

Responsible Purchasing Practices

Learning and Implementation Community

Purchasing practices are at the heart of business and are vital in efforts to improve labour standards. The focus on responsible purchasing practices is a key priority for many purchasing companies and multi-stakeholder initiatives. The MSI Working Group on Responsible Purchasing Practices (RPP) has convened a group of garment brands and retailers, working with supply chain partners to improve purchasing practices, as part of the 'Learning and Implementation Community (LIC). The Community will facilitate companies wanting to take new steps towards progress in their purchasing practices, develop solutions, together with manufacturers and share learning with peers, experts and supply chain partners.

The community uses the Common Framework on Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP) as a reference document. If you want to know more about the Framework, how it was developed and who is involved, please see details [here](#).

Aims and desired outcomes of the LIC

The overall desired outcome of the community is improved purchasing practices, in order to give scope for improved working conditions in the supply chain, through peer learning and practical action.

The aims of the community include:

- Encouraging and supporting companies in implementing positive changes in responsible purchasing practices in discussion and partnership with manufacturers, through sharing case studies, expert input, tools and guidance.
- Active participation of supply chain partners to ensure that possible changes to purchasing practices are those which will have a positive impact on manufacturers and workers.
- Collecting and sharing best practice and strategies in implementation of responsible purchasing practices.
- Ensuring the elements of the framework are workable in practice.

What are the benefits of the LIC?

For brands/retailers:

For purchasing companies, the LIC provides an opportunity for peer learning, to hear examples of what others are doing, have input and advice from experts, support in implementation from the MSIs involved, and to have a safe environment to jointly brainstorm possible solutions with supply chain partners, and to trial changes and share learnings.

For manufacturers:

- Opportunity to influence industry purchasing practices by representing the manufacturer perspective and saying which changes would be the most helpful/workable for suppliers.
- Meet with individuals from brands who are committed to improving purchasing practice and discuss the changes they could trial.
- Opportunity to discuss purchasing practices in a safe space.
- Build confidence to speak about purchasing practices, impacts and solutions.



Practical details

- **Organisers:** Fair Wear¹, ETI², Ethical Trade Norway³, PST/GIZ⁴, Solidaridad⁵, in partnership with the Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative (STTI)⁶.
- **Timeline:** The community will run for about two years, starting in September 2022.
- **Finance:** The LIC is funded by the Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) and the Sustainable Textile Initiative: Together for Change (STITCH) (supported by the Dutch Government)⁷.
- **Facilitation:** The community's activities will be facilitated and organised by an independent Responsible Sourcing consultant, supported by the MSIs in the Working Group.
- **Activities of the Community:**
 - online workshops and sub-meetings (more details below)
 - support by MSIs (more details below)
 - signposting to relevant resources that are already available e.g. training
 - developing practical tools/guidance on good practice
- **Confidentiality:** The participants agree to confidentiality, so that companies and manufacturers can engage freely in discussions. All discussions are conducted with an awareness and respect of Competition Law.

Commitments for participating brands/retailers

Each purchasing company that is a member of the LIC is committed to:

- Taking action to improve their purchasing practices, including trialling some changes during the course of the LIC, in order to improve working conditions in the supply chain.
- Allocate relevant staff time/resources:
 - Attend the 7 main workshops over the 2 years and relevant sub-meetings.
 - Commercial team involvement: Minimum requirement is one named CSR/SR team member and one named commercial team member committed to working together on action plans. Ideal is to have a team from both CSR and commercial departments who will work together on this, with commercial team members also attending online sessions.
- Have regular engagement with leadership teams, throughout the course of the LIC, to discuss progress and proposed action plans.
- Engaging with suppliers on RPP. This might involve nominating a few key suppliers to have more in-depth conversations with, to invite to sub-meetings and to work together with to trial possible changes.
- Engage within the community, for example by sharing case studies, progress and learnings with other participants in workshops and discussions (all voluntary and not regarding commercially sensitive information) and contributing to the development of resources and guidelines.
- Participate in support/follow-up meetings with their MSI to plan actions and to track, share and discuss progress and learnings.

