

# IGS INITIATIVE FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY



## Sustainability Forward

News from the Initiative for Global Solidarity

# October 2023



The Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) promotes the implementation of human rights and environmental due diligence in global supply chains by scaling and harmonising proven approaches.

The IGS supports stakeholders along global supply chains, particularly in the garment and electronics sector, to exercise shared responsibility for the impacts of business practices on people and the planet.

The initiative is working on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Further information can be found here:

[➔ Initiative for Global Solidarity](#)

# New partner countries

## IGS is expanding to new partner Countries

On its mission to promote human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) in global supply chains, IGS is expanding its activities to four new partner countries.

In Mexico, Turkey, Tunisia and Pakistan, further Responsible Business Helpdesks (RBH) will be launched to become also part of the global RBH Network (see next page on the study and networking trip).

The IGS team in Mexico together with the Sector Dialogue on Automotive Industry and the German Institute on Human Rights is furthermore supporting the establishment of a cross-company grievance mechanism (in German: Unternehmensübergreifender Beschwerdemechanismus – UBM) in the Mexican automotive industry.

Recently, the entire IGS team met in Berlin to onboard the new colleagues.



# The RBH Network

18–21. September 2023

## The RBH Network comes to life – Study and network trip to Berlin

Our partners from business associations and chambers from seven countries convened in Berlin in mid-September to kick off the RBH Network and exchange with relevant stakeholders on HREDD, including federal ministries, experts on HREDD, German companies and business associations.

The aim of the Responsible Business Helpdesk (RBH) Network is to serve as a support structure on HREDD in partner countries of global supply chains focusing on information and awareness raising services and fostering dialogue. In September, 23 representatives from the local host organizations and local GIZ-staff met for the first RBH Network meeting in Berlin. The study and network trip aimed to strengthen the understanding of the role of producing countries in effective HREDD implementation, foster peer-to-peer learning and the exchange with important (German) stakeholders and experts on HREDD and the German Supply Chain Act.

The action-packed four-day programme was full of fruitful dialogues showcasing the importance of including voices from production countries, which are indirectly affected by

new HREDD legislations. Meetings with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA) provided enriching political insights on due diligence legislation with a focus on the German Supply Chain Act and its concrete monitoring and control mechanisms through the competent authority BAFA.

Next to lively exchanges with the private sector (Tchibo GmbH) and its representatives (Federation of German Industries (BDI)), the RBH Network also used the opportunity to strengthen existing cooperations with actors like the German Helpdesk on Business & Human Rights, the Responsible Contracting Project (RCP) and the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK).



RBH delegation with Reinhard Junker from the BMZ



All actors agreed upon that the local chambers and associations forming the RBH Network can play a crucial role in the future to further enhance HREDD legislations by providing feedback to relevant German stakeholders.

The RBH Network builds upon a replicable model with tangible and easy-to-use resources, concepts and tools around HREDD topics allowing for peer-to-peer learning and an efficient way of operationalizing an RBH. The RBH model is open for other stakeholders. BMZ and GIZ is looking to expand the network further.



# HREDD in Practice

## Launch of Model Contract Clauses for Suppliers

IGS joined forces with the Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative and the Responsible Contracting Project (RCP) to release the Supplier Model Contract Clauses 1.0 (“SMCs”). The 29 clauses aim to improve human rights and purchasing practices in the apparel and textiles industry through innovative contracting practices.

Wanting to establish human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) in global supply chains, one effective tool is responsible contracting. Textile producers have identified this as a key concern, as unfair contract practices can have a direct impact on working conditions in factories. Currently, contracts between purchasing and manufacturing companies are usually formulated in a way that they shift risks to the supplier, while most rights lie with the buyer. The integration of responsible purchasing practices, which are strongly reflected in contract clauses, is intended to distribute responsibility more fairly. More uptake of the clauses is expected as many companies will have to change their contracts to align with the upcoming EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D).

In September, the SMCs 1.0 were successfully presented to the RBH Network during their delegation trip in Berlin. The SMCs will be promoted in the coming weeks, including an in-person event in Bonn in November. For registration, please see the “Outlook” section at the end of this newsletter. Additionally, various training offers will be rolled out in 2024.



Responsible Contracting Project

 Responsible Contracting Project



 Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative

## IGS fosters collaboration of cycling brands and suppliers to decarbonise their supply chains

Co-facilitated by Shift Cycling Culture Companies in the cycling industry will co-develop a Climate Action Training programme (CAT) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their supply chains.

