

Terms of Reference for Baseline Study of ‘Sustainable Textile Initiative: Together for Change (STITCH)’ programme

1. Request for Baseline Study of ‘Sustainable Textile Initiative: Together for Change (STITCH)’ Programme

On behalf of the STITCH consortium, Fair Wear Foundation is commissioning a baseline study seeking to provide an information base against which to monitor and assess the programme’s progress and effectiveness during implementation and after the activity is completed. The programme is being implemented in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam and MENA region. These Terms of Reference (ToR) outline the scope of work and working arrangements for an external evaluator/ evaluation team to conduct this study. This baseline study will contribute towards baseline-midline-endline evaluation of the programme. If well received, the same evaluators will be preferred during midline and endline evaluation studies.

2. Introduction and background

The year 2021 marks the start of the five-year ‘**Sustainable Textile Initiative: Together for Change**’ (STITCH) consortium for Garment Supply Chain Transformation. It is a partnership between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Dutch trade unions: CNV Internationaal and Mondiaal FNV; Civil society organizations: The Center for Development and Integration (CDI), Civil Initiatives for Development and Peace (Cividep) India; and Multi-stakeholder initiatives: Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and Fair Wear Foundation (lead partner)¹. (More details on these partners can be found in Annex I: STITCH Members). The partnership is part of the ‘Power of Voices’ 2021-2025 framework of the Ministry and falls under the ‘Trade and/or making value chains more sustainable’ theme. The programme operates in seven production areas: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam and MENA region². In all these production areas, STITCH works with three main actor groups, namely, trade unions and labour rights organizations, engaged brands and factories and international stakeholders, to bring about the desired change.

In the remainder of this document, ‘members’ will refer to the six entities (CNV Internationaal, Mondiaal FNV, CDI, Cividep, ETI, and Fair Wear Foundation), apart from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that make up the partnership; whereas ‘partner organisations’ refers to the civil society organisations in the garment production countries with whom the members collaborate (trade unions and labour rights organizations).

Programme background

The STITCH consortium envisions **a global garment industry that contributes to an equal and just society by respecting human rights in the world of work**. STITCH envisages workplaces where workers feel free to speak out, unionise, and bargain collectively for better working conditions. By strengthening unions, we can enhance workers’ influence in the value chain. By influencing the most powerful players in the value chain—brands—we can create space for workers to organise and secure a seat at the negotiation table. In the meantime, factory employers have a strengthened position vis à vis their customers (brands), and improving brands’ purchasing practices creates potential for better working conditions and rewarding freedom of association.

The global garment industry is fragmented and complex, involving many actors across the globe, with varying levels of power and influence. The actions of one person or a small group in Europe can have

¹ CNV, FNV and Fair Wear were previously also part of five year programme ‘Strategic Partnership’ (SP) for Garment Supply Chain Transformation (2016-2020), funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme was operational in seven countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam.

² Programme activities are limited to only two countries in the MENA region.

an enormous and potentially crippling effect on the workers. To reach our goal, every link of the (supply) chain must bear its proportionate weight and take up its role in ensuring that the chain is strong and equitable.

Workers, the people who produce our clothes, need to be put at the centre of decisions and actions. They need the opportunity to be collectively represented and express their voices through trade unions. Those trade unions need the space, strength and legitimacy to represent them. Factories must include and listen to workers. Governments must establish and enforce laws to protect them. Brands, arguably the most powerful link in the chain, must ensure that their decisions and practices work to support and enhance the rights of workers and that they negotiate fairly with the factories from which they source. Change must happen at all levels.

The members of STITCH consortium collectively have access to all the value chain actors mentioned above. Through a shared goal of an industry where garment workers (75% of whom are women) can exercise their right to freedom of association and have access to safe, dignified, and properly paid employment, the consortium will work both collectively and through individual channels to influence the policies and practices of those key actor groups.

Our Theory of Change (ToC) follows five pathways that will collectively lead to the change we envision and a 'new normal' for the garment industry. The pathways are as follows:

1. Strengthen capacity and legitimacy: STITCH focuses on capacity strengthening and enhancing the legitimacy of trade unions and labour rights organisations. We focus on collective bargaining, lobby and advocacy, organising, negotiation skills, planning/monitoring/evaluation/learning (PMEL), and financial sustainability, and gender equality (as a cross-cutting theme).

2. Innovate and guide: STITCH works with the private sector (brands and factories) to guide these actors with innovative approaches and to accept the need to change purchasing practices and freedom of association.

3. Convene and align: STITCH's engagement with international stakeholders focuses on convening and aligning for effective lobby and advocacy. These stakeholders are STITCH's allies that play an important role in amplifying workers' voices and driving global change.

4. Lobby and advocate: STITCH envisions that all actors with whom we engage will lobby and advocate for improved labour conditions, in order to create the 'new normal'. The research and knowledge created under STITCH will be the foundation for our evidence-based lobby and advocacy efforts.

5. Share knowledge and learn: A precondition for any effort to redress power imbalances is to ensure access to the same information across garment value chains and the industry. Tools and methodologies will be developed, both with and for the industry, and significant research will be conducted to inform our lobby and advocacy efforts. The outcomes of this research and learning will be actively shared with trade unions, LRO, factories, and business associations to ensure a level playing field as the basis for constructive sourcing and social dialogue.

How does STITCH operate?

We collectively stand up for better working conditions and adherence to labour rights by:

- Capacitating suppliers to improve their social dialogue with workers and governments and sourcing dialogue with brands
- Working with local unions and labour rights organisations on collective bargaining to influence higher wages, gender issues and decent work
- Engaging with brands towards more responsible business, leveraging the crucial role they can play in making the industry both more ethical and sustainable
- Advocating for a legislative framework that creates higher levels of accountability on better working conditions and remuneration for companies sourcing in production countries
- Lobbying, campaigning, and convening to influence the regulatory framework (the 'smart mix') being developed at EU and national levels to include workers' voices, freedom of

association, a gender lens and purchasing practices as part of widely supported and implemented human rights due diligence by companies.

Through these pathways of change and strategies, STITCH aims to achieve a ‘new normal’ for the garment industry where governments, brands, TUs and, consequently, garment-industry employers, support the proper functioning of civil society and positively impact garment workers’ rights. (Details of our ToC and assumptions can be found in the Annex II, Theory of Change.)

3. Objective and scope of the study

The objective of the study is to establish the benchmark to which programme progress, achievements and learnings can be measured in the course of the coming five years. The dual purpose of the baseline study is accountability to the donor and learning for the consortium.

The proposed **baseline study** will:

- Serve as **formative assessment** (relevance check) of the programmatic choices that were made during preparation stage checking if the ToC still holds and programmatic choices are still valid at global and country level
- Conduct **geographical mapping** of STITCH programme to identify which regions the engaged TUs, LROs, brands and factories operate in.³ This will serve the purpose of providing a representative sample population for the baseline study; and will also be used by the programme to identify locations where multiple members operate in, so that increased collaboration can take place there.
- Provide an information base against which to monitor and assess the program’s **progress, effectiveness and efficiency** during implementation and after the activity is completed. In doing so it will also validate the values and targets set out by the programme team for the programme monitoring indicators.
- Provide **recommendations** for STITCH partners in revising objectives and interventions.

The study will explore 3 DAC/OECD evaluation criteria⁴, namely relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in the sphere of the work done by STITCH partners with brands, TUs, LROs, suppliers (factories) and workers.

