

Recommended Priorities for Effective Online Safety Regulation

Governments implementing online safety regulations must address a number of key priorities to ensure success. There is no set order for undertaking these priorities, and how they are addressed will vary by context, but they are crucial ingredients for an effective, whole-of-society approach to online safety. The sheer number of actors involved in each priority underscores the complexity of addressing online safety and makes establishing strong coordination mechanisms an essential first step for most regulatory pathways.

Align on shared outcomes and roles:

Agree on practical, survivor-centered outcomes (timely response, meaningful remedy, reduced repeat harm) and clarify roles across platforms, regulators, civil society/service providers, and justice actors.

Key actors: All government actors and catalytic non-governmental partners

Strengthen online safety legislation:

Update and harmonize laws to reflect current and emerging online harms, with clear platform duties of care, proportionate enforcement powers, and survivor-centered safeguards.

Key actors: Policymakers and legislative bodies with input from catalytic non-governmental partners

Make reporting and redress usable end-to-end:

Simplify reporting, ensure accessibility and language coverage, publish clear timelines, improve escalation for high-risk cases, and connect survivors to support and legal aid where available.

Key actors: Regulatory Authorities; Law Enforcement and Prosecutorial Authorities; Judiciary and Courts; Human Rights and Equality Institutions; Social Welfare, Health, and Survivor Support Services; Local and Sub National Governments; Technology Platforms, Service Providers, and Infrastructure Actors; Civil Society Organizations and Intermediaries; Grassroots and Community Based Networks; Funders and Development Partners

Improve data and transparency without increasing risk:

Platforms, regulators, and researchers should establish shared harm taxonomies, privacy-preserving data-sharing/research access, and regular transparency reporting that can be used to track prevalence, responsiveness, and systemic risks.

Key actors: Regulatory Authorities; Human Rights and Equality Institutions; Technology Platforms, Service Providers, and Infrastructure Actors; Academic Institutions and Research Centers; Funders and Development Partners

Operationalize Safety-by-Design:

Prioritize preventive design changes (friction against abuse, stronger account integrity, safer defaults, synthetic media provenance, scalable mitigations for coordinated harassment) and evaluate them against real-world harm reduction.

Key actors: Regulatory Authorities; Technology Platforms, Service Providers, and Infrastructure Actors; Education Systems, Educators, and Cultural Institutions; Funders and Development Partners

Strengthen capacity and coordination where it matters most:

Invest in cross-training (law enforcement, courts, regulators, social services), clear referral pathways, and lightweight coordination mechanisms, especially in resource-constrained settings.

Key actors: Regulatory Authorities; Law Enforcement and Prosecutorial Authorities; Judiciary and Courts; Funders and Development Partners; Academic Institutions and Research Centers

Sustain prevention through education and public engagement:

Integrate digital literacy, bystander interventions, and risk awareness into schools and community programs; support public-facing guidance that helps people act before harm escalates.

Key actors: Regulatory Authorities; Education and Preventive Institutions; Local and Sub National Governments; Funders and Development Partners; Civil Society Organizations and Intermediaries; Education Systems, Educators, and Cultural Institutions; Media, Journalism, and Cultural Production Networks; Grassroots and Community Based Networks