The CAT will help brands and suppliers to collaboratively decarbonize their supply chains thereby addressing climate change as one of the main sector risks. In the spirit of HREDD, the initiative intends to strengthen equal partnership and sharing of responsibilities between buying and producing companies to jointly address sector risks in the supply chain.

The online training is aimed at suppliers of hard goods based in Asia and will be offered in several relevant Asian languages. The course will provide brands and factory management with foundational knowledge on measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions, how to set reduction targets and monitor progress, as well as relevant case studies of potential solutions to drive down emissions. It will be launched in Q2/2024. This initiative aims on a blueprint for future collaborative projects of the industry.

This initiative builds on the success story of [the Climate Action Training for the Fashion Industry](#) that was co-developed by GIZ and the [Fashion Charter for Climate Action](#) in 2021. Until today, more than 10,000 learners took part in the training that is available in seven languages.



 Shift Cycling Culture



# Activities in Focus Countries



Participants of the second ToT

6.–7. September 2023

## Second ToT on human rights and environment due diligence

Following the first training of trainers (ToT) on human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) in April, IGS together with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) organised the second training for RBH staff and consultants of the local network in September.

With facilitation of a joint task team of international and local experts, the training covers diverse topics on HREDD, i.e. detailed HREDD assessments, purchasing practices, cooperation between buyers and suppliers in the global value chain and internal grievance mechanisms.

Bringing in experience and concerns from practical work with enterprises, participants enriched the training content and knowledge through active discussions. The participants also expressed their need for further technical support from GIZ and the RBH in strengthening the HREDD network, as well as learning about dialogues between buyers and suppliers. Reflections of some trainees showed that the consultants started adopting learnings from the ToT series to their work.

## Chemical Management Initiative has taken off

Walking the talk of sharing responsibilities, IGS facilitated the collective action of three brands and 17 of their suppliers to improve chemical management in fabric and footwear production facilities in Viet Nam.

The participating brands (Columbia Sports Company, PUMA, VFC) co-sponsored the in-depth training and expert consultation for their suppliers. As a result, all participating suppliers have established or significantly enriched their chemical management implementation plan, in which chemical safety for workers is a cornerstone. This plan will serve as an instrument for the brands and suppliers to jointly and continuously take action on chemical management. Improvement is measured annually using the Higg Facility Environmental Module (Higg FEM) and expected to be available in early 2024.



*We got great feedback from vendors who participated in the Chemical Management Initiative in 2022 with an impressive increase in Higg FEM. It is exciting to expand the programme.*

Wendy Kan, Product Compliance Manager at Columbia Sportswear

Further brands have expressed interested in scaling up the programme in 2024 and developing it further to make it a joint annual activity of the apparel and fashion industry in Viet Nam and in other production countries.



Launch of the RBH in Bangladesh

11. June 2023

## Launch of the RBH



**The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), in collaboration with the IGS launched the first two RBH in Bangladesh.**

The RBH in Bangladesh will function as one-stop-shops to inform, raise awareness and provide guidance to textile manufacturing companies on requirements and opportunities emerging from HREDD. The hub is poised to play a pivotal role in supporting manufacturers in adapting to the new regulations, ultimately leading to more sustainable and resilient supply chains.

Key stakeholders, including representatives from the Sustainable Supply Chains division of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Embassy Dhaka, industry experts, government officials, apparel brands, development organisations and various other stakeholders joined the launch of the RBH in June. The event highlighted the strong commitment of both BGMEA and BKMEA to promote responsible business practices within the ready-made-garment industry in Bangladesh.

## Training of Trainers on Sustainability Data Management and Grievance Mechanism

**To support factories in fulfilling due diligence requirements, IGS organised two training of trainers (ToT).**

The ToT on sustainability data management focused on social, environmental as well as governmental aspects. This equipped 32 participants from business associations, private sector and training bodies as master trainers. These trainers will empower factories in the ready-made garment and leather sector to enhance their data management systems, facilitating effective sustainability data collection, ensuring data accuracy, measurement and management while adhering to relevant reporting standards.

