



2024 TrustLaw

Index of Pro Bono - FAQ

Available [online](#)

GENERAL

WHO IS TRUSTLAW?

[TrustLaw](#) is the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro bono legal programme. We are the largest free pro bono service in the world, and connect law firms and corporate legal teams across 175 countries with high-impact NGOs and social enterprises working to create social and environmental change.

WHAT IS THE TRUSTLAW INDEX OF PRO BONO?

In 2014, the [Thomson Reuters Foundation](#) launched the first annual TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono. The Index identifies global trends in the pro bono marketplace and looks at how much pro bono work law firms are undertaking on a country-by-country basis around the world.

The [2022 Index](#), compiled with data from **245 firms**, representing more than **100,000 lawyers** across **124 countries**, showed that respondent firms donated **3.5 million hours** of their time assisting charities, non-profits, social enterprises, and low income or marginalised individuals free of charge. On average, individual lawyers were found to have invested 33 hours of free legal assistance around the world. See the 2022 findings [here](#).

WHY DID TRUSTLAW CREATE A GLOBAL INDEX OF PRO BONO?

Collecting information about pro bono enables us to highlight success factors, show how much pro bono is being done on a country-by-country basis, and give a picture of the global pro bono market. Over time, the Index will show how the pro bono sector is evolving and will uncover emerging trends.

The Index is an invaluable tool to spread the practice of pro bono by highlighting successful pro bono programmes, providing benchmarks on engagement levels in different jurisdictions and demonstrating the amount of pro bono being done globally. In many countries, pro bono is an emerging area, and showing different ways of supporting pro bono initiatives, such as setting up a pro bono committee, incentivising pro bono and setting pro bono targets, can help lawyers the world over decide what is best for their firm.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE INDEX

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN THE INDEX OF PRO BONO?

1. Complete the online [TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono survey](#) by **Friday 15 March 2024**.
2. Spread the word – the more firms that contribute, and the more countries we can analyze, the greater tool the Index will be. Please share this email in your firm, with your legal networks, and with other firms and lawyers.

WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE?

Law firms in every country around the world are invited to contribute, irrespective of size, specialism or how much pro bono they do.

WHAT IF YOU CAN'T PROVIDE SOME OF THE INFORMATION?

We understand that each law firm has different policies concerning the publication of data. While we wholeheartedly encourage you to complete the full survey, we will accept partial submissions.

CAN I VIEW AND PRINT THE SURVEY QUESTIONS BEFORE SUBMITTING A RESPONSE?

Yes; the survey questions for the 2024 TrustLaw Index are available for download as a PDF. They can also be downloaded in Word Doc format for ease of completion. Both can be accessed [here](#).

CAN I REVIEW MY RESPONSES BEFORE THEY ARE OFFICIALLY SUBMITTED?

Yes; you will be presented with a list of the answers you've provided for each of the survey questions (and given the option to download a PDF file containing this information) before submitting your responses to TrustLaw.

THE ONLINE SURVEY IS NOT WORKING. IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO SUBMIT MY FIRM'S RESPONSES?

Yes; the exact questionnaire from the online survey is also available in Word Doc format which can be downloaded [here](#), completed and emailed to Index of Pro Bono team at probonoindex@thomsonreuters.com for inclusion in the 2024 Index.

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH JURISDICTIONS TO SUPPLY DATA FOR AS PART OF MY FIRM'S SUBMISSION?

Please supply data for each jurisdiction in which your law firm has offices.

WE DON'T TYPICALLY USE THE PHRASE 'FEE EARNER' IN MY JURISDICTION. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

A 'fee earner' is any legal professional whose services are billed to the client at an hourly rate. For more information, please see the relevant definitions outline in TrustLaw's Index Submission Guidance. It can be accessed [here](#).

CAN I DOWNLOAD A PDF OF MY SUBMITTED SURVEY RESPONSES FOR MY RECORDS?

Yes; upon completion of the survey questions, you will be asked to review your answers prior to submitting your firm's responses to TrustLaw. You will also be prompted to download a corresponding PDF.