¹ Fair Wear is an MSI working with 140+ member brands to improve worker rights in textile supply chains, engaging directly with factories, trade unions, NGOs and governments. <https://www.fairwear.org/>

² The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is a UK based alliance of companies, trade unions and NGOs that promotes respect for workers' rights around the globe. <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/>

³ Ethical Trade Norway is a member based organization and resource center for sustainable trade. The around 170 members include some of Norway's largest companies, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), public enterprises and organizations. <https://etiskhandel.no/en/dette-er-etisk-handel-norge/>

⁴ The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles (PST) is a multi-stakeholder initiative with around 130 members from companies, associations, trade unions, civil society, standard setting organisations and the German Federal Government: <https://www.textilbuendnis.com/en/>

The Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a federally owned enterprise and supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. It hosts among others the Initiative for Global Solidarity: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/104524.html>

⁵ Solidaridad is an international civil society organization working to develop solutions to make communities more resilient and create more sustainable supply chains. In the organising team for the LIC, Solidaridad represents companies that were part of the AGT. <https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/>

The Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (AGT) ran until the 31st of December 2021. A broad coalition of businesses and other organisations worked together during the term of 5.5 years to improve working conditions, prevent pollution, and promote animal welfare in production countries.

⁶ STTI is unique, global manufacturer driven initiative focused on creating fairer purchasing practices in the textile and garment industry. <https://sustainabletermsoftradeinitiative.com/>

⁷ Sustainable Textile Initiative: Together for Change (STITCH) is a partnership with a common vision: a global textile and garment industry that contributes to an equal and just society by respecting human rights in the world of work. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided the financial support for the programme and is aligned as strategic partner for STITCH. www.stitchpartnership.org

What will happen in the community?

Implementation of Responsible Purchasing Practices

- The purpose of the framework and the LIC is to support companies to make practical improvements in their purchasing practices.
- Companies are expected to be committed to and working towards the 5 core 'Principles' outlined in the framework, and have a willingness to improve and to take active steps towards those principles.
- The 'Practices' listed under each principle are a collation of existing materials to outline what good practice looks like in terms of steps companies can take to implement those principles. We understand that some of the practices/lines in the framework will be more or less applicable to different business models and sizes. We would encourage companies to focus on practices they feel will make an impact and where they can get traction to make change.
- The framework is not a compliance mechanism, it is a description of what responsible practices look like, to be used by companies to stimulate practical action.

Online workshops

Online meetings happen roughly every 2 months, alternating between workshops and sub-meetings.

- 7 workshops over the 2 years, attended by all the members of the community.
- Each workshop will focus on one of the five principles of the CFRPP, to introduce the topic to participating purchasing companies (e.g. integration, partnership, collaborative planning, payment terms, and pricing).
- The format of the workshops will involve the following:
 - input from manufacturers to understand the realities of the impact on the ground of that topic
 - companies sharing case studies on actions taken and what they have learned
 - brief input from experts to explain the practices in that principle and give advice on how to implement them
 - facilitated break out rooms, with exercises/materials to guide discussions about ideas of actions to take and about overcoming obstacles

- As the community progresses, there will be space within the workshops for companies to give feedback on what they are learning as they are making efforts to implement RPP.