- **Relevance** measures the extent to which the intervention ToC, objectives and design respond to workers’, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.
- **Effectiveness** measures the extent to which the intervention is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
- **Efficiency:** The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

Timeframe	The focus will be on time period January – June 2021, with additional comments if anything major has impacted programming from July onwards
Geographical coverage	All STITCH production countries/areas— Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar ⁵ , Vietnam and MENA region and Europe (where the headquarters of the garment brands are)
Stakeholders	Governments CSOs (Trade Unions (TUs), Labor Rights Organizations (LROs))

³ Some of the geographical operating information will already be available and some additional information may need to be collected from stakeholders through surveying.

⁴ [OECD/DAC guidelines on evaluation criteria](#)

⁵ Due to the current political climate in Myanmar, only desk research and limited interviews will be done.

	Companies (brands and suppliers)
	Workers (see more on workers' focus in section below)
Level of analysis	The study will involve country and consortium level analysis

4. Research Questions

The primary research questions are closely linked to the STITCH programme's ToC. Some questions relate to the STITCH programme in its entirety and others focus specifically on work done with different actor groups.

Example sub questions have also been given, which will be reviewed and refined during the inception phase by the evaluator(s) in close collaboration with the STITCH PMEL Coordinator and PMEL staff of the members.

Criteria	Primary question	Example Sub questions*
Relevance	Are the programmatic choices valid and relevant at global and country level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have conditions in relation to the context (civic space, conflict, government laws and policies, COVID-19) and the stakeholders (TUs, brands, factories, workers) involved in the garment industry in the respective programme countries and its relevant global operations changed since the development of the STITCH program? • Considering these changes, is the Theory of Change and its underlying assumptions still valid, both at country as well as consortium level? • To what extent do the proposed interventions and activities support the project objectives? <p>This section also has to include a geographical mapping of STITCH program's engaged TUs, LROs, brands and factories.</p>
Effectiveness	To what extent have the TUs and LROs been effective in representing workers, holding brands and governments accountable and influencing buyer/factory policies?	<p>Provide the baseline situation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent engaged TUs and LROs have the power and voice to exercise their rights, especially related to Freedom of Association (FoA) and decent work in the production countries? • To what extent are the workers (male and female) willing to engage with TUs/LROs/suppliers through mechanisms (collective bargaining, social dialogue, remediation mechanisms)? • To what extent are TUs able to hold brands and governments (in production and EU buying countries) accountable? • To what extent have TUs and LROs embedded a gender sensitive lens into their strategies and practices?
	To what extent do private actors (brands	Provide baseline situation of:

	and suppliers) in the garment industry practice responsible business and respect labor rights?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do engaged brands and their suppliers in production and EU buying countries accept the need to change purchasing practices and FoA? • To what extent do changes in engaged brands' purchasing practices have an impact on suppliers' practices and on workers? To what extent are suppliers satisfied with these purchasing practices? • To what extent have engaged brands embedded a gender sensitive lens into their purchasing practices and FOA work?
	To what extent has the programme contributed towards enhancement and enforcement of policies on decent work in production and EU buying countries?	<p>Provide the baseline situation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do governments in production and EU buying countries have policies in place that promote decent working conditions, especially FoA? • To what extent are these policies implemented and enforced? • To what extent do relevant governments in production and EU buying countries create opportunity for inclusion of workers' voices in negotiations and decision-making processes?
Efficiency	To what extent has the consortium been efficient in forming synergies and leveraging collective power?	<p>Provide the baseline situation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power balance at the consortium level. • synergies and alignment on key topics among the consortium members and partner organizations <p>What are the potential synergies and collective leveraging points for the consortium?</p>
Recommendations	The study should include recommendations on objectives and interventions of the programme for each of the sub-questions listed under relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency above at country and consortium level.	

* STITCH members are in the process of conceptualising key components under study, such as “having power and voice to exercise rights”, “power balances”, and “gender sensitive lense”.

5. Evaluation Methodology

When developing the evaluation methodology, careful consideration should be given to the approach to ensure the suggested approach and methods can be utilized for midline and endline assessment

purposes. Ideally, the evaluators involved in the baseline study will also be involved in the midline and endline assessment⁶. The Evaluator is therefore requested to reflect in the proposal on the relevance of the approach and methods for the full scope of activities and on the relationship between baseline, midline and endline data and interpretations.

In the proposal, the evaluator is requested to address in more detail the methodology for the baseline study. As the baseline is expected to set the benchmark for the program, the study should embrace a thorough methodology for data collection and analysis. This methodology should propose sampling approaches to limit the sampling bias and data collection methods that reduce data bias due to Covid-19 conditions. The Alliance is aware that factors such as sampling bias, opportunities for data collection among workers, and supplier-brand relationships will need to be considered carefully if the study is expected to present a realistic and, where fitting, representative picture of the different STITCH contexts. The baseline approach and methodology, including the relevant tools for the baseline study, will be further developed during the inception phase in close collaboration with the STITCH PMEL Coordinator and PMEL staff of the members. It will then be presented in the inception report.

In terms of the preferred analytical approach, the IoB (the evaluation arm of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has recommended methodologies to assess effectiveness for the Power of Voices program. Qualitative approaches include realist evaluation, contribution analysis, process tracing and general elimination methodology. For quantitative approaches, they recommend basing the study on level 3 or above on the Maryland scientific method scale. STITCH would recommend the evaluator to consider using a combination of the above approaches and invites the evaluator to suggest the most relevant (combination of) approach(es) to address the baseline questions, also including the focus on relevance and efficiency, in the proposal. (Please refer to Annex III: IoB evaluation quality criteria, especially criteria 11 and 12)

The analysis will be conducted at country and consortium level. The research questions will be explored from the perspective of engaged brands, engaged TUs and LROs, engaged suppliers and factories and workers. Since the study is focusing on presenting the baseline situation, where relevant, the analysis will also comment on the effect of COVID-19 on the program. The Alliance would recommend including an evaluation matrix where information sources and expected triangulation of results from different sources will become visible.

The methodology for the baseline data collection should involve at least the following quantitative and qualitative components:

- Geographic data for mapping exercise of intervention locations of STITCH consortium partners and production country project partners in all the STITCH programme countries.
- Review of secondary data, including the program's existing research and documentation. Where relevant, monitoring progress data for the first six months of the programme can be used. Documentation to be reviewed will at least include:
 - Reports from Strategic Partnership 1 (previous partnership programme 2016-2020)
 - STITCH programme proposal (including context analysis)
 - STITCH indicator framework and MEL protocol
 - Monitoring progress data
 - STITCH governance structure
 - Existing research reports from members on working conditions in programme countries

⁶ conditional upon quality of baseline (data collection and analysis) and to what extent methodology, as agreed upon in the inception report, was followed.

- Collection and assessment of primary data is expected to be conducted through in-person (where possible) and remote surveying and key informant interviews, at least including the following data sources:
 - Data collected at trade union level, in production countries and from TU allies.
 - Data collected at (member) brands level of Fair Wear and ETI. The membership of both initiatives covers up to 200 number of brands.
 - Data collected at supplier level in production countries, including factory management.
 - Data collected at engaged LRO level
 - Data collected at worker level in production countries
 - Data collected from STITCH staff

Due to the restrictions faced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the possibility for face-to-face data collection might be challenged in some or all production countries of the STITCH program. The evaluator(s) are therefore requested to provide a realistic approach to (remote) data collection. We urge the evaluator(s) to suggest robust remote data collection approaches that allow for circumventing the challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions. It will be preferred for the evaluators to have presence in STITCH countries, so as to assist in data collection.

Members' and Suppliers' perspectives

It is expected that the scope of the baseline will not allow for data to be compared with control group data. This implies that only member brands from Fair Wear and ETI, as well as related suppliers will be expected to be included in the study. The evaluator is requested to suggest how the baseline, lacking a control group approach, will still draw meaningful conclusions from the study.

