

WORLDWIDE PARTNER EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: INFORMATION SOURCES OVERVIEW



In today's interconnected global economy, the evaluation of business partners is a critical, ongoing process that extends far beyond the initial selection phase. As companies increasingly rely on international collaborations to drive growth, innovation, and supply chain efficiency, the ability to continuously assess the performance, reliability, and risk profile of global partners becomes essential.

A structured partner evaluation framework, grounded in diverse and credible data sources, empowers organizations to:

- Monitor compliance with contractual and regulatory obligations
- Detect early warning signs of financial or operational instability
- Ensure alignment with strategic goals and ethical standards
- Strengthen resilience against geopolitical, reputational, and supply chain risks

This framework is not a one-time checklist, but a dynamic system that supports informed decision-making throughout the lifecycle of a business relationship.

Key Dimensions of Partner Evaluation

1. Financial Stability

- Ongoing analysis of financial statements, credit scores, and payment histories helps assess a partner's ability to meet obligations and invest in growth.

2. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- Regular screening against sanctions lists, litigation databases, and compliance records ensures partners operate within legal and ethical boundaries.

3. Operational Performance

- Metrics such as delivery reliability, quality control, and capacity utilization provide insight into a partner's operational effectiveness and scalability.

4. Reputation and Public Perception

- Media monitoring, customer reviews, and social sentiment analysis reveal how a partner is perceived by stakeholders and the public.

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5. Strategic and Cultural Fit

- Evaluating alignment in values, business practices, and long-term goals supports stronger, more collaborative partnerships.

6. Sustainability and ESG Compliance

- Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data is increasingly vital for assessing long-term viability and reputational risk.

7. Geopolitical and Market Risk

- Country-specific risks, including political instability, economic volatility, and regulatory changes, must be factored into partner evaluations.

By leveraging a wide array of data sources—from financial databases and compliance tools to local intelligence and ESG ratings—organizations can build a comprehensive, risk-aware view of their global partners. This proactive approach not only safeguards operations but also fosters more transparent, resilient, and mutually beneficial business relationships.

In the context of global trade, obtaining reliable and consistent information on companies worldwide remains a significant challenge for businesses operating across borders. Organizations engaged in international commerce must navigate a complex landscape shaped by diverse legal systems, varying levels of data transparency, and geopolitical conditions. These factors influence not only the availability and quality of corporate data, but also the methods required to collect, interpret, and validate it.

The ability to access high-quality, up-to-date information is essential for supporting risk assessment, compliance, and strategic decision-making. However, doing so requires both a local presence and a deep understanding of how data is structured, regulated, and disseminated in each jurisdiction.

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Core Categories of Information

Despite regional differences, company data can generally be grouped into several key categories that form the foundation of any business partner evaluation:

- **Public Registries:** Used to verify a company's legal existence, registration details, and current operational status.
- **Financial Information:** Available for entities legally required to file financial statements with public authorities. This data helps assess financial health, solvency, and performance.
- **Legal and Structural Data:** Includes information on company formation, governance, and legal representatives, offering insight into organizational structure and accountability.
- **Adverse or Negative Records:** Covers bankruptcies, insolvencies, legal disputes, and other red flags that may impact a company's credibility or operational continuity.
- **Ownership and Shareholding Structure:** Critical for understanding beneficial ownership, control, and potential conflicts of interest.
- **Local and Contextual Data:** Encompasses industry classification, certifications, licenses, and other contextual elements that help position the company within its local market.

Complexities in Data Collection

While categorizing data is relatively straightforward, the collection process is far more complex and highly dependent on country-specific factors. These include:

- **Legal Frameworks:** Some jurisdictions mandate public disclosure of corporate data, while others restrict access or require special authorization.
- **Data Infrastructure:** The maturity of digital registries and the frequency of data updates vary widely.
- **Language and Format Barriers:** Information may be available only in local languages or in non-standardized formats.
- **Political and Institutional Stability:** In regions with weak governance or political instability, data may be outdated, incomplete, or unreliable.
- **Cultural and Administrative Practices:** Local norms can influence how data is reported, interpreted, and shared.

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To effectively evaluate international business partners, companies must adopt a flexible, informed, and locally aware approach to data sourcing. This involves not only identifying the right categories of information but also understanding the nuances of data access and interpretation in each market. Partnering with local experts, leveraging global data platforms, and maintaining a robust due diligence process are all essential components of a successful global evaluation strategy.

Legislative and Structural Challenges in Global Company Data Management

One of the primary challenges in accessing reliable company information across borders lies in the legislative requirements governing corporate data disclosure. Each country has its own legal framework that dictates what information companies must submit to public authorities, how it is collected, and how it is made accessible.

While most countries maintain some form of public institution or registry responsible for collecting corporate data, the structure, scope, and accessibility of these institutions can vary significantly. In some jurisdictions, data is centralized at the national level, with local authorities feeding into a unified repository. In others, data remains fragmented across regional or municipal bodies, making it difficult to obtain a comprehensive national view of a company's profile.

These differences are often a reflection of how a country is administratively organized and the degree of coordination between central and local governments. Generally, countries with more advanced administrative systems tend to have more structured data flows and higher levels of transparency. However, this is not always the case. Even in countries with high data availability, the types of data required from companies can vary widely.

A notable example is the filing of financial statements. While most countries require certain legal entities to submit financial reports, the scope of this obligation differs. In the United States and Switzerland, for instance, only publicly listed companies are typically required to file financial statements with public authorities, leaving a large portion of private businesses outside the scope of mandatory disclosure.

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Beyond Legislation: Infrastructure and Technology

Legislative requirements are only part of the equation. The technological infrastructure supporting data collection and dissemination plays a crucial role in determining the efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness of information.

