

CONCEPT NOTE

Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtables 2026

Connecting organizations working with displaced and stateless populations with pro bono legal support

1st Roundtable (Programmatic projects): 30 September 2026, Wednesday | 11 AM - 12:30 PM
Bangkok time | Virtual via Zoom

2nd Roundtable (Operational Support projects): 06 October 2026, Tuesday | 11 AM - 12:30 PM
Bangkok time | Virtual via Zoom

The Refugee Rights Pro Bono Roundtable

Across Asia-Pacific, refugee-led organizations (RLOs), NGOs and community-based organizations (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 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](#), and [GRF Legal Community Pledge members](#) - the [Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network \(APRRN\)](#), [MAP International](#), [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

Due to an unprecedented number of project pitches received, the 2026 Roundtable is expanding into two virtual events, giving organizations more time to present their projects and connect with potential pro bono partners. **The first roundtable will focus on Programmatic projects, including legal research, training, advocacy and legal assistance.** The second will focus on **Operational Support projects, including governance, compliance, contracts and organizational structures.** Law firms, in-house legal teams and other pro bono providers may attend either or both, depending on their interests and expertise. Registered participants will receive a concise project catalogue and agenda in advance, including the project background, jurisdiction, intended output and relevant expertise sought.

- Selected organisations will make a short 3–5-minute presentation of their project idea.
- Each roundtable will end with a facilitated dialogue between pro bono providers and pitching organizations (optional).
- Firms and other pro bono providers may express interest after either session; attendance does not create an obligation to take on a matter.
- PILnet and APNOR will facilitate introductions and support matched organizations to clarify scope, roles, timing and terms of engagement.
- Projects not presented live during the roundtables 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 organizations 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 organizations; and
- contribute to implementation of the GRF Legal Community Pledge in Asia-Pacific.

The roundtables are open to **law firms, in-house legal teams and other legal organizations 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. PILnet will provide follow-up support after the roundtables to match law firms with RLO/NGOs and to establish a pro bono partnership. Whether a firm has signed the Pledge will be a factor considered during the matching process.

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

- **Organizational 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:** organization-led legal clinics, referral systems, mentoring and supervision, strategic litigation or other defined programs with appropriate safeguards and quality assurance.

Event details and registration

Format: Both roundtables will be Virtual via Zoom

Materials: Project catalogue shared with registered firms/legal teams on Friday, 25 September 2026.

Registration links:

- [Roundtable #1: Programmatic projects](#) (30 September, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Bangkok time)
- [Roundtable #2: Operational Support projects](#) (6 October, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Bangkok time)

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