Worker's perspectives

Covid-19 related challenges are particularly relevant for the process of collecting worker-related data, as data collection will be most challenging among workers. The evaluator is therefore requested to propose a realistic approach to data collection for this crucial stakeholder group, fitting the scope and objective of the baseline study. Where representative sampling and data collection might be limited, the evaluator is requested to propose alternative methods to obtain and analyse data (e.g. building on existing studies and/or data from third parties and other STITCH partners), while maintaining to adhere to the IOB evaluation quality criteria. In such cases, it is acceptable that the data from workers is not representative.

Throughout the baseline process, the evaluator(s) can rely on the support from STITCH in-country partners and teams for logistical support. This includes liaising with in-country stakeholders (e.g. suppliers and/or trade unions/LROs) and offering introductions for (local) consultants to stakeholders. The expected level of in-country support towards the evaluator should be made explicit in the proposal.

6. Guiding principles and values

The following principles will guide the evaluation: transparency, partnership, openness, cost-effectiveness, gender awareness and sensitivity around culture, minorities, race and class. The evaluators are expected to follow appropriate research ethics and procedures.

It is imperative for the evaluators to:

- Guarantee the safety of respondents and the research team.
- Apply protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of respondents.
- Ensure confidentiality of data collected of members, partners and stakeholders.
- Ensure to follow data safety regulations

- Ensure compliance with legal codes governing areas such as provisions to collect and report data.

7. Limitations of the study

Due to COVID-19, there will be limitations on face-to-face data collection for this study, especially in countries most affected. In such a case, the study in these countries will heavily rely on desk reviews (e.g. building on pre-existing data sets and studies conducted by STITCH partners and/or third parties) and remote data collection. Still, we urge the evaluator(s) to suggest robust (remote) data collection approaches that allow for circumventing the challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions.

8. End users of the Evaluation:

The evaluation will be used by various audiences in the following ways:

Primary users:

- STITCH programme staff: accountability, learning, communication and fundraising;
 - Fair Wear Foundation, Ethical Trading Initiative, CDI, Cividep, CNV International and Mondiaal FNV: accountability, learning communication and fundraising;
 - STITCH partner organizations in production countries: accountability, learning, communication and fundraising;
 - STITCH allies (engaged brands, TUs, LROs, suppliers): accountability, learning, communication;
 - Platforms and networks involving STITCH: learning and taking action;
 - Donor (The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs): accountability, learning, communication;
- Secondary users:
- National governments in production countries: learning and taking action;
 - Global garment industry actors: learning

9. Deliverables

All deliverables should be presented in English. The final report must comply with the quality standards for external evaluations set out in the IOB guidelines (Please refer to Annex III: IOB evaluation quality criteria).

	Deliverables	Description of Expected Deliverables	Deliverable timeline
1	Baseline inception report	<p>Inception report will serve as a mutual agreement on the part of all parties on how the evaluation will be conducted. Items to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the issues and questions raised in the ToR • List of key concepts and definitions based on a common understanding of these concepts (may differ per country/areas) • Final list of research questions and sub-questions • Data sources; how to assess the finalized research questions • Evaluation methodology • Schedule of activities (timeline), and who will be involved/consulted when. • Detailed budget • Data collection tools (e.g. methodological guidelines, interview questions) • Structure of the report including country and consortium level analysis <p>The report is based on available documentation and on conversations with PMEL coordinator and PMEL staff of the</p>	<p>Draft inception report: 5 July 2021</p> <p>Final inception report: 15 July 2021</p>

members

Inception workshop with PMEL staff and other STITCH staff members

Final report incorporates a response to the feedback received on the draft inception report

2	Bi-monthly progress reports	A short document outlining activities and progress of the evaluators, to be submitted twice a month. Regular meetings will be scheduled to share updates on the progress and/or discuss any changes or challenges to the approach.	Bi-monthly
3	Baseline draft report	Draft report that presents the answers to the evaluation questions in the form agreed upon in the inception phase.	15 September 2021
4	Oral presentation of findings	A presentation in the form of a validation workshop to a group of production country level stakeholders, consortium members, and other staff members. The results of the baseline are presented, and feedback from the audience is sought to validate these.	27 September 2021
5	Final baseline report	Report that presents the answers to the evaluation questions in the form agreed upon in the inception phase. It incorporates a response to the feedback received of the draft report.	15 October 2021
6	Mapping	Data set containing results of mapping exercise programme area map containing results of mapping	15 October 2021
7	Data sets	Final versions of methods and tools used for data collection and data set for qualitative and quantitative data will be submitted separately from the final report	15 October 2021
8	Webinars	Webinars with country teams and content groups to share the results of the study	15-30 October 2021

Evaluation responsibilities and management arrangements

The evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluation team. Their contact person is the PMEL Coordinator – who works with the PMEL working group of the consortium. The Coordinator and Strategic Leads of STITCH will also be involved in all stages of the study.

The PMEL Coordinator will hold regular check-ins with the evaluators to facilitate in conducting the study and to monitor the progress.

10. Budget

The total costs for this baseline study will not exceed EUR 85,000 exclusive of VAT. This amount includes fees for the full team, including administrative costs, travel and accommodation, communication costs and social funds. The fees are calculated for the entire assignment, including planning, preparation, data collection, travel, interviews, report writing, report revision, editing and finalization of the assignment. All language translation costs (to implement surveys and interviews)

will be borne by the evaluators. Any required unplanned additional costs in the framework of this assignment are subject to prior approval in writing from the STITCH.

11. Evaluation team: qualifications and skills needed

STITCH is looking for an evaluation team which is (co-)headed by or includes significant roles for consultants from South or South-East Asia. The evaluation team is expected to bring in the following expertise, track record, background and competencies:

- Expertise on the labour rights situation in at least 3 of seven production areas/ countries
- Preferably (verbal and/or written) skills in some of the local languages of production countries
- Proven track record of undertaking multi-stakeholder evaluations with private sector actors and trade unions (preferably in garment industry)
- Proven track record of undertaking multi-country programme evaluations
- Expertise and understanding of the work of unions, federations and the international trade union movement
- Expertise and understanding of working with Ready Made Garment brands and their supply chains
- Native-level fluency in English (written and spoken)
- Strong experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis is required
- The evaluator should be available from 21 June 2021

If applying as a team, please identify a team coordinator.

12. Request for proposals & selection procedure

STITCH requests for the proposals to be submitted by **6 June, 23:59 hours CET**, to Zunaira Mughal- STITCH PMEL Coordinator at mughal@fairwear.org. Any questions, remarks or requests for clarification can also be sent to the same email address.

The following should be included in the application:

- a) Motivation letter including your/your team's availability, explaining why you think you are a good candidate
- b) An understanding of the ToR and outline of the suggested approach and methodology
- c) Detailed work plan
- d) Consultant team CVs with expertise and qualifications in the required areas (max. 3 pages per CV)
- e) Evidence of 2 written works (e.g. consultancy or evaluation report) and 2 references
- f) Budget indication (in Euro). Accompanied with a cost breakdown of days spent and the related costs.

Tentative Timeline for evaluator selection process

21 May 2021	Call for proposals is published
6 June 2021	Deadline to submit proposals
14-18 June 2021	Interviews with the three (teams of) evaluators
21 June 2021	Decision on which evaluation to select and work starts
30 June 2021	Contract signed with evaluation team

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the requirements of the assignment (10%)
- Quality of suggested approach: the proposed methodology is appropriate, and the team understands the challenges and limitations that may be involved (30%)
- Demonstrates value for money through clear, realistic budget breakdown (10%)

- Track record of the evaluator(s) and/or organization: proven experience with similar assignments (20%)
- Experience and qualification of team members:
 - o the team members have relevant experience and expertise and are allocated to appropriate roles (15%)
 - o qualified consultants from the production countries lead or have a significant role in the evaluation team (15%)

If the baseline study is well done and well received, the same evaluators will be preferred during midline and endline evaluation studies.

