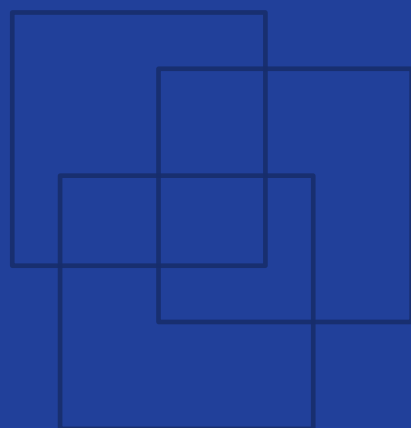




International
Labour
Organization

Implementation guide

For partners delivering FIT services



Copyright © International Labour Organization 2020

First published 2020

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Licensing), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: rights@ilo.org. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with a reproduction rights organization may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit www.ifro.org to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

ISBN: 9789220319802 (web pdf)

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

Information on ILO publications and digital products can be found at: www.ilo.org/publns

Author: Sara Andersson

Photos: © ILO

Printed in Thailand

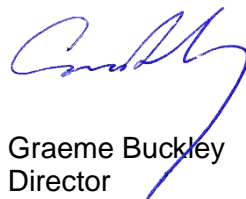
Foreword

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has long supported the garment sector, promoting productivity, employment and decent work; key elements for realising a fair globalization and poverty reduction. The garment sector has during these decades contributed significantly to the economic and social development across Asia, by connecting countries in the region to international markets and global supply chains. As the world's number one garment exporting region, Asia today exports garment, textile, and footwear (GTF) to a value of US\$ 668 billion annually.

The economic and social footprint of the garment sector in Asia is significant but the sector still faces a number of serious decent work deficits and, in many contexts, continues to struggle with low productivity levels. In order to ensure decent working conditions for women and men workers in the sector, further efforts are required to address the underlying causes of these problems. This includes addressing the sector's low productivity as well as cultivating ongoing efforts to improve labour and environmental practices.

This guide is intended as a practical tool to support the use of the Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT). The International Labour Organization (ILO) developed FIT to contribute to the creation of more decent and sustainable employment in the garment sector. FIT is a set of tools devoted to guide garment manufacturers through their own factory improvement process, focusing on the different departments in the production processes within the factory and the systems that support production.

The toolset is a valuable addition and potential complement to a variety of ongoing interventions by the ILO and other actors to support the more than 43 million workers, the majority of whom are women, employed in the Asian garment sector. Specifically aimed at supporting those producers operating in the lower tiers of global supply chains, FIT will support the garment facilities which often experience the poorest working conditions and lowest productivity levels. Promoted across the region by the ILO and partners, FIT will be utilized by key industry actors to improve competitiveness of these factories by upgrading production systems and factory processes, while also improving working conditions.



Graeme Buckley
Director

Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific and Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic

About this guide

This guide is intended for organizations such as garment manufacturing associations, national training centres and international buyers that intend to become FIT service providers and offer the Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT) to garment factories in order to assist these factories in instituting the continuous and broad-based improvement of operations. As a FIT service provider, you will have a key role in ensuring the success of the delivery of FIT services. You will be managing a number of activities, including the facilitation of FIT sessions and the monitoring of results.

This guide will provide the necessary information for an organization to successfully set up and run FIT sessions with factories. You will find useful information about the FIT programme, service model, available FIT tools, and other materials. With the assistance of this implementation guide, your organization will be able to build a delivery model over time that can help factories:

- Increase productivity in different production departments
- Improve working conditions and worker welfare
- Improve environmental practices
- Reduce costs and increase profitability

