operations, not just shareholders. This study utilizes stakeholder theory to identify key stakeholders in the relationship between sustainability professionals and Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) within companies. It also examines sustainability professionals' competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) that contribute to their impact on HRDD. Understanding these factors is essential for promoting responsible business practices and addressing global concerns.

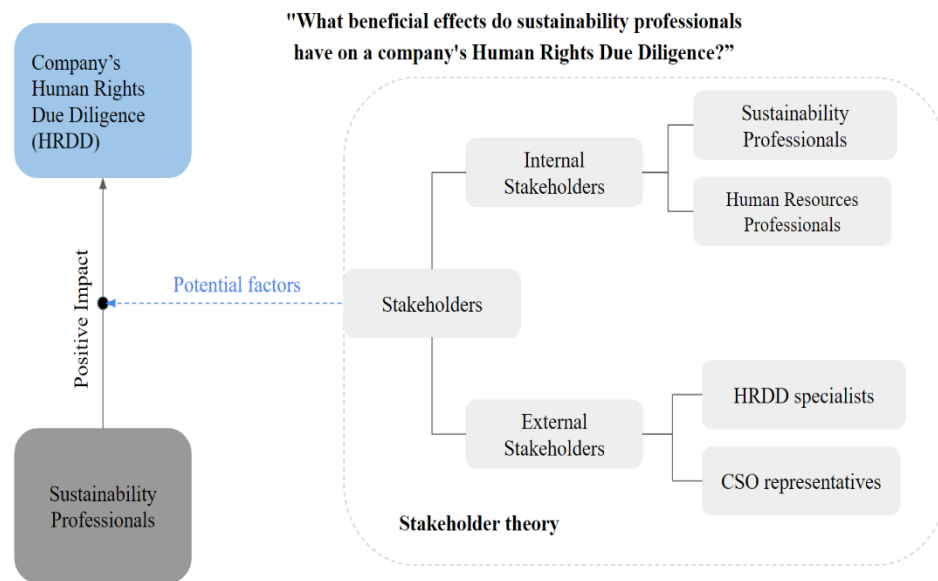
##### **1.4.1 Stakeholder Theory**

When looking at value creation and exchange between businesses and individuals, the stakeholder perspective offers an alternate viewpoint. According to Freeman et al., 2010, companies should benefit everyone whose interests are affected by their operations, not only shareholders. Companies and people are not autonomous entities; they are connected and reliant on one another, with different stakeholder groups having different interests and demands. This point of view acknowledges that a company's success is determined by its financial results and capacity to provide value for its many stakeholders. Clarkson (1995) viewpoint of the concept of stakeholder theory emphasizes that a company's performance should not be determined solely by shareholder wealth. Stakeholders include a broader spectrum of individuals and organizations with a vested interest in the company's operations. The economic and social purpose of the corporation is to generate and distribute wealth and value among all primary stakeholder groups without favoring one group over another. By recognizing the significance of engaging with and considering all stakeholders' interests, a business can better comprehend and meet their diverse needs and expectations. Prioritizing stakeholders and

actively pursuing their input and perspectives can contribute to achieving the company's goals.

This study uses stakeholder theory to identify key stakeholders within the relationship between sustainability professionals and management of the company's Human Rights Due diligence. As UNGP's 2nd pillar is about private businesses respecting the human rights of different stakeholders within their operation, From the business responsibility initiative to a principle-based initiative, UNGPs had contributed to the change of the company's code of conduct upholding their responsibility firmly even though this is a voluntary base approach (Rasche & Waddock, 2021).

This theory contributes to the motivation and demonstration of why it is one of the keys to consider implementing around this matter by recognizing the importance of considering the interests of all stakeholders in a company's decision-making processes and impact on company's Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD). The UNGPs emphasize that businesses are responsible for respecting human rights, which includes undertaking due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for their potential adverse human rights impacts. "It is a process by which businesses are expected to assess actual and potential human rights impacts, integrate and act upon the findings, track the responses, and communicate how those impacts are addressed." (McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021). HRDD is a crucial instrument for implementing the UNGPs, as it entails identifying and assessing actual and prospective human rights risks, taking action to prevent or mitigate these risks, and tracking and reporting the outcomes of these actions (Achavanuntakul, 2017b).



The layout of this study can be seen in Figure 1. This is potentially beneficial in describing the study question and associated implications.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework to find potential positive factors influencing the company's HRDD through different stakeholders' views.

Source: Created by the author.

From the figure, the use of stakeholder theory in this study highlights the crucial role of sustainability experts in ensuring that all stakeholders' interests are considered during Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) procedures. The involvement of these people is essential for developing corporate practices consistent with the UNGPs' principles on business and human rights and for encouraging constructive change. The need to consider stakeholder interests when deciding on HRDD procedures is emphasized by stakeholder theory, which presents an appealing point of view.

As in the figure that mentioned 'sustainability professionals' this means to verify if such career can thrive through their need to better corporate practice battling global concerns.

The link between sustainability and human rights is underlined, developing good attitudes toward sustainability careers. This award emphasizes the importance of sustainability professionals in creating good change inside a company and improving responsible business practices. As the importance of sustainability in tackling global concerns grows, so does the role of sustainability professionals as emerging leaders. They have the knowledge and experience to manage the intricate interplay between sustainability and human rights, allowing them to contribute to creating a more sustainable and

equitable future. Emerging careers are associated with innovative fields or industries that are rapidly evolving and require specialized skills and knowledge. These careers often arise in response to new challenges, opportunities, or trends in the global landscape (Kettunen, 2021).

#### **1.4.2 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)**

In this study, it is essential to identify sustainability professionals' influence competencies to gain insights into their impact. Competencies, which are widely recognized as comprising knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA model), significantly improve performance (Ulrich, 2008). In certain instances, researchers and professionals have employed the terms "KSAs" and "competencies" in a mutually interchangeable manner (Ahsan et al., 2013). The KSA model offers an extensive structure for understanding the necessary competencies to excel in a specific role or task.

*Knowledge* can be defined as individuals' conceptual comprehension and empirical data. *Skills* can be defined as the tangible proficiencies and methodologies that individuals develop through repeated application and accumulated knowledge. *Abilities* refer to the inherent qualities and responsibilities that individuals have. In the context of sustainability professionals and their influence on a company's Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD), these professionals' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are essential.

#### **1.5 Key Terminologies**

In this study, there are important terms that are significant to understand by readers; these two terms are sustainability professional as a career that comes with the responsibility and expectation of company and individual to perform in the task that may be related to another key term, which is Human Rights Due Diligence or in this paper would refer as HRDD. This section aims to provide information learned regarding these two essential elements.

#### **Sustainability professionals**

The concept of "sustainable careers" has gained significant attention as a prominent perspective in understanding contemporary professional paths. Scholars have started to develop conceptual frameworks to define the notion of sustainability within the context of careers (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2017); (Kossek et al., 2014). The idea of sustainable careers offers a potential source of resilience for individuals navigating the

complexities and uncertainties of the modern career landscape. It adopts an ecosystem perspective that recognizes the contribution of numerous actors, including people, organizations, and labor markets, in establishing and maintaining careers.

With modern job descriptions suggesting on media, sustainability professionals play a crucial role in addressing organizations' environmental, social, and economic challenges. They work to develop sustainable solutions that reduce negative environmental impacts, promote social well-being, and guarantee long-term prosperity (Međugorac et al., 2020). Their roles may include undertaking sustainability assessments, formulating strategies and action plans, monitoring and reporting on sustainability performance, engaging stakeholders, and driving organizational change toward more sustainable practices. It is essential to recognize that sustainability professionals have diverse roles and expertise, reflecting the complex nature of sustainability across industries and sectors as a good example of this positions competency displayed in table 2.

Willard et al. (2010) had highlighted that the role of a sustainability coordinator or sustainability consultant necessitates specific key competencies to carry out job duties successfully. The significance of significant sustainability issues and how they are perceived can vary based on the size and type of organization. Typically, larger organizations tend to view multiple issues as more critical. However, an exception arises when considering creating a business case for sustainability, which smaller organizations prioritize as more essential. This finding may explain why not all companies have this position as a traditional role, as it depends on the organizational context and priorities (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1994).



**Table 2:** Comprehensive Competencies and Learning Outcomes in Sustainability Professionals<sup>2</sup>

1 Knowledge (Concepts, Theories, Ideas, Processes)	2 Skills (Process Dynamics, Tools, Methodologies)	3 Attributes (Innate Abilities)	4 Performance Competencies (Job/Career Duties/ Responsibilities)	5 Intended Outcomes (Educational Goal or Job Expectation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niche Market</li> <li>• Basic Principles of Natural Systems</li> <li>• Business Model</li> <li>• Carbon Footprint</li> <li>• Ecological Integrity</li> <li>• Economics</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Environmental Justice</li> <li>• Environmental Management Systems</li> <li>• Gross National Product (GNP)</li> <li>• Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Supply Chain</li> <li>• Triple Bottom Line</li> <li>• Ecological Economics</li> <li>• Ecosystem Services</li> <li>• Efficiency</li> <li>• Externalities</li> <li>• Globalization</li> <li>• Gross Domestic Product (GDP)</li> <li>• Human Rights</li> <li>• Natural Resources and Biodiversity</li> <li>• Social Justice</li> <li>• Value Chain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution Prevention (P2)</li> <li>• Analysis of Environmental Problems</li> <li>• Cap and Trade</li> <li>• Socially Responsible Investing (SRI)</li> <li>• Pollution Trading</li> <li>• Systems Thinking</li> <li>• Business Case</li> <li>• Full Cost Accounting</li> <li>• The 4 P's of Marketing</li> <li>• Designing a Sustainable System</li> <li>• Life Cycle Analysis</li> <li>• Ecological Footprinting</li> <li>• Economic Restructuring</li> <li>• Effective Communication</li> <li>• Efficiency</li> <li>• Indicators and Indexes</li> <li>• Influencing the Organization</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• The Natural Step</li> <li>• Sustainability Planning</li> <li>• Systems Thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Change Agent</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Ethical</li> <li>• Decisive</li> <li>• Social Equity</li> <li>• Confident</li> <li>• Integrative and Adaptive</li> <li>• Local and Global Responsibility</li> <li>• Open-minded</li> <li>• Organizational Structuring</li> <li>• Systematic</li> <li>• Personal Responsibility</li> <li>• Precautionary</li> <li>• Proactive and Organized</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Process-Focused</li> <li>• Versatile</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greenhouse Gas Reductions</li> <li>2. Experience in Developing and Presenting Sustainable Business Concepts, Training, and Burgeoning Technologies</li> <li>3. Knowledge of Emerging Sustainable Business Strategies</li> <li>4. Measure Progress Through Use of Indicators</li> <li>5. Performs Life-Cycle Assessments</li> <li>6. Develop Resource Inventories</li> <li>7. Waste Elimination</li> <li>8. Environmental Policy/Planning</li> <li>9. Social Marketing to Change Consumer Behaviors</li> <li>10. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing and Supply-Chain Management</li> <li>11. Transportation Energy Saving</li> <li>12. Write and Present Annual Sustainability Reports</li> <li>13. Ability to Work With Teams to Evaluate Decisions Based on Financial And Sustainability Goals</li> <li>14. Design and Direct a Sustainability Operating System (SOS)</li> <li>15. Conduct Sustainability Audits</li> <li>16. Assist Departments in Development Of Metrics Specific to their Work Areas</li> <li>17. Understand Basic Principles That Govern Natural Systems</li> </ol>	<p><b>Corporate Sustainability Manager</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalization</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Green Building</li> <li>• Ecosystems</li> <li>• Adaptive Management</li> <li>• Tragedy of the Commons</li> <li>• Land Management</li> <li>• Basic Principles of Natural Systems</li> <li>• Low-Impact Development (LID)</li> <li>• Carbon Footprint</li> <li>• Ecological Integrity</li> <li>• Economics</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Environmental Justice</li> <li>• Intergenerational Equity</li> <li>• Natural Capital</li> <li>• Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Natural Resources and Biodiversity</li> <li>• Ecological Economics</li> <li>• Urban Design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation-Based Development</li> <li>• Analysis of Environmental Problems</li> <li>• Citizen Engagement</li> <li>• Community Development Assets</li> <li>• Community-Based Decision-Making</li> <li>• Effective Communication</li> <li>• Team Engagement</li> <li>• Ecological Footprinting</li> <li>• Economic Restructuring</li> <li>• Indicators and Indexes</li> <li>• Influencing the Organization</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Multilateral Organizations</li> <li>• Negotiation and Conflict Management</li> <li>• Pollution Prevention</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Project Planning</li> <li>• Public Discourse and Policy</li> <li>• SWOT Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precautionary</li> <li>• Open-minded</li> <li>• Systematic</li> <li>• Confident</li> <li>• Change Agent</li> <li>• Adaptable and Resourceful</li> <li>• Diplomatic</li> <li>• Observant</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Decisive</li> <li>• Democracy</li> <li>• Ethical</li> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Integrative and Adaptive</li> <li>• Lifelong Learning</li> <li>• Local and Global Responsibility</li> <li>• Logical</li> <li>• People-sensitive</li> <li>• Perceptive</li> <li>• Personal Responsibility</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Proactive and Organized</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Environmental Policy/Planning</li> <li>2. Effective Communicator</li> <li>3. Foster an Environment of Acceptance, Fairness, and Mutual Respect</li> <li>4. Transportation Planning</li> <li>5. Environmental Health and Quality Improvement</li> <li>6. Climate Change Research and Analysis</li> <li>7. Greenhouse Gas Reductions</li> <li>8. Resource Conservation</li> <li>9. Waste Elimination</li> <li>10. Foster an Environment of Acceptance, Fairness, and Mutual Respect</li> <li>11. Facilitation, Change Management, and Group Process Skills</li> <li>12. Project Management and Priority Setting</li> <li>13. Community Partnerships</li> <li>14. Identify Sustainability Project Funding Sources</li> <li>15. Develop New Initiatives That Promote Organizational or Community Sustainability</li> <li>16. Understand the Significance, Definition Process, and Utility For Sustainability Indicators</li> <li>17. Ability to Analyze Data, Evaluate Outcomes, and Recommend Actions</li> <li>18. Understand Basic Principles That Govern Natural Systems</li> <li>19. Recognize Cultural, Economic, and Political Forces That Affect Environmental Attitudes and Decision Making Based Upon Science and Technology Understanding</li> <li>20. Ability to Marshal Support</li> </ol>	<p><b>Sustainable Community Development Director</b></p>

Source: Willard et al. (2010) The sustainability professional: 2010 competency survey report. *Environmental Quality Management*, 20(1), 49-83.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.20271>

<sup>2</sup>In this study, the table used as a guiding to distinguish the understanding of what are requirement/ skills that may imply to this specific career beyond societal focus.