Annex

Annex I: STITCH Members

The consortium members are well-established organisations with diverse and complementary portfolios.

Fair Wear Foundation, an independent multi-stakeholder initiative, wants to see a world where the garment industry supports workers' rights to safe, dignified and properly paid employment. Working with the industry, trade unions and labour rights organisations, Fair Wear operationalises human rights due diligence, showing with its member brands that change is possible.

The Center for Development and Integration (CDI) is a Vietnamese non-governmental, non-profit organisation, working for the rights of the disadvantaged groups to build a society of equity, solidarity and sustainable development. Since its establishment, labour rights is one of CDI's prioritised programs. Starting from projects related to corporate social responsibility and legal aid for workers, CDI has gradually strengthened its scope of activities to support improvement of working conditions, the quality of life of workers and to promote access to social protection for domestic migrant workers.

Civil Initiatives for Development and Peace (Cividep) India aims to empower workers and communities and to ensure that businesses respect human and labour rights and environmental standards. With this objective, they educate workers, study the effects of corporate conduct, engage in dialogue with various stakeholders and advocate for policy change. Cividep has been working on corporate accountability and workers' rights since the year 2000. Their research is on export-oriented consumer electronics, ready-made garments, leather products, tea and coffee plantations, and mining. Their workers' rights initiatives have focused on the garment, electronics, manufacturing, and plantation industries.

CNV Internationaal Foundation is part of the National Confederation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands (CNV). CNV Internationaal has worked with trade unions in developing countries since its establishment in 1967. Its mission is to contribute to 'decent work' in developing countries by applying the CNV principles of international solidarity, individual responsibility, social dialogue and pluralism. CNV Internationaal strengthens the position of workers in both the formal and informal economy through strong social partners and by promoting sustainability in value chains. CNV and CNV Internationaal are also partners in different sectoral International Responsibility Business Conduct (IRBC) Agreements, including that for garments and textiles.

The **Ethical Trading Initiative** is a leading alliance of global companies, trade unions and NGOs that promotes respect for workers' rights around the world. ETI's vision is a world where human rights at work are enjoyed by all workers, protected by the state, and respected by business. Pioneering brands, NGOs and trade unions established ETI in 1998 to promote fundamental human rights in global value chains. Based on the ILO core conventions, the ETI Base Code was developed, turning international labour standards into a practical framework for business. Today, ETI has 110+ members globally, of which, over 90 are companies, which includes retailers and brands in the food, clothing, beauty, and electronics industries.

Mondiaal FNV is a trade union solidarity support organisation affiliated with the largest employees' organisation in the Netherlands: FNV. Mondiaal FNV strengthens the capacity of trade unions and labour organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the MENA region to campaign for decent work, engage in constructive social dialogue with employers and governments, and improve labour conditions in high-risk value chains. FNV and Mondiaal FNV are also partners in different sectoral IRBC Agreements, including that for garments and textiles.

Annex II: THEORY OF CHANGE

1. What needs to change? Long- and medium-term objectives

Our strategic objective (long-term impact) is that **garment workers, most of whom are women, can exercise their right to freedom of association and have access to safe, dignified, and properly paid employment.**

STITCH envisages workplaces where workers feel free to speak out, unionise, and bargain for better working conditions. Female and male workers will have equal access to safe employment, and workplaces free from (sexual) harassment, which offer protection against COVID-19 and OSH risks—workplaces where negotiated wages meet the standard of living. Garment workers and their families will benefit. Two strategies underpin our theory of change: redressing power imbalances and ensuring freedom of association.

By influencing the most powerful players in the value chain—brands—we can create space for workers to organise in unions and secure a seat at the negotiation table. By strengthening unions, we can enhance workers' influence in the value chain. In the meantime, factory employers have a strengthened position vis à vis their customers (brands), while improved purchasing practices of those brands allow for better working conditions and reward freedom of association.

THEORY OF CHANGE

STITCH

a 'new normal' for garment workers

Ultimate goal

The global garment industry contributes to an equal and just society by respecting human rights in the world of work

Long-term impact

Garment workers (75% women) exercise their right to FoA and have access to safe, dignified, and properly paid employment

Medium-term impact

TUs and LROs worldwide **hold brands and governments accountable** and **influence buyer/factory policies**

The global garment industry practices **responsible business**, expanding civic space and respecting labour rights

Buyer and production countries improve and implement clauses on human rights in international **trade agreements**
Governments in production countries **enhance and enforce policies on decent work** including FoA and Human Rights Due Diligence
Buyer country governments enforce **Human Rights Due Diligence** and ethical investment

Sphere of Influence

OUTCOMES

Bangladesh
Cambodia
India

Indonesia
Myanmar
Vietnam

MENA

Europe

Private sector actors in the garment industry in production and EU buying countries accept the need to change purchasing practices and FoA

New Multi Stakeholder structures in production countries

"New normal" for the garment industry

Social dialogue

TUs and LROs have the power and voice to exercise their rights, especially related to FoA and decent work

Expanding civic space

Governments in production and EU buying countries create the opportunity for the garment industry to change and for inclusion of workers' voices in negotiations and decision-making

Lobby & Advocacy

Trade unions (TUs) & labour rights organisations (LROs)

- Increased representation
- Increased number of women in leadership positions in TUs
- Increased knowledge on gender equality and participation of women
- Capacity to influence for a living wage, harassment free workplace and FoA, through social dialogue
- Research to create evidence on labour conditions, to support lobby and advocacy

Engaged brands and factories

- The voices of workers and the Trade Unions representing them and factories drive the implementation and prioritisation of brand action on Human Rights Due Diligence and remediation.
- Human Rights Due Diligence by engaged brands drives improved purchasing practices that support and incentivise FoA, decent work and gender equality
- Innovative and improved approaches to remedy are implemented for garment workers
- Factories and business associations are capacitated for social dialogue
- Improved information sharing with TUs, LROs, and other brands for collaboration

International stakeholders

- Local partners and STITCH form coalitions with allies (e.g.: global unions, ILO, OECD, Dutch embassies) to drive lobby and advocacy efforts for "the new normal" in the global garment industry

Knowledge sharing & learning

Freedom of Association (FoA)

- Laws, regulations and practices enable a sustainable, equal balance of power between garment industry actors
- Enforced laws and policies ensure that FoA is possible and that workers are protected

- CSOs, private sector and policy makers are aware of power imbalances and address these
- FoA is an integral part of "the new normal"

- CSOs, private sector and policy makers are aware of power imbalances and take responsibility to address these
- Engaged brands and factories address lack of FoA at factory level

Strategies

- Redressing Power Imbalances
- Ensuring Freedom of Association (FoA)

Strengthen capacity and legitimacy

Innovate and guide

Convene and align

STITCH Consortium: (CDI, Cividep, CNV-I, ETI, Fair Wear, M-FNV)

Freedom of association and redressing power imbalances

Redressing power imbalances in the value chain and ensuring freedom of association are key for us to reach our long-term objective. Therefore, all pathways of change, interventions and engagement with actors in the STITCH programme aim to ensure that these two critical strategies are met.

Both the vertical power relations in the value chain and the horizontal power relations in production countries restrict the civic space in which workers' voices can be heard and the right to freedom of association can be exercised. Vertically, brands exercise power over factories via their purchasing practices and business models. Meanwhile, factories often limit workers' power and collective voice, and governments in production countries restrict civic space and freedom of association. Leadership positions in trade unions and management positions in the private sector are still largely male-dominated, resulting in power imbalances between women workers and the men who represent or manage them; ultimately, decision-making processes miss out on key input from women.