IS THERE A MINIMUM REQUIRED NUMBER OF PRO BONO HOURS THAT A FIRM MUST UNDERTAKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TRUSTLAW INDEX?

No; the Index seeks to support the development of pro bono around the world by highlighting success factors in pro bono practices, providing benchmarking and mapping trends. We want to spread the practice of pro bono worldwide to drive social change. As such, we consider every single hour of pro bono undertaken to be valuable and worth of note.

HOW DOES TRUSTLAW DEFINE 'PRO BONO' FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE INDEX?

We acknowledge that a great deal of community work is done by lawyers, though the Index only looks at pro bono legal work. We have created a definition of what qualifies as pro bono work for the purposes of the Index.

Our definition is designed to be flexible enough to take into account a multitude of regional variations, from Australia to Azerbaijan and Seoul to Swakopmund, while still allowing us to look at pro bono globally and make comparisons on a country-by-country basis. See the TrustLaw Index Submission Guidance for definitions of Qualifying Pro Bono and Qualifying Fee Earner for the purposes of the Index.

ARE QUALIFYING PARTNER HOURS CONSIDERED QUALIFYING FEE-EARNER HOURS FOR PURPOSES OF THE INDEX?

Yes; Qualifying Partner Hours are included in the tally of Qualifying Fee-Earner Hours. Therefore, a firm's Qualifying Fee-Earner Hours should include both the number of pro bono hours carried out by non-partner fee earners at the firm and the number of pro bono hours carried out by partners.

INDEX RESULTS

WHAT INFORMATION WILL TRUSTLAW PUBLISH ABOUT YOUR FIRM?

The only information that will be attributable to your firm will be:

- The average number of pro bono hours per fee earner per year, in each jurisdiction which your firm operates
- The percentage of fee earners undertaking ten or more hours of pro bono per year

Please see the definitions of 'Qualifying Pro Bono' and 'Qualifying Fee Earner' in Index Submission Guidance for full details.

WHEN WILL THE TRUSTLAW INDEX OF PRO BONO BE LAUNCHED?

The TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono will be launched at the start of **2025**.

HOW ARE THE FINDINGS PUBLISHED?

The Index will be published on a country-by-country basis, not on a global level. For example, if you complete the survey for your firm's pro bono activities in India, this information will be included in the India analysis only.

WHAT IS THE REST OF THE DATA USED FOR?

The additional information requested will be collated and published on an anonymous basis, or used to inform the TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono's industry analysis. This includes the structure of pro bono practices, whether pro bono is considered for determining fee-earner compensation, and levels of partner involvement. None of this additional information will be accredited to individual firms.

To understand how your firm's information will be included, see the [2014](#), [2015](#), [2016](#), [2020](#) and [2022](#) Index findings.

I HAVE SUBMITTED DATA FOR THE INDEX. WHY IS MY FIRM NOT LISTED IN THE FINDINGS?

All of the firms that submit data for the Index are listed on the website as part of the published methodology when the findings are launched. However, only those firms that provide data on the amount of pro bono they undertake and their engagement levels are included on the relevant jurisdiction or regional tables.

I HAVE SUBMITTED DATA FOR THE INDEX. WHY IS THERE NO SEPARATE TABLE LISTING THE FINDINGS FOR MY COUNTRY?

A separate table of country-wide findings is only published if a minimum number of submissions have been received from law firms with offices in the national jurisdiction. If only one or two submissions are received from that jurisdiction, the data of participating local law firms will only be published in the relevant regional table.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY WORK COUNTS AS QUALIFIED PRO BONO FOR PURPOSES OF THE INDEX?

The definitions of Qualifying Pro Bono Work and Qualifying Fee Earner, for the purposes of the Index, can be found at www.trust.org/trustlaw.

WHEN CAN I VIEW THE PUBLISHED FINDINGS?

The findings of the 2024 TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono will be published on the TrustLaw website at the start of 2025.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

For further information or to submit additional questions, please contact the Index team at probonoindex@thomsonreuters.com