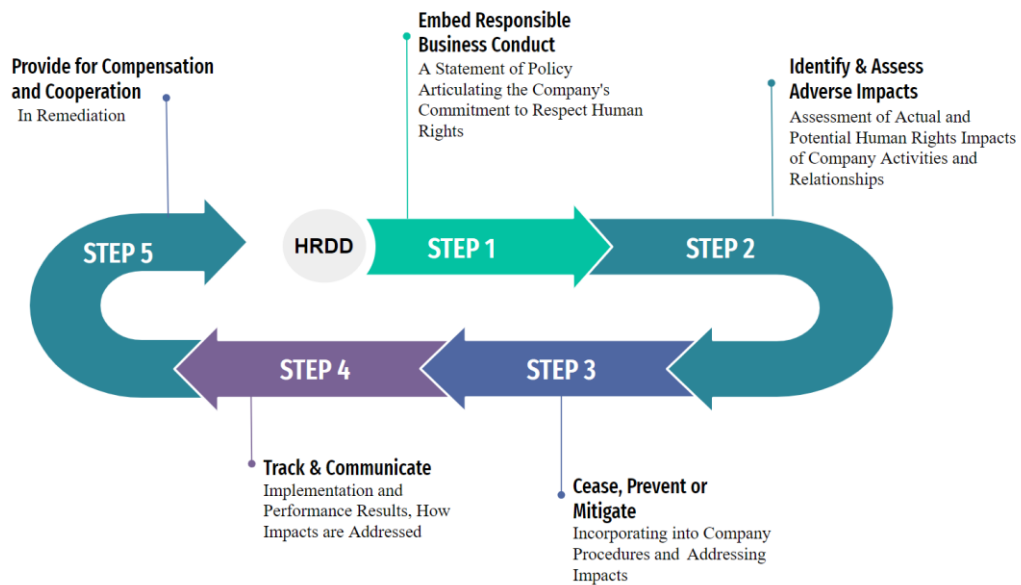
The table presented highlights the core competencies associated with sustainability as identified in "The Sustainability Professional: 2010 Competency Survey Report." This study is a noteworthy contribution to an implied understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for sustainability professionals from the analysis of experienced stakeholders. It offers valuable insights into the competencies required by individuals in the 'sustainability professional' role. It provides a deeper understanding of their contribution to the growth and progress of local private businesses. Notably, the report emphasizes the significance of a holistic understanding of sustainability, with particular attention to the social aspects, alongside the environmental dimension.

### **Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD)**

Human rights due diligence (HRDD) is an essential component of the "corporate responsibility to respect" as specified in Pillar II of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP). The UNGPs apply to all businesses, regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership, or organizational structure, and whether they are transnational or operate exclusively within a single nation. Therefore, HRDD applies to all businesses.

It refers to organizations' systematic and ongoing process to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for their potential adverse impacts on human rights. It involves assessing the actual and potential human rights risks associated with a company's operations, products, and services and its business relationships throughout its value chain. HRDD aims to ensure businesses respect and promote human rights in line with internationally recognized standards such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021). It involves identifying and addressing human rights issues, engaging with stakeholders, implementing appropriate measures, and monitoring and reporting progress as visually detailed on Figure 2. HRDD is essential for companies to fulfill their responsibility to respect human rights and contribute to sustainable development.

HRDD requires companies to assess impacts and risks in their value chain and act responsibly to prevent, mitigate and account for human rights abuses in which they may be involved through their own activities and business relationships (Lees, 2021).



**Figure 2:** Human Rights Due Diligence principles

Source: Created by the author based on Human Rights Due Diligence Training book<sup>3</sup>.

This figure illustrates the fundamental elements of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD), which assist businesses in identifying, preventing, mitigating, and accounting for their human rights impact. Through 5 steps;

1. Embed Responsibility Business conduct, public disclosure of the Company's policies and values regarding respecting human rights, how the Company would conduct itself concerning upholding human rights for internal and external stakeholders, including detailing the roles played by connected parties in the organizational hierarchy.
2. Identify and Assess Adverse Impacts, finding out who has or is likely to be impacted by a company's operations on human rights is necessary for assessing the actual or possible effects of those activities. The Company must communicate directly with individuals who will or could be impacted, including employees, suppliers, investors, local communities, etc.
3. Incorporating into Company Procedures and Addressing Impacts, integrating policies into evaluations, including internal and external oversight mechanisms for identifying and prioritizing concerns. Businesses must find a solution by integrating access to their operations difficulties. However, most are done through training and instruction with various tools and processes

<sup>3</sup> These are the principle provided through Achavanuntakul, S. (2017a). *Human Rights Due Diligence Handbook*. National Human Rights Commission Retrieved from <http://library.nhrc.or.th/ulib/dublin.php?ID=9203>

related to human rights issues ranging from labor to corporate governance. Engaging with stakeholders will make it easier for corporations to build policies and processes if there is work.

4. Track and Communicate Monitoring and Reporting Performance reporting empowers stakeholders. Investors, in particular, understand why the business is concerned about the issue, in addition to disseminating the impact assessment report on human rights, which can demonstrate business transparency.
5. Provide compensation and cooperation. It must remediate and remedy when the Company concludes it has caused or is contributing to harmful human rights effects. The Company should make the necessary changes or participate in correction through legitimate methods by developing or constructing a complaint channel for Stakeholders whom their operations may negatively impact to receive those complaints promptly and with immediate remedies.

HRDD is an organized process businesses use to effectively and ethically handle human rights issues (Lees, 2021; McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021; Midwinter, 2019). It includes recognizing potential risks, implementing preventive measures, reducing negative consequences, and ensuring accountability for human rights outcomes. By adhering to these principles, companies can improve their understanding of human rights risks and take appropriate actions to respect and promote human rights throughout their operations.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Emerging Perspectives on Private Sector's Responsibility

In recent years, a newfound awareness of the business sector's role in addressing societal and environmental issues has emerged. New viewpoints have emerged as a result of this change, highlighting the transforming function of corporations in solving urgent global problems. More and more people look to the private sector as an agent of progress and expect it to do so in ways that go well beyond simply making a profit. Businesses are urged to take on a more holistic view of responsibility, including environmental protection, positive social effects, and ethical decision-making.

#### 2.1.1 Environment, Social, Governance (ESG)

The notion of sustainability is to meet current requirements while ensuring that future generations can meet their own. In business, sustainability entails managing the triple bottom line, which includes financial, social, and environmental factors. This method assists firms in addressing risks and creating long-term value (Armstrong, 2020). The global awareness of climate change and its human-caused aspects, such as deforestation and fossil fuel consumption, has increased the relevance of sustainability. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) refers to a collection of criteria investors and stakeholders use to assess a company's sustainability and ethical practices. It consists of three main domains; Environmental factors, including carbon emissions, resource utilization, and waste management. Second, social elements include employee relations, community effect, and human rights respect. Finally, governance factors include board makeup, CEO salary, and decision-making process openness. Companies can measure their performance regarding sustainability goals and make educated decisions to improve their overall sustainability and ethical behavior by concentrating on these ESG aspects. This strategy not only assists organizations in reducing risks but it also creates trust and credibility among investors, consumers, and other stakeholders (Serafeim, 2020).

Since the private sector is driven primarily by the desire to maximize profits, long-term fiscal health is given top priority. Businesses can improve their ability to plan and set up reliable systems and procedures for obtaining and validating data on sustainable practices by implementing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices. By conducting in-depth assessments, businesses may see the effects of their sustainability efforts and report on their progress to those with a vested interest. Many studies have focused on management strategies that put stakeholders' needs first, as has been the connection between corporate sustainability and corporate financial

performance. Several recent studies have added to the existing literature by stressing the importance of stakeholder-oriented management in attaining sustainability and financial goals (Garcia et al., 2017; Wang & Sarkis, 2017).

### **2.1.2 Thailand mandatory 56-1 reporting**

A specific reporting requirement required by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of Thailand. It is an annual report that Thai publicly held businesses must provide. Report 56-1<sup>4</sup> aims to give shareholders, investors, and the general public financial information and other disclosures. As the regulatory body regulating the Thai capital market, the SEC requires the submittal of Report 56-1. The report is essential for promoting openness and accountability in the corporate sector. It allows stakeholders to make informed decisions and evaluate the company's financial health and performance by providing comprehensive financial data and disclosures. Additionally, the SEC's role in enforcing this reporting requirement aligns with its mission to support the implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (SEC, 2020).

One report can encourage companies to adopt more sustainable practices and reduce their negative impact on the environment. The reporting framework also helps investors make informed decisions by providing information about a company's ESG performance. By making this information publicly available, the Thai government is promoting greater corporate responsibility and contributing to a more sustainable future. As such, this reporting requirement is an essential step towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and creating a more equitable and environmentally friendly world with a strong emphasis on significant ESG factors, such as the effects on the environment, employee welfare, community involvement, anti-corruption practices, and corporate governance methods.

The reporting requirements are intended to motivate businesses to incorporate sustainability factors into their business plans, daily operations, and decision-making procedures. Companies are expected to show their dedication to sustainability through this reporting requirement, identify areas for improvement, and take the necessary steps to address ESG risks and opportunities. The 56-1 reporting framework supports Thailand's larger sustainability agenda by adhering to international standards and programs like the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. Even though UNGP is a non-binding framework, companies that may need to conduct one report could use UNGP principles to identify risks and other steps that benefit systemic reporting to authority in Thailand.

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<sup>4</sup>The merge of two reports that becomes one report 56-1 effective from the end of the year 2021.

The 56-1 reporting structure boosts the company's reputation and attracts socially responsible investors while supporting sustainable practices. Companies can develop stakeholder trust and demonstrate long-term viability by sharing ESG information. The structure also promotes transparency and responsibility between companies and stakeholders. The 56-1 reporting requirement will help Thailand achieve a more sustainable and fair future. Companies may benefit society and succeed in a conscious market by prioritizing ESG issues.

### **2.1.3 Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD)**

Increasingly apparent that companies should strive to balance financial success and social responsibility (Snider et al., 2003). The heightened significance of corporate sustainability has become increasingly evident. It is of critical significance, not just for the extended well-being of the planet as a whole but also for the business's long-term prosperity. Companies in the ASEAN region are increasingly likely to publicly disclose their impacts, making it an emerging global leader in sustainable business (GRI, 2023). As mentioned in the definition of HRDD from Chapter 1, there are many reasons why corporate sustainability is essential, mainly related to their operation, risk management, and efficient fiscal reduction. For instance, companies that invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy can reduce their energy costs and their exposure to volatile fossil fuel prices. Additionally, businesses implementing sustainable practices can reduce their exposure to reputational risks, such as negative press resulting from environmental or social controversies.

Another reason why corporate sustainability is important is that it can help companies attract and retain employees, customers, and investors who are increasingly concerned about environmental and social issues. Apart from Drumwright (1994) which claimed that one of the two variables influencing the effectiveness of socially responsible buying is the organizational setting in which policy companies' purpose.

Grewal and Serafeim (2020) discussed corporate sustainability to generate long-term value through enhanced social and environmental effects. The field has changed from focusing on corporate social responsibility, where a company's societal effect was either an afterthought or run in a separate department from its core business. In order to achieve such a reason for success. Companies usually add sustainability officers to ensure that specialized and driver officers take care of internal management and external impact to benefit the company the most.

It is recommended that HRDD must apply to think of all, not only beneficial aspects of private business but for sustainable future to their impacts on other people or communities, including their supply chain entities. HRDD is not a one-time assessment or certification. Instead, it demands organization-wide dedication, time,

and effort. HRDD systematically and formally addresses human rights threats. It regularly assesses risks, implements appropriate safeguards, and plans for effective remedies, not just certification. HRDD users must realize that it is a continual process that requires assessment and development. HRDD is an ongoing process that includes review, monitoring, and modifications. Risk assessment, defined procedures, and effective remediation require time and effort from organizations (Achavanuntakul, 2017a; Lees, 2021).

The lack of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) in a company's operations can harm its reputation. Without HRDD, the company may unwittingly engage in practices that violate human rights, resulting in negative repercussions for its reputation and standing in the eyes of its stakeholders. Human rights violations or unethical treatment of workers within the company or its supply chain can become public knowledge, leading to public indignation, boycotts, and brand damage. In addition, media scrutiny and increased interest from advocacy organizations can exacerbate reputational harm. In today's interconnected world, where information travels rapidly through social media and news outlets, allegations of human rights violations can irreparably damage a company's reputation. Without HRDD, a company confronts increased reputational risks and the potential loss of customer and investor trust, as well as valuable business relationships. As a good example given in the overview of Thailand's fishery sector that cautioned against the use of forced labor, this immediately drew the attention of consumers (who may be at the end of the value chain) to the fact that seafood producers must implement a rights-based approach to ease the complexity of employing migrant workers and to plan remedies for those who were harmed by the company's operations (Allison et al., 2012).