Sub-meetings

- 5-6 sub-meetings over the 2 years, one for each Principle, following the workshop.
- The sub-meetings will involve discussion groups with manufacturers/suppliers and brands/retailers together.
- These will dive into specific topics, with more solutions focused discussion.
- Varied, more specific topics will be considered, such as payment terms, internal incentives for buying teams, integrating supplier feedback into PP. The exact list of sub-meeting topics will be decided with the input of participating companies and suppliers.
- The format of the sessions will involve the following:
 - brief input from experts, manufacturers and brand case studies, focused on the specific topic in question
 - exercises and case material will be provided for discussion
 - discussion in break out groups, facilitated by members of the MSI Working Group and consultant, on how to practically implement certain aspects and develop solutions
 - feedback from the break out groups
 - aiming to produce guidelines/ ideas for sharing after the meeting

Support from MSIs

- The MSIs will work with their member companies, in between the workshops, to support implementation.
- This might include action plans and tracking progress, giving support and advice on implementation. The specific scope and content of the support is to be agreed between brands and the relevant MSI, depending on the approach and available resources of the MSIs.
- Another role the MSIs could play is to potentially connect the company with other companies who are working on a similar practice/element, so they can share experience and learn from each other.



Who is the community for?

The main target audience for changed behaviour is garment brands and retailers, which is why the briefing workshops focus on this group. However, a key priority of the LIC is participation of both manufacturers and purchasing companies in discussions around possible actions and solutions. This particularly happens in sub-meetings and participating brands are also encouraged to continue these discussions with their key supply chain partners between the meetings.

We recognise the essential importance of the involvement of supply chain partners, in order to find solutions that are most impactful for suppliers and workers, and are workable and mutually beneficial for the whole supply chain. The MSI Working Group is partnering with the Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative (STTI) to ensure active and fruitful participation of manufacturers/suppliers.

The 35 or so participating purchasing companies are all in the garment sector, mostly head quartered in Europe and the UK, but with a mix of sizes and business models.

"The CFRPP and the LIC is about learning and stimulating positive action, it's not a compliance or accountability mechanism."

Desired end goal

The overall desired outcome of the community is improved purchasing practices, in order to give scope for improved supply chain working conditions. While the approach and solutions may differ among the participating companies, the aim is that at the end of the 2 year process:

- the company will have taken steps to translate framework practices into their company's practices, in a way that works with their business model.
- the company has a proposal to present to internal teams on potential feasible changes that could be made, with case studies and relevant information to back that up, ideally building on changes that have been trialled through the course of the community's duration.



Measuring progress and learning

The CFRPP and the LIC are about learning and stimulating positive action.

Regarding questions that companies may have about accountability and reporting, we want to emphasise that the MSI Working Group and the framework are not a compliance or accountability mechanism. The framework is a reference point, which outlines what the MSIs agree that good looks like, in terms of responsible purchasing practices. Each MSI involved will integrate the framework into their own practices in different ways.

- Some MSIs (e.g. PST and Fair Wear) will integrate the CFRPP into their existing accountability frameworks, working together with the other MSIs in the Working Group to align this as far as possible.
- Other MSIs (e.g. ETI) will use the framework in a different way, as a basis for discussions, support and mentoring of companies, to stimulate ideas of improvements that can be made.

Key contacts

- The company's key contact will be their case manager/contact person at the MSI they are a member of. The key individuals in the MSI Working Group at the participating MSIs are:
 - PST: Topsy Roedler, topsy.roedler@giz.de
 - Fair Wear: Wilco van Bokhorst, Vanbokhorst@fairwear.org
 - ETI: Elisa Shepherd, Elisa.Shepherd@eti.org.uk
 - Ethical Trade Norway: Marthe Kielland Røssaak, marthe@etiskhandel.no
 - Solidaridad (supporting companies who were part of AGT): Tamar Hoek, tamar.hoek@solidaridadnetwork.org and Annemiek Smits, annemiek.smits@solidaridadnetwork.org
- The key contact for practical enquiries about Zoom meetings and arrangements is Milena Gropp at Fairwear gropp@fairwear.org
- The external consultant that is facilitating the MSI Working Group on Responsible Purchasing Practices and supporting the implementation of the LIC is Hilary Murdoch hilarymurdoch@gmail.com

If you are interested in finding out more about joining the LIC please contact the MSI Working Group on info@cfripp.org

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