ECONOMIST ENTERPRISE

Turn crisis response into business resilience

Assess how your organisation engages with societal crises and find the next practical step



Supported by Institute of Philanthropy

Contents

2 **Before you start**

- What this self-assessment is for
- How to take the self-assessment

5 **The framework**

- The crisis engagement spectrum
- The systems
- The transitions

8 **Assess your organisation**

- Governance
- Capabilities
- Partnerships
- Funding
- Data and learning
- How to use your results

16 **Appendix: the framework in full**

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Before you start

What this self-assessment is for

When a crisis disrupts the communities where a company operates, it also disrupts that company's workers, suppliers, customers and infrastructure. Businesses recover only as quickly as the communities around them. Companies that stay engaged through recovery are therefore better placed to protect their operations, retain trust among workers and customers and preserve their licence to operate.

Figure 1: Staying after the storm

How lifecycle engagement can strengthen communities and business resilience

From reactive engagement	To lifecycle engagement	Why this shift matters
Response begins once a crisis is visible	Preparedness, response, recovery and resilience are treated as connected phases	Businesses can act faster and with greater relevance, helping communities recover while reducing disruption to workers, suppliers, operations and local markets.
Support depends on leadership discretion, discretionary budgets or corporate social responsibility cycles	Crisis engagement is linked to clearly defined governance structures, risk profiles, operational needs and partnerships	Support becomes less vulnerable to delays, competing priorities or fragmented accountability, making it easier to sustain engagement and protect business continuity beyond the emergency phase.
Success is often measured by outputs, such as money donated, volunteers mobilised	Success is assessed through outputs, outcomes, learning and contribution to resilience	Businesses can demonstrate value more credibly by tracking both social outcomes and business benefits, including trust, workforce resilience, supply-chain stability, market recovery and preparedness for future shocks. Relationships with communities and government, often built through sustained corporate philanthropy, become a capability that can be leveraged during active crises.

Source: Economist Enterprise

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Most companies can respond to a crisis. Far fewer have the systems to sustain their support, learn from experience and prepare for the next shock. Research by Economist Enterprise, supported by the Institute of Philanthropy, surveyed more than 1,600 executives across 14 Asian markets and drew on interviews with experts. It found that businesses are most engaged during an emergency, but their involvement falls quickly afterwards. Fewer than a quarter of organisations remain involved in long-term recovery and efforts to build resilience. The problem is rarely a lack of intent. It is a lack of systems.

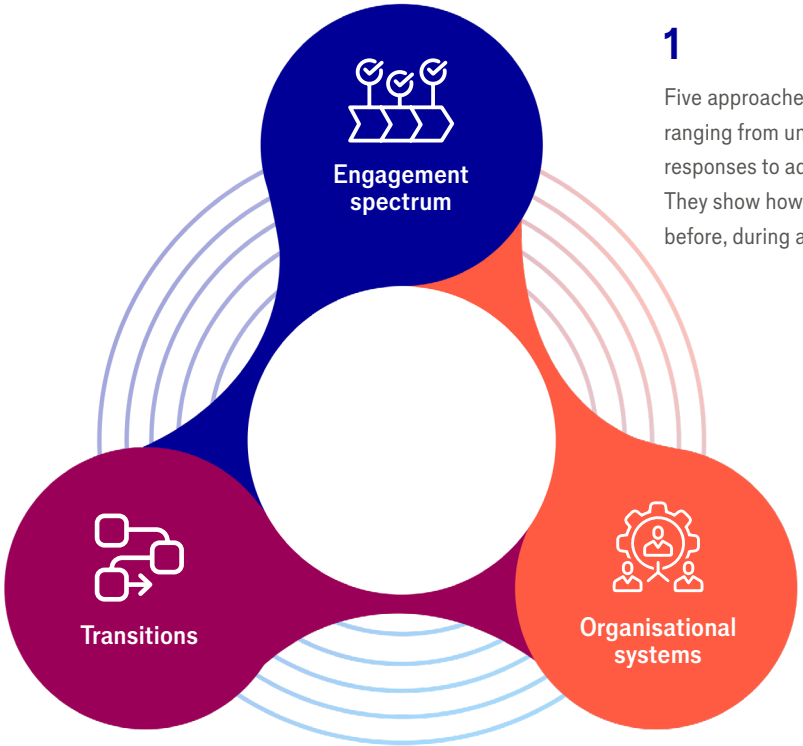
This self-assessment helps businesses understand what they have in place, identify gaps and decide what to strengthen. It sets out what to implement first, what can wait and what effective engagement looks like as businesses become better prepared. The aim is to prepare before a crisis rather than improvise during one, protecting both the business and the communities around it.