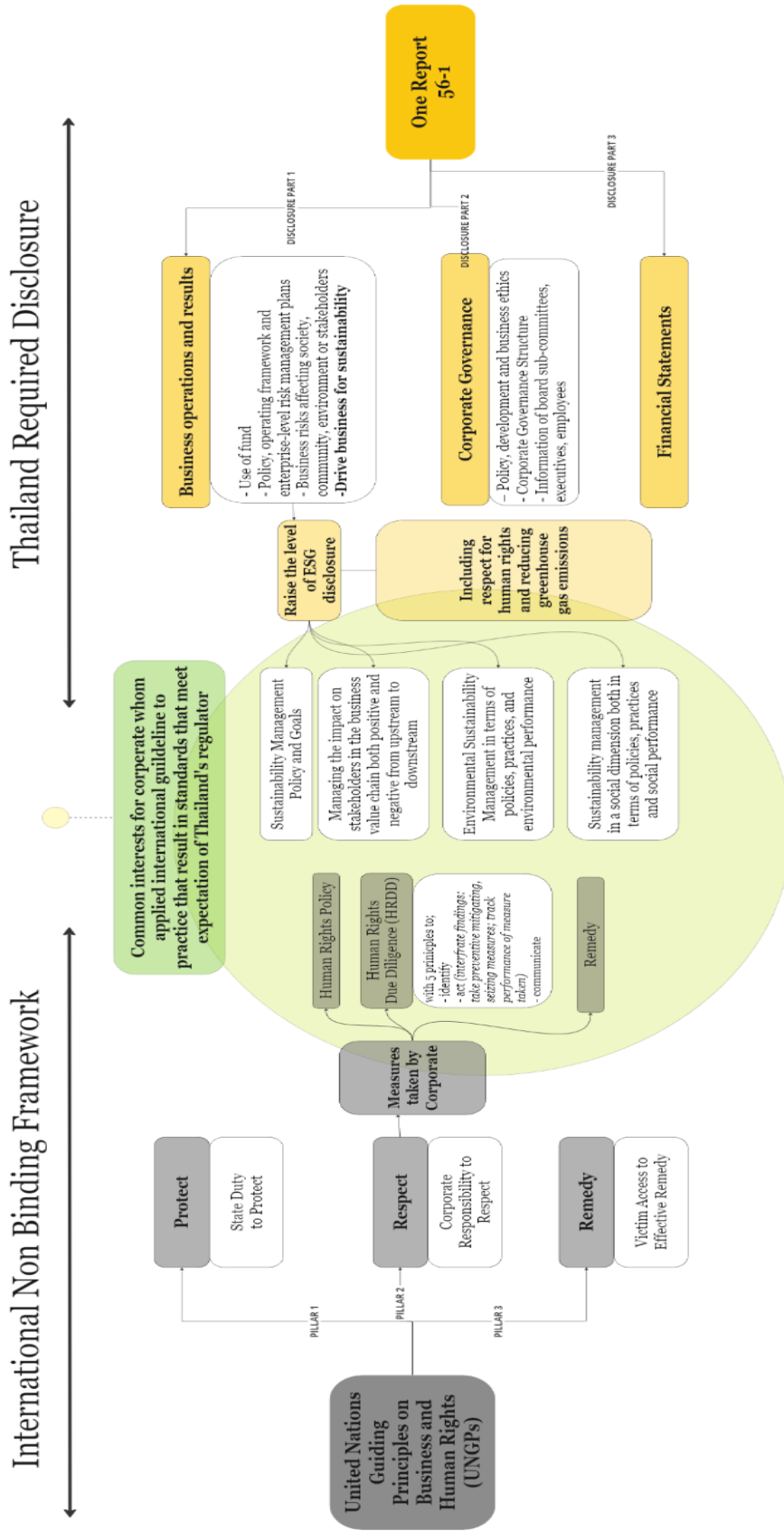
## **2.2 Company adaptation to concerns**

The following information provides insights into the relationship between non-binding international frameworks like the UN Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights and Thailand's mandatory annual report 56-1. In considering the relationship between non-binding international frameworks such as the UN Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights and Thailand's mandatory annual report 56-1 in figure 3, it is essential to note the differences in restrictions. However, Thai companies required to report using the 56-1 report may find it advantageous to use the UNGPs on HRDD assessment to leverage standard practices and meet regulatory requirements. Human rights due diligence (HRDD) is critical in addressing human rights risks, including social risks, but it can also create uncertainties regarding risk definition and management objectives. Effective involvement and communication between

businesses, communities, and stakeholders are crucial in promoting HRDD. In addition, mandatory ESG disclosures in Thailand promote transparency, sustain good practices, and provide comprehensive insights for shareholders, investors, and stakeholders to ensure long-term business sustainability.







**Figure 3:** The relevance of International non-binding framework and required reporting in Thailand  
 Source: Created by the author based on Lees (2021) and SEC (2021)

This figure illustrates the relationship between non-binding international frameworks like the UN Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights and Thailand's report matrix on mandatory annual report 56-1. Where in both different in terms of restriction, but Thai companies that likely need to report to SEC using a 56-1 report, may have the benefit of using UNGPs on HRDD assessment also to leverage the standard of practice and results are satisfied with the regulator report and good visibility of foreign buyers.

The United Nations Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights, one instrument suggested throughout the implementation of the corporate respect pillar (from initially three pillars: Protect, Respect, and Remedy), Human Rights Due Diligence is one of the frameworks that help practitioners to address Human Rights Risks from their operation from their employees to its supply chain and to also customer. It is challenging to address the due diligence on 'social risks' or 'Human Rights Risks' as per the discussion made in the study by Fasterling (2017) HRDD can create uncertainty regarding the definition of risk and the objectives of risk management. Human rights risk refers to the potentially negative effects of a company's activity on human rights. Contrarily, 'social risk' refers to the actual or potential impact that people or organizations with a poor opinion of a company's operations can have on its total value.

Meanwhile, Midwinter (2019) gave the reason that HRDD should be a legal obligation and tool for companies to promote sustainable development and enhance their reputation. The article examines the Thai legal framework for HRDD, including the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and the amended Civil and Commercial Code, and its effectiveness could be improved due to weak enforcement mechanisms and a need for more awareness. The significance of effective involvement and communication between businesses and communities, civil society organizations, and governmental organizations when discussing the role of stakeholders in HRDD. The author makes the case that partner involvement can assist businesses in identifying human rights risks and creating efficient mitigation strategies that consider all stakeholders' requirements and worries.

On the other hand, as mentioned, one report is mandatory that the Thai authority requires listed companies to disclose their operation, risks, mitigate, and other related information to ensure transparency and sustain good practices for the benefited or interested public. Disclosure of ESG information will provide shareholders, investors, and stakeholder insight into the vision and direction of the business in a more comprehensive way than just financial information. This will give confidence in efficient business operations. Have the ability to compete in today's rapidly changing era (disruption), including having a long-term business plan and risk management, which will lead to the sustainability of the business. Companies that can make ESG disclosures based on their context reflect that the company is aware of the importance and takes action seriously (Faracik, 2017).

### 2.3 Company HRM towards sustainability trends

"The practice of sustainable development is rapidly growing and evolving. As such, an increasing number of professionals are providing needed services in various areas" (Willard et al., 2010). Implementing a sustainable approach to human resource management has become essential for businesses. The implication of sustainability trends impacted company management, especially human resource management.

The world population faces challenges, and opportunities at all times, as one of the meanings of life. The occasion is the way to gain money as per macro economies identification. Simple as this, this study to explain why it is important to identify future needs. A career is necessary for laborers who may trade their work and gain income to live in the modern world as current. As the changes mentioned in the earlier topics could be very informative elements on the benefit of Framework/things that should bring into consideration of everyone and the decision maker that can create change within their organization as a company giving the question 'why must the company imply Business and Human Rights into practice?'

In this topic, the review of papers aims to identify the area of the question related to the job and management of a company's internal processes. Towards the existing knowledge on 'who takes care of the company's Human Rights Due Diligence process, how are those professionals recruited?'

With the general review of online sources, the question of how one company formed its Human Rights Due Diligence is nearly impossible. With ten searches, only a company stated on their website that "*The Human Resource Department conducts Human Rights Due Diligence every three years...*" (BJC, n.d.). Identifying who each company identified as the underline person for such a specific task is quite challenging.

### 2.4 Higher demand on specific skills

Sustainability is becoming an important topic for many firms that integrate it into their business strategies (Maniora, 2018). Initially, efforts were primarily focused on incorporating sustainability into developing sustainable products and lowering the environmental effect of manufacturing processes. However, a broader and more complete approach to sustainability has recently gained momentum.

In New Zealand, they conducted a year-long study to delve into the topic of sustainability in the workplace. The results of the study showed that companies are becoming more mature in their approach to sustainability, with a growing recognition

of the need to devote resources to it. This is evidenced by the increasing number of roles and teams dedicated to sustainability within organizations. These teams are working hard to promote sustainable practices across the entire operation. According to the research, there are several employment prospects in the subject of sustainability, with a special emphasis on mid-management positions. Utilities, construction, and management consulting are among the industries where these opportunities are widespread. It also indicates that there is a growing demand for sustainability specialists in these areas, and individuals with sustainability experience can find lucrative job opportunities in these sectors compares between year 2021 and 2022 (Holden, 2022).

Based on the Sustainable Investment and ESG report by SET notes, Thailand has achieved an impressive Gold-Class sustainability ranking by S&P Global. The report reveals that in the Sustainability Yearbook 2021, 29 Thai companies were selected, solidifying Thailand's position as the world's 7th highest-ranked country in terms of the number of companies recognized. Notably, 11 companies<sup>5</sup> received the esteemed Gold-Class distinction in the same year. Further research indicates that these recognized companies have established dedicated sustainability teams within their operations. This finding underscores the importance of sustainability teams in driving and promoting sustainable practices within Thai organizations (Chatchai Thisadoldilok, 2021).

In recent years, the concept of sustainability has been extended to the realm of careers to address emerging trends and contextual factors that pose risks to individuals and their professional paths (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). These factors, including economic and political influences, can potentially jeopardize the stability and continuity of careers. Despite the growing recognition of sustainable careers, research in this area is still in its early stages. Scholars are beginning to explore and define what sustainability means in the context of careers (Kossek et al., 2014; Newman, 2011; Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2017). Notably, the human resource development (HRD) field has yet to thoroughly examine the concept of sustainability from a career perspective.

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<sup>5</sup> 11 companies were BANPU, BTS, IRPC, PTT, PTTEP, PTTGC, SCC, TOP, TRUE, TU and ThaiBev by Chatchai Thisadoldilok, W. M., Parit Ngaobenjakul. (2021). *SET Note 3/2021 Thai Stocks Are Outstanding in Global Sustainability Index* <https://storage.googleapis.com/sg-prd-set-mis-cms/common/research/1131.pdf>

## 2.5 Gap in literature

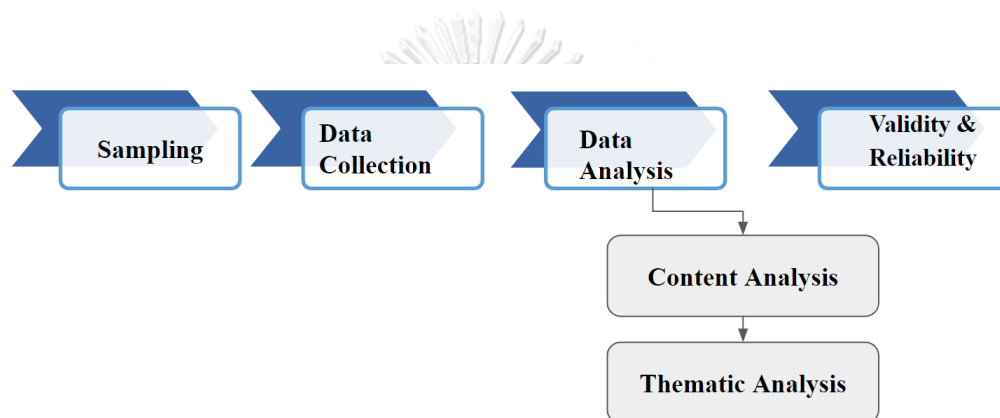
One notable gap in the existing literature is the limited availability of case studies focusing on specific professions in Thailand. While there may be general studies on career development and employment trends, there is a dearth of in-depth analyses and empirical evidence tailored to particular professions or industries within the Thai context. This absence hinders understanding the unique challenges, opportunities, and best practices associated with sustainability careers in Thailand, thereby restricting the guidance available to individuals pursuing these career paths. Additionally, it is more common to find case studies in big companies that openly share their sustainability or annual reports, whereas identifying such studies in smaller companies poses a challenge. Furthermore, private companies often do not disseminate their recruiting and hiring practices for sustainability positions, which creates a lack of clarity regarding talent requirements, skill gaps, and recruitment tactics. As a result, job seekers and educators find it difficult to match their skills and competencies to these emerging occupations. Without clear and accessible job advertising, individuals seeking sustainability careers may struggle to prepare and transition effectively. To address this issue, there is a need for greater transparency and publication of job opportunities, enabling job seekers to prepare for and enter emerging sustainable professions by clarifying the required qualifications and abilities.



## Chapter 3 Data and Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study aims to conduct qualitative research to identify the roles and contributions of sustainability professionals on Human Rights Due Diligence. Through the steps in the processes of sampling, collecting, analyze and verify in accordance of designed flow in figure 4. The study has quite a limited time to collect the data; therefore, the purposive sampling of the key informants was adopted and the data was analyzed through content and thematic analysis with the support of Atlas.Ti.



**Figure 4:** Research design processes of this study

Source: Created by the author

The figure provided by the author outlines the various processes involved in the research design of this study. These processes include sampling, data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability. Each of these steps is described in detail, providing a clear understanding of the research methodology used in this study.

#### 3.1.1 Sampling

This study utilized semi-structured interviews with a purposive sampling strategy to gather insights from four stakeholder groups categorized as Internal Persons and External Persons from companies. The interviews were tailored to each participant's role and responses, providing diverse perspectives. Table 3 outlines the roles and contributions of the eight key informants, offering a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

**Table 3:** Stakeholder groups included in this study.

	Code	Role/Description
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>		
Group 1: Sustainability Professionals	S	Representatives of companies in charge of their own HRDD procedures offer opinions on the market's demands, performance relevance, and job requirements.
Group 2: Human Resources Professionals	HR	Based on their viewpoint as experienced recruiters, HR professionals offer thoughts on the skills and capabilities needed for future sustainability roles in organizations.
<b>External stakeholders</b>		
Group 3: Human Rights Due Diligence Specialists	SPE	Specialists who help businesses learn about HRDD. These individuals work for organizations developing HRDD standards guidelines for Thai companies and are well-known trainers. They offer insights and advice, especially those with little knowledge or expertise.
Group 4: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	CSO	Well-known nonprofit groups have assisted disadvantaged communities and employees affected by material problems from the private sector. Their observations highlight the significance of organizations' responsible planning and highlight the expectations of the affected external stakeholders. They support that businesses have the power and duty to reduce their societal impacts through efficient HRDD.

Source: Created by the author based on Human Rights Due Diligence Training book<sup>6</sup>

The table describes different stakeholder groups included in this study; Two sub-groups comprised the internal stakeholder group: Group 1 consisted of sustainability experts who worked as corporate representatives and had their own routinely reviewed HRDD processes. The relevance of their performance and its possible effects on the company's HRDD processes were emphasized, and they offered insightful information on the demands and expectations placed on people

<sup>6</sup> These are the principle provided through Achavanuntakul, S. (2017a). *Human Rights Due Diligence Handbook*. National Human Rights Commission Retrieved from <http://library.nhrc.or.th/ulib/dublin.php?ID=9203>

in this position. They provided fundamental expertise and market demand knowledge for their particular area by drawing on their experience. Human resources specialists belong to Group 2 and worked to determine the knowledge and abilities future sustainability professionals would need to be successful in private businesses. They contributed to understanding the skills and abilities required for people pursuing sustainability careers in private organizations by sharing insights into talent acquisition and trends in demand for sustainability roles using their recruitment expertise.