Countries that rely on manual or paper-based processes often face delays, inconsistencies, and limited accessibility. In contrast, those that have adopted modern digital platforms and automated workflows are better positioned to ensure data is updated regularly, processed efficiently, and made available in standardized formats.

This disparity affects not only the speed of data availability, but also the confidence users can place in its completeness and reliability. A robust digital infrastructure enables real-time updates, audit trails, and integration with other data systems—features that are essential for high-quality business intelligence.

The Impact of Political and Institutional Stability

Finally, political instability, weak governance, or limited central oversight can severely undermine the integrity of corporate data systems. In countries experiencing internal conflict or lacking effective regulatory enforcement, data collection processes may be inconsistent, underfunded, or subject to manipulation. This creates significant challenges for businesses seeking to evaluate partners in such environments, as the risk of incomplete, outdated, or inaccurate information increases substantially. Understanding the legislative, structural, and technological context of each country is essential for interpreting the quality and reliability of corporate data. Businesses engaged in international operations must account for these variations when evaluating partners, and often benefit from working with local experts or global data providers who can navigate these complexities effectively.

Data management challenges

Data management is a critical function in any organization, and it comes with a range of challenges that can impact data quality, accessibility, security, and usability. Here are the key challenges in data management:

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1. Data Quality and Consistency

- Inaccurate, incomplete, or outdated data can lead to poor decision-making.
- Inconsistent data formats across systems make integration and analysis difficult.

2. Data Integration

- Combining data from multiple sources (e.g., databases, cloud platforms, third-party systems) is complex.
- Legacy systems often lack compatibility with modern tools.

3. Data Governance

- Lack of clear policies on data ownership, access rights, and accountability.
- Difficulty in enforcing data standards and compliance across departments.

4. Data Security and Privacy

- Protecting sensitive data from breaches, leaks, and unauthorized access.
- Ensuring compliance with regulations like GDPR, CCPA, or HIPAA.

5. Data Volume and Scalability

- Managing the exponential growth of data (big data) requires scalable infrastructure.
- Storage, processing, and retrieval become more resource-intensive.

6. Real-Time Data Processing

- Increasing demand for real-time analytics and decision-making.
- Requires robust architecture and low-latency systems.

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Geographic differences

When dealing with company data in a global business context, there are significant differences across countries that can affect how data is accessed, interpreted, and used. These differences stem from variations in legal frameworks, administrative structures, technological maturity, and cultural norms. Here's an overview of the key dimensions where company data differs worldwide:

1. Legal Disclosure Requirements

- What companies must report varies widely. For example:
 - In the U.S., only publicly traded companies are required to file financial statements.
 - In Germany, even small private companies must submit annual accounts to public registries.
- Types of data required (e.g., financials, ownership, governance) differ by legal form and jurisdiction.

2. Public Data Availability

- Some countries maintain centralized, open-access registries (e.g., UK's Companies House).
- Others have fragmented or restricted systems, often at regional or municipal levels (e.g., Italy, Brazil).
- In some jurisdictions, access to data may require fees, licenses, or local representation.

3. Data Format and Standardization

- Data may be available in structured digital formats (e.g., XML, JSON) or unstructured formats (e.g., PDFs, scanned documents).
- Language and terminology differences can complicate cross-border comparisons.

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4. Frequency and Timeliness of Updates

- Some registries update data in real time or annually, while others may lag by months or years.
- Delays in updates can affect the reliability of financial or legal information.

5. Ownership Transparency

- Countries like Norway and the UK have public beneficial ownership registers.
- Others, such as Switzerland or the UAE, offer limited visibility into company ownership.

6. Technological Infrastructure

- Advanced economies often have automated, searchable databases.
- Developing countries may rely on manual processes or paper-based records, limiting accessibility and accuracy.

7. Political and Institutional Stability

- In politically unstable regions, data may be incomplete, outdated, or manipulated.
- Weak governance can lead to low enforcement of reporting obligations.

8. Cultural and Administrative Practices

- In some cultures, privacy norms limit the disclosure of business information.
- Administrative practices may affect how data is collected, verified, and shared.

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Given these challenges, partnering with a reliable information provider is essential for maintaining a secure global presence.

SkyMinder is the CRIF platform positioned as a hub when a company has to be evaluated in every country in the world. Considering differences between countries, the combination between CRIF companies and the best local provider is perfectly matching the highest quality standard required by the markets. In Executive Report, Full Reports and Slim Report, even if with different level of details, all companies registered in public sources are covered, evaluation data like Rating and Credit Limit are giving the right direction when a business decision must be taken. Then, firmographic data, financial information, negative data, company structure and activity details, are composing the Report. On-line availability almost complete for CRIF countries or other partner in Western Europe with the fresh investigation process, has as a result to provide information on all companies. Based on Full Report but with a synthetic content, Slim Reports are including basic official and unofficial data and evaluation information like rating and credit limit.

Business can be affected by changes, like new financial statements, negative events, principals or rating and credit limit, Monitoring Solutions are able to notify if a change occurs providing the right information to modify or confirm decisions previously taken.

Due to legislations' or business requirements, it's necessary to understand company structure, ownership and shareholding: thanks to Verification Report, is possible to obtain this information to have an in depth knowledge of the company itself. As a matter of overall evaluation, also financial crimes, bribery, corruption, terrorism can assume a very high relevance when a business partner has to be evaluate, both in term of risk management and reputation. In this case, SkyMinder has a double offering with two products, Compliance Check Report and Extended Check Report, able to verify if company required or shareholders and principals are connected to financial crimes.

Finally also Cyber Risk can be underlined using KYND Cyber Risk Report in a complex evaluation process.

SkyMinder is strongly committed in providing best in class information everywhere in the world, considering local specificities and able to offer high quality information despite data friction level.