Redressing power imbalances requires looking at each relationship between actors, both vertically and horizontally, along with identifying the root causes of unequal power and developing interventions to address these. Ensuring freedom of association requires understanding the barriers to these rights, identifying the role each actor plays in addressing these barriers, and developing interventions that promote an enabling environment for these rights to be exercised. As described in Section 3, STITCH has five clear pathways of change across actor groups that will lead to balanced power relations and ensure freedom of association.

Through our strategies of addressing power imbalances and ensuring freedom of association, as well as the underlying interventions, we are confident that the 'new normal' is possible, and that the global garment industry contributes to an equal and just society by respecting human rights in the world of work.

International framework: SDGs and UNGP

Our framework for action is the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which are reflected in the OECD guidelines as well as ILO Conventions 87 and 98.¹ Trade unions, labour rights organisations, and STITCH consortium partners engage with and advocate for governments to effectively protect labour rights and for businesses to respect these rights, in line with the first two pillars of the UNGPs. They do so in dialogue with workers. STITCH will contribute to increased access to remedy (third pillar), which in our understanding is closely related to freedom of association and healthy industrial relations, in which unions are positioned to address workers' grievances with factory management. The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C87) is one of the ILO's core conventions and sets forth the right of workers and employers to establish and join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorization.² It is directly linked to the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (C98); both are core conventions and are enabling rights to promote and realise decent working conditions. STITCH's work is rooted in the principles outlined in these conventions, which ensure that workers are able to collectively influence and negotiate for improvements in their work. We lobby for application and enforcement of these rights in national and international law; share knowledge and advance awareness of the value of these rights across the value chain; and strengthen the capacity of trade unions and labour rights organisations to claim these rights.

By applying this framework, STITCH will contribute to the realisation of the SDGs, especially SDG 5 (on gender equality) and SDG 8 (decent work for all).

¹https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinessshr_en.pdf;
<https://mneguidelines.oecd.org/guidelines/>; <https://mneguidelines.oecd.org/responsible-supply-chains-textile-garment-sector.htm>

² <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/freedom-of-association/lang--en/index.htm>

2. Who needs to change and what kind of change are you after? Outcomes

In order to reach our long-term objective and to redress power imbalances and ensure freedom of association, STITCH has identified three main actors and the change required of them.

Trade unions and labour rights organisations have the power and voice to exercise their rights, especially related to freedom of association and decent work

Trade unions are the legitimate representatives of workers in industrial relations: they represent garment workers' interests towards employers and government institutions. The results of their work impact workers beyond their direct members; if strong unions negotiate higher sectoral wages, this benefits all workers. Thus unions play a crucial role in realizing SDG 8. Labour rights organisations have a broad mandate of expanding civil and political rights. They conduct research, create innovative approaches to improved labour rights, monitor human rights protection, and lobby and advocate for improved policies and practices. Trade unions and labour rights organisations play complementary roles in promoting labour rights.

At the factory and national level (federations and confederations) in the STITCH production countries, trade unions will organise more workers and become stronger organisations, in terms of financial capacities, (digital) membership databases, organising (via digital tools) and negotiation skills. Organising will specifically target women workers, and representation of women will increase in all levels of union structures. Unions will become more gender representative and inclusive. Thus, unions become more powerful and capable of voicing the concerns of (female) workers. Labour rights organisations will help voice workers' concerns at the political level, support capacity strengthening, aligning and convening with international stakeholders, and conducting research.

More representative and legitimate trade unions will represent workers in meaningful social dialogue with employers (bipartite) and with employers and government (tripartite). This will lead to increased protection of labour rights by governments and both more and higher-quality CBAs that also reflect the specific concerns of women workers. Research by Cornell University and WageIndicator Foundation shows that unionised factories generally have higher respect for human rights in relation to labour standards than factories without trade union presence.

STITCH will increase access to information for trade unions about purchasing practices and pricing; thus, they will be able to more effectively negotiate for living wages in bipartite and tripartite negotiations and in wage mechanisms at the national level, for example, in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and India (state level).

Workers will have increased access to remedy, with support of trade unions and labour rights organisations in case of labour rights violations, as well as via grievance mechanisms at the factory-level, state-level or internationally. They will investigate sexual harassment incidents, support victims in accessing remedy, and actively lobby for (improved) legislation on the prevention of sexual harassment and ratification of C190. Trade unions and labour rights organisations will monitor civic space, especially freedom of association, and advocate to protect this civic space and workers' rights. Trade unions and labour rights organisations will hold brands and governments accountable through evidence-based lobbying. Research done as a basis for this lobby will be used as input for brands' human rights due diligence and to shape grievance mechanisms and international lobby. In contrast, trade unions and labour rights organisations get access to value chain data and information on brands' human rights due diligence processes.

Governments in production countries and buyer countries protect human rights

Governments have a responsibility and the means to set policy and effectively protect labour rights. Governments in production countries will meaningfully engage trade unions and employers' associations in tripartite social dialogue on social and economic policies. They will legally protect the right to freedom of association and other labour rights. Labour rights will be implemented and monitored, and workers will have access to remedy. Thus, workers will benefit from more decent working conditions and will be able to exercise their right to freedom of association without fearing reprisals from state agents.

Trade agreements with the EU will include labour rights and human rights clauses that guarantee these rights. Outcomes will be set per production country, depending on the specific context. C190 will provide momentum to address violence and harassment in the workplace. The convention will therefore contribute to safe workplaces, where workers, especially women, feel free to speak out without fearing reprisals. Ratification of C190 will be an aim in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar and Tunisia.³ **Bangladesh** will furthermore adopt legislation to address gender-based discrimination. The government will ensure more effective law enforcement and will consult trade unions and business associations on policy reforms. In **Cambodia**, the government will strengthen the existing garment industry minimum wage mechanism. **Indian** labour authorities will actively process registration requests from trade unions within the legal timeframe and without interference on internal affairs. State governments of garment hubs will effectively monitor the implementation of the Sexual Harassment Act of 2013. The **Indonesia**-EU CEPA negotiations will result in the inclusion of labour clauses. Furthermore, the government will adopt the Sexual Harassment Alleviation Bill and tripartite negotiations in the garment industry will take place. In **Myanmar**, the government will consult trade unions and business associations on the wage policy, adapt policies accordingly, and engage in a meaningful tripartite dialogue. This will result in increased minimum wages. **Tunisia** will ratify other conventions aiming for gender equality at the workplace, and the government will consult social partners on new labour policies. The **Vietnamese** government will take steps to implement the recently ratified C98 and ratify C87 in 2023. Strengthening **social dialogue** and tripartite structures is a priority in all production countries.

The global garment industry practices responsible business

In our theory of change, brands and factories have a crucial role in advancing workers' rights, in particular those of women, and in complementing trade unions' and labour rights organisations' advocacy to achieve a 'new normal'. Because of the power imbalances previously described, factories can only structurally improve once brands do. With increased high-level buy-in and internal alignment between departments, engaged brands will implement **human rights due diligence**, conduct **responsible purchasing practices**, support and incentivise freedom of association, prioritise gender equality, and increase workers' access to remedy. An excessive workload and overtime to meet ever increasing production targets are often an outcome of poor purchasing practices by brands. Work intensification has a differential impact on women workers. Apart from being denied sufficient breaks, all forms of harassment are used on women to push production. Relentless work takes a toll on women's reproductive and mental health. It is imperative that brands' purchasing practices account for the differential impact these have on women. Brands will amend and improve their purchasing practices, acting on feedback of factories and workers and inform human rights due diligence processes with information gathered by trade unions and labour rights organisations in research, via multi-stakeholder structures and from workers' grievances. Brands will be assessed publicly on their progress in implementing human rights due diligence and responsible business conduct.

