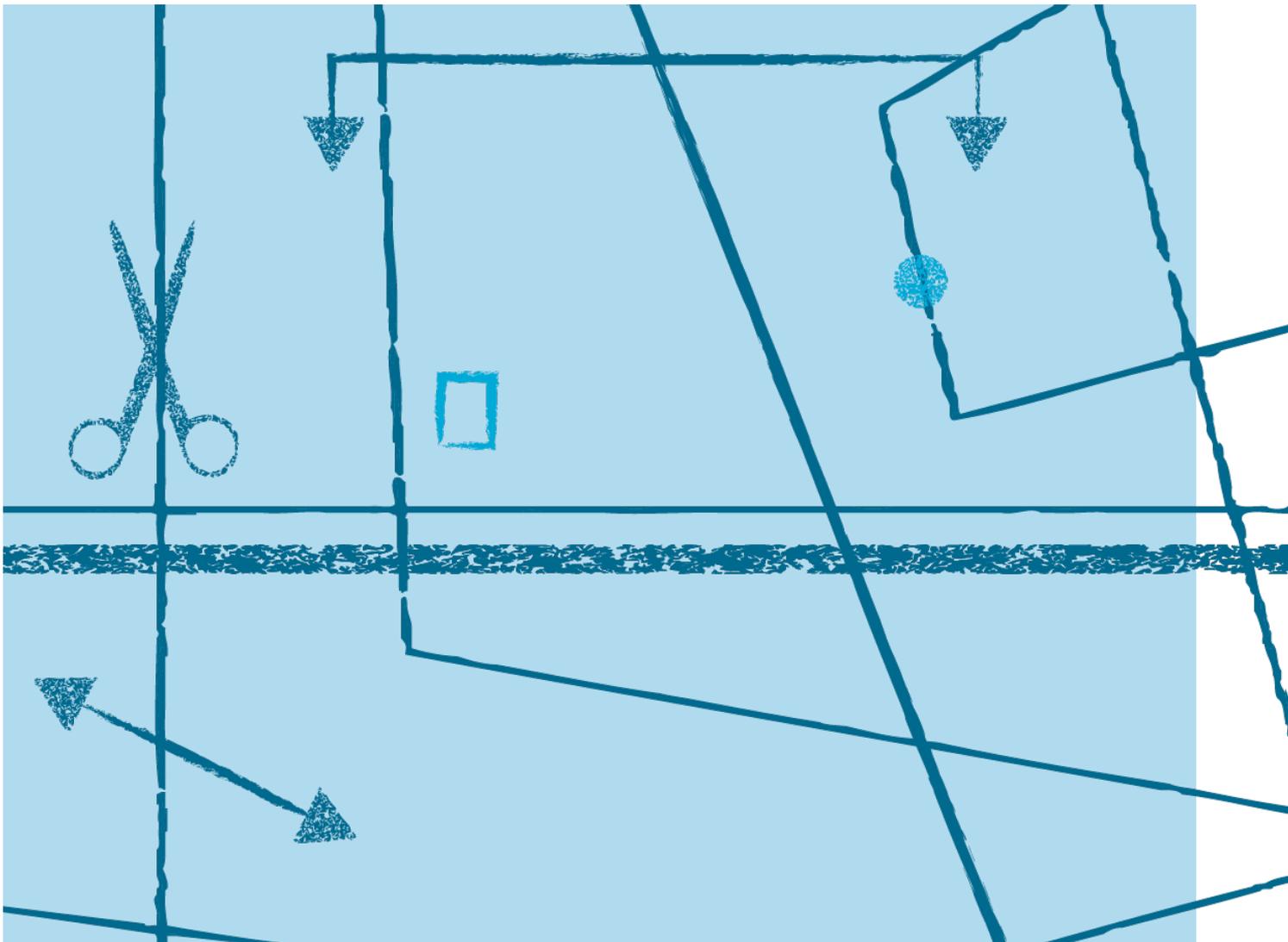


# We make things work.

Principles for developing  
and conducting  
Partnership Initiatives



# Imprint

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# Contents

Partnership for Sustainable Textiles.....	4
The Purpose of Partnership Initiatives.....	5
Five Steps to a Partnership Initiative.....	6
Criteria for Partnership Initiatives.....	8
Preliminary Modules for Partnership Initiatives.....	9
Modular Structure of Partnership Initiatives.....	10
Implementation Process.....	10
Evaluation Process.....	11
Financing.....	11
Help Desk at the Textiles Partnership Secretariat.....	11
Textiles Partnership Glossary.....	13