Table of Contents

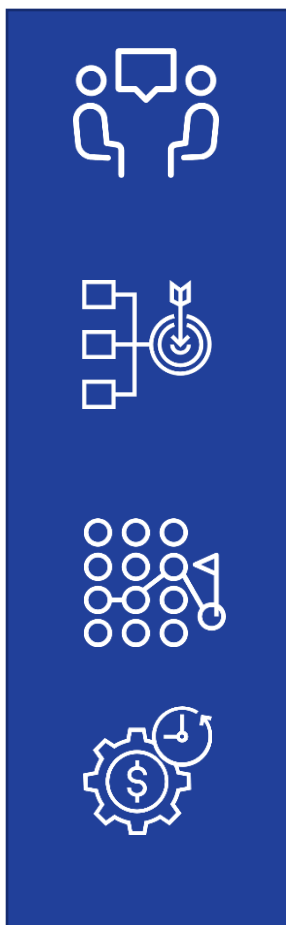
Foreword.....	III
About this guide.....	IV
The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT).....	1
7 steps to get started with FIT.....	5
Learn FIT: Familiarize yourself with FIT.....	6
Adapt FIT: Selecting a FIT delivery model.....	7
Market FIT: Promoting your services	11
Customize FIT: Select and adjust modules	13
Plan for FIT: Getting the logistics ready	14
Execute FIT: Driving action	17
Monitor your FIT programmes	18
Frequently asked questions (FAQs).....	21

The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT)

The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT) is a self-facilitated, activity-based programme designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to create more decent and sustainable employment in the garment sector. FIT supports manufacturers in global supply chains to improve productivity, competitiveness and working conditions by upgrading production systems and factory practices. Targeting underserved garment factories, typically subcontractors or those beyond the first tier, the toolset was designed to be a sustainable, scalable solution for factory development.

FIT can be used as a stand-alone toolset or to complement other development or training approaches. While working in small groups, FIT participants review real-life situations and engage in discussions to determine improvements to be made in their factory without an external trainer or specialist. With each module lasting no more than 2.5 hours, FIT enables factories to consider specific areas for improvement of their operations, whilst minimizing interference with production realities. The easy-to-use methodology makes it possible to rapidly scale the implementation to reach a large cohort of trainees across multiple production facilities.

FIT key features



Activity-based and participant driven: Participants are divided into small groups of 5–7 and work together on lesson content and active exercises, without any trainer. Participants share the role of reading instructions, and decisions are taken together by everyone within the group. This allows them to gain confidence, and to learn from others' experiences and perspectives.

Practical and output-based: Participants apply best practices and concepts directly by discussing their own factory setting, identifying areas of improvement and what changes to potentially be made. At the end of each session, participants have to formulate an action plan that can drive the factory improvement process.

Flexible delivery model: FIT sessions can be delivered as a one-off activity or combined into a customized factory programme. Service providers and factories can choose appropriate modules from a wide suite of tools. The highly participatory methodology ensures that the difficulty level is automatically adjusted in group discussions.

Time- and cost-efficient: Short modules, lasting no more than 2.5 hours, enables factories to run FIT sessions without interfering with production realities. Since sessions are organized without a trainer, the cost of running a session can be kept low, mostly comprising of personnel time and printing costs if delivered in-factory.

Overview: Three phases of a FIT intervention cycle

FIT has a flexible service model that can be easily adapted to be compatible with a variety of local contexts, different capacities of implementing organizations, and to the specific needs of benefitting factories. Building on three pillars of continuous improvement; 1) Needs analysis; 2) Implementation; and 3) Evaluation, the FIT service model aims to encourage and drive continuous improvement among participating factories. This cycle of continued improvement allows factories to recognize gaps in their production processes and use the tools provided to upgrade factory practices and ensure results.

1. Needs analysis

The first phase of deploying the FIT toolset includes assessing the needs of your target factories. The FIT Needs Assessment Tool is an online tool that can be used (at no charge) to determine which tools would be appropriate for your FIT improvement programme according to the needs of the factories you are supporting. This enables you as a service provider to easily customize individual programmes for factories without investing a lot of resources. If you prefer to use another assessment methodology or auditing tool, this works too.

2. Implementation

The second phase focuses on guiding factory managers and workers to determine actions to be taken by the factory by running FIT sessions and engaging in a factory improvement process. As FIT is designed to be flexible, this step can vary extensively. In the coming section, 'Selecting the right FIT delivery model', we will introduce four different FIT delivery models. These models are presented to guide you in your decision on how to deliver FIT to support factories.