For the external stakeholder group: Group 3 was set up of Human Rights Due Diligence Experts connected to organizations that have written HRDD guidelines handbooks for Thai businesses and were well-known trainers. Their specialist knowledge benefited businesses that wanted to apply HRDD but needed a more in-depth understanding. They discussed their expertise in establishing HRDD processes and assisting businesses with efficient risk assessment. Group 4 was made up of well-known civil society organizations with first-hand knowledge of working with workers in vulnerable situations and communities that the actions of the corporate sector had negatively impacted. Their observations highlight the importance of better planning and demonstrate how HRDD expertise may help create safer communities by illuminating the expectations of external stakeholders influenced by business activities. Overall, their viewpoints emphasized how crucial it is for businesses to understand their authority and duty to reduce societal impacts and uphold human rights.

All key informants were included to consider their current position and roles, their understanding of Human Right Due Diligence, and their experience regarding the research's intention. There are final in 9 interviewees in four categories who agreed to share their interview information.

### 3.1.2 Data Collection

Using primary data gathered through semi-structured interviews. All interviews were performed online via Microsoft Meeting Conference to ensure the interviewees' comfort and flexibility. This method was purposefully designed to reduce the carbon footprints connected with travel while accommodating the participants' busy schedules. Participants were given guideline questions before each interview to guarantee uniformity and enable focused discussions. A consent form was also provided to ensure that ethical issues were satisfied and participants' rights were respected.

The decision to use this approach was made to address time constraints and the need to identify a range of stakeholders. According to Drever (1995), semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable for small-scale research with limited participants. This approach provides the researcher with flexibility while still



allowing for identifying key questions to be addressed with open-ended questions. Using this approach can make the research process more efficient while still enabling the collection of rich and detailed data. The study conducted involved various respondent types and they were asked about the crucial role of sustainability professionals in HRDD, positive impacts of their efforts, tasks and responsibilities, necessary competencies, and collaborative measures. All respondents rated the significance of sustainability professionals in HRDD on a scale of 1-10. The interviews lasted an average of 30-40 minutes, allowing for in-depth investigations into the research question (see research tool and consent form in Annex B). All interviews were recorded in video format to capture the rich details of the conversations, allowing for accurate and extensive analysis. Because the interviewees spoke Thai fluently, the interviews were initially done in that language. The interviews were then written and translated into English to provide a more comprehensive understanding and analysis.

This research strategy aimed to reduce environmental impact while maximizing convenience for the interviewees utilizing online platforms and an organized methodology. The thorough instructions, consent forms, video recordings, and translation procedures ensured the data was solid, trustworthy, and appropriate for in-depth study.

### **3.1.3 Data Analysis**

Following the transcription of the interviews, the audio recordings were analyzed to identify significant data units, such as quotes, observations, and concepts relevant to the research objectives. These elements received identifiers indicating the topics or objects that appeared in the data as categories or titles. Atlas.Ti, a program for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis, was used to code the study's data for the more in-depth levels of analysis because it was believed that this method was better than human hand analysis (Paulus & Lester, 2016). Atlas.Ti is helpful when uploading transcribed files, and it can apply new coding to repetitive wording or context in commons, which allows content to be grouped and highlighted. In its innovative feature, the program allows these contents to be grouped by its themes; at this stage, the KSA concept categorizes the relevant content that often mentions, which scores every time speakers share related matters. The program has a quote feature where each file document can be seen and to make specific sentences to be highlighted. In the specific need to get the data screen, there are two analyses conducted;

### 3.1.3.1 Content Analysis

The job descriptions of sustainability teams/persons/departments have been reviewed in order to form the research tool, particularly questions to each key informant. The analysis around what role is common and responsibility shared by different companies in Thailand and the perception of what this career perceived by different stakeholders.

Each interviewee was asked to discuss how closely they resembled sustainability professionals in private business and how they thought such a position would affect corporate HRDD. This includes responses related to particular duties, responsibilities, impact outcomes, and crucial skills of sustainability professionals. Key informants asked following questions to elaborate their point of view on some new concept undiscovered.

### 3.1.3.2 Thematic Analysis

The data were subjected to thematic analysis to find and examine recurrent themes or patterns, which involved finding patterns, distinctions, and essential insights between interviews. As stated in Pojasek (2008), this is one way to demonstrate a professional's knowledges, skills, and abilities (KSAs) in their work. The topics encompassed the most frequently expressed knowledge, skill, ability, and responsibility of sustainability workers that may favorably promote HRDD in Thai organizations and reasons that supported the interviewee's opinions.

### 3.1.4 Validity & Reliability

The conclusions were strengthened and validated using data from a variety of sources. To gather primary data, semi-structured interviews with various kinds of stakeholders were employed, providing a variety of viewpoints and minimizing bias. In addition, literature reviews were conducted to understand the key issues and takeaways from the reports, and HRDD guidelines handbooks were used to expand upon and validate the findings.

The use of literature reviews, semi-structured interviews, and HRDD guidelines handbooks enhances the validity and reliability of the research process. Researchers can reduce bias, gather a variety of views, contextualize their findings within the body of current knowledge, and follow predetermined rules by using many data sources and research techniques. Together, these efforts strengthen the validity and dependability of the study's outcomes.

### 3.2 Ethical consideration

All participants were given a clear and complete consent form detailing the research purpose, voluntary involvement, and participants' rights prior to the interviews. They were told aware of potential risks and benefits, as well as their right to withdraw at any time and the strict confidentiality of their responses. Participants were given enough time to carefully assess the consent form, seek clarification, and share informed consent. The privacy and anonymity of the subjects were of the most significant importance during the whole process. Anonymity was ensured by providing unique identities to participants and keeping personal identifying information separate from the research data.



## Chapter 4 Analytical Results and Discussion

This chapter demonstrates how the undertaken analysis is interpreted into determining, in detail, what are the knowledge, skill, and ability of sustainability professionals, including the potential positive impact that may cost the company with good practice on HRDD and the sustainability professionals. Additionally, this chapter discusses the possible positive impact that may cost the company with good practice on HRDD and the sustainability professionals. The findings placed an emphasis on the interviewees' previous experiences as well as their opinions. These takeaways are summed up in the point that is frequently brought up by all of the stakeholders.

### 4.1 General information of key informants

The principal informants for this study are the experts who occupy varied positions in the fields of sustainability, human resources, and business and human rights. They were chosen because of the knowledge and experience they bring to the table in their respective industries. Among the sources of information are senior sustainability development officers, chief sustainability officers, talent acquisition managers, recruitment assistants, project managers specializing in business and human rights, and specialists in responsible recruiting and human rights legal issues. As in Table 4 clarifying the nexus of sustainability, human rights, and business practices is the focus of this study. Their thoughts and insights provide essential information that was incorporated into the study. The interviews were conducted throughout June 2023.

**Table 4:** List of Interviewees

Interview Code	Gender	Title/ job position	Date of interview	Time taken
S1	Female	Senior Sustainability Development officer at a Biofuel Energy public company	10/6/2023	44 mins
S2	Male	Chief Sustainability Officer at a Textile and Clothing limited company	19/6/2023	32 mins
HR1	Female	Talent Acquisition Manager at a Seafood Public company	14/6/2023	27 mins
HR2	Male	Assistant Manager Recruitment at a Petrochemical limited company	30/6/2023	24 mins
SPE1	Male	Deputy Managing Director at Sustainable business consultant limited company	9/6/2023	36 mins
SPE2	Female	Project Manager - Business and Human Rights at a United Nations' lead agency	22/6/2023	37 mins

Interview Code	Gender	Title/ job position	Date of interview	Time taken
SPE3	Male	Project Coordinating Associate - Business and Human Rights at a United Nations' lead agency	22/6/2023	37 mins <sup>7</sup>
CSO1	Female	Responsible Recruitment Specialist at an International non-profit works on <i>social and Human Rights issues</i>	14/6/2023	30 mins
CSO2	Female	Co-Founder, and Lawyer at local non-profit works on protect and promote Human Rights, Community Right and the Environment	17/6/2023	25 mins

Source: created by the author.

The table provides an overview of the key informants interviewed for the study. Each informant is assigned an interview code for identification purposes. The table includes information such as gender, job title or position, interview date, and interview duration.

#### **Key informant 1 (S1)**

She worked in a public company, started her environmental sector career, and has a master's degree in environmental sciences. She is now a senior and an expert on company risk mitigation reporting standards. She worked in the position of sustainability work for nine years and approximately three years in this particular position.

#### **Key informant 2 (S2)**

He is an experienced Human Rights and Environmental expert working on sustainability as chief in public and now working closely on HRDD in a private company. He is knowledgeable in supply chain management and training. He gains his master's from a well-known university in Thailand and has been working for over two decades.

<sup>7</sup> An interview was conducted for both SPE2 and SPE3 at the same interview.

**Key informant 3 (HR1)**

She is a Talent Acquisition Manager with a Bachelor's degree. They have past experience in a general position related to sustainable development and ISO compliance. Their current responsibility is talent recruitment for all positions in the company and its business units.

**Key informant 4 (HR2)**

He is currently working as the Assistant Manager of recruitment at Petrochemical limited company. His main responsibility is talent recruitment, ensuring to identify the right talent to the job vacancy. He has been in this field for approximately 8 years.

**Key informant 5 (SPE1)**

He is a Deputy Managing Director at Sustainable business consultant limited company. As a responsible business specialist, he has experience as a consultant for a private company and banking institutes. His current responsibility involves researching human rights, sustainable business, and social impacts.

**Key informant 6 (SPE2)**

She is a Business and Human Rights Project Manager at a United Nations' lead agency. Her primary responsibility is to manage business and human rights projects and work with the Thai government and businesses to promote sustainable and socially responsible actions. She incorporates HRDD processes in their work and collaborates with civil society organizations to monitor cases of human rights violations. She has been in this role for three years.

**Key informant 7 (SPE3)**

He is working on the same project as SPE2 as a Project Coordinating Associate. His roles are to coordinate and support the project. His understanding of the HRDD in Business helps to guide giving suggestions to add to how a person's sustainability thrives company success in HRDD.

**Key informant 8 (CSO1)**

She is a Responsible Recruitment Specialist at an International nonprofit that works on social and Human Rights issues. Her insights are shared through the lens of external nonprofit services that link companies and relevant partners to ensure the implementation of the principle of human rights standards implemented in businesses.

### **Key informant 9 (CSO2)**

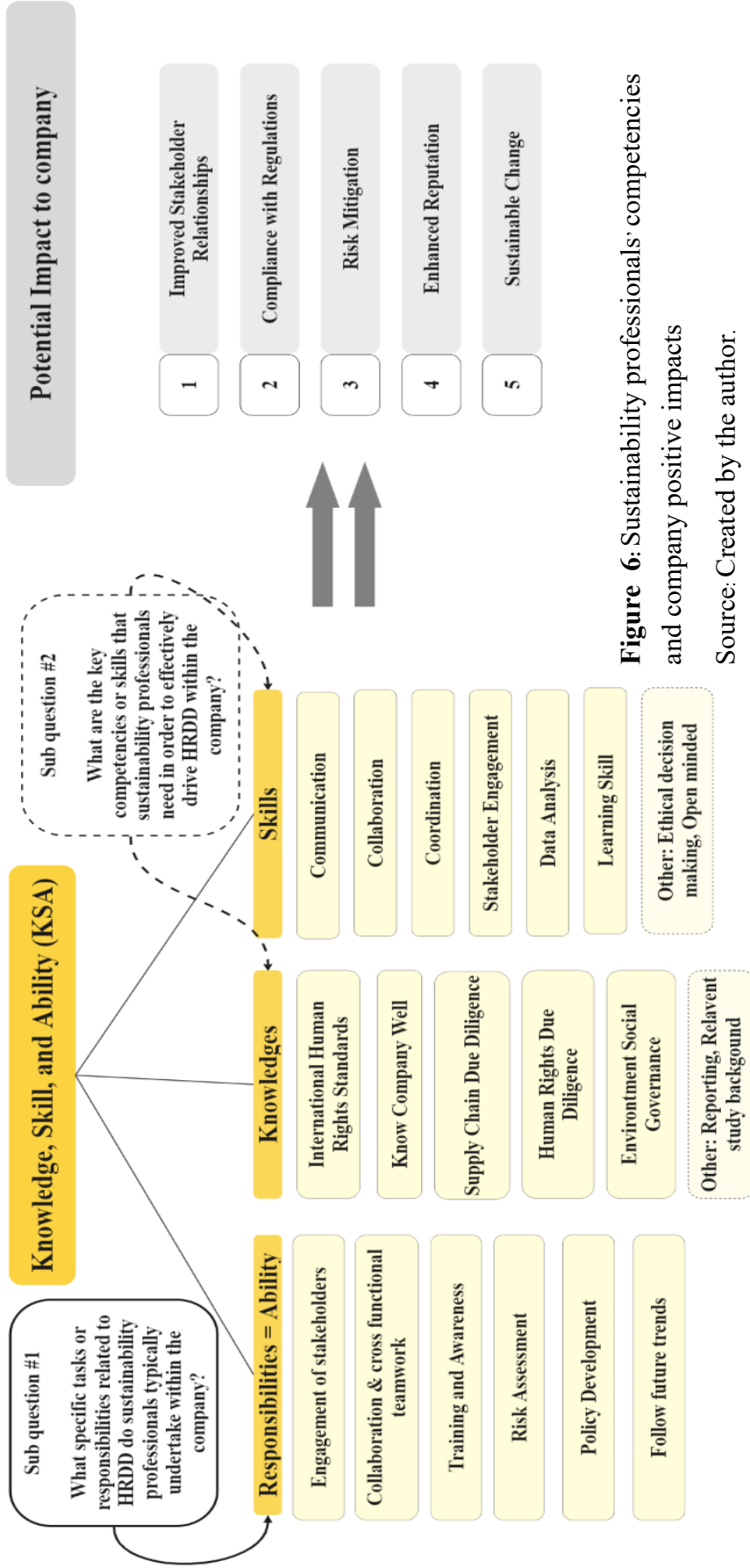
She is a co-founder and lawyer at a local non-profit organization focusing on human rights, community rights, and the environment. With over a decade of working in the field, she is adding valuable insights on the perspective of protection to the community and rights holders.