Factories and brands will engage in a sourcing dialogue based on equality, rather than the current power dynamic. Suppliers will have increased access to and ability to assess information about pricing, to create a more equal footing in negotiations. A key condition for social dialogue (between workers' representatives and employers) thriving in factories is for brands to commit to pay and stay, to provide stability of orders for factories, in order for them to create stability for workers. Therefore brands will commit to ensuring that any rise in cost due to the conclusion of a collective bargaining agreement (CBA)—or steps towards such an agreement—in its pricing, thus ensuring factories that brands will not leave if costs increase due to CBAs.

Improved purchasing practices will contribute to an enabling environment in which workers are able to unionise and to negotiate, in gender-sensitive negotiation teams, with factories/employers for better working conditions. For bipartite social dialogue, both parties need to have negotiation skills. As such, factories and business associations will be more equipped to engage in social dialogue; this includes ensuring that women

³Dutch unions are lobbying for the ratification of C190 in the Netherlands as well; however, this is outside the scope of STITCH.

workers have stronger roles in factory management (or as supervisors) to ensure their participation in social dialogue at both sides of the table.

The garment market is so fragmented that even the biggest brands cannot change the dominant way of doing business single-handedly. More critical mass is needed to make the change, and, besides, having a common vision or at least direction in which the market should move, brands also need the right incentives to take that course and stay it. This goes to the heart of the company as an economic actor, and thus to its business model. Changing the business model of a company is far more sustainable than counting on its management to 'do the right thing', for one because it does not depend on individuals. STITCH envisions improved business models of brands through an improved legal (governance and business) environment, positive influence from investors, and based on the behaviour of customers.

3. How will we get there? Pathways of change

To see the change we envision in each of the above-mentioned actors, in order to reach our long-term objective, STITCH has identified five pathways of change.

1. Strengthen capacity and legitimacy
2. Innovate and guide
3. Convene and align
4. Lobby and advocate
5. Share knowledge and learn

1. Strengthen capacity and legitimacy

STITCH will focus on capacity strengthening and legitimacy of trade unions and labour rights organisations. We focus on collective bargaining, lobby and advocacy, organising, negotiation skills, planning/monitoring/evaluation/learning (PMEL), and financial sustainability. STITCH will involve trade unions in human rights due diligence processes and grievance mechanisms, and will convene linkages to international stakeholders, like the OECD and the ILO. Furthermore, STITCH will amplify trade unions and labour rights organisations' lobby and advocacy efforts at the national and international levels, thus jointly driving a change process to a 'new normal'. To increase their lobbying strength and legitimacy, STITCH will support trade unions and labour rights organisations in accessing and using value chain data and improving the inclusion of workers' voices in such data. Trade unions and labour rights organisations will campaign at the international level to push brands to improve business conduct and to address workers' grievances. We emphasise women's leadership in trade unions and labour rights organisations, increasing capacity on gender equality and inclusiveness, and generating evidence to support lobby and advocacy and innovation.

Interventions related to this pathway are extensively described. However, the work under pathways two and three (described below) is also aimed at promoting freedom of association and social dialogue and making space for trade unions. Under pathway two, we will address purchasing practices that are the root causes of labour rights violations and restrictions on the right to freedom of association. We will ensure concerns of workers and trade unions are central to human rights due diligence by brands. STITCH will promote freedom of association with factories and capacitate them for social dialogue and provide access for remedy for those workers whose access is blocked. Under pathway three, we will seek alignment with (international) stakeholders like the OECD, the ILO, global unions and CCC to amplify the collective voice of workers.

2. Innovate and guide

STITCH will work with the private sector (brands and factories) to guide these actors with innovative approaches to accept the need to change purchasing practices and freedom of association. STITCH MSIs influence engaged brands by developing **guidance tools for brands on human rights due diligence**, which includes ways to identify and address gender discrimination at all levels of employment and also in all cycles of employment (i.e. from recruitment to the exit of a worker). Similarly, STITCH will develop tools and training to support brands in improving their purchasing practices in order to incentivise freedom of association, decent work and gender equality. On all accounts, these tools will be driven by input from workers (via trade

unions), factories and local stakeholders. In this way STITCH ensures brand practices are guided by those who are most impacted. As human rights due diligence and purchasing practices are not limited to specific production countries but cover the whole value chain, ripple effects may occur beyond our production countries, particularly in major sourcing countries like China and Turkey.

To drive improved and more sustainable business models of brands, STITCH will push for positive laws and regulations in market countries, including at least human rights due diligence legislation but potentially also consumer protection or other regulations—in particular at the EU level. Shareholders, owners and other financiers of garment brands will be targeted through progressive financial industry groups like the Platform Living Wage Financials, through associations of progressive shareholders and potentially by supporting movements for more human-rights-oriented financial regulations. Consumers will be influenced through their most important intermediaries: large (online) retailers and European (online and traditional) influencers like important journalists or vocal fashion icons.

Innovative and improved approaches to remedy will guarantee workers have increased access to remedy in cases where workers have not yet been able to fully exercise their rights. Special attention will be given to ensuring mechanisms for addressing gender-based violence are implemented and functional. STITCH simultaneously works with factories to ensure they are capacitated for and are engaging in social dialogue in good faith. We will develop best practice examples, training, and shared learning platforms to guide factories. When this capacity is strengthened, trade unions can engage with factories in bipartite social dialogue and exert pressure for factories to change.

Under this pathway, two intermediary outcomes have been amended to more explicitly link work with brands to workers' experiences:

The voices of workers and the trade unions representing them, and factories drives the implementation and prioritisation of brand action on human rights due diligence and remediation

Human rights due diligence by engaged brands drives improved purchasing practices that support and incentivise freedom of association, decent work and gender equality

3. Convene and align

STITCH's engagement with international stakeholders focuses on **convening and aligning** for effective lobby and advocacy. These stakeholders are STITCH allies that play an important role in amplifying workers' voices and driving global change. We will build and strengthen coalitions, in order to create an aligned vision of the 'new normal' between the key actors in the industry. With international stakeholders such as the ILO (and ILO Better Work), the OECD, global unions and the UN, we will build relationships, share knowledge, and ensure that our work is mutually reinforcing. Together we will lobby for improvements across the industry with a unified voice. Similarly, we will work with the Dutch embassies across our focal countries, to ensure alignment of our work and to strengthen the goals of STITCH and the embassy MACs simultaneously.

4. Lobby and advocate

STITCH envisions that all actors with whom we engage will lobby and advocate for improved labour conditions, in order to create the 'new normal'. The research and knowledge mentioned above will be the foundation for our evidence-based lobby and advocacy efforts. To motivate governments to increasingly protect labour rights, trade unions and labour rights organisations will lobby and advocate their governments. When possible, brands will lend their voices and influence to these lobby efforts to support the positions of trade unions and labour rights organisations. STITCH will amplify their voices in different ways, for example by creating or supporting structures for dialogue between a wider setting of stakeholders in **multi-stakeholder structures**, including brands and labour rights organisations, to work towards a shared vision of the sector. STITCH supports the trade unions and labour rights organisations efforts by lobbying on trade agreements, by advocating for freedom of association, by engaging with Dutch embassies, by mobilising brands' support for specific lobby goals, and by **aligning** trade unions and labour rights organisations with **international stakeholders** like the OECD and conducting joint lobby.

STITCH consortium partners also engage with **governments in buyer countries** to raise the bar for the industry to change. We will do so at EU level, in the Netherlands, in Germany and in the UK. The focus will be on **mandatory human rights due diligence and ethical investment**. Mandatory human rights due diligence will avoid free riders, brands that do not invest in improved working conditions, but reap the fruits of investments by others. In the meantime, ethical investments are a financial incentive for change in the sector.