How to take the self-assessment

The self-assessment brings together three elements of crisis.

Figure 2: A trio in action

The three elements of the crisis-engagement framework



1

Five approaches to crisis engagement, ranging from unstructured or reactive responses to adaptive lifecycle engagement. They show how organisations engage before, during and after a crisis.

2

Five systems that sustain crisis engagement: governance, capabilities, partnerships, funding, and data and learning.

3

Act, Strengthen, Integrate and Adapt: practical steps that show how businesses can improve each system, one step at a time.

Source: Economist Enterprise

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Take the self-assessment in four steps:



1

Assess your organisation's practice

Answer the diagnostic questions for each system. Choose the description that best reflects your organisation's repeatable practice.

2

Mark where your organisation stands

Place each system on the engagement spectrum: absent, reactive, prepared, integrated or adaptive.

3

Choose what to strengthen

Use the transition for each system to identify practical steps for improvement.

4

Reassess

Repeat the assessment regularly and after a major crisis or exercise.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

The framework

The crisis engagement spectrum

The spectrum sets out five approaches to crisis engagement, from absent to adaptive.

The aim is not to reach the most advanced level in every system. The right level depends on the organisation's size, sector, resources, exposure to risk, location and role in society.

Figure 3: From impulse to institution

Five approaches to crisis engagement, from unstructured response to adaptive lifecycle engagement

Approach to crisis engagement	Key characteristics
No structured engagement during a crisis	Unstructured, minimal engagement, dependent on individual initiative, leadership discretion or one-off circumstance
Reactive engagement in crisis response	The business responds when a crisis occurs and can mobilise some support, but decisions, roles, budgets and partners are often arranged case by case
Prepared engagement with selective lifecycle coverage	The business has clearer triggers, responsibilities, partners, assets and review processes, but coverage may remain focused on selected crisis phases
End-to-end lifecycle engagement	Crisis engagement is integrated into business strategy and structures, with cross-functional ownership, long-term partnerships, more stable funding and outcome-oriented learning
Adaptive and institutionalised lifecycle engagement	Crisis response is embedded and dynamic. The business uses forward-looking capabilities to anticipate emerging risks, together with flexible resources and continuous learning, and contributes to broader ecosystem resilience

Source: Economist Enterprise

©Economist Enterprise 2026

The systems

Five systems determine whether a business can sustain its engagement before, during and after a crisis.

Figure 4: What keeps support going

The organisational systems that shape sustained crisis engagement

	Governance	Capabilities	Partnerships	Funding	Data and learning
What it covers	Ownership, decision rights, escalation routes, accountability and leadership oversight; awareness of the legal and regulatory environment	In-kind goods, services, products, assets, staff skills, logistics and digital, data and platform capabilities, together with the playbooks, processes, surge capacity and preparedness mechanisms that enable them	Relationships with NGOs, government, peers, intermediaries and affected communities	Availability, flexibility, speed and sustainability of financial resources, including grants, concessional capital, foundation funding, matched employee giving and commercially aligned budgets	Tracking, review, evidence use, knowledge retention and feedback loops
Why it matters	Determines whether crisis engagement is intentional, co-ordinated and aligned with business priorities	Determines whether the business can translate intent into effective action before, during and after crises	Determines whether engagement is credible, locally informed and complementary to wider response systems	Determines whether commitments can move beyond discretionary or delayed support	Determines whether the business learns from each crisis and improves future engagement

Source: Economist Enterprise

©Economist Enterprise 2026

The transitions

Four transitions—Act, Strengthen, Integrate and Adapt—show the next practical step for each system. They are not a fixed journey. As risks change, businesses should continue to prepare, respond, recover and learn.

Figure 5: Making the next move

The transitions that strengthen crisis engagement over time



Source: Economist Enterprise

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Assess your organisation

Now assess your organisation against the framework. Review what each system covers, answer the diagnostic questions and choose the description that best matches what your organisation does consistently. Use the transitions to see what to strengthen next.