## **4.2 Results**

At the end, there are 9 key informants interviewed, and collected data from. This study received permission from all key informants to record for further processes in this study. After video transcriptions, content, and thematic analysis were conducted. The information gathered was analyzed using the Knowledges, Skills, Abilities concept (KSAs) as a coding tool for the repetitive concept to be capsulized, allowing a further thematic way to categorize and organize the contents into themes relevant to the research questions later on. After these steps, the results were interpreted along with the context added that aimed in this chapter to present learned insights from detailed conversations.

This section presents the study's results, focusing on the findings that align with the research objectives and capture the perspectives expressed by the interviewees. The selected quotes from the conversations reflect the contextual nuances and provide insights into the identified themes. Each relevant finding is supported by a minimum of one quote and up to four quotes, based on the frequency of mention in the interviews (following a ratio of one quote for every four mentions of each item). The distribution of quotes is summarized in Figure 5, providing a concise overview of the representation of findings in the interview data.

**“What beneficial effects do sustainability professionals have on a company’s Human Rights Due Diligence?”**



**Figure 6:** Sustainability professionals’ competencies and company positive impacts  
Source: Created by the author.



This figure is showing that the research question and its sub-questions have been answered with the learning that regards KSAs that listed items identify the competency of sustainability professionals in the minds of key informants. Additionally, with the question pointed out of the success level that would reply in answer, the result showed that the beneficial to a company which right-handed of this figured listed main five items including (1) Improved stakeholder Relationships (2) Compliance with Regulations (3) Risk Mitigation (4) Enhanced Reputation (5) Sustainable Change. The findings of KSA in response to the first and second sub questions are share in detailed discussion which support the readers to investigate the reasons behind the testimony of important informants.

#### 4.2.1 Knowledge

In today's job market, it's essential to have relevant knowledge and expertise to secure employment. Employers are looking for candidates who have the necessary skills and qualifications to excel and contribute effectively. This emphasis on relevancy extends to the field of sustainability. With global challenges like climate change and social inequality persisting, sustainability professionals have emerged as essential players in addressing these issues.

**Table 5:** Key knowledges of sustainability professionals

<b>Key Competencies</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>
International Human Rights Standards	9 times
Know Company Well	8 times
Supply Chain Due Diligence	6 times
Human Right Due Diligence (HRDD)	5 times
Environment Social Governance (ESG)	5 times
Other; Reporting, Relevant Study Backgrounds	4 times

Source: created by the author based on analysis of interviews

The table highlights the key competencies mentioned by different stakeholders regarding the essential knowledge required for sustainability professionals. The "Key Competencies" column lists specific competencies identified during the interviews. The "Mentioned" column indicates the frequency with which the stakeholders mentioned each competency. For instance, the mention of International Human Rights Standards nine times underscores their significance within the field of sustainability.

#### 4.2.1.1 International Human Rights Standards

A sustainability professional plays a crucial role in effectively addressing human rights issues. Possessing this knowledge empowers them to proactively identify and tackle such concerns by developing and implementing strategies that prioritize protecting and promoting human rights. Furthermore, they should understand labor rights laws and regulations to ensure compliance with legal requirements. Notably, during the interviews, some key informants emphasized the importance of sustainability professionals being well-versed in the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its standards for labor rights. A sustainability professional with a deep understanding of human rights and related knowledge is better equipped to advocate for and uphold human rights in their work, distinguishing themselves from those without this understanding.

Some examples of quotes from key informants such as...

*“The sustainability person **must know what standard and knowledge** they refer to..., As our company is likely to use lots of migrant workers, sustainability workers need to understand the sensitivity of **human rights issues** and be able to raise through strategies.”*

(H1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

*“Within this job - sustainability person who may involve with HRDD; Must learn **ILO knowledge on labor rights**..., Sometimes there is knowledge of some things but lack of awareness. This is also a challenge to address the issues that come after that it is not clearly black or white to judge if thinking of context in cultures or anything.”*

(S2, Chief Sustainability Officer, 19/6/2023)

#### 4.2.1.2 Know company well

Sustainability professionals are vital in addressing companies' social, environmental, and governance (ESG) issues. They must understand the company's sector, culture, and goals to be effective. This enables them to plan ESG initiatives aligned with company objectives. Close collaboration with the head office and factory provides valuable insights for informed decision-making. Additionally, they need sector-specific knowledge and a deep understanding of the company's business intricacies. Their role includes proactively identifying and mitigating risks, such as human trafficking and

supply chain concerns. Empathy towards workers and stakeholders is crucial. Some examples of quotes from key informants such as...

*“Sector specific knowledge - **Knowledge of the company's business**... they (sustainability professional) will gain more knowledge by working with the head office and factory under this business.”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

*“Adapted into **company's sector, cultures, and type** so that they know what to pressure in company favor and plans”*

(HR1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

#### 4.2.1.3 Supply chain due diligence

Supply chain due diligence is critical for large companies as they require employees who know about their supply chain and the companies they collaborate with. These professionals must identify and assess risks associated with each stakeholder, particularly suppliers. On the other hand, smaller companies within the supply chain may still be familiarizing themselves with Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) in the short term. Regarding sourcing, companies seek individuals with supply chain due diligence knowledge who can effectively communicate and manage suppliers. Understanding and navigating the supply chain's intricacies is crucial for ensuring ethical practices and responsible sourcing.

*“If they work for a large company, they need to **know like what companies they are working with in the supply chain** and they need to know...”*

(CSO1, Responsible Recruitment Specialist, 14/6/2023)

This is showing that when identifying supply chains as part of the knowledge sustainability person must know, this implying that the position is suggesting/imagining only with big company and this is observed that the starting point of HRDD by the push of sustainability professionals started in bigger size businesses.

#### 4.2.1.4 Human Right Due Diligence (HRDD)

From the interview, it is learned that this keyword clarified what to anticipate, and the majority of interviewees are familiar with and able to convey that they also understand the importance of sustainability in ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge on HRDD processes in order to achieve the best possible benefit for the company.

*“They’ve **must to understand HRDD**..., I highly think that the position who maybe the representative of company must play a big role to receive complain from impacted communities or individuals”*

(CSO2, Co-Founder & Lawyer, 17/6/2023)

Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) is a crucial process that companies need to be familiar with and comprehend. It involves the identification of potential risks and harm to individuals, ensuring that companies uphold and protect human rights. As the concept of HRDD gains prominence, companies in Thailand are also beginning to embrace and adapt it to suit their specific circumstances. Some key informant mentioned that HRDD are pressured by investor and buyers so that big company likely to apply HRDD that beyond law enforcement as following mentioned...

*“If the company that must do HRDD - mostly they were pressured by investors, NGO, clients which in this specific group they are quite quick and clearly know what to do.”*

(S2, Chief Sustainability Officer, 19/6/2023)

#### 4.2.1.5 Environment Social Governance (ESG)

A Sustainability Professional should know and understand various sustainability concepts, particularly environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. This includes being familiar with environmental laws and regulations relevant to the company's operations. Expertise in these areas is essential for effectively responding to the company's sustainability objectives and implementing sustainable initiatives.

Sustainability professionals with a comprehensive understanding of ESG practices are equipped to identify and address environmental and social

challenges that the company may face. They can develop strategies and action plans to minimize environmental impact, promote social responsibility, and ensure good governance practices within the organization.

*“In one of the hard skills, they (Sustainability professional) must have knowledge of **Environment Law and relevant report on ESG**”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

Sustainability professionals within companies must possess a comprehensive understanding of ESG, encompassing multiple perspectives and aligning with the specific focus of the company's sector. This knowledge is essential for the company's success, as it enables them to thrive, achieve organizational goals, and fulfill their responsibility of publishing annual/sustainability reports to the public on a yearly basis.



Sustainability professionals' role involves developing sustainable solutions that align with international human rights standards and encompass supply chain management, human rights due diligence (HRDD), and environmental social and governance (ESG). To succeed, these professionals must possess a deep understanding of these areas and a comprehensive knowledge of company operations. By leveraging their expertise, sustainability professionals are vital in advancing sustainable practices and ensuring adherence to relevant reporting and study backgrounds. Their knowledge and skills contribute to creating a more resilient and equitable future.

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#### **4.2.2 Key Competencies (Skills)**

The key competencies are listed from all key informants when a specific question is asked ‘What competencies or skills, in your opinion, are necessary for sustainability professionals to contribute to HRDD effectively?’ This question helps clarify what, in their experience, specify sustainability workers have that could positively impact HRDD. From the analysis, there are six ranked tops in Table 6

**Table 6:** Key competencies (skills) of sustainability professionals

<b>Key Competencies</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>
Communication	16 times
Collaboration	15 times
Coordination	6 times
Stakeholder engagement	6 times
Data Analysis	6 times
Learning	5 times
Other: Ethical decision making, open minded	6 times

Source: created by the author based on analysis of interviews

Table 6 presents the key competencies (skills) required for sustainability professionals to drive Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) effectively. The data was gathered to identify this context's essential skills, knowledge, or qualifications. The table lists various competencies in the "Key Competencies" column, including Communication, Collaboration, Coordination, Stakeholder engagement, Data Analysis, and Learning. The "Mentioned" column indicates the frequency with which each competency was mentioned during the interviews.

#### 4.2.2.1 Communication

Communication runs into the top rank for many reasons. However, the most common reasons are sustainability person must perform with good skills in communicating with different stakeholders, for example, between workers from the Head office and the factory. They must know how to digest hard-to-understand concepts into understandable for some stakeholders to ease their work and to remain peaceful in the company. Also mentioned to different interviewees that it is easier to get the job done with the art of communicating. This skill includes the part that a sustainability person must get buy-in from the higher level, even C-level decisions on something that may risk the company or to risk to people. Sustainability professionals must prepare their information to communicate effectively, as expected from all stakeholders who gave this interview. For example:

*“With this work, a sustainability person must have the knowledge necessary to conduct data collection and **know how to speak with different departments**. Most asked the question ‘Why do you need this information?’ which we should not make them feel like it is extra work. For this question, a sustainability person must be able to provide an accurate answer and encourage that when there are standard indicators- the information can be used for a whole year. I assume that all companies have this difficulty but in conclusion, sustainability people must understand the point of business and be emphatic to workers too.”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

*“Communication skill is the key to convince different people and to ensure to **send the right message**. Imagine if the company would decide yes or no depending on the person who is suggesting or whether it's the benefits of the company or not that is very important. I think this may be the **most important skill**. And I personally think that it's already done with the process that requires commitment and understanding from everyone in a company but speaking frankly about this position **I think communication is the key**.”*

(SPE1, Deputy Managing Director, 9/6/2023)

*“...they (sustainability professional) must have the ability to work and **communicate clearly** with others teams...”*

(HR1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

*“...the key to fostering buy-in for sustainable operations within a company is **effective communication**. This involves conveying to everyone (in a company) that it is everyone responsibility in this matter.”*

(SPE2, Project Manager, 22/6/2023)

Some effects of bad communication would result in unfinished or unsatisfied work, especially since the knowledge of ESG or Human Rights is still complex for some people who may need to respond to this matter. Sustainability professionals must retain the knowledge and better these skills throughout on-the-job learning.

#### 4.2.2.2 Collaboration

To minimize the likelihood of upsets to its activities, a company must possess social development skills acquired through collaborations with external parties. Collaborating with the corporate strategy team and coordinating efforts with the HR department are essential elements. Establishing a solid internal structure and promoting cross-functional work is essential for effective implementation. The company's size determines whether a dedicated working group is necessary to drive Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) initiatives. Moreover, a thorough understanding of external processes and active collaboration with stakeholders for feedback is vital in successfully conducting HRDD.

*“All company **work in cross functional**. Sustainability person would assign a focus area for monitoring criteria and for data collection would **work in collaboration with other teams**...But at the end of the day, a sustainability person must know from the criteria of the gap and knowledge to identify further steps.”*

(S2, Chief Sustainability Officer, 19/6/2023)

*“For HRDD, sustainability person **must work with**; Human Resources, Community relations - factory relation and surround communities, Safety Officers, Corporate strategies, Internal audit departments, and lastly Executive...”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

In the case of external, they shared similar points regarding to this skill about team initiative in company,

*“So, I am not sure if only sustainability person will do all HRDD because as for my experience most of the company that have the **working group internally** in order to manage and then contact over our sustainability and also each HRDD processes and with this there may be different positions in the company that relate to this working group namely HR or human resource, public relations. I think it's totally depending on the company and its sizes for the big list of company they might have you know the resources that is enough to create a working group...”*

(SPE1, Deputy Managing Director, 9/6/2023)



This skill highlighted internal collaboration on ESG strategy. This skill ties to the responsibility required sustainability professionals to identify necessary information from different teams/departments in the company to use later to analyze and summarize that one person could not know all. Able to connect and set goals of what valuable information for analysis is needed. The sustainability professional must understand each department's role and be able to work with them to get that information.

#### **4.2.2.3 Coordination**

Successful project planning and execution require effective coordination among teams. Coordination entails more than just aligning efforts; it involves collecting and analyzing data to inform decision-making processes. Moreover, coordination between corporate and operational teams is necessary. This coordination enables companies to adhere to standard practices and nurture strong relationships with suppliers, minimizing the risk of contract termination. Ultimately, the key to effective coordination is fostering a shared commitment among all stakeholders toward sustainable operations.

*“Within this job - sustainability person who may involve with HRDD needs to coordinate, cause company would need to follow the standard of practice and also remain the business functional...”*

(S2, Chief Sustainability Officer, 19/6/2023)

Key informant linking the cross-functional work with the required skills of collaboration internally. Meanwhile, external stakeholders see this as an opportunity for the company to identify responsible persons to manage work outside the organization for better participatory actions of on-company voices.