*Textiles Partnership members at a panel discussion at the Ethical Fashion Show in 2016 (now Neonyt).*

# Partnership for Sustainable Textiles

The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles brings together about 120 private companies and associations, non-governmental organisations (NGO), trade unions, and standards organisations as well as the German Federal Government. They founded the Partnership in 2014 to work together to achieve improvements along the global value chains in the textile industry. With this aim, they agreed upon social and environmental goals.

Every member is obliged to submit an increasingly ambitious individual plan of measures (called “roadmap”) every year and to implement improvements leading to increased sustainability. These improvements are evaluated by an external body. Additionally, Partnership members also realise joint Partnership Initiatives in developing countries aiming at improving the living and working conditions of workers in the textile sector and mitigating negative impacts on the environment.

*Left: Training is often a part of PI.*

*Right: PI have a direct impact on the local level.*



# The Purpose of Partnership Initiatives

Partnership Initiatives (PI) are measures that are implemented jointly by several members of the Partnership. They aim at making sustainable improvements to the general framework in producing countries. In this process, PI involve suppliers and local actors such as trade unions and non-governmental organisations. Partnership members and their international and local partners devise the initiatives, which must comply with a set of specific criteria<sup>1</sup>. The Steering Committee takes the final decision. PI offer members the chance to attain their individual goals by joining forces with other members, thus making progress on improving environmental and social standards. Examples include the initiatives to upgrade chemical and environmental management in China and Bangladesh, as well as to improve social standards in India.

The greatest benefit of PI is that stakeholders act jointly. By pooling their forces, making use of synergies, establishing stable partnerships and using the combined strengths of every single member, these initiatives can achieve more for people all the way along the supply chain than any member could achieve acting alone. They thus demonstrate, to internal and external audiences, the effectiveness of the Partnership.

<sup>1</sup> See page 8 for "Criteria for Partnership Initiatives".

# Five Steps to a Partnership Initiative

## Step 1 – Setting the topic

Based on the strategic direction of the Textiles Partnership and the interests of its members (including their individual roadmaps, results of member surveys and member-driven PI), the Steering Committee will decide on the thematic direction of PI. By adopting a topic to be addressed by the Partnership members and the Partnership Secretariat, the Steering Committee essentially approves the implementation of a corresponding PI.

## Step 2 – Developing the concept

Once a topic is identified, the Partnership Secretariat will develop a project plan, working closely with actors interested in the PI. This will include proposals for the composition of an Expert Group drawn from the members. This group translates the concept of the PI into more concrete terms.

If there is not already an existing Expert Group on this topic, qualified members for an Expert Group will be identified and appointed for every planned PI. The group will typically consist of three to five individuals; ideally, all relevant stakeholder groups will be included (German Federal Government, private sector, NGO, trade unions, standards organisations). The Expert Group receives its mandate from the Steering Committee<sup>2</sup>.

To coordinate and support efforts, the Partnership Secretariat will appoint a Coordinator from the Secretariat, who will be available to answer all questions related to the PI. It is the job of the PI-Coordinator to support the work of the Expert Group and the resultant PI, and to steer the work of the Secretariat (cost calculation, the creation of agreements, commercial duties, etc.).