As a service provider, you will also facilitate FIT sessions as part of this pillar. To support you in this endeavour, the ILO has developed a FIT facilitator manual that is complementary to this Implementation guide.

3. Evaluation

The performance monitoring of participating factories is a critical pillar for ensuring a process of continuous improvement. For this purpose, the ILO has developed a framework to guide this process as well as several different FIT monitoring tools that are available to you as a service provider.

More guidance related to this process is available in 'Monitor your FIT intervention' in this guide as well as the FIT Monitoring guide.

FIT guidance materials

The ILO continues to develop support materials to assist you and other service providers using FIT. Currently, the following guidance materials are available:

- FIT Implementation guide: Provides information necessary for an organization to successfully set up and run a FIT programme to support factories.
- FIT Facilitator manual: Supports facilitators that will be involved in the planning and delivery of FIT sessions.
- FIT Monitoring guide: Provides information about the FIT monitoring framework and how to use it.
- FIT Tools catalogue 2019/20: Presents the full list of tools available.

Other FIT materials

- Certificate of completion: The ILO has designed a standard template that can be prepared in advance of the FIT sessions for distribution at the end. It is possible to include the logo of your organization on this template.
- Promotional and marketing materials: The ILO can provide you with marketing materials to help promote the FIT sessions you will organize. The material can be posted in social media, newsletters, and emails, or in other places where you want to advertise.



7 steps to get started with FIT

FIT is designed to be user-friendly so that organizations can easily support use of the toolset by garment factories to improve their operations. The following steps outline the key actions you should take as a service provider in order to successfully deliver FIT to garment factories. The remaining sections in this guide are structured according to these steps to help you better navigate the process.

1. Learn FIT: Familiarize yourself with the FIT materials

As a first step, carefully read the FIT modules and available support materials to become more familiar with the toolset and related activities. Test the modules with a group of colleagues or friends. This will help you better design and plan your own programme using FIT.

2. Adapt FIT: Decide what FIT delivery model suits you

FIT sessions can be delivered in a variety of ways and it is important that you use the toolset in a manner that suits your organization. Consider things such as available time and resources. Use this section to help you decide what FIT delivery model is suited for you.

3. Market FIT: Inform garment factories about your FIT services

Once you have decided on your delivery model, you should inform garment factories of your available services. If you would like to offer it to factories on a commercial basis, think about how to promote your services to potential clients in an appealing manner and price them appropriately.

4. Customize FIT: Decide topics for your FIT sessions

Have factories expressed interest in joining a FIT session? If so, the next step is to agree on the subject matter (or FIT modules to be used) for your session(s). Maybe some factories already know what processes and sections of their factory need improvement. For those factories that do not know, you can recommend the FIT Needs Assessment Tool, which is available online at no cost.

5. Plan for FIT: Set a date, time and venue for the FIT session

Choose a time and place that is conducive to using FIT and minimizes disruption to the production realities of your factories. This will be more or less easy depending on whether you are planning to run a session with one single factory versus multiple factories. This step also requires you to prepare the factory for the FIT improvement process.

6. Execute FIT: Facilitate the FIT session

At the start of the session, be sure to welcome participants warmly, introduce the session and register participation. During the FIT session, you should ensure that groups collaborate and discuss with each other and provide support if needed. For guidance on how to facilitate a FIT session, see the FIT facilitation manual.

7. Monitor your FIT intervention: Evaluate your performance and repeat!

Congratulations on completing your first FIT session! Immediately after completing the session, take some time to think about what you did well and what can be improved next time. Make any necessary adjustments and start planning for your next FIT session.

Learn FIT: Become a FIT pro

Becoming familiar with the FIT modules, available support materials and prototyping the continuous improvement of processes is the first step towards your FIT journey. This step requires that you get more comfortable with the content and action-mobilizing methods embedded in the FIT modules.

The FIT suite consists of a wide range of modules, divided into three categories; production, support systems, and working conditions tools. A full list of available tools can be viewed in the FIT tools catalogue for 2019/2020.