5. Share knowledge and learn

A precondition for any effort to redress power imbalances is to ensure access to the same information across garment value chains and the industry. Tools and methodologies will be developed, both with and for the industry (for example in conjunction with other responsible business conduct platforms), and significant research will be conducted to inform our lobby and advocacy efforts. The outcomes of this research and learning will be actively shared with trade unions, LRO, factories, and business associations to ensure a level playing field as the basis for constructive sourcing and social dialogue. Not only this, but information that is traditionally held by only one actor group, for example on brand pricing strategies and costing, will be shared transparently across the value chains, to better understand and influence each other's roles. STITCH will share information with our direct partners and those identified in the above pathways, but also beyond to the greater industry and stakeholders. Through publications, engaging in industry and other forums and seminars, and through using our own and our partners' networks, we will share our research and learning broadly. Through our extensive PMEL framework we will ensure continued learning from our own processes and programme. We envision that this research, tools, case studies and overall learning will provide valuable input to other industries and to countries outside of our focal areas.

4. Assumptions

We have identified several assumptions which underlie our theory of change:

'World view' assumptions about the drivers and pathways of change

- Investors, consumers, and governments have an intrinsic motivation to promote human rights due diligence to foster responsible purchasing practices. They are committed to engage in a dialogue on promoting human rights due diligence—although commitment will depend on the impact on economic interests
- Civic space is needed to monitor implementation of ILO conventions and international agreements
- Well-designed regulation changes business behaviour
- Legislation drives best practices instead of lower common standards
- Signing of free trade agreements can change behaviour of governments, brands and value chain partners to respect human and labour rights
- COVID-19 creates uncertainty, but also an opportunity for social dialogue. There is a need for tripartite structures.

Assumptions about the causal links at different levels of the theory of change

- Better dialogue and purchasing practices ultimately lead to monetary and other significant benefits for the factories, which in turn pass on the benefits to workers.
- Partner trade unions and labour rights organisations & the STITCH international lobby and advocacy team have the capacity to follow up on relevant developments and opportunities
- It is possible to connect workers' voices to international/EU consultations on regulatory frameworks.

Assumptions about the external context

- COVID-19 will change brands' business habits under the current increased international attention to the garment value chain.

Assumptions on the key actor groups

Trade unions/labour rights organisations

- Trade unions and labour rights organisations need civic space (freedom of association) and strengthened lobby and advocacy to redress power imbalances between brands, factories, and workers.
- Without a redistribution of power across garment value chains, the position of civil society and its interventions remain precarious
- Representative trade unions will be able to organise more workers as they show more responsiveness to the needs of women workers
- STITCH interventions will create more opportunity for trade unions to organise in factories

Engaged brands/factories

- Manufacturers and buyers are open to proposed changes in their business models and also see this as an opportunity to restructure and rebalance the industry for the better
- Factories need support with dialogue and freedom of association and support from brands to implement dialogue outcomes
- Factories are more willing to change if brands cooperate
- A change in brand purchasing practices can effectively redress power imbalances
- Engaged brands and factories are committed towards freedom of association and the role of trade unions

International stakeholders

- International stakeholders build and participate in coalitions that achieve global goals, strengthen civil society organisations' lobby and advocacy efforts, and expand civic space.

Governments

- With lobbying as a catalyst, governments are willing to implement policies that contribute to the new industry normal.
- Governments are supportive and accountable to enforce C87/98 when applicable and recognise the role of trade unions in social dialogue systems.

5. Theory of change implementation during COVID-19

COVID-19 has clearly shown the urgency to address the power imbalances in the value chain. In many production countries, unions saw their membership drop, as workers lost their jobs. The crisis showed the importance of social protection, an issue that will be a focal area in, for example, India and in our cooperation with IndustriALL. This draws attention to the importance of safe workplaces, in addition to gender, living wage and freedom of association. COVID-19 regulations make organising and other union activities challenging. In the meantime, COVID-19 is also a push factor for digitalisation within unions, and thus capacity strengthening interventions on digitalisation will receive high priority. COVID-19 also has the risk of (escalating) social unrest.

COVID-19 has worsened some of the business behaviour STITCH has identified as root causes for the exploitation of workers, and a lot of brands are in a precarious situation that will make them less likely to pay for investment in living wages or safe workplaces. On the other hand, the crisis has also amplified voices for structural change in the garment industry.

ANNEX III: IOB Evaluation quality criteria 2020

Introduction

Since long IOB uses evaluation quality criteria to assess the quality of evaluation reports. At the same time, these criteria are useful when designing an evaluation, during the formulation of the Terms of Reference and the elaboration of the methodology, as well as during the evaluation itself. Over the years, IOB made some modifications in the evaluation quality criteria, resulting in this latest set of December 2020. There are two versions of the document describing the evaluation quality criteria:

1. This short version document with the evaluation quality criteria, with a minimum of explanation.
2. A long version document with for each criterion more explanation and practical examples of insufficient, just sufficient, and very good consideration of the criterion. This will be published on the IOB website, and will be used in training about evaluation quality. (can be shared upon request)

The evaluation quality criteria are grouped around subjects that are usually followed in this order in an evaluation report.

Quality control of the evaluation

1. **A reference group oversees the evaluation.** This group is composed of the commissioner of the evaluation, members with both thematic and evaluation experience, including at least one independent member. The role of the reference group is to assure evaluation quality and independence. It advises the commissioner on the Terms of Reference and evaluation questions, the selection of evaluators, the elaborated methodology (inception report), and the draft evaluation report.
2. **Evaluators are independent.** The evaluators and affiliated organisations have not been involved in the design or implementation of the intervention (project, programme, policy) under evaluation, and have no interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

Description and background of the intervention

3. **Description of the context of the intervention.** This can include the national, sector, and political context, and explains the rationale of the intervention.
4. **Description of the intervention.** Preferably in a theory of change (ToC), otherwise an intervention logic or result chain. The evaluator may need to reconstruct a ToC, using whatever is available in project documentation, but with a critical reflection from the evaluator's point of view.
5. **Validation of the assumptions underpinning the ToC.** The evaluator validates the ToC assumptions, which may refer to cause effect relations with in the result chains, to the context, or to broader world views on development. The evaluator makes use of broader literature (reviews) to reflect on the validity of the ToC.

Objective and delimitation of the evaluation

6. **Description of the objective of the evaluation. Clarify what the evaluation results will be used for.** There may be several objectives and it helps to distinguish:

- a) knowledge objective (knowing what works, how it works); this can be translated into knowledge questions that will result in conclusions.
 - b) an action objective (recommending what to do); this can be translated into policy questions that will result in recommendations.
7. **Delimitation of the evaluation.** Clarify what part of the intervention, expenditure, period, or even what part of the ToC, is of interest for this evaluation.

Evaluation questions

8. **Choice of OECD-DAC evaluation criteria to be covered.** Based on the evaluation objectives and limitations, it may turn out that not all evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact sustainability and coherence) are needed. This in turn will be reflected in the evaluation questions. (See [OECD DAC revised evaluation criteria 2019](#))⁴.
9. **Clear set of evaluation questions.** The evaluation questions follow logically from the intervention under evaluation, evaluation objective and delimitation, and chosen evaluation criteria. Evaluation questions should not be too general or vague, but also not be a too many and too detailed, losing focus. In line with the distinction between the knowledge and policy objectives (see criterion 6), it helps to distinguish:
 - a) knowledge questions, resulting in conclusions
 - b) action questions, resulting in recommendations

Evaluation methodology

A note of caution, our objective is to assess the evaluation methodology *as it has been conducted*, not as it has been intended. This means that for example good intentions in the methodology chapter or an inception report will have to be verified in the actual results and conclusions chapters.