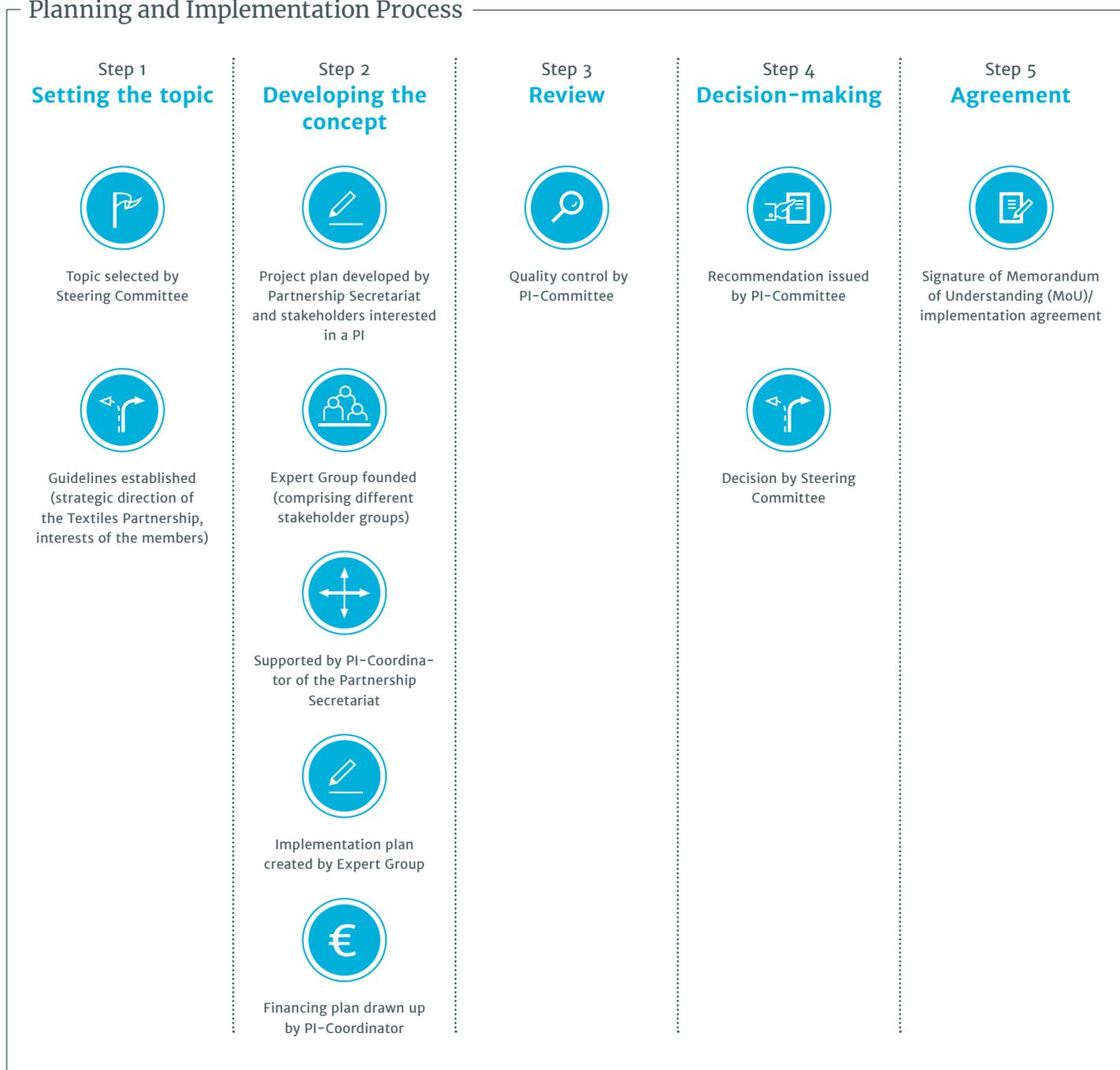
It is the duty of the Expert Group and the participatory members to further develop and shape the initiative. Members who are not involved in the PI have no say. On the basis of the project plan produced by the Partnership Secretariat, the Expert Group will draw up an implementation concept for the PI.