The FIT tools take up to 2.5 hours to complete and always follow the same structure. The module starts with a case study. The case study introduces the session topic and get participants started with the discussion. In section two, Learning about the topic, participants will complete a number of practical activities to help them better understand the topic and apply new knowledge to their own area of work. Lastly, participants reflect on the results of their discussions and complete an action plan, writing down concrete ways to improve the factory's work by applying learned takeaways from the sessions. The action plan is critical for factories that wants FIT to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and consider it a part of their factory improvement process.



Adapt FIT: Selecting a delivery model

FIT is designed to be a flexible toolset and can be used by multiple organizations such as garment sector associations, training centres, consultants or international buyers. The toolset can be used strategically by service providers of varying capacity levels in a manner that meets the different improvement needs of garment factories.

This section will introduce your role in the implementation of FIT and provide four FIT delivery models or approaches to delivering the FIT toolset to garment factories.

Key actors and your role as a FIT programme service provider

There are three different actors involved in the delivery model for FIT: The ILO, FIT service providers, and the garment factories.

- **The International Labour Organization (ILO):** The ILO is the exclusive owner of all proprietary items and intellectual property rights for FIT. The ILO shares materials with partners under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#). The ILO will continuously develop and distribute new modules informed by market research and requests from partners. Additionally, the ILO will organize technical seminars, national workshops, and programme orientations with the purpose of strengthening partner's capacity to sustainably deploy the toolset.
- **The FIT service provider:** The FIT service provider is an organization like yours, that directly delivers FIT sessions to garment factories. Typically, a direct relationship exists between FIT service providers and the ILO. The key responsibilities of a service provider include conducting FIT sessions and the administrative and logistical arrangements for the FIT programme in supported factories.
- **The garment factory:** The garment factory is obviously key in the FIT factory improvement process. For a FIT factory improvement process to be successful, senior management support is critical as well as factory ownership of the process.

Factories participating in FIT programmes have to appoint a FIT factory coordinator to be responsible for driving the FIT improvement process in the factory. As the FIT service provider, it is your responsibility to make sure this person is appointed in every factory that you work with, and that the FIT coordinator knows his/her responsibilities (more information about this is available in the Plan for FIT section).

Available FIT delivery models

In the following two pages we will introduce four different models for how you can run FIT sessions with factories. While these are not the only service models available, they may provide some inspiration for designing a delivery model that best suits your organization. The ILO recommends FIT service providers to deliver FIT as an extended factory improvement programme, in which 5-6 modules are included initially to ensure factories optimally leverage the process.



1. The FIT in-factory model

The In-factory model is an intervention where you run sessions for factories in their own premises. When organizing a new session, you, together with a FIT coordinator from the factory, will determine which workers will join the session and form groups.

The In-factory model is beneficial for several reasons. For example:

- Less interference with production deadlines. Factory owners or managers might be more inclined to have their staff participate in sessions if the staff spend less time away from production processes.
- Adoptable to factory needs. You can customize programmes for individual factories, ensuring that it addresses their particular needs. The FIT sessions will in turn focus solely on one factory context in contrast to sessions with multiple factories. Research demonstrates that in-factory support results in better learning outcomes.
- Keeps costs down. With this model you do not need to consider spending on extra costs, e.g. renting an external venue.

The disadvantages of this model is that you will need to spend more time on transportation as you will have to travel to various factory locations. Thus, it might also be more difficult to scale. In addition, work premises may not provide safe and open spaces for conducting modules on some more sensitive topics, where especially women, people with disabilities, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) workers feel secure to voice concerns.



2. The FIT classroom model

The second model introduced in this guide is the Classroom model. This model is different from the previous model as FIT sessions are delivered in an external venue. This would preferably be a venue that you have access to free-of-charge, to ensure that costs are kept low. The model is advantageous as it:

- Facilitates knowledge exchange and experiences across factories. With this model, it is possible for you to organize activities for multiple factories simultaneously which enables them to share knowledge and experiences amongst each other and build networks.
- Controlled intervention. With this model your organization is less dependent on others when organizing FIT sessions (e.g. the FIT factory coordinator), making it easier for you to manage administration and logistics.
- Raise awareness of other services. If you offer FIT in your own venue, running FIT sessions on a regular basis is one way to attract new members or participants that maybe would have been difficult to access otherwise.

