

Company Quick Scan

Following the money

The SOMO Quick Scan is a comprehensive investigation into a company and is one of the key research specialisations that SOMO Services offers. The methodology used in the SOMO Quick Scan is also the basis for SOMO's research into how companies are organised, how they operate and how they are financed. Researchers at SOMO Services "follow the money" when investigating a company. This means digging into the details of who owns what, to determine who really makes the business decisions and who should be held accountable, regardless of whether the company is big, small, public, private or an empty letterbox.

Target Groups

Many civil society organisations (CSOs), public interest groups, workers groups, NGOs and governments have connections with companies when they establish partnerships, select suppliers, campaign against a company's business practice or when they enter into talks and negotiations. Increasingly SOMO Services clients want more useful and strategic information about the companies they are connected to or have relationships with, which is why a tailor-made SOMO Quick Scan investigation is so useful.

The Research

A Company Quick Scan is SOMO's most thorough and comprehensive investigation into a corporation. Depending on the specific needs of the client, a Quick Scan can focus on various areas of interest including labour and human rights, the environment, tax avoidance, corruption, corporate social responsibility (CSR) or corporate governance. When research into these areas is combined with controversies reported in the press and red flags revealed in financial and other reports, the findings are used by SOMO Services as the groundwork for developing a risk analysis. If the client has specific areas of concern, SOMO Services will adjust the research plan and tailor-make the report to suit your needs. A SOMO Quick Scan is normally between 10-15 pages, takes 4-8 days to complete and includes a corporate overview, controversy review and risk analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

Corporate & Ownership Structure Analysis

Analysing a company's corporate structure is the bedrock of the SOMO Quick Scan. Regardless of whether a company is big or small, family-owned, private or publically listed on a stock-exchange, the corporate structure is the basis for understanding how a company works. Particularly for big, multinational companies, the corporate structure can also reveal how the company is controlled, business that are prioritised and complex subsidiary or holding structures that facilitate tax avoidance.

The ownership structure of a company reveals who or what owns the company. The size and value of the investments held by a company's equity shareholders and debt financiers are examined and analysed to determine who actually has the power to call the shots.

Risk Analysis

The SOMO Quick Scan will provide the client with a risk analysis based on research into the company's finances, corporate and ownership structures, and controversies revealed publically in the press in local, national and international media. Legal or regulatory filings will also be examined to look for controversies relevant to the client's research questions. If the company is the target of any NGO, CSO, labour, human rights or consumer campaigns, this information and how the company has responded will also become part of the risk analysis.

Results and Recommendations

A company overview is presented, red flags or controversies are revealed, the research findings and results are summarised, a risk analysis is presented and finally the Quick Scan report ends with conclusions and recommendations. The research presented is based on the facts and evidence found. The conclusions do not include a final judgement with regards to the company, but will help the client consider their options in deciding how best to proceed with engaging the company. SOMO may also recommend other areas of research depending on the findings.

The Sources

Apart from corporate information provided by the company and found in regulatory and legal filings, SOMO Services uses many different sources to dig up information about a company, its operations and executives. The information in a Quick Scan is also sourced from various corporate databases including three different financial terminals (Reuters Eikon, Bloomberg and Orbis), global media and legal database (LexisNexis), local trade and financial registries including Chambers of Commerce, and various open source databanks. SOMO has as well an in-house corporate search engine.

Network

Additionally, SOMO researchers can tap into a vast, global network of partners SOMO has been building since it was set up in 1973, including contacts in the international trade union movement, the environmental movement, within development and aid organisations as well as human rights and women's movements. If requested by the customer, SOMO can also engage with the company being investigated to exchange information and to communicate between parties.

SOMO Scans & Services

In addition to the SOMO Company Quick Scan, SOMO Services also offers other ways to investigate a company that might better suit your needs. A SOMO Controversy Scan, for example, only investigates past or current controversies about the company and its executives that are reported in the local, national or international press. If the company is the target of an NGO campaign that raises "red flags," or warnings, this too will be examined and included in a Controversy Scan. Local research into a company's specific operations on the ground in a country, or even various companies within a market or sector can also be arranged. In addition to the Quick Scan and Controversy Scan, SOMO Services offers tailor-made company investigations, corporate screenings, and company benchmark analyses. SOMO Services also offers trainings in corporate research and company screening.

Contact SOMO Services

If you have any questions or would like more information about SOMO's Quick scan or other company research, please contact r.cowan@somo.nl or g.schuil@somo.nl.

At www.somo.nl/services you can find examples of previously conducted research. SOMO services also offer training and advice to public interest groups, to help them increase their leverage with companies.



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The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) is a critical, independent, not-for-profit knowledge centre on multinationals. Since 1973 we have investigated multinational corporations and the impact of their activities on people and the environment. We provide custom-made services (research, consulting and training) to non-profit organisations and the public sector. We strengthen collaboration between civil society organisations through our worldwide network. In these three ways, we contribute to social, environmental and economic sustainability.