Governance

Key question: Can the business make decisions quickly, and does someone remain accountable after the emergency?

What it covers: ownership, decision rights, response thresholds, escalation routes, accountability, leadership oversight and awareness of legal and regulatory requirements.

Why it matters: clear governance helps a business act quickly, co-ordinate across teams and maintain accountability from response through recovery.

Diagnostic questions

1. **Who decides whether and how the business responds?** If a crisis began this week, could you name the person or committee responsible?
2. **What triggers a response?** Is there an agreed threshold, such as employees or customers affected, proximity to operations or a government classification, or is each case decided from scratch?
3. **Who has authority to commit funds?** How much can they approve without further sign-off, and how quickly did funds move during the last response?
4. **Who takes responsibility when response shifts to recovery?** Is there a clear handover, or does accountability lapse when the emergency ends?
5. **Who checks compliance before support is committed?** Is it clear which function reviews legal, regulatory, sanctions and data-protection requirements, and when?

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Evidence to check: crisis or business-continuity policies; crisis-committee terms of reference; board or executive minutes; decision and approval times from previous responses.

Mark	Approach	What this looks like	Next step
☐	**No structured engagement during a crisis**	Crisis decisions depend on senior leaders, with no clear owner.	**ACT:** name a crisis lead. Set a response threshold, such as the impact on employees or customers, and agree who can make decisions.
☐	**Reactive engagement in crisis response**	A crisis lead exists, but roles are unclear and teams co-ordinate only during a crisis.	**STRENGTHEN:** define team roles, escalation routes and approval limits. Use a short checklist to record decisions and owners.
☐	**Prepared engagement with selective lifecycle coverage**	Accountability, protocols and response thresholds are clear, with leadership backing across teams.	**INTEGRATE:** link crisis engagement to business-continuity and risk planning. Name an executive sponsor and define the handover from response to recovery.
☐	**End-to-end lifecycle engagement**	Crisis engagement is built into planning and governance, with executive or board oversight and shared ownership.	**ADAPT:** review governance as risks change. Test decision rights against new scenarios and keep crisis readiness on the board agenda.
☐	**Adaptive and institutionalised lifecycle engagement**	Readiness is built into the business and governance changes as risks change.	**SUSTAIN:** refresh thresholds, test decision rights and keep accountability clear as structures change.

Capabilities

Key question: Can the business mobilise what it is best placed to provide, and how quickly?

What it covers: products, assets, staff skills, logistics, services, technology, data and platforms, as well as the playbooks, surge capacity and preparations needed to deploy them.

Why it matters: knowing what the business can provide, and how to mobilise it, turns good intent into useful action.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Diagnostic questions

1. **What can the business provide that others cannot easily provide?** Consider logistics, data, technology, supplier networks, expertise and essential goods and services.
2. **Where is this information recorded?** Could someone find it within an hour of a crisis starting?
3. **How quickly can these capabilities be mobilised?** For each asset, is it clear who controls it and what approval is needed to release it?
4. **Have these capabilities been tested?** Has the business used them in a drill, simulation or real response, reviewed what worked and made changes as a result?

Evidence to check: asset and equipment registers; product and service catalogues; staff-skills and volunteering records; logistics and warehousing capacity; response playbooks; training and simulation records; records of what the business deployed in recent responses.

Mark	Approach	What this looks like	Next step
☐	**No structured engagement during a crisis**	The business has not identified assets, goods or services it could deploy or donate.	**ACT:** list the assets that could move quickly. Name an owner and identify basic staff roles, such as logistics or volunteering.
☐	**Reactive engagement in crisis response**	The business can mobilise some support, but does not track assets or train staff consistently.	**STRENGTHEN:** build an asset register with an owner and lead time for each item. Map staff skills and write a basic response playbook.
☐	**Prepared engagement with selective lifecycle coverage**	The business maintains an asset register, identifies trained responders and carries out basic scenario planning.	**INTEGRATE:** extend capabilities into preparedness and recovery. Run drills and build training into HR and operating processes.
☐	**End-to-end lifecycle engagement**	Capabilities cover preparedness, response and recovery, backed by regular training and simulations.	**ADAPT:** build forecasting and surge capacity. Keep systems and skills up to date as risks change.
☐	**Adaptive and institutionalised lifecycle engagement**	Capabilities change as new risks emerge.	**SUSTAIN:** refresh risk scenarios, test surge capacity and invest where the business can make a distinctive contribution.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Partnerships

Key question: Does the business have the relationships and agreements it will need during a crisis?