The disadvantages of this model is that factories might be less inclined to send the factory improvement teams to sessions as logistical and operational costs are typically higher. Further, workers that previously have not had access to support might not feel comfortable to join this more formal setting.



3. The blended model

The third model is a combination of the first two. In this model, FIT sessions are delivered in an external venue as well as in-factory in a two-step intervention, in order to rapidly scale the programme. For this to succeed, you need to collaborate and join forces with representatives from multiple factories simultaneously.

As a first step, you run a FIT classroom session with multiple factories. Thereafter, in step 2, each participant(s) goes back to their own factory and run the same session with factory staff. Thanks to the easy-to-use methodology, you will not be needed in the in-factory session as participants have received support and are familiar with the module thanks to the classroom session that you facilitated in step 1. Representatives become FIT facilitators and assist you with the delivery of the programme!

Advantages of the FIT blended model include:

- Reach maximum scale. This is a combined approach for maximum scalability and for cascading across multiple factories to reach a larger group.
- Ownership of factories. By involving representatives from factories in this delivery model, you will make sure that the factories themselves feel ownership of the change process and clearly sees the benefits and value-add.
- Less resources required. By making use of factory staff to facilitate sessions in-factory, your organization can contribute to more impact while spending less time and resources on each supported factory.

Disadvantages related to this model is that you need to rely on external support to ensure the success of your intervention. If you do not have a factory that is fully committed to the programme, your arms-length relationship will make it difficult to address any shortfalls of the intervention and quality control of the delivery of the FIT sessions will be more difficult to assess.



4. The FIT laissez-faire model

The last module is well-suited for organizations that would like to contribute to garment factories enhanced productivity and working conditions but that have limited time and capacity to do so. The model means that organizations simply share widely – via websites, emails or partners – FIT materials so that factories can access such and potentially run sessions without external involvement. The laissez-faire model is beneficial for several reasons:

- Requires little or no resources. Sharing information about FIT or distributing the materials to various organizations costs very little.
- Increased knowledge and awareness. The model contributes to factories having access to relevant open source materials that are free for them to use at any point in time to improve factory practices and processes.

The disadvantage of this model is that the ILO and the FIT service provider can do very little to ensure that materials are actually used by garment factories, that often do not have the motivation or capacity to self-initiate the improvement process needed to fully benefit from FIT.



Market FIT: Promoting your services

As a FIT service provider, you might offer FIT sessions to garment factories on a commercial basis. In order to successfully build a strong customer base, it is important that you develop a plan for how to market and promote your services. This includes considering for example who your customers are, suitable marketing channels, and what pricing model should you make use of.

To support you, the ILO has developed the FIT promotional toolkit which includes a number of communication products that can help you in your marketing. This material can be posted through social media, newsletters, and emails, or in other mediums where you want to advertise.

Who is your customer?

The FIT programme has been specifically designed by the ILO to target underserved garment factories, which have previously not had the opportunity or financial capacity to benefit from costly external support on factory upgrading.

As a FIT service provider, you will have the chance to offer a new group of factories a service that could be very valuable to them. In order to convince them that is the case, try to think about the following questions and use this information to shape key messages in your marketing:

- Who is your target factory?
- Why would they want to participate in a FIT programme or session?
- How much would they be willing to pay to participate?

What marketing channels should I use?

Your organization probably have several different marketing channels available to you to promote FIT to garment factories. These include for example:

- Social media campaigns
- Advertising in local or industry magazines, radio, television or on websites
- Networking events, for example if you are a business membership organization you can offer the services directly to your members
- Participating in business conferences and fairs to promote FIT

Remember, as with most products, satisfied customers are more likely to return and to tell other people about their experiences. Treat your existing clients well and encourage them to share information about FIT with word-of-mouth recommendations.