#### **4.2.2.4 Stakeholder engagement**

As it involves building relationships with various parties in the supply chain. Sustainability professionals within the company should know the entities they collaborate with, enabling them to address any grievances. Engaging with stakeholders, particularly civil society, holds significant importance in ensuring that the rights of individuals are prioritized and protected. As already mentioned in last skills, this particular statements from other stakeholders;

*“Stakeholder engagement just now is very important because since I moved from a consulting company to this (current organization name), I see the importance of this matter, especially the engagement with civil society. Before, we didn't have the ability hear (different voices) at all and didn't engage too much in the sector, when we consulted or guided with the company. **This particular action makes HRDD process become a High-Level process from the company itself. However, in reality if we get these stakeholder voices, it will make the process more efficient. And, I think it really works on the ground, because you kind of make the process inclusive, it helps build validity of this process more...**”*

(SPE2, Project Manager, 22/6/2023)

#### 4.2.2.5 Data Analysis

In many interviews, it mentioned by participants that data analysis is much needed in the skills of a sustainability person. It encompasses various aspects of their work. These professionals must comprehensively understand human rights issues and the skills to address them effectively. They play an essential role in project planning, particularly in decision-making. Data analysis allows sustainability professionals to identify and propose relevant stakeholders to engage with, ensuring comprehensive and inclusive involvement. Collaboration with other teams is necessary for effective data collection and monitoring of key criteria. By conducting thorough data analysis, sustainability professionals can identify negative externalities and potential human rights concerns, enabling them to address these issues in their strategies and disclosures.

*“To clarify with managing directors that sustainable work is not only for awards or reputation of the company, using verify information (some company have long reporting mechanism- some detail information could be missing out during the transformation from bottom to top) **as evidence of proof** that need to go on field and conduct **data collection and analysis** to present information and risks of company to them and we're seeking buy their ins”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

#### 4.2.2.6 Learning

Continuous learning on the job is essential in a career related to Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG). This dynamic field demands ongoing knowledge expansion, often acquired through hands-on experience rather than traditional academic structures. Professionals in sustainability positions must

possess the ability to research information from diverse sources, including international references, proactively. The evolving nature of ESG issues necessitates staying updated with the latest trends, regulations, and best practices. By embracing a learning mindset and actively seeking out new knowledge, sustainability professionals can effectively navigate the complexities of ESG and drive meaningful change within their organizations.

*“...I believe that with the standard requirement mentioned above, the **new graduates can grow and learn to the job itself** because in this position's responsibilities that now it has not been standardized but responsibilities must be adapted into company's sector, cultures, and type...”*

(HR1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

#### **4.2.2.7 Other: Ethical decision making, open minded**

The role of a sustainability professional demands more than just expertise; it requires individuals who possess a unique set of qualities, including ethical decision-making and an open-minded mindset. As emphasized by the Talent Acquisition Manager, finding the right candidate for this position can be challenging, especially when seeking individuals who understand sustainability and can apply ethical principles in their decision-making processes. Moreover, being open-minded is crucial in this field, as sustainability is a rapidly evolving discipline that requires embracing new ideas and approaches. Sustainability professionals with a solid ethical foundation and an open-minded mindset are well-equipped to navigate complex sustainability challenges, drive positive change, and contribute to creating a more sustainable future.

*“It is hard to find the right person for this title, if aiming for the new graduates in the last four-five years ago, they are less likely to understand what is actually sustainability in a corporation. This required **an open-minded person.**”*

(HR1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

#### **4.2.3 Task related responsibility (Ability)**

Insightful analysis of the task-related responsibilities that sustainability professionals are required to fulfil as part of their job description. These results are derived from the input of internal and external constituents, reflecting their shared expectations. The insights gathered from interviews provide an exhaustive

overview of the primary task-related responsibilities sustainability professionals are expected to carry out. By comprehending and effectively carrying out these responsibilities, sustainability professionals can significantly contribute to their organizations' sustainability objectives and stakeholder expectations.

**Table 7:** Task related responsibility (ability) of sustainability professionals

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>
Engagement of Stakeholders	17 times
Collaboration & Cross Functional Teamwork	15 times
Training and Awareness	8 times
Risk Assessment	7 times
Policy Development	7 times
Follow Future Trends	5 times
Other; Monitor Criteria, Report, Planning,	10 times

Source: created by the author based on analysis of interviews

Table 7 outlines the duties that sustainability professionals are expected to have. The following table details the number of times that each obligation was brought up throughout the interviews.

#### 4.2.3.1 Engagement of Stakeholders

The engagement of stakeholders is a crucial aspect, as all interviewees mention it. The ability to possess in-depth knowledge of the companies within their supply chain and be adept at addressing grievances or complaints from workers raised. This understanding would help plan, remedy issues, and collaborate with external stakeholders. Practical communication skills are essential for sharing knowledge with diverse audiences. The sustainability person should actively participate in revising the company's sustainable policies and action plans, conduct field visits to suppliers, and seek input from experts. Stakeholder engagement holds immense importance in the Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) process, and collaborating with external stakeholders enhances its efficiency. Additionally, the sustainability person may collaborate with corporate strategy teams and oversee people-related aspects within the company.

*“The ability to engage stakeholders to talk about Human Rights is very important because personally, I think that stakeholder engagement makes the organization successful..., When entering engage stakeholders from a private point of view (business mindset), of course the community is not happy, so compromising skills will be very important in this respect because we have to*

*understand the local context first...,It's very important if employees can talk to the CEO to announce their commitment, whether it's a policy or statement via social media. because it makes employees in the organization see that the organization has human rights..."*

(SPE3, Project Coordinating Associate, 22/6/2023)

*"There are always that work in collaboration between Sustainability persons and HR department, specifically in knowledge development of internal staffs and as our company focused on circular economic where **each team must be planned for specific projects**. In (company's name) there are two parts of sustainability team divided into..., group two CSR focused position; this person must **ensure local relation and risk mitigate specify** in this group and plan for activity on community support..."*

(HR2, Assistant Manager Recruitment, 30/6/2023)

*"I mean personally like I think a person who works on HRDD even though they work for a company, they should consider they should have a **mindset that is for the people...**"*

(CSO1, Responsible Recruitment Specialist, 14/6/2023)

This engagement, apart from what is mentioned in knowledge, comes with a well understanding of each position of people involved in the impacts of company actions. Engagement is expressed internally and externally where key informants shared that typically engage are making unaware individuals aware and letting them be part of the process too.

*"They (sustainability professional) must have social development skills; this could be gained through **working with external parties...**"*

(CSO2, Co-Founder & Lawyer, 17/6/2023)

#### **4.2.3.2 Collaboration & Cross functional teamwork**

As mentioned above with the skill to collaborate with different teams/departments. Working in cross-functional is usual for workers in this role. Accessing different information from a company's overall operation is vast and challenging. This is why some key informants shared that sometimes companies set up a 'working group' to manage the internal process that

requires multi-team to be on the same page regarding the company's strategy on ESG. Which key informants in agreed that working in a working group, the sustainability person must lead and set a scope of what each team representative must bring to the table to see all risks that could be raised in the company's concerns. There were quotes in knowledge on collaboration and coordination that mentioned the need of company adapting to what resources they have and cross fictional is needed in majority of the business' operations.

*“Sustainability takes charge and **collects data from relevant parties** integrate and report back to the corporate as a whole in terms of the annual sustainability report...”*

(SPE2, Project Manager, 22/6/2023)

*“With the nature of this job, it is required to go on **and work with different people**. For example, if you have to go inspect and then assess the production or factory with your supplier, you **must assign different persons to follow up with the quality** that is respected to the requirements of HQ. If a person who is in that does not understand why you have to ask for some, accepting this is going to create misunderstanding and turn the burden to their daily responsibility.”*

(SPE1, Deputy Managing Director, 9/6/2023)

*“..., Because each country would have a standard requirement for their supplier to assess risk of rights violation (i.e., working hours) to meet the set standard of the client, Sustainability workers work with corporate strategy to ensure this matter. Which also thrive between teams.”*

(HR1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

During interviews, it was noted that larger companies tend to recruit specific expert workers to serve as sustainability professionals, while smaller companies may not have the necessary resources to do so. Instead, they may utilize existing talent within the company to oversee and analyze similar aspects, such as HR conducting risk assessments for employees impacted by company operations. Interestingly, smaller companies with limited resources may opt to establish a working group led by experienced workers, rather than hiring dedicated sustainability personnel.

#### 4.2.3.3 Training and Awareness

To ensure respect for people's rights within a company's policies and practices, awareness, policy updates, knowledge development of internal staff, and support for training are needed. This includes raising awareness internally, developing capacity-building initiatives with suppliers, and using knowledge and criteria to identify necessary next steps towards sustainability. Sustainability professionals and recruiters pointed out that with their role, training on awareness-raising activities is also expected to be done by sustainability persons. With the knowledge and clear mission of company ESG plans, the sustainability person often planned and conducts activity raise a better understanding of their workers and supplier (in some cases) how would issues/risks related to their work and generally life, for instance, the training topic can vary between ESG concerns; Rights at the workplace, safety protocols, etc.

*“I think Interpersonal skills, they must be able to communicate well with others and support on training - **internal training** to raise awareness of certain things...”*

(HR2, Assistant Manager Recruitment, 30/6/2023)

*“In communicating what responsibility of sustainability persons, as if I knew, they have quite diverse works **rather training** and they would need to prepare annual company reports which it is quite hard to conduct...”*

(HR1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

Learning from the interview, this particular ability, a sustainability person could work in collaboration with Human Resources or other departments to conduct on-demand sessions raised by different teams.

#### 4.2.3.4 Risk Assessment

HRDD intends to reduce company materiality by disclosing necessary elements that could be avoided and solved by the company's actions. This whole HRDD process required good analysis to identify potential risks. One of the main responsibilities of a sustainable professional is to conduct a risk assessment to gather relevant information put into the excellent analysis to ensure results are accurate and identify remedies and potential actions to respond to future harm. With the analysis of risks, there is a different way of using the results. For instance, it can be a standard company assessment to ensure safety concerns are in place. The assessment can highlight areas to

concern and areas of improvement. The assessment could be part of the company's policy and strategy moving forwards with general knowledge and shape the competitiveness in ESG-driven businesses.

*“As HRDD is part of the process that they could use to identify risks even though in this HRDD is not mandatory but it is somehow indirectly required by them. So, company tend to need the **good assessment to their risks** to human rights, I think it is the strongest pressure to the company. The company should be suggested by its workers that there is highly risk which it is deserving a mitigation and investment to plan ahead...”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

#### 4.2.3.5 Policy Development

Sustainability professionals play an important role in assessing and advising on company policy in order to encourage sustainable and ethical business practices. They are in charge of governing and steering businesses toward long-term viability. This necessitates a thorough awareness of human rights issues as well as the ability to devise effective solutions to address them. To make educated decisions and suggestions, sustainability workers must have applicable standards and information. Their knowledge is essential in developing firm rules that prioritize responsible ways. Furthermore, as noted repeatedly in the interviews, establishing an anonymous process for reporting violations or breaches of company rules of conduct is critical for safeguarding human rights within an organization.

*“Proposing company policy..., the company policy is important. Companies must have their policy address human rights and be effective. By **suggesting the shape of policy, sustainability worker must be involved in revising the company relevant to sustainable policies -its action plans and code of conduct for example reporting mechanisms when if there are breach of policy there should be solutions for the better and inclusivity of all...**”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

#### 4.2.3.6 Follow future trends

Sustainability professionals play a crucial role in recognizing and following future trends in their sector. They must be proactive in identifying emerging trends and their potential impacts on their organization's operations. They must report sustainability efforts, align with positive trends, and publish relevant



information to reduce negative impacts and maintain competitiveness. They must analyze human rights due diligence and anticipate future trends, managing potential risks and opportunities for daily tasks and company success.

*“... they must report because they see the trends in their sector that must be disclosed, and publish sustainability report to reduce negative impact and be in the trend that positive to their operation...”*

(S2, Chief Sustainability Officer, 19/6/2023)

#### 4.2.4 Beneficial effects

This subject comprehensively examines the beneficial impacts of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD). Companies have the potential to enhance their relationships with stakeholders, adhere to regulatory requirements, mitigate risks, bolster their reputation, drive sustainable change, and achieve a return on investment. The effects mentioned most frequently during interviews underscore the crucial role of sustainability professionals in identifying and resolving human rights issues while enhancing the company's value. By integrating Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) into their operational strategies, organizations can enhance their competitive advantage by cultivating favorable stakeholder relationships and guaranteeing adherence to regulatory frameworks and industry standard

**Table 8:** Beneficial effects to a company if there are Sustainability professionals that enhance HRDD

	<b>Beneficial effects</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>	
	Improved stakeholder Relationships	10 times	
	Compliance with Regulations	10 times	
	Risk Mitigation	8 times	
	Enhanced Reputation	6 times	
by	Sustainable Change	5 times	Source:
	Return on Investment	5 times	created
based	Other; Strong Networking, competitive business	2 times	the
			author
			on
			analysis

of interviews.

Table 8 highlights the beneficial effects that a company can experience when employing sustainability professionals who enhance Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD). The table summarizes the frequency with which each effect was mentioned during the interviews.

#### 4.2.4.1 Improved stakeholder Relationships

As most interviewers pointed out, the need for a big company to align its strategies involves different stakeholders and collaboration at this stage. Big companies must be aware of the supply chain and the suppliers' responsibility to handle any complaints or concerns that may arise. Additionally, it is essential to impact CSOs and NGOs positively, meet client standards, manage local relations, provide input for company releases, and address any human rights matters that may come up where investors, NGOs, and clients may pressure companies to follow human rights standards. Involving stakeholders can make the HRDD process more efficient and effective.

*“If they work for a large company, they need to know like what companies they are working with in the supply chain and they need to know if their counterparts in their practices, do they have any like HRDD that had they have to abide by. So, they need to know to be well aware of the HRDD trends. I would say globally... It's important for companies to have human rights due diligence (HRDD) in place, but sometimes they may not know how to handle grievances or complaints from their workers. In such cases, it would be helpful for them to work with a CSO to figure out how to support their workers and remediate any issues. This kind of collaboration can create a positive environment and make it easier to form partnerships with the private sector...”*

(CSO1, Responsible Recruitment Specialist, 14/6/2023)

*“I believe that there is certainly room for improvement when it comes to upholding Human Rights and labor rights. By doing so, we can have **a positive impact on the work of CSO, NGO, and Lawyer**. Rather than being reactive, we should take a proactive approach to fixing these problems through HRDD practices. This will lead to better planning and development in the long run.”*

(CSO2, Co-Founder & Lawyer, 17/6/2023)

#### 4.2.4.2 Compliance with Regulations

As a responsible and ethical company, it is important for our HRDD (Human Rights Due Diligence) to align with our social responsibility to meet client standards and follow ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) strategies. To understand the significance of sustainability reporting, and to comply with reporting requirements from Global Reporting Initiative and regulatory bodies like the SEC in Thailand. It is mandatory for Thai listed companies to submit a

56-1 report, which discloses human rights impacts and other relevant information. If company take these reporting requirements seriously and strive to meet them in a timely and accurate manner. The benefit of the company's HRDD to its social responsibility to meet client standards and follow ESG strategies. Reporting requirements, such as those from Global Reporting Initiative and regulatory bodies like the SEC in Thailand, mandate sustainability reporting and disclose human rights impacts. Thai listed companies must submit a 56-1 report, a regulatory requirement.