What it covers: relationships with NGOs, government, industry peers, intermediaries, local organisations and affected communities.

Why it matters: established relationships help a business provide credible, locally informed support that complements the wider response rather than duplicating it.

Diagnostic questions

1. **Who would the business call first?** Are trusted partners already identified, and does the business stay in contact with them between crises?
2. **Are roles agreed in advance?** Is it clear who does what, who leads and who funds, or would these decisions begin during an emergency?
3. **How is the business connected to the wider response?** Is it linked to a national or local disaster-management system, either directly or through a chamber, industry body or other platform?

Evidence to check: partner and grantee lists; memorandums of understanding and standing agreements; due-diligence records; membership of business networks, chambers or disaster platforms; records of contact with partners between crises.

Mark	Approach	What this looks like	Next step
☐	**No structured engagement during a crisis**	The business has not mapped potential partners.	**ACT:** identify one or two trusted NGOs or intermediaries through referrals or recognised platforms. Avoid direct delivery without local knowledge.
☐	**Reactive engagement in crisis response**	The business uses a few partners repeatedly but has no formal vetting or standing agreements.	**STRENGTHEN:** vet partners for credibility, local presence and capability. Keep in touch between crises and agree non-binding memorandums of understanding.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Mark	Approach	What this looks like	Next step
☐	**Prepared engagement with selective lifecycle coverage**	The business has a shortlist of trusted partners, some formal agreements and clearer roles.	**INTEGRATE:** formalise long-term partnerships. Define roles across preparedness, response and recovery and connect with government or industry platforms.
☐	**End-to-end lifecycle engagement**	Stable partnerships support work across sectors and all phases of a crisis.	**ADAPT:** strengthen the wider response through joint programmes, shared standards or input into public policy.
☐	**Adaptive and institutionalised lifecycle engagement**	The business helps shape the wider response through long-term collaboration.	**SUSTAIN:** test co-ordination, keep affected communities involved and share lessons without displacing local leadership.

Funding

Key question: Can money move quickly and flexibly, and last long enough to matter?

What it covers: how much funding is available, how quickly and flexibly it can move and how long it can last. Sources may include grants, concessional capital, foundation funding, matched employee giving and business budgets.

Why it matters: clear funding arrangements help money move quickly while allowing support to continue beyond the emergency.

Diagnostic questions

1. **How quickly can funding be released?** Can money move within 48 hours without a new approval process, and is it clear where it sits and who controls it?
2. **Who has authority to approve funding?** What can they approve without further sign-off, and how quickly did funds move during the last response?
3. **How long can funding continue?** Is money available beyond the emergency to support recovery and preparedness?
4. **How flexible is the funding?** Can partners use it where it is most needed, including for staff, logistics, administration and co-ordination?

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Evidence to check: crisis-support budgets from recent years; ring-fenced or contingency funds and approval limits; grant agreements and restrictions; matched-giving records; multi-year commitments and foundation funding.

Mark	Approach	What this looks like	Next step
☐	**No structured engagement during a crisis**	The business has no dedicated crisis budget. Funding is decided case by case.	**ACT:** identify an existing corporate social responsibility, philanthropy or emergency budget that can be used. Set a simple fast-track approval process.
☐	**Reactive engagement in crisis response**	Funding is usually available but is not set aside in advance.	**STRENGTHEN:** ring-fence an annual emergency budget. Set approval limits and distinguish immediate relief from recovery funding.
☐	**Prepared engagement with selective lifecycle coverage**	Emergency and philanthropic funds can move quickly, with some forward planning.	**INTEGRATE:** use multi-year or rolling budgets linked to priorities such as supply-chain resilience or community stability. Increase unrestricted funding where appropriate.
☐	**End-to-end lifecycle engagement**	Multi-year funding supports business priorities across preparedness, response and recovery.	**ADAPT:** establish a permanent or flexible mechanism, such as a reserve, pooled fund or foundation, to support long-term resilience.
☐	**Adaptive and institutionalised lifecycle engagement**	Long-term, flexible funding can scale as needs change.	**SUSTAIN:** stress-test available funding, preserve flexibility and balance spending across preparedness, response and recovery.