The FIT promotional toolkit

As a FIT service provider, you have access to a FIT promotional toolkit through the ILO. The ILO will continuously develop new communications products, such as case studies. We also encourage you to develop your own communications material as a complement to these products.

The FIT promotional toolkit includes a number of communications products that can be customized to your local context and distributed during events, as well as used in social media. Your organization's logo can be made visible on all materials. More specifically, the toolkit includes:

- FIT fact sheet
- FIT banner
- FIT PowerPoint
- FIT posters

Please contact the ILO FIT focal points to learn more about other potential products that may be available.



Pricing FIT services

When deciding the price for garment factories to participate in one of your FIT sessions, you should consider a few factors.

First, calculate how much it will cost you to organize a FIT session. Typical costs for organizing a FIT session might be:

- Staff costs (for the person facilitating the session)
- Printing costs (one copy of the FIT tool for each participant)
- Stationary costs (if you provide for example pens, paper, markers)
- Marketing costs (if you for example decide to advertise in a local newspaper)
- Venue costs (preferably, this is very low or free of charge for you to be able to offer FIT at a low price)

You also need to find out the market rate for factory improvement services, if there are such. The FIT customer base is previously underserved factories that most likely cannot afford the typical market price in your country. You must set a price that is high enough for you to cover costs and make a profit, and low enough for factories to be willing to attend and able to pay the price.

There could also be other ways for you to generate a profit from providing FIT sessions to garment factories and develop a sustainable business model. Perhaps you could collaborate with an international buyer that sponsors factory improvement support for suppliers? If you are a business membership organization, you could offer FIT services as part of the membership offer in order to expand your membership base. Try to be creative and think about other ways that would make FIT an affordable option for garment factories while at the same time a commercial service offered by your organization.

Customize FIT: Select and adjust your modules

As a FIT service provider, you can customize a factory improvement programme by selecting from a broad range of modules. You also have the ability to adjust modules further to make them even more relevant to the local context or factories targeted. In this section, you will learn more about ways to customize your FIT services.

Select your FIT modules

Selecting the right FIT module is important to ensure that the services you are offering target key areas of improvement for factories. Every organization is different. For example, some factories may want to focus on improving production techniques, while others, perhaps driven by buyer compliance demands, may want to provide further opportunities for enhancing working conditions.

The FIT Needs Assessment Tool is an online tool that can be used (at no charge) to determine which tools would be appropriate according to the needs of your specific factory or clients. This enables you as a service provider to easily customize individual programmes for factories without investing a lot of resources. If you prefer to use another assessment or audit tool, that is fine too.

To complete the FIT Needs Assessment Tool, the FIT factory coordinator is asked to go online and respond Yes/No to a broader set of statements related to their factory practices. It is important that the FIT factory coordinator answer the questions as accurately as possible when completing the survey, and should therefore complete this jointly with the factory manager, to ensure that inadequate processes and practices can be identified. As a FIT service provider, you might also be able to assist with this assessment.

The ILO recommends factories to select between 5-6 modules if they are participating in an extended factory improvement process (rather than participating in single FIT sessions).

Adjust your FIT modules

The FIT modules are available online in different languages. As a service provider, you can download the modules as PDF versions or as a Word document. The Word documents are available if you would like to further modify materials to make it more suited to their target group. Changes may include:

- Changes to the case study to highlight problems common for targeted factories
- Change to local names in the case study
- Adjust translation to ensure that it uses correct terminology
- Add additional guidance in specific sections.

Since the FIT modules are available under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), FIT service providers have the permission to do all of these changes to the materials.

Plan for FIT: Logistics and adapting FIT to your audience

There are several things to consider when planning the delivery of your FIT services. As a FIT service provider, it is your responsibility to make sure that the factory is ready to start the factory improvement process. This step also includes logistical arrangements and making sure that your programme is set-up in order to accommodate the needs of participating factories. Lastly, you should also ensure that your services are planned to be inclusive and available to both women and men workers in the factory.

