

CONCEPT NOTE

Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable 2026

Connecting organisations working with displaced and stateless populations with pro bono support

30 September 2026 | 11 AM Bangkok time | Virtual via Zoom

The Refugee Rights Pro Bono Roundtable

Across Asia-Pacific, refugee-led organisations (RLOs), NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) frequently operate in complex regulatory environments and without regular access to specialist legal support. Their needs may include governance and registration, contracts and employment matters, banking and regulatory compliance, legal research and training, or structured partnerships that expand access to justice. At the same time, law firms across the region are seeking credible, well-designed opportunities to contribute legal expertise. The central challenge is often not a lack of goodwill, but the absence of a structured process that translates community-identified needs into practical, lawyer-ready projects. The Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable was designed to bridge this gap.

The Roundtable offers a unique opportunity for organizations to present (“pitch”) projects in need of pro bono legal assistance to law firms and other pro bono providers. First piloted in Asia in 2020 and repeated in 2022, this model achieved a 100 percent match rate in Asia and has since been successfully replicated across the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. The format has proven highly effective at sparking both short-term and long-term pro bono partnerships, particularly for RLOs, which constituted 50% of the pitching entities at the most recent roundtable in the United States.

[PILnet](#) and the [Asia Pacific Network of Refugees \(APNOR\)](#), are pleased to now be partnering with [UNHCR](#), [TrustLaw](#), the [Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network \(APRRN\)](#), [Migration & Asylum project \(MAP\)](#), [Asylum Services & Knowledge \(ASK\)](#) and [Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer \(HSF Kramer\)](#), to bring the model back to Asia where it was first created.

Roundtable format

The Roundtable will be a virtual partnership-building forum between selected RLOs/NGOs/CBOs and law firms, in-house legal teams and other pro bono providers. Registered participants will receive a concise project catalogue and agenda in advance, including the project background, jurisdiction, intended output and relevant expertise.

- Selected organisations will make a short 3–5-minute presentation of their project idea.
- The roundtable will end with a facilitated dialogue between law firms and pitching organisations (optional).

- Firms may express interest after the session; attendance does not create an obligation to take on a matter.
- PILnet and APNOR will facilitate introductions and support the parties to clarify scope, roles, timing and terms of engagement.
- Projects not presented live may be considered through bilateral matching and complementary referral routes.

Where a project spans multiple jurisdictions, practice areas or could otherwise benefit from multiple firm engagement, PILnet may explore collaboration between firms and/or with relevant local legal partners.

Why participate

By participating, law firms and in-house legal teams will have an opportunity to:

- hear directly from organisations closest to the legal and operational challenges affecting displaced communities;
- review concrete, collaboratively scoped projects before deciding whether there is a suitable fit;
- contribute expertise from a wide range of practice areas, including corporate, employment, regulatory, data protection, public law, research and litigation;
- build longer-term, equitable relationships with RLOs and other regional civil society organisations; and
- contribute to implementation of the GRF Legal Community Pledge in Asia-Pacific.

The Roundtable is open to law firms, in-house legal teams and other legal organisations providing pro bono services. Participation is welcome from law firms that have not signed on to the [Global Refugee Forum Legal Community Pledge](#) yet, though they will be encouraged to do so. Follow-up support to match law firms with RLO/NGOs and to establish a pro bono partnership will also be provided by PILnet after the Roundtable. Whether a firm has signed the Pledge will be a factor considered during the matching process.

Preparing for the roundtable

On 4 August 2026, hosted the [Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Pro Bono Workshop](#). The workshop and its pre-event consultation engaged more than 100 organisations and helped participants to:

- understand the principal forms of pro bono legal support available to organisations;
- learn from practical Asia-Pacific partnerships, including challenges and lessons;
- distinguish organisational and programmatic legal projects from individual case, emergency protection or funding requests; and
- begin translating an early legal need into a defined problem, outcome, scope and role for lawyers.

Following the workshop, organisations have been invited to submit initial legal needs through PILnet's Legal Assistance Intake Form. PILnet and APNOR are reviewing and collaboratively scoping suitable requests.

The final project catalogue will prioritise requests with a clear legal or organisational problem, a practical intended output, relevant jurisdictions and a committed organisational focal point. Projects may fall within one or more of the following broad areas:

- **Organisational legal support:** governance, legal status, compliance, contracts, employment, banking, funding structures, data protection and internal policies.
- **Research and training:** focused legal research, comparative or multi-jurisdictional analysis, mapping, toolkits, model policies, training and capacity-building.
- **Structured direct assistance:** organisation-led legal clinics, referral systems, mentoring and supervision, strategic litigation or other defined programmes with appropriate safeguards and quality assurance.

Event details and registration

Format: Virtual via Zoom

Timing: The Roundtable is planned as a virtual session on **30 September 2026 at 11 a.m. Bangkok time**. A project catalogue will be shared with registered firms/ legal teams in advance.

Registration: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/-BRm6c6-SkuKjY_soVj2vQ

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