Data and learning

Key question: Does each response make the next one better?

What it covers: tracking, review, evidence, knowledge retention and feedback.

Why it matters: good evidence helps a business learn from each response and improve the next one.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Diagnostic questions

1. **What do you know about the last response?** Can you show what support was provided, how quickly, through which partners and whom it reached?
2. **How was the response reviewed?** Did the business hold a structured debrief, record what it learned and store the findings?
3. **How did the business apply what it learned?** Did it change a protocol, approval limit, partnership or playbook as a result?
4. **What difference did the support make?** Can you show whether communities became more resilient or partners strengthened their ability to respond?

Evidence to check: response logs and tracking spreadsheets; debrief notes and after-action reviews; playbooks and revision dates; partner reports; outcomes published externally.

Mark	Approach	What this looks like	Next step
☐	**No structured engagement during a crisis**	The business does not track or document its actions.	**ACT:** track basic outputs, including funding, goods donated, people reached and response time. Use a simple log or spreadsheet.
☐	**Reactive engagement in crisis response**	The business tracks basic activity, but debriefs are informal or inconsistent.	**STRENGTHEN:** run a structured debrief after each response. Track response speed and partner performance and store lessons in one place.
☐	**Prepared engagement with selective lifecycle coverage**	The business reviews responses and records lessons, but does not always apply them.	**INTEGRATE:** track outcomes as well as outputs. Feed lessons into planning and use evidence to change policies, playbooks or partner choices.
☐	**End-to-end lifecycle engagement**	Outcomes and feedback inform decisions and planning.	**ADAPT:** use near-real-time monitoring where it adds value. Apply lessons as risks change and share useful findings externally.
☐	**Adaptive and institutionalised lifecycle engagement**	Learning is continuous and evidence informs decisions inside and outside the business.	**SUSTAIN:** keep measurement proportionate and use lessons to improve both the business and the wider response.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

How to use your results

The assessment provides a starting point for discussion and action. Use it to compare the five systems, identify where gaps could hinder response or recovery and decide what to strengthen first.

For each gap, name an owner, agree the first step, set a review date and decide what evidence will show progress.

Revisit the assessment regularly and after a major crisis or exercise. As risks and circumstances change, so may the systems that need attention.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

Appendix: the framework in full

The full framework brings the assessment together in one place. Use it to compare what each system looks like at each level of the engagement spectrum and understand the transitions needed to move from one level to the next.

Figure 6: Good intentions, built to last

A framework for effective crisis engagement

	Governance	Capabilities	Partnerships	Funding	Data and learning
No structured engagement during a crisis	Crisis decisions handled informally by senior leaders, with no clear ownership	Deployable and donatable assets not yet identified; response capability not yet established	Partners not yet mapped	No dedicated crisis budget; funding decided case by case	Actions not yet tracked or documented
ACT Establish baseline capability	Appoint a crisis lead; enable rapid decision-making; define a simple trigger, such as employee or customer impact	Identify assets that can be deployed or donated immediately using a simple inventory or spreadsheet; mobilise staff for basic support roles, such as logistics or volunteering	Engage with one or two trusted NGOs or intermediaries through referrals or recognised platforms; avoid direct delivery without local knowledge	Use discretionary CSR, philanthropic or emergency budgets; establish a simple fast-track approval process	Track basic outputs, such as funding provided, goods donated and people reached, using simple logs or spreadsheets
Reactive engagement in crisis response	A crisis lead is in place, but roles remain unclear; co-ordination happens only during crises	Basic mobilisation is possible but inconsistent; assets and donatable goods and services are not tracked systematically; staff receive little or no training	Repeat engagement with a small number of partners, but no formal vetting or agreements	Funding is usually available, but not pre-allocated	Basic tracking is in place; debriefs are informal or inconsistent