Preparing the factory

Preparing the factory for the FIT improvement process is highly important. Supporting factories with the set up for FIT entails guiding them through five different steps:

1. **Understand FIT:** Make sure factories have a good understanding of how FIT works before starting the factory improvement process.
2. **Select the FIT team:** Ensure that factories have appointed a FIT coordinator and involved the factory improvement team before you begin running FIT sessions.
3. **Identify FIT needs:** Provide support to factories to ensure they select the FIT modules corresponding to their needs (see the 'Customize FIT' section for more information).
4. **Run FIT sessions:** Facilitate FIT sessions with factories (see the 'Execute FIT' section for more information or read the FIT facilitation manual).
5. **Track FIT results:** Make sure that factories capture results of the FIT improvement process by monitoring performance before, during and after you have completed the FIT programme (see the 'Monitoring FIT' section for more information or read the FIT Monitoring guide).

Making sure that factories understand how FIT works is your responsibility as a FIT service provider. It is important that you share sufficient information with factories ahead of the factory improvement process. The ILO has developed different materials to assist you, such as the FIT module 'Setting up your factory for FIT', which you can run with factories or ask them to complete on their own before you begin facilitating more technical modules. There is also a FIT fact sheet and animated videos that you can forward to factories to help them better understand the toolset and how it can help their factory improve over time.

As a FIT service provider, you will not be able to ensure great results after completing the FIT factory improvement process unless you have someone coordinating the process internally in the factory. This person is responsible for all communication with you as a service provider, setting up the logistics but also for following up with the departments involved in the factory improvement process to ensure that they implement new practices. The FIT factory coordinator should preferably create a factory improvement team, which includes managers / supervisors as well as workers from the departments involved in the factory improvement process. The team should meet regularly to track results and support the factory coordinator in driving action.

FIT guidance materials

As a reminder, the following materials are available to help you plan your FIT programme:

- FIT Implementation guide: Provides information necessary for an organization to successfully set up and run a FIT programme to support factories.
- FIT Facilitator manual: Supports facilitators that will be involved in the planning and delivery of FIT sessions.
- FIT Monitoring guide: Provides information about the FIT monitoring framework and how to use it.
- FIT Tools catalogue 2019/20: Presents the full list of tools available.
- FIT promotional and marketing materials: The ILO can provide you with marketing materials to help promote the FIT sessions you will organize. The material can be posted in social media, newsletters, and emails, or in other places where you want to advertise.

Venue & equipment

The FIT programme has been designed so that sessions can be conducted in any venue that can comfortably accommodate participants working in small groups of between 5–7 individuals over a 2-3 hour period. Venues should be safe and allow groups to work in small circles. Safe spaces should also include spaces where workers, especially women, do not fear judgment or retribution for expressing grievances, concerns, or criticisms against workplace policies and practices. Try to find a venue closer to factories if you do not deliver in-factory sessions, as this will make participants more willing to attend.

In line with the key principle of maintaining a service that is low-cost and accessible, the ILO encourages service providers to use venues available at a low-cost, such as factories themselves or if you have your own venue.

As a service provider, it is your responsibility to print one copy of the FIT tool for each participant ahead of the session. Participants also need pens to take notes. In addition, participants could benefit from having access to A4 note paper and markers, however they are by no means necessary.

Gender and inclusion

It is important to note that women constitute more than half of the garment sector workforce in Asia. For this reason, you can expect that many participants in your FIT sessions will be women workers. If this is not the case, you should talk to the factory and suggest that female workers are invited to participate in the session too (if it turns out that they are excluded from the FIT sessions).

To make your FIT sessions more effective, try to consider the needs and issues of women, including young and elderly women, single mothers, and women with disabilities. Additionally, you may also consider to be sensitive to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people.

For women workers for instance, family responsibilities such as picking children up from school or dropping them off may affect women's willingness to participate if the FIT session is organized too

early or late in the day. Some perceptions related to gender, such as those around women and girls' roles in the household, may prevent them from learning new things, and may also deter women from participating in FIT sessions. In both these cases, try to organize the sessions during hours when women can participate, and ensure that you communicate clearly to both factory managers and workers what the FIT sessions are for and how this benefits their work processes and personal development.