*“following the recent situation where Thailand SEC is required to list the company to disclose their activity regarding ESG that is more on the company responsible for the impact, according to that reporting metrics human rights is one element of the report requirement..., Even Though this is not legally abide but somehow when the company disclose about the risk of Human Rights concern in the company, this is an indirect obligation from The Authority in Thailand seeking big companies to actually address their risk into the report wishes it aligned with the practice of HRDD..., **This is all including the company who may not listed in Thai Stock Exchange Market but they are in the position of being supply chain** for foreign company especially the EU's region where the client may ask these companies to be aligned with the standard so it is why some company may need to respect the client's request and follow the human rights standards.”*

(SPE1, Deputy Managing Director, 9/6/2023)

From the statements of SPE1, there are two parts; 1) Thai listed company required to submit their company report using 56-1 as a mandatory process, 2) Thai non-listed companies in the position of supplier for a big company are likely assessed and expected to be compliant with international standards from the needs of their contractor's clients/investors/buyers. Moreover, as a following up question to S1 about the company motivation of implying HRDD to their risk mitigation processes, the sustainability person mentioned that

*“..., The mandatory sustainability reporting from authority from SET(+SEC), HRDD is part of the process that they could use to identify risks even though in this HRDD is not mandatory but it is somehow indirectly required by them. So, company tend to need the good assessment to their risks to human rights (This is the strongest pressure to company)”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

Based on the statements provided by SPE1 and S1, it is evident that compliance with regulations plays a significant role in driving specific actions within companies. Thai-listed companies are mandated to submit their reports using the 56-1 process, highlighting the importance of regulatory compliance in ensuring transparency and accountability. Additionally, non-listed companies acting as suppliers to larger organizations are expected to comply with international standards to meet the requirements of their clients, investors, and buyers. Although HRDD may not be mandatory, it indirectly becomes necessary for companies seeking to identify and mitigate risks, particularly human rights-related ones. This pressure to address human rights risks strongly motivates companies to implement HRDD processes and undergo thorough risk assessments. Ultimately, compliance with regulations and adherence to international standards serve as critical drivers for companies to prioritize sustainability and risk mitigation efforts.

#### 4.2.4.3 Risk Mitigation

From the interview and quotes mentioned in the Sustainability professional's key responsibilities, violations of Human Rights and labor rights should be minimized, and the future focus should be on driving and mitigating company risks. Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) is a process that companies can use to identify and address risks. Assessing risks to human rights is strong pressure on companies, and sustainability professionals need to understand this issue. Mandating HRDD for listed companies in Thailand can prioritize these efforts. Companies that appeal to better address these risks are top of the trust and showcase their standards of practices.

*"..., this person creates and pulls stakeholders. HRDD must involves outsiders. Whether risk assessment, impact assessment, or reporting, external perspectives, the organization can **identify risks and respect human rights effectively.**"*

(SPE3, Project Coordinating Associate, 22/6/2023)

In a conversation with a company recruiter, they distinguish that sustainability person can also worked in the field of cooperate responsibility that ensures the risk mitigate in nearby community and plan for engagement as mentioned

*"..., where this person **must ensure local relation and risk mitigate** specify in this group and plan for activity on community support"*

(HR2, Assistant Manager Recruitment, 30/6/2023)

Based on the insights provided by SPE3 and HR2, it is clear that sustainability professionals play a crucial role in risk mitigation efforts within companies. Their focus is on minimizing violations of human rights and labor rights, and driving and mitigating risks. HRDD emerges as a valuable process for identifying and addressing these risks, with external perspectives playing a significant role in practical risk assessment, impact assessment, and reporting. It's essential for sustainability professionals to be involved in corporate responsibility and ensure risk mitigation in local communities. They also plan for community engagement activities to foster positive relationships and mitigate risks within the surrounding communities. The role of sustainability professionals in risk mitigation is instrumental in creating a more responsible and sustainable business environment.

#### 4.2.4.4 Enhanced Reputation

Reporting on human rights and company recognition is beneficial for the company's image and meeting client standards. Forecasting future trends helps reduce risks for the company. Publishing sustainability reports and having a sustainability team positively impacts the company's image and commitment to sustainable development.

*“... having a sustainability person/team in the company- this would **positively impact the company's image of communicating their commitment/effort to sustainable development.**”*

(S2, Chief Sustainability Officer, 19/6/2023)

In the expression of this following quote, there is believe that Sustainability work related to external views and reputations.

*“To clarify with Managing directors that sustainability work is not only for **awards or reputation of the company**, using verify information (some company have long reporting mechanism- some information could be missing out during the transformation from bottom to top)”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

#### 4.2.4.5 Sustainable Change and Return on Investment

A proactive planning and development approach is necessary for sustainable growth in companies. This may involve creating a position focused on sustainability to promote wider sustainability goals and mitigate future risks. Having a sustainability person/team in the company can positively impact the company's image and communication of their commitment to sustainable development.

Key informants believe investing in mitigating risks and planning ahead is necessary for a company. This might need a commitment from higher level positions that must be convinced that sustainability professionals or HRDD would not only cost them financially but also offer the outcome that could positively impact company operations.

*“In the nature of Thai companies, 70% of them are privately owned so it is not really critical but with the future trends from authority's requirement - SEC this may raise job competition because this **position is a niche target** because there aren't not school/instant courses for this job. So, **people with knowledge are likely to be in high demand...**”*

(HR1, Talent Acquisition Manager, 14/6/2023)

Some interviewees mentioned that smaller companies are less likely to see the importance of HRDD or Sustainability professional positions because they rarely profit. This learning is enhanced and confirmed that big companies with long supply chains must consider suppliers' requirements to conduct transparency assessments. They need much more support from their contractors. The support would change the ESG and Human Rights ecosystem between companies if the more prominent companies were aware of these hardships and offered to support the other human rights assessment practitioners, which would tie into the previous beneficial impact on Sustainable change.

*“..., the challenges that come with implementing HRDD processes in a private company. It can be difficult to get support from decision makers, especially when it requires budget and investment of staff time. However, it's important to remember the **potential benefits that HRDD can bring to the company in terms of employee satisfaction and overall success.**”*

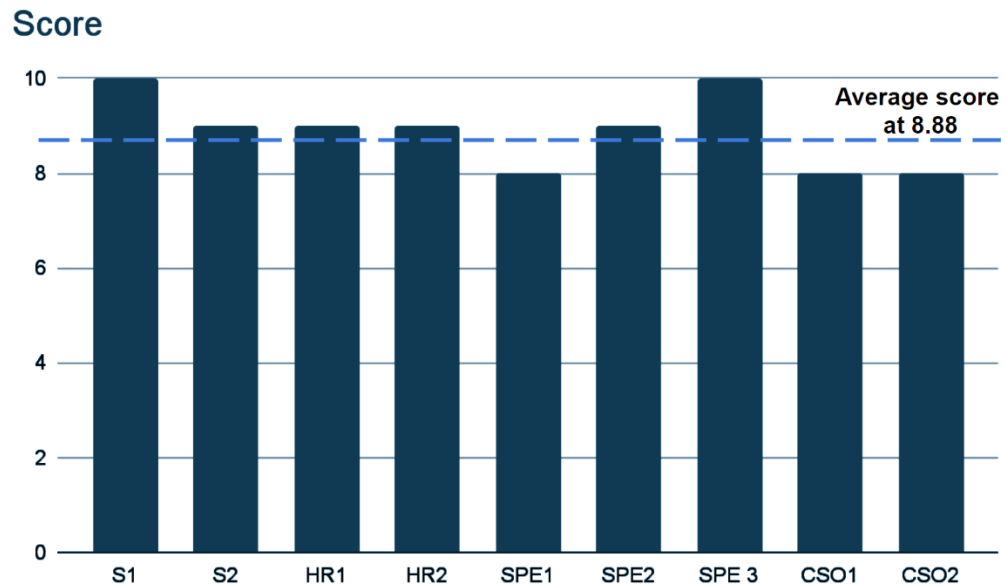
(SPE2, Project Manager, 22/6/2023)

As a responsible company, it's important to plan and develop sustainably for long-term growth. Not only does it help achieve broader goals, it also helps mitigate risks. By investing in sustainability and HRDD, businesses demonstrate their commitment to responsible practices and positively impact their image. When larger and smaller companies come together to support sustainability and human rights, it sets the stage for transformative change. Of course, implementing HRDD processes in private companies can face obstacles, but it's crucial to highlight the benefits, like employee satisfaction and overall success.

#### 4.2.5 Professional Rating

At the conclusion of each interview, the participants were requested to rate the significance of the sustainability position in an organization's Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) processes on a scale of 1 to 10. The ratings ranged from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating low importance and 10 representing essential importance. This rating aimed to comprehend the participants' perception of the value and impact of sustainability professionals in driving HRDD within organizations. The responses were very informative and provided valuable insights into the pivotal role of sustainability professionals in ensuring effective HRDD practices and upholding human rights standards. These ratings were constructive in highlighting the influence of sustainability professionals in promoting responsible business conduct and their contribution to a company's commitment to HRDD. The results of these ratings are presented in Figure 7.





**Figure 7:** Rating of the Significance of Sustainability Professional in HRDD Processes

Source: Created by the author

The results in Figure 7 illustrate the ratings given by participants regarding the significance of the sustainability position in Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) processes. The participants consisted of individuals from various backgrounds, including different age groups, genders. The ratings' average score of 8.88 shows that the sustainability position is given a high level of perceived importance in advancing HRDD inside organizations. The participants, who were made up of individuals from various gender backgrounds, consistently gave scores between 8 and 10, demonstrating agreement on the importance of the sustainability perspective.

The evaluations provided by the participants demonstrate their understanding of the crucial contribution sustainability professionals play in establishing efficient HRDD processes. Participants of both sexes underlined the value of having committed sustainability specialists to promote ethical corporate practices and safeguard human rights. These findings highlight the need to give sustainability positions the attention they deserve and the funding they need, as sustainability professionals' skills and contributions are valued for their role in advancing ethical behavior and HRDD.

Overall, the findings indicate that participants strongly agree on the importance of the sustainability stance in HRDD processes, underlining the importance of incorporating sustainability concerns into corporate plans to achieve responsible and sustainable business outcomes with some opinions such as;



*“From my view as a person working in this job, I must know that Human Rights Due Diligence is involved in many aspects of a company and I would like to give a 10 for this question.”*

(S1, Senior Sustainability Development officer, 10/6/2023)

*“..., This role may have an impact on the start of HRDD, but it must be defined. How does sustainability person work with clear job description.”*

(SPE1, Deputy Managing Director, 9/6/2023)

#### 4.3 Additional Comment

Some of the interviewee's comments and takeaways are interesting, particularly regarding previously mentioned topics. All representatives have shown good will and interest in contributing to this study. Some participants highlighted concerns and contributions related to the partitioning of non-listed companies, potentially requiring larger companies to engage in Human Rights Due Diligence.

*“..., If a company managed to have **an internal mechanism assigned to a specific person**, that would be good. Reality doesn't require it for all companies; instead, if they have less margin, they could assign this HRDD matter to their existing staff to also develop their capacity towards this trend.”*

(CSO2, Co-Founder & Lawyer, 17/6/2023)

Based on the feedback given by the interviewees, it seems that there are some valid concerns regarding the impact of internal management on the size of the business and its incentives. Some participants have also suggested the formation of a internal working group, which would not require full professionals to perform the job but rather someone who knows the company well. It is clear that all representatives have shown a good will and interest in contributing to this study, and some participants have highlighted concerns and contributions related to the partitioning of non-listed companies, which may require larger companies to engage in Human Rights Due Diligence.

*“I think it's totally depending on the company and its sizes for the big list of company they might have you know the resources that is enough to **create a working group and ensuring** like each one of them has the **clear job description** that dedicated to this work speaking of the other medium or small company who may not have enough resources whether it's time or budget for this works so they may just decide for anyone or not impossible for the small companies.”*

(SPE1, Deputy Managing Director, 9/6/2023)

It was interesting to note that during the interviews, some participants expressed concerns about how sustainability practices may impact Small Medium size companies (SMEs) in the future. They suggested that Thailand needs to consider the burden on these companies and find a way to balance sustainability practices with their regular business operations. Additionally, some participants recommended forming a working group comprised of individuals who know the company well to address these concerns. Overall, all the participants showed a willingness to contribute to this study, and some even highlighted concerns related to the partitioning of non-listed companies, which may require larger companies to engage in Human Rights Due Diligence.

*“..., especially the SME group, here the SME group has left out of the conversation about HRDD for a long time.”*

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย (SPE2, Project Manager, 22/6/2023)

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In conclusion, the interviews provided valuable insights into HRDD and sustainability professionals, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in this field. The participants stressed the need to consider the diversity of companies and develop practical strategies that align with their capacities and business contexts.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

This study provides significant insights into the role of sustainability professionals in companies' Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) processes. The findings shed light on various aspects, including company motivations, job descriptions of sustainability professionals, education support, and the contribution of sustainability professionals to HRDD. In discussing the results, it is evident that multiple factors influence the decision to have sustainability professionals within companies.

Company motivations vary, with some driven by their intended direction towards environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, while others feel external pressures from regulators, clients, investors, and partners. The size of the company also plays a role, as larger companies are more likely to follow mandatory reporting requirements. In contrast, smaller companies are considering including sustainability professionals in the future.

The job description of sustainability professionals presents challenges due to the sector-specific focus areas. Different sectors prioritize different aspects, such as labor rights or environmental sustainability, resulting in variations in the roles and responsibilities of sustainability professionals. Furthermore, recruiters express the need for more suitable candidates for this niche position, as it requires individuals who align with the company's strategies and possess the necessary competencies.

Education support emerges as a critical need to enhance the competency of sustainability professionals. Many current professionals have transitioned from the environmental field or possess scientific backgrounds. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of dedicated courses or schools focusing on sustainability careers. Introducing module certificates could strengthen students' knowledge and skills, increasing the pool of qualified professionals in the job market.