At the same time, the PI-Coordinator will draw up a financing concept in conjunction with the relevant Expert Group. To ensure that all those involved in the PI have a sound basis for planning, specifically defined contributions should be identified (financial or in-kind contributions). It should be laid out what a member must do in order to collaborate on the PI, illustrating the expected need for resources. Where financial pledges made by members are insufficient, the PI cannot be pursued.

Once the Expert Group has discussed the implementation and financing concept, the Partnership Secretariat will present the outcome to the PI-Committee.

<sup>2</sup> The mandate of the Expert Group will generally end when the PI begins (i.e. when the implementation agreement/Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is signed). It is then replaced by the "Advisory Committee" of the specific PI (see also page 10 "Implementation Process").

## Planning and Implementation Process



### Step 3 - Review

The outputs of the Expert Group will be submitted to the PI-Committee for quality control. The PI-Committee will review the proposal on the basis of the criteria laid down for PI<sup>3</sup> and can require corrections if necessary. It will then recommend the endorsement of the concept to the Steering Committee for implementation.

Especially during the start-up phase of PI, the PI-Committee can recommend implementing individual modules, or sub- or pilot measures. The committee must explain its decision to the members of the PI as well as to the Expert Group, in particular if a PI is rejected or changes are required.

<sup>3</sup> See page 8 for "Criteria for Partnership Initiatives".

## Step 4 – Decision-making

The Steering Committee decides to implement the PI on the basis of the project plan and the recommendation of the PI-Committee.

## Step 5 – Agreement

Even after the Steering Committee takes its decision, the PI can be joined by other members who were not involved previously. Any additional member will be welcome on board.

The final step is an ultimate commitment on the part of all participating members to provide specific inputs and/or financial contributions to the PI (this can be laid out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or in an implementation agreement).

The involved members can then begin to implement the PI, supported by the PI-Coordinator of the Partnership Secretariat.

# Criteria for Partnership Initiatives

## The Criteria

### Minimum criteria

#### Systemic potential

The PI accomplishes positive contributions to achieving the objectives of the Partnership. These include improved framework conditions, transparent communication and the ongoing development of Partnership standards.

#### Multi-stakeholder approach

A number of different stakeholders are involved and there is broad-based readiness for cooperation between several Partnership members/partners.

#### Minimising negative impacts

Taking a holistic and integrated view of the PI, any negative impacts should not outweigh the expected positive effects.

#### Sustainability

Local and – if appropriate – international partners are involved.

### Additional criteria

#### Type

- Generation of best practices
- Linkages to existing initiatives
- Promotion of innovative approaches

#### Alignment

- Global or regional focus
- Scalable
- PI along the value chain

(Steering Committee decision of 11 May 2016)



*In PI members have the opportunity to share their ideas.*

# Preliminary Modules for Partnership Initiatives

Preliminary modules are low-threshold projects that precede a PI. They serve for the preparation of the content, processes or structures as well as for the follow-up of the potential PI. Additionally, they provide for more flexible implementation and make it possible to achieve systemic relevance in gradual stages, which is an important criterion for PI.

**To be recognised, preliminary modules must meet the following standards:**

- The topic covered in the preliminary module must be in line with the focal topics laid down by the Steering Committee.
- The preliminary module must be suitable as a first step towards the planned PI. Therefore the following aspects have to be taken into account:
  - Development and/or testing of tools/methods/procedures to address issues relevant for the PI;
  - Initiation/development of structures/processes in the producer country that are needed for the implementation of the PI.
- The project must involve a minimum of three different stakeholder groups.
- The Textiles Partnership is obliged to document the planning, preparation, implementation, and results.
- All participating stakeholders should be willing to become involved in any follow-on PI, at the very minimum in the form of communicating lessons learned from the preliminary module, including relevant capacities and/or budgets. This also embraces the funds needed to prepare a PI.

# Modular Structure of Partnership Initiatives

PI can consist of one single comprehensive activity or can be modular in design. To achieve systemic relevance particularly in the long term, the modular design can be of advantage. For a modular PI, individual modules are defined during the development process. Modules are packages of measures that are clearly outlined and that can be implemented independently of one another, but at the same time have a closely related context.

