

Sustainability in the Textile and Leather Sector (STILE)

Background

Bangladesh is the world's second largest exporter of clothing and textiles after China. The textile and leather industry employs more than 4.5 million inhabitants of Bangladesh, representing one of the country's most important sources of income.

Following tragic accidents in factories, Bangladesh has made considerable efforts to comply with sustainability standards. Legislation and enforcement have developed significantly in the areas of trade unions, minimum wages and job security.

Nevertheless, additional measures are needed to ensure social security and to safeguard employees and the environment. Currently, neither the government nor companies are sufficiently protecting the general public or the environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic causes additional challenges. Due to the major fall of sales in the sector, livelihoods are put under threat.

Objective

The Government of Bangladesh and companies are implementing social and environmental standards in the textile and leather sector more effectively.

Areas of intervention and envisaged activities

1. Promoting occupational safety

- Strengthening capacities of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to improve employee protection
- Supporting DIFE to further develop the Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA), an online database for increased transparency in planning and monitoring inspections
- Assisting the DIFE in the establishment of the National Occupational Health and Safety Training and Research Institute (NOHSTRI)

Project name	Sustainability in the Textile and Leather Sector (STILE)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Commissioned value	15.5 million Euro
Project region	Bangladesh
Partner ministry	Ministry of Commerce (MoC)
SDG contribution	Good health and well-being (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), responsible cities and communities (SDG 12), peace and justice strong institutions (SDG 16)
Duration	July 2020 to June 2024





2. Environmental protection

- Building capacities in the Department of Environment (DoE) in order to improve its regulatory and organisational performance. This approach will capacitate staff to ensure environmental standards in factories
- Providing new or improved tools for more effective state monitoring and inspection to strengthen compliance with environmental standards

3. Qualifying companies for certification

- Contributing to the implementation of the 'Green Button' certification
- Promoting compliance with sustainability standards in production facilities through introducing qualification measures for textile suppliers
- Encouraging cooperation between the government, private sector stakeholders and civil society organisations to further promote sustainability in the sector

4. Social dialogue

- Circulating knowledge on labor and human rights among workers in so-called 'women cafés' alongside non-governmental-organisations (NGOs)

- Strengthening dialogue between workers and factories; empowering employees to advocate for compliance with social standards

5. COVID-19 awareness

- Addressing the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in cooperation with the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)
- Creating awareness on COVID-19 through communication campaigns and training courses in order to minimise the risks of infection at the workplace as well as in worker communities

Approach

In order to achieve sustainable and structural results on a broad scale, the methodological approach focuses on interventions at the meso and macro level aimed at institutionalising both new and proven approaches from previous projects.

On the one hand, capacity development will enable state institutions to better fulfill their mandate to protect workers and the environment.

On the other hand, private sector actors are supported through organisational development and advisory services to fulfill their responsibility of implementing government requirements.

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