©Economist Enterprise 2026

	Governance	Capabilities	Partnerships	Funding	Data and learning
STRENGTHEN Build preparedness and repeatability	Define roles across teams; establish escalation procedures; introduce a simple crisis checklist or scorecard	Build an asset register; map staff skills; develop basic response playbooks	Vet partners against simple criteria such as credibility, local presence and capability; build ongoing relationships; introduce non-binding memorandums of understanding	Ring-fence an annual emergency budget; define approval thresholds	Conduct structured debriefs; introduce consistent measures, such as response speed, reach and partner effectiveness; store lessons in a central repository
Prepared engagement with selective lifecycle coverage	Clear accountability; defined protocols and triggers; leadership support and alignment	Asset register maintained; trained responders identified; basic scenario planning in place	Shortlist of trusted partners; some formal agreements; clearer division of roles	Emergency and philanthropic funds available and deployed quickly; basic forward planning	Regular reviews conducted; lessons captured but not yet applied consistently
INTEGRATE Embed crisis engagement across the lifecycle	Integrate crisis engagement into business continuity and risk planning; appoint an executive sponsor; align roles across functions	Expand capabilities beyond response to include preparedness, such as drills, and recovery, such as rebuilding support; embed training in HR and operational processes	Formalise long-term partnerships; define roles across each phase of a crisis; engage with government and sector platforms	Move to multi-year or rolling budgets; align funding with strategic priorities, such as supply chain resilience or community stability	Track outcomes as well as outputs; feed learnings into planning cycles; refine strategies using data
End-to-end lifecycle engagement	Crisis engagement embedded in planning and governance; executive or board oversight; cross-functional ownership	Capabilities span preparedness, response and recovery; regular training and simulations	Stable, multi-stakeholder partnerships; collaboration across sectors and all phases of a crisis	Multi-year funding aligned with strategic priorities, ESG commitments or regulatory requirements	Outcome measurement embedded; feedback loops inform decisions and planning

©Economist Enterprise 2026

	Governance	Capabilities	Partnerships	Funding	Data and learning
ADAPT Continuously improve and shape systems	Embed crisis readiness in corporate strategy; review governance regularly as risks evolve; make crisis readiness a standing board priority	Introduce adaptive capabilities, such as forecasting tools and surge capacity; continually strengthen systems and skills	Take a leadership role across the ecosystem by co-designing programmes, shaping standards or contributing to public policy	Establish permanent or flexible funding mechanisms, such as reserve funds, pooled funds or foundations; align funding mechanisms with long-term resilience goals	Introduce real-time or near-real-time monitoring; apply lessons continuously; share insights externally where appropriate
Adaptive and institutionalised lifecycle engagement	Crisis readiness is embedded in strategy; governance evolves as risks change	Capabilities evolve continuously to anticipate and respond to emerging risks	Plays a lead role in the wider ecosystem; system-level collaboration	Long-term, flexible and scalable funding structures support sustained resilience	Continuous learning is embedded, with data informing decisions inside and outside the organisation

Source: Economist Enterprise

©Economist Enterprise 2026

While every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of this information, Economist Enterprise cannot accept any responsibility or liability for reliance by any person on this report or any of the information, opinions or conclusions set out in this report. The findings and views expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the views of the sponsor.

©Economist Enterprise 2026

ECONOMIST ENTERPRISE

LONDON

The Adelphi
1-11 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6HT
United Kingdom
Tel: (44) 20 7830 7000
Email: london@economist.com

GENEVA

Rue de la Rôtisserie 11
1204 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (41) 22 566 2470
Fax: (41) 22 346 93 47
Email: geneva@economist.com

SYDNEY

Level 14
5 Martin Place
Sydney
Australia
Tel: (61) 2 8551 0023
Email: asia@economist.com

NEW YORK

The 900 Third Avenue
16th Floor
New York, NY 10022
United States
Tel: (1.212) 554 0600
Fax: (1.212) 586 1181/2
Email: americas@economist.com

DUBAI

Office 1301a
Aurora Tower
Dubai Media City
Dubai
Tel: (971) 4 433 4202
Fax: (971) 4 438 0224
Email: dubai@economist.com

GURUGRAM

9th floor, Tower A
Infinity Building
DLF Cyber City, Phase – II
Gurgaon (122002)
India
Tel: (91) 124 6409 300
Email: asia@economist.com

HONG KONG

1301
12 Taikoo Wan Road
Taikoo Shing
Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2585 3888
Fax: (852) 2802 7638
Email: asia@economist.com

SINGAPORE

8 Cross Street
#23-01 Manulife Tower
Singapore
048424
Tel: (65) 6534 5177
Fax: (65) 6534 5077
Email: asia@economist.com