The Expert Group and the PI-Committee ensure that the individual modules are conceptually dovetailed, thus ensuring an overall systemic impact. Basically, all members of the PI should be involved in all of the modules.

## Implementation Process

PI are usually planned for a period of two or three years and should then be continued by local partners in the countries concerned. There are three phases to each initiative:

1. Launch phase (e.g. staff recruitment, procurement of material and equipment, leasing premises, kick-off workshop<sup>4</sup>)
2. Implementation phase (planned activities are put into practice)
3. Concluding phase (evaluation, analysis, handover to local partners)

In its concept, every PI lays down a steering structure that regulates the roles and responsibilities of the individual stakeholders during the development and implementation phases. The Expert Group, which develops the concept of a PI during the planning phase, is replaced by an Advisory Committee at the start of a PI.

The Advisory Committee is the first point of contact for the initiative within the Partnership and is mainly responsible for monitoring and reporting. The initiative applicant and the other members involved elect representatives from their own ranks to form the Advisory Committee. There should be at least one representative of every stakeholder group involved in the initiative on the Advisory Committee. Other members directly involved in the initiative can also be part of the Advisory Committee. This applies in particular to members providing financial contributions, who are interested in having a say to ensure financial control.

The Advisory Committee is also responsible for informing the Steering Committee at six-monthly intervals on the implementation status, and is required to inform the Partnership Secretariat immediately of any major events posing a risk to the success of the initiative.

<sup>4</sup> If necessary a kick-off workshop can be held in the partner country during the launch phase. The workshop should aim at involving all stakeholders, especially local partners, and inform them about the initiative's activities. The plan of operations and the planned steering structure should also be reviewed and modified if necessary.

# Evaluation Process

Indicators for measuring the results of the PI are developed at the same time as the proposed concept for the initiative. With these indicators, it is then possible to measure the achievements of the initiative's objectives during the concluding phase. Best practices and lessons learned are collected and can be used for new PI concepts (e.g. by the Partnership Secretariat).

The PI should ideally end with a concluding workshop involving the key participating stakeholders and with the handover of the initiative to a local body. During the kick-off workshop, milestones for the different phases of the PI were set. The milestones can be used during the process to check whether the implementation is going according to the plan. The milestones thus provide an important basis for reporting.

# Financing

PI are jointly financed by the members involved, with the financing arrangements set out in the implementation agreement. The actual costs of involvement in a PI will vary depending on the initiative. The inputs provided by members can vary in form (financial or in-kind), and members with more financial resources can assume the costs of other members who are less well placed.

To give the members involved in a specific initiative the security to plan at an early stage, a financing plan is drawn up during the concept development phase. It lays out, in as much detail as possible, identifiable financial contributions and/or contributions in kind. The plan will specify what a member will have to do in order to collaborate and thus provide a good overview of the resources that are expected to be needed.

The overall costs for implementing a PI will be broken down at an early stage into packages worth a fixed sum, specifying human and financial resources. The budgets for individual activities will emerge from the assessments of the emerging costs and capacities needed. Inputs should ideally be of different magnitudes so that the varying resources available to PI members are taken into account. This allows every member to become involved (e.g. small, medium, large; different stakeholder groups; etc.).

# Help Desk at the Textiles Partnership Secretariat

The Textiles Partnership members can obtain information and support to the development of concepts and to the financing of PI from the Help Desk:

E mail@textilbuendnis.com

P +49 228 4460 3360

A section entitled "Partnership Initiatives" has been set up at the Membership Area. It provides an overview of all relevant information about PI and allows users to check on the current status of every initiative.



# Textiles Partnership Glossary

The glossary provides an explanation of the terms that have been specifically defined and agreed upon within the processes of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles. It should be seen as work in progress. New terms can be included and modifications can be made as required.

**Award of contracts to sub-contractors** The outsourcing of contracts or parts thereof to other production companies or individuals (including home-based work).