In the ToT on grievance mechanism, 24 master trainers from BKMEA, BGMEA and worker organisations were trained on the topic of in-factory grievance mechanisms. The ToT was conducted in partnership with ILO Better Work Bangladesh. Moving ahead, the master trainers will deliver grievance mechanism trainings to both factory management and worker representatives across 120 ready-made garment factories in Bangladesh. The objective is to strengthen their in-factory grievance mechanism structures while including a gender-sensitive approach.



Participants of the ToT on Grievance Mechanisms



Opening panel during the conference

08. September 2023

## Conference on Effective Grievance Mechanisms

**The conference organised by IGS in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in September highlighted the potential of effective grievance mechanisms and their role in the protection of human rights.**

Bringing together more than 50 participants from trade unions, civil society organisations, institutions and business associations, the conference provided a platform to discuss key elements of transparent and effective grievance mechanisms.

Following the presentation of the study on formal and informal grievance mechanisms in Serbia, the panel discussion with trade unions and civil society explored ways to improve existing and to create new channels to voice concerns and raise issues about working conditions and treatment. The urgent need for increased cooperation and coordination between actors representing workers was frequently highlighted. Delta Holding and Lidl Serbia presented examples of good practices and offered advice and recommendations to participants on how to promote the establishment of workplace grievance mechanisms.

The conference created an open space for exchanging ideas on methods to improve worker protection and enabled further coordination of actors, especially in relation to upcoming Serbian Strategy for Business and Human Rights.

## Training of Carbon Experts

**In September, IGS trained local trainers on carbon management services for supplier companies in Serbia. The aim of the training is to build the capacity of local Serbian consultants to measure, report, verify and monitor greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at the corporate level.**

The programme was kicked off in late June with the conference “Decarbonizing Production in Serbia – a Case for Corporate Climate Action” in Belgrade. 70 interested participants joined from all sectors - development cooperation, local ministries, Serbian and international businesses as well as civil society. The conference featured best practices on decarbonisation efforts in Serbia and served as an important building block to collecting feedback on the future training on carbon management services. The conference was organised in cooperation with the Responsible Business Hub Serbia (RBH) and the German-Serbian Chamber of Commerce (AHK).

Following the event, a group of Serbian consultants was trained to effectively implement carbon management systems at supplying companies in Serbia. After the trainings, the consultants will advise their first clients on carbon management according to recognised methodologies and in line with the latest developments in climate science and the requirements of European legislation.



Group of selected consultants that was trained in carbon management services



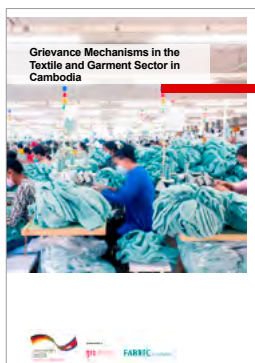
# Publication of sector studies



IGS recently published two studies analysing (1) the landscape of existing grievance mechanisms in the garment and footwear industry in Cambodia and (2) the status quo of the electronics sector in Cambodia, respectively. Both studies are distributed via the RBH in Cambodia.

Based on intensive desk research as well as qualitative interviews with a total of 93 individuals, the first study provides an overview of currently available grievance structures for garment and footwear workers in the kingdom and evaluates their capabilities for dispute resolution in the industry. It assesses both local mechanisms at the factory level as well as external mechanisms that require third-party intervention. The aim is to offer insights into the present state and effectiveness of the grievance mechanism ecosystem in the Cambodian garment and footwear industry, identify current challenges, and formulate recommendations to improve dispute resolution in the industry.

The study on the electrical and electronic equipment industry in Cambodia focuses on industry trends and sustainability aspects. It explores the current state of the industry, including key players, production processes, and market conditions, as well as emerging trends and challenges. Additionally, the report examines the sustainability aspects of the electronic sector, including its environmental and social aspects. The findings are largely derived from qualitative interviews with various Cambodian industry stakeholders.



## Download the studies

-  [Grievance Mechanisms in the Textile and Garment Sector in Cambodia](#)
-  [Sector Brief Cambodia: Electrical and Electronic Equipment Industry](#)

## Launch of the new TAFTAC member portal

IGS supported the update and improvement of the member portal of the Textile, Apparel, Footwear & Travel Goods Association Cambodia (TAFTAC) to improve the availability of relevant industry data.