10. **The research design is clearly elaborated and shows how the research results will contribute to answers to the evaluation questions.** The design may consist of several quantitative and / or qualitative methods. If more than one method is used, the quality assessment looks both at the individual methods and the combination of methods.
 - a) Quantitative methods include three main research designs: survey, time series and experiment / quasi-experiment (see explanation under 11).
 - b) Qualitative methods are mainly based on elements of the Case Study approach and the Grounded Theory approach. Methods include many research designs, some of which are more suitable for evaluating effectiveness, and less susceptible for bias, than others⁵ (see explanation under 11).

Under the following five criteria, 11-15, a distinction is made between qualitative and quantitative methods, acknowledging that an evaluation often uses several methods.

11. **The methods are appropriate to evaluate effectiveness: attribution and / or contribution (if effectiveness is an evaluation criterion/question).**

a. **Qualitative methods** can make a plausible claim about the effect that the project has contributed to. The qualitative evaluation methods that allow a plausible claim have the following steps in common: (i) formulate the cause-effect contribution question; (ii) reconstruct an intervention theory;

(iii) formulate an alternative theory; (iv) collect data along intervention and alternative theory; (v) validate the theories step by step.

A good overview of qualitative evaluation methods is provided by White and Phillips (2012). They made an inventory of eight evaluation methods and distinguished four that make a more plausible claim of effectiveness:

1. Realist Evaluation;
2. Contribution Analysis;

⁴ Also cross cutting subjects to be considered in the evaluation can be mentioned here, such as gender, poverty reduction, inclusiveness or climate smartness.

⁵ A good overview is provided by [White and Phillips, 2012](#). They made an inventory of eight evaluation methods and distinguished four that make a more plausible claim of effectiveness: Realist Evaluation, Contribution Analysis, Process Tracing, and General Elimination Methodology.

3. Process Tracing; and
4. General Elimination Methodology.

This paper formulates a general framework for qualitative evaluation, using the four aforementioned methods. At the same time, the paper identifies four qualitative evaluation methods that are less suitable qualitative evaluation methods for making claims of effectiveness:

5. Most Significant Change;
6. Success case method;
7. Outcome Mapping;
8. Method for Impact Assessment of programs and Projects.

More recently, Outcome Harvesting has gained popularity amongst practitioners and evaluators as a qualitative tool for monitoring and evaluation. IOB recommends explicitly against the use of Outcome Harvesting as an independent, external evaluation method. In practice, this method is not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness and unable to validly establish the contribution of interventions to observed outcomes. In addition, the method is not in the spirit of several other evaluation quality criteria, specifically regarding the independence of evaluators (criterion 2), sufficient independent sources (criterion 17), triangulation (criterion 18), and avoidance of bias (criterion 19).

b. **Quantitative methods** can make a firm claim on the effect that can be attributed to the project. The Maryland scientific method scale distinguishes 5 levels:

1. One observation moment, after the project: comparison with-without project.
2. Two observations moments: comparisons before-after project, without control group.
3. Two observation moments: comparing before-after AND with-without project (double difference).
4. Two observation moments: comparing before-after AND with-without project (double difference, semi experimental design), and correcting for other, external influences.
5. Two observation moments: comparing before-after AND with-without project (double difference); the participants are at random assigned to a project: randomised control group, experimental design).

Level 5 is best suited for attributing results to a project, but is rare and not always possible to apply in evaluations. Level 4 is a commonly used good quantitative method. Level 1 and 2 are generally not the preferred methods for making effect claims and evaluators should be encouraged to aim at least for level 3 and preferably for level 4. Under certain strict conditions, evaluations below level 4 can be seen as just good enough, although in practise this is rare. Whether level 1, 2 or 3 is sufficient depends on the evaluation subject and context, especially on whether the following assumptions hold true: (i) that without the project nothing would change over time, and (ii) that a control group is similar to the project group, before the start of the project.

12. The methods are appropriate to evaluate efficiency (if this is an evaluation criterion/question). The evaluation needs to specify what aspect of efficiency is considered⁶.

- a) Quantitative methods: e.g. calculation of cost-effectiveness, timeliness of implementation, overhead costs, etc.
- b) Qualitative methods: e.g. assessment of demonstration or leverage effects and scaling, etc.

13. The indicators or result areas are appropriate to capture the planned results along the different levels in the ToC.

- a) Quantitative methods: indicators are defined at different levels (e.g. output, outcome, impact; context and other assumptions) in the ToC. Indicators should be SMART and valid to measure the planned results.

⁶ The OECD-DAC evaluation criteria for efficiency considers the aspects (i) cost-effectiveness and (ii) operational efficiency, but there are more aspects of efficiency.

- b) Qualitative methods: result areas and processes, including assumptions that are part of the ToC, are defined at and between different levels (e.g. output, outcome, impact; context and other assumptions) in the ToC, and are valid to assess the planned results.

14. Justified choice of sample, cases and information sources (e.g. choice of countries, projects, organisations and persons)

- a) Quantitative methods: Well justified choice of sampling (e.g. random, stratified), (type of respondents, external validity), sample size (power calculation, response rate), and discussion of the limitations.
- b) Qualitative methods: Well justified choice of the selection of cases and / or qualitative sample (based on strategic, theoretical or practical considerations), number of cases (internal validity, saturation), and discussion of the limitations.

15. The analyses are appropriate, given the chosen research design.

- a) a. Quantitative methods: appropriate statistical analyses, given the research design, chosen indicators and sample size; appropriate comparisons: e.g. difference in difference, analyses of variance, regressions analyses, matching techniques.
- b) b. Qualitative methods: the data analyses methodology is clear, given the research design, and includes e.g. theory construction, coding, comparing cases.

16. Summary of the methodology in an evaluation matrix. This matrix shows how (i) evaluation questions are translated into (ii) sub-questions / indicators / result areas, and (iii) methodologies and (iv) information sources.

17. Sufficient independent information sources. Besides information sources among project implementers, direct beneficiaries and other local stakeholders, the evaluator should also independently select and consult sufficient independent sources, e.g. the opinion of other experts or non-beneficiaries that can critically reflect on the intervention, objective observations, or validated secondary data.

18. Triangulation of results from different information sources. This includes a comparison and critical reflection by the evaluator of results from different sources and results from different research methodologies (i.e. quanti and/or quali), data collection methods (i.e. interviews, surveys, observations) and data sources (i.e. persons, documents, sites).

19. Discussion and avoidance of bias. The evaluator provides a critical reflection of different forms of bias (sample bias, respondent bias, evaluator bias) and addresses these as much as possible.

20. Systematic, complete and transparent description of the data collection and analysis. In principle, if another evaluator would apply the same methodology, this should result in the same findings and conclusions (replicability).

- 21. **Discussion of the limitations of the evaluation.** The evaluator is self-critical and discusses the limitations of the study, including reliability, internal and external validity, relative contribution of the intervention and other external factors to the observed changes.

Results and conclusions

22. Conclusions answer research questions. Although conclusions may be organised or grouped differently than the original research questions, in principle all research questions are answered, or accompanied by an explanation why they could not be answered.

23. Conclusions follow logically from the research findings.

- a) Complete and transparent presentation of the results of each method, to avoid jumping to conclusions. Detailed results can be presented in an annex.
- b) Discussion of the limitations and validity of the conclusions (in line with C21)

24. Validation of draft conclusions. To strengthen the validity of the conclusions, the draft conclusions are discussed, e.g. in a validation workshop, with project implementers, independent experts, and compared with findings in earlier evaluations and broader literature.

Usefulness and readability of the evaluation report

- 25. Recommendations should be useful and practical, given the evaluation objectives and its intended users**
- 26. The report is well readable, consistent, and includes a clear summary with evaluation objective, evaluation questions, conclusions and recommendations.**