**Baseline** Members use the questionnaire adopted within the Textiles Partnership to identify procedures in place to ensure due diligence as part of the review process. The baseline is updated in every report to ensure it reflects the status quo.

**Binding objectives** Objectives set by the Textiles Partnership members within the roadmap as part of the review process that must be pursued.

**Brands/retailers** Textiles Partnership members that procure primary or finished products or production capacities are classified as “brands/retailers”. A Textiles Partnership member can be assigned to several groups of stakeholders.

**Business partners**<sup>5</sup> Companies/organisations that are not producers and maintain a direct contractual relationship with the Textiles Partnership member. Business partners in turn place orders with producers and/or other business partners. Examples: importers, agents.

**CIL – Chemical Inventory List** A chemical inventory includes the chemicals stored and used and is kept in textile processing companies. The CIL provides an overview of the properties of the chemicals that make them harmful to human health and the environment, as well as information on any chemical hazards.

**Companies (in the Textiles Partnership)** Members of the Textiles Partnership that engage in profit-making activities. Within the Textiles Partnership, companies are classified as brands/retailers and/or manufacturers.

**Comply or explain** In the progress report members explain whether or not they have attained the objectives laid out in their roadmap, i.e. if they have complied with the roadmap.

Any failure to comply must be explained. An acceptable explanation must include the degree of non-achievement of the objective, the factual reason for the failure to comply, and a presentation of efforts undertaken by the member to achieve the objective nevertheless.

**Deeper supply chain** All preliminary stages in the supply chain without a direct contractual relationship with Textiles Partnership members and sub-contractors. This comprises all stages in the supply chain that are not covered by producers or business partners.

**Due diligence** The concept of due diligence expects from companies to be aware of the potential risks and adverse impacts of their actions on people and the environment, as well as taking steps to minimise these impacts and to redress any adverse impacts that have already taken place. Due diligence is an ongoing, long-term and individual process for every company. Practical information on achieving due diligence, which the Textiles Partnership also takes as a guideline, is provided by the OECD Due Diligence Guidance.

**Field structure** Implementation structure in producer countries with tripartite partners (government, industry, civil society) for exchanging information and supporting PI.

**Freely set objectives** Objectives which Textiles Partnership members can select individually in their roadmap within the review process and which have a link to the question grid.

**Good housekeeping** A set of practical measures that a company can take in order to raise productivity, cut costs and reduce adverse impacts of production on the environment, human health and staff safety. It includes scaling back the use of toxic substances, saving energy and enhancing working conditions (e.g. occupational health and safety).

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<sup>5</sup> The terms “producer”, “business partner” and “deeper supply chain” specify the actors and relationships within supply chains more closely. This does not in any way relativise the overarching Textiles Partnership goal of working for and achieving improvements along the entire supply chain.

**Group of stakeholders** Institutions, organisations, and groups with which members of the Textiles Partnership are affiliated. Groups comprise the Textiles Partnership, brands/retail, manufacturers (deeper supply chain), the German Federal Government, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, standards organisations, associations, and initiatives.

**High risk countries or regions** Countries or regions in which there is a higher risk of negative impacts on the Textiles Partnership goals.

**Home textiles** Curtains, towels, table linen and bedclothes as well as upholstery fabrics. The Textiles Partnership continues to exclude floor coverings and awnings.

**Hot spots** Priorities are related to issues and challenges within the supply chain and countries/regions with respect to which Textiles Partnership members identify an urgent need for action.

**Independent third party** External organisation contracted to review members' roadmaps and progress reports.

**Initiatives** Formalised alliances of actors in the clothing sector that focus on key issues related to due diligence and sustainability. They develop appropriate solutions and introduce these within the sector. They include, for instance, the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety, BSCI, ETI, and FWF.

**Manufacturers** Textiles Partnership members that manufacture or process primary or finished products at their own production facilities are classed as "manufacturers". A Textiles Partnership member can be assigned to several groups of stakeholders.