To support TAFTAC in the collection and management of transparent and reliable industry data – including sustainability data points – IGS supported the employer association with the improvement of its online member portal. The new data and functionalities were launched jointly with the new TAFTAC website in June after several months of data collection and website development. Now, information such as general company data but also information on social and environmental practices and sustainability certificates can be explored on an interactive map for around 700 producers. IGS is continuing its support to TAFTAC to improve the portal, e.g. by further enhancing the user experience and including new functionalities on the website.

 [TAFTAC Member Portal](#)

# TAFTAC



# IGS on stage

## Webinar on Comparable and Transparent Data

In June, IGS jointly with its partners Social & Labor Convergence Project and Open Supply Hub, organised a webinar on the importance of comparable and transparent data for the implementation of HREDD.

In order to comply with existing and up-coming due diligence legislation, companies need to enhance the capacity to collect data on social and environmental risks from the entire value chain on an on-going basis. Reliable and comparable data are the basis for assessing risks, monitoring effectiveness of implemented measures and reporting on progress. Collecting the necessary information will not be possible without the right tools and most important of all: stakeholder collaboration.

In this webinar, the organisations shared best practice approaches of how industry commitment and collaboration lead to better availability of comparable data. First, the [Social & Labor Convergence Program](#) presented their approach to capture credible social and labor supply chain data while combatting audit fatigue. Secondly, [Open Supply Hub](#) demonstrated the power of opening up and standardising supply chain data to accelerate collaborative initiatives at facility, regional, or sectoral levels.

Webinar

7 JUNE 2023 | 11:00 – 12:00 CET

The First Step Toward Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence:  
Comparable and Transparent Data

→ Reliable and comparable supply chain data are the basis for implementing due diligence. We invite companies from all sectors to join this webinar, where you'll learn about best practice approaches for credible and transparent data.

**SPEAKERS**

Franziska Meckelhafer  
Responsible HR Lead  
Lindorff

Emily Monahan  
Social & Labor  
Convergence Project

Hannah Lenoir  
Open Supply Hub

IGS INITIATIVE FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY  
Implemented by GIZ GmbH

SOCIAL & LABOR CONVERGENCE

OPEN SUPPLY HUB

WEBINAR

21 September 2023, 10:00 – 11:30 am CET

Access to remedy:  
Integrating worker voices into  
grievance mechanisms

## Webinar on integrating worker voices into grievance mechanisms

IGS and the Social Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) hosted their third joint webinar on access to remedy in September.

Björn Claeson, Executive Director at Electronics Watch, shared his experience on engaging with relevant stakeholders representing worker voices and rightsholder in setting up grievance mechanisms and getting access to remedy.

[Access to remedy webinar](#)

One of the main goals of corporate responsibility is to respect worker rights and ensure decent work. However, the road to shift from a focus on company compliance and assurance towards a focus on worker-centric approaches to human rights due diligence is filled with obstacles. Thus, the potential that mandatory HREDD has to enhance the integration of worker voices in corporate due diligence strategies is of great significance – increased meaningful and transparent stakeholder engagement will help us bridge the gap.

Maria Mora, Technical Advisor at IGS

# Outlook

## October

- Series of webinar training on communicating due diligence in supply chains in Vietnam (from September to November)
- Series of energy and data management trainings (Q4 2023/Q1 2024) as well as HREDD trainings offered by RBH Cambodia (Q3-Q4/2023)
- ToT on HREDD for BGMEA and BKMEA RBH staff members (Q4 2023)
- Stakeholder consultation on BGMEA's Digital Data Disclosure Platform and launch of the platform (Q4 2023)
- Factory-based training on sustainability data management and in-factory grievance mechanism in Bangladesh (Q42023-Q1 2024)
- **October 16-19**, Attendance at the Annual Conference of the Responsible Business Alliance in Santa Clara, California
- **October 19**, 10-11 am CET: Online event on 'Implementing Responsible Purchasing Practices - Sharing progress and lessons learnt'.  
📧 [Click here to register](#)

## November

- **November 22**, 9.30-16.30: In-person workshop on 'Responsible contracting in global supply chains' at the GIZ office in Bonn. The workshop is free of charge and aimed at CSR and legal staff from European Brands.  
📧 Contact [Nicolina Hajdu](#) by 20. October for registration and further questions

## December

- **December 5**: Fourth session of the 'Access to Remedy' webinar series in collaboration with the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) board

## Published by

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On behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

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GLOBAL SOLIDARITY



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development