The findings relevant to HRDD underscore the significant contribution of sustainability professionals in driving HRDD practices within organizations. The average score of 8.88 out of 10, as rated by key informants, indicates the high importance placed on sustainability professionals in HRDD. This highlights their role in integrating sustainable practices and addressing human rights issues within the corporate context, as well as their ability to navigate complexities, identify risks, and develop strategies aligned with international standards and best practices.

The function of sustainability professionals in Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) in Thailand is closely linked to population studies and human development. By addressing human rights concerns and implementing responsible business practices, Thai businesses contribute to inclusive and sustainable development. This study's findings support the notion that integrating sustainability professionals into HRDD processes aligns with the essential human development outcomes of promoting increased living standards, social well-being, and environmental sustainability. In Thailand, integrating sustainability professionals into HRDD processes enables businesses to identify and mitigate human rights risks proactively. This approach ensures that business operations and supply channels respect the rights of affected individuals and communities. It also demonstrates Thailand's dedication to ethical business practices and the protection of human rights. Human development outcomes in Thailand are favorably impacted by the involvement of sustainability professionals

in HRDD. Companies may foster social advancement, economic growth, and a higher standard of living for individuals and communities by addressing human rights issues and encouraging ethical business practices. This demonstrates how crucial sustainability experts are to bringing about positive change and encouraging equitable development in Thailand.



## Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the roles and responsibilities of sustainability professionals in driving Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) within companies. By analyzing the findings, we gained valuable insights into the beneficial effects of sustainability professionals on a company's HRDD, as well as the specific tasks and key competencies required for their effective contribution.

Regarding the first research question, the findings revealed several beneficial effects that sustainability professionals have on a company's HRDD. These effects include improved stakeholder relationships, compliance with regulations, risk mitigation, enhanced reputation, sustainable change, and a return on investment. Sustainability professionals play a crucial role in fostering positive relationships with stakeholders, ensuring adherence to regulatory requirements, identifying and mitigating human rights risks, enhancing the company's reputation, driving sustainable change, and achieving a return on investment. These effects highlight the significant value that sustainability professionals bring to HRDD processes within organizations.

To address the second research question, the study identified specific tasks and responsibilities typically undertaken by sustainability professionals in driving HRDD within companies. The tasks included engagement of stakeholders, collaboration and cross-functional teamwork, training and awareness initiatives, risk assessment, and policy development. Sustainability professionals are responsible for engaging stakeholders internally and externally to address grievances and concerns and ensure effective communication and collaboration. They work closely with cross-functional teams to gather information, integrate data, and align HRDD efforts with the company's overall strategy. Moreover, sustainability professionals play a role in conducting training sessions, raising awareness, and developing capacity-building initiatives related to human rights issues. They conduct risk assessments to identify potential risks, analyze data, and propose strategies for risk mitigation. Additionally, sustainability professionals contribute to policy development by proposing company policies that promote responsible approaches and establishing mechanisms for reporting violations or breaches of the company's code of conduct.

Regarding key competencies, the findings emphasized the importance of strong analytical skills for sustainability professionals. They need to be able to analyze data, conduct risk assessments, and evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and practices. Effective stakeholder engagement was also identified as a crucial competency, requiring strong communication and collaboration skills to engage with diverse internal and external stakeholders. Other essential competencies included interdisciplinary knowledge, understanding of human rights issues, adaptability to

future trends, and the ability to propose effective policies and strategies that align with sustainable principles.

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of sustainability professionals in promoting Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) within corporations. Strong analytical skills, stakeholder engagement abilities, interdisciplinary knowledge, adaptability, and policy expertise enable these professionals to contribute to HRDD's facets significantly. They improve stakeholder relations, assure regulatory compliance, mitigate risks, advance a positive reputation, facilitate sustainable change, and generate a return on investment. By recognizing the value of these competencies and incorporating them into organizational practices, businesses can strengthen their HRDD processes and establish a corporate culture that places a premium on human rights.

Businesses and policymakers gain valuable insights by recognizing the specific tasks, essential competencies, and positive impacts associated with the role of sustainability professionals in driving HRDD. This knowledge enables them to develop strategies and policies consistent with international standards and best practices. In addition, it promotes incorporating sustainability professionals into decision-making processes and cross-functional teams, thereby facilitating an all-encompassing approach to HRDD. Organizations can cultivate a culture of respect for human rights, improve their overall sustainability performance, and contribute to the global advancement of responsible and ethical business conduct by leveraging the expertise and contributions of sustainability professionals.

## **5.2 Policy Recommendation**

As a result of the data analysis and the debates surrounding the role of sustainability professionals in Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) processes, numerous recommendations may be made to improve the efficiency and impact of sustainability professionals when it comes to driving HRDD within enterprises. These recommendations can be found below. These proposals reach as far as job seekers, educators, and future populations, to make the current business environment more responsible and sustainable.

First, it is recommended that businesses develop explicit policies for integrating sustainability professionals into their organizational structure. These policies should define these professionals' duties, responsibilities, and reporting structures to facilitate the efficient implementation of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) techniques. Businesses can effectively identify and address human rights risks by including sustainability experts in cross-functional teams and decision-making processes. Moreover, recruitment agencies can benefit from accurate information regarding

careers in sustainability. Understanding the specific skills, knowledge, and competencies required for these positions enables recruitment agencies to match job seekers with appropriate opportunities. By gaining an understanding of the responsibilities and obstacles encountered by sustainability professionals, recruitment agencies can offer more tailored advice and assistance to individuals pursuing careers in sustainability. This knowledge will allow them to connect job seekers with companies seeking sustainability professionals, thereby contributing to the growth and development of the sustainability job market.

Secondly, companies should adopt Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks and align their policies with them. This demonstrates a commitment to conducting business responsibly and considering human rights aspects. Regular reporting of ESG performance and HRDD results in corporate sustainability reports enhances transparency and accountability. Moreover, companies should actively engage their supply chains in HRDD efforts. This can be achieved through collaboration with suppliers to ensure responsible practices are followed. Implementing supplier codes of conduct, conducting audits, and sharing best practices will encourage adherence to human rights standards and foster a collective approach to HRDD.

For job seekers, it is crucial to pursue education and training that provide a strong foundation in sustainability concepts, HRDD, and ESG frameworks. This will equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively address human rights risks and contribute to organizations' sustainable development goals. They should also cultivate diverse skill sets encompassing environmental, social, and political dimensions to tackle the multifaceted challenges of HRDD. Continuous learning is essential for job seekers to stay updated on emerging trends, regulations, and best practices in HRDD and sustainability. Participation in industry events, workshops, and professional development programs ensures that individuals remain informed and equipped to address evolving challenges.

In terms of education, educational institutions should develop comprehensive and interdisciplinary sustainability programs that integrate HRDD and ESG concepts. This will equip future sustainability professionals with the knowledge and skills required to address human rights risks and contribute to sustainable development effectively. Through guest lectures, internships, and research collaborations, collaboration with industry partners ensures that curriculum content remains relevant and aligned with industry needs. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and media channels should collaborate to educate the public about human rights risks and the significance of responsible business practices to promote awareness and advocacy. Consumer participation is essential, and consumers should be urged to support businesses that prioritize HRDD and demonstrate a commitment to sustainable and ethical practices.

Consumers can influence businesses to enhance their HRDD processes and contribute to sustainable development by making informed decisions and demanding transparency. Collaboration between stakeholders is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to HRDD. Governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and individuals should work together to advocate for policies, regulations, and international frameworks that promote human rights, sustainability, and ethical business practices.

Last but not least, there should be an effort made to promote the incorporation of human rights principles into labor market practices. This involves addressing concerns such as fair salaries, safe working conditions, non-discrimination, and the protection of worker rights, among other things. Professionals in the field of sustainability have the potential to play a pivotal part in the process of advocating for and putting into practice policies and practices that safeguard human rights in the workplace. Companies have the ability to cultivate a culture of responsible business conduct through the implementation of these recommendations; individuals have the ability to develop the skills necessary for careers in sustainability; educators have the ability to shape future professionals; and stakeholders can contribute to an environment that is more sustainable and socially responsible for business. Collectively, these measures will not only create good improvements but also lower dangers to human rights and make it easier to achieve goals related to sustainable development.

### **5.3 Limitation and Future Research**

The present study, which was carried out between May and July of 2023, acknowledges some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. To begin, the research depended on a limited number of participants, and a set of predetermined criteria determined the selection of those people; this could have led to bias in the findings. In addition, there is a possibility that participants' responses were affected by self-reporting bias, and it is impossible to rule out the possibility of cognitive or social desirability bias. Additionally, the element of language should be considered, as the talks were held in Thai and then translated into English. This resulted in the loss of some nuances and minor meanings, which could have an impact on how the data is interpreted.

To address these limitations and advance our comprehension of careers in sustainability, a number of recommendations for future research can be made. Conducting in-depth case studies on particular professions or industries in Thailand would provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of sustainability factors within these domains. By analyzing the specific challenges, opportunities, and good practices



associated with these career trajectories in various contexts, case studies could provide tailored guidance to individuals pursuing careers in sustainability.

In addition, a comparison of sustainable practices and career development in medium-sized businesses (SMEs) would cast light on these organizations' unique challenges and strategies. This comparative analysis could disclose how various organizational types implement sustainability efforts and identify areas that require additional support.

Investigating the sustainability of job recruitment and hiring procedures within private companies would benefit job seekers seeking to connect with employers. Understanding the talent needs, skill gaps, and recruitment strategies of private sustainability enterprises would assist job seekers and educators better preparing students for sustainable professions. Moreover, this line of research could explore how various recruitment methods attract and retain sustainability professionals.

In addition, collaborative research initiatives involving academia, industry, and sustainability experts have the potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Working closely with sustainability professionals would enable researchers to gain valuable insights, receive access to real-world data, and co-create knowledge that addresses the industry's specific requirements. It is suggested that future research endeavors build upon the current study's limitations and delve deeper into the unique challenges, opportunities, and best practices associated with sustainability careers in specific professions, industries, and cultural contexts. Moreover, the cost-benefit analysis of having sustainability professional in the company's long-term performance should be further explored quantitatively. By expanding our knowledge in these areas, we can effectively support individuals pursuing careers in sustainability, influence policy and organizational practices, and make significant contributions to global efforts for sustainable development.

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## ANNEX A

## CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

**Independent Study Title:** Enhancing Human Rights Due Diligence in Private Business: The Role and Beneficial Impact of Sustainability Positions. (TBD)

Thank you for consenting to participate in the interview for the aforementioned study. Please kindly fill out and sign the form provided below to confirm your agreement with each statement, please initial the corresponding boxes.

	Please check the appropriate boxes.
I hereby acknowledge that I have been provided with adequate information regarding this study and have a clear understanding of my responsibilities within it. The procedures and handling of my personal data in the future have been explicitly outlined to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware that my participation as an interviewee is entirely voluntary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I acknowledge my right to decline answering questions and to discontinue the interview if I feel any form of discomfort. In such cases, I have the right to request the deletion of any data collected prior to my withdrawal.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to the recording of this interview. I acknowledge that the recorded material will solely be utilized for analysis purposes and that excerpts from the interview may be used. I understand that no other utilization of the recording will occur without my written consent. The interview transcript will only be accessible to Ms. Pimpilai Rumthum and any potential collaborators involved in the study process, under strict confidentiality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I acknowledge that I have the freedom to reach out to the student or any other individuals involved in the study for additional clarification or information in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have thoroughly reviewed and comprehended all the points and statements outlined in this form. I have received satisfactory answers to all my inquiries, and I willingly consent to participate in this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

Your name

Date

(Participant Name & Signature)

---

Miss Pimpilai Rumthum

Date

(Student Name & Signature)

### Contact Information

This study is conducted under the supervision of the College of Population's program on Population Policy and Human Development, Chulalongkorn University. If you have further questions or concerns about this study, please contact

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## ANNEX B

### In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guide

#### Types of the respondents: **Sustainability Persons**

- How do you view the role of sustainability professionals in the improvement of the company's Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD)?
- Can you provide specific examples of how sustainability professionals have positively impacted HRDD within your organization?
- What specific HRDD-related tasks or responsibilities do sustainability professionals typically undertake?
- What competencies or skills, in your opinion, are necessary for sustainability professionals to effectively contribute to HRDD?
- How do you collaborate with other stakeholders, including HR and HRDD experts, to incorporate sustainability into HRDD processes? (Particularly at the stage of policy implementation)

#### Types of the respondents: **Human Resource Persons**

- How, in your opinion, do sustainability professionals contribute to the HRDD efforts of the company?
- Can you provide examples of how the HR and sustainability functions collaborate to address human rights risks?
- What kinds of tasks or responsibilities related to HRDD do human resources employees in a company usually take on?
- From your point of view, what competencies or skills do employees in HR need to help drive HRDD in a way that supports sustainability professionals?
- Additional recommendations of key success factors for driving the implementation of HRDD policy in the organization.

#### Types of the respondents: **Human Rights Due Diligence Specialists**

- How do you think sustainability workers are good for the HRDD of the company?
- Can you give examples of how working with people who work on sustainability has made HRDD results better?
- What exact tasks or responsibilities related to HRDD do HRDD experts usually expect sustainability professionals to handle?
- What skills or competencies do you think professionals in sustainability should have to successfully contribute to HRDD?
- Your working experience with sustainability team in the organizations, please share the obstacles\* you see good practices of the companies which are quite successful in driving HRDD implementation.

\*Obstacles which hinder the success of HRDD implementation in organization.

Types of the respondents: **Civil Society Organization**

- How do you perceive the role of sustainability professionals in driving Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) within companies? What value do they bring to the table?
- Can you provide examples of successful collaborations between sustainability professionals and CSOs/non-profit organizations that have positively impacted HRDD practices?
- What specific tasks or responsibilities related to HRDD have you observed sustainability professionals undertaking in collaboration with CSOs/non-profit organizations?
- From your experience, what competencies or skills do you believe sustainability professionals should possess to effectively engage with CSOs/non-profit stakeholders and to raise the external participation in order to drive HRDD?
- In your opinion, with good HRDD practice in private companies, how will it create an impact on your work? E.g., is it a tool for risk control of violation of labor rights, etc.

**All key informants asked**

As you/ your organizations have been working Human Rights Due Diligence, how would you rate the impact of the sustainability position in a private company's Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) processes.

- On a scale of 1-10, please rate the significance of the sustainability position in a company's Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) processes. (1 being of low importance and 10 being essential for the company's HRDD processes)

Any other additional comments (if any)



## REFERENCES



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