**MRSL** The Manufactured Restricted Substances List lays out the chemicals that may not be used in the manufacturing of products or where restrictions apply.

**Objectives requirements** Steering Committee resolutions on binding and recommended objectives set and pursued by Textiles Partnership members in their roadmap as part of the review process.

**OECD Due Diligence Guidance** The OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct in the Garment and Footwear Sector provides practical guidance for realising due diligence in the garment and footwear sector and serves as the basis for requirements that are part of the review process.

**Partnership goal (overarching objective)** The overarching objective of the Textiles Partnership is to demonstrably improve social, economic and environmental conditions along the entire supply chain in the textile and clothing sector. The German Federal Government, the textile and clothing industry, the retail sector, trade unions, and civil society are pooling their expertise and joining forces to this end.

**Partnership goals (specific objectives)** The specific Textiles Partnership goals relate to defined social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainability and provide for the identification of specific measures to pursue these objectives<sup>6</sup>.

**Plausibility check** The roadmaps of all members are always checked for plausibility. This includes checking that qualitative objective requirements are met and ascertaining whether the objectives actually represent progress in comparison to the status quo.

**Producer** Directly contracted production facilities that manufacture end products or textile raw materials and maintain a direct contractual relationship with the Textiles Partnership member<sup>7</sup>.

**Progress report** Report to be submitted by all members laying out the achievement of objectives or failure to achieve the objectives laid out in the roadmap. Reports must follow the comply or explain principle and will be published on the Textiles Partnership website.

**Recommended objectives** Voluntary objectives that should nevertheless be pursued by Textiles Partnership members within the framework of the review process and included in the roadmap.

**Review process** The review process sets the framework for the ongoing measurement of the progress made by Textiles Partnership members and by the Textiles Partnership as a whole.

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<sup>6</sup> Specific Textiles Partnership goals include "preventing/abolishing child labour" and "increasing the use of natural fibres".

<sup>7</sup> Producers can be prioritised within the scope of application of the implementation requirements based on their individual risk mapping, if Textiles Partnership classifies the member as being essential for achieving the Textiles Partnership goals.

**Risk mapping** A risk analysis is the first step in due diligence and a precondition for this. Companies must be aware of the social and environmental risks and impacts of their actions before they can take countermeasures to mitigate or prevent these risks and to redress any adverse impacts. Risks can be analysed either along the raw materials or product supply chain or with respect to potential and existing business partners, producers or the deeper supply chain. To identify all risks, the greatest possible transparency is required regarding a company's own supply chain.

Since 2018 brand-name companies and retailers (see brands/retailers), manufacturers and the German Federal Government are required, within the scope of the review process, to identify and prioritise the social and environmental risks of their own business.

**Roadmap (individual roadmap)** All Textiles Partnership members draw up an individual roadmap setting out their objectives:

- The roadmap is based on their baseline and any additional criteria; implementation is measured and assessed annually.
- Objectives must comply with the objective requirements of the Textiles Partnership. Members undertake measures to pursue these objectives and must present evidence of how these have been attained in line with the principle of comply or explain.

**RSL** The Restricted Substances List lays out chemicals that may not be part of the final product or where restrictions apply.

**Standards system** The totality of all units and activities responsible for implementing standards, including processes like setting standards, checking conformity, labelling, monitoring and capacity development.

**Technical textiles** Textile products that have special functional properties for use in commercial/industrial processes (e.g. abrasive materials) or for special applications (e.g. airbags or filter materials). For the time being, they are excluded from examination by the Textiles Partnership.

**TexPerT** TexPerT is a web-based application used to record the baseline, set the individual objectives laid out in the roadmap and report on the achievement or failure to achieve objectives in the progress report.

**Tool** Instruments that help Textiles Partnership members to pursue the Textiles Partnership goals and implement its requirements. These tools enhance the ability of members to act alone and/or with others. In contrast to the Textiles Partnership or individual initiatives, they are only indirectly geared to achieving improvements in producer countries.



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