By adapting your FIT sessions to the particular needs and issues of women, people with disabilities and LGBTI managers and workers, you will be better able to respond to these needs and encourage discussion on how to better improve workplace practices and policies. This will also make managers and workers more receptive to your sessions and help you achieve more positive results including strong commitment to implement actions agreed upon and takeaways throughout the FIT sessions.

Tips to plan for a more inclusive FIT session:

- Consult with colleagues and/or friends how you can make your FIT sessions more inclusive and responsive to the needs of women, people with disabilities, and LGBTI staff;
- Organize FIT sessions during hours when women can participate;
- Organize FIT sessions in venues in-factory or with convenient locations near factories;
- Try to use venues that are accessible to participants, especially people with disabilities who may need wheelchair ramps and accessible toilet facilities;
- Encourage factory coordinators to include a diverse group of participants including women, men, people with disabilities, and LGBTI managers and workers in FIT sessions;
- Communicate clearly with factory coordinators, managers, and workers on how the FIT sessions can benefit work processes and the personal development of participants;
- Try to incorporate gender and inclusion in FIT sessions, including by preparing additional, relevant guiding questions;
- Try to make sure that factory coordinators and participants understand why it is important to talk about gender and inclusion as part of improving workplace practices and policies;
- Inform managers and workers that the FIT sessions provide a safe space to voice out concerns regarding existing workplace practices and policies;
- Prepare to moderate discussions and ensure that everyone has time to speak in group discussions, particularly in cases where men might try to talk over women;
- Prepare to guide the discussion around sensitive topics to ensure discussions remain productive and timely, and does not force anyone to talk about difficult personal experiences such as trauma and harassment.

Execute FIT: Driving action

On the day you deliver your FIT sessions, ensure you are well prepared, ready to engage with participants and focused on delivering value to the factory stakeholders that you are supporting. When facilitating FIT sessions, there are certain things that you can do to ensure you provide high-quality services. In this section, you will be introduced to certain tips that might be helpful to you. We also highly recommend you read the FIT facilitation manual, which provides you with more in-depth support for executing FIT sessions.

Remember, the FIT modules are designed to be self-facilitated and activity-based, leading to concrete actions to improve factories. Your role as a facilitator is to make it possible for participants to determine improvement based on the FIT toolset as effectively as possible, without taking on the role of a traditional expert or consultant.

Tips for leading successful FIT sessions

In addition to reading the FIT material before each session, the following are some helpful tips:

- Prepare a clear, brief and engaging introduction to the topic module and the FIT module's format involved (e.g. discussion exercises, time checks);
- Ensure that the groups collaborate and discuss with each other encourage them to work together by asking questions to guide the discussion;
- Be available for support and for questions during the session; and
- Monitor the time, check regularly on group progress and remind groups to stay on track.



When delivering FIT sessions, it is important to communicate with the factory coordinator and the participants, especially women workers, that the sessions are safe and open spaces for everyone to share their thoughts and experiences at work. You may also include women to lead sessions and discussions, in order to encourage the active participation of other women.

As a facilitator, you can encourage participants to think critically about gender and inclusivity in the workplace by asking guiding questions for open discussion related to the module topic. For example, what might be the barriers to communicating effectively with women workers? Try to think of other questions you can ask and guide participants to develop their own solutions.

For more helpful tips, troubleshooting guidelines and planning tools, please consult the FIT facilitation manual.

Monitoring your FIT programmes

The purpose of monitoring the FIT programme is to ensure accountability to the factories participating in the FIT programme, as well as to capture lessons from the implementation for adjustment and further scale-up of this programme. The objective is also to inform and deliver insights to the ILO and FIT service providers that will be involved in the implementation of FIT longer-term, to ensure a consistent high-quality service delivery. As a FIT service provider, you will play a key role in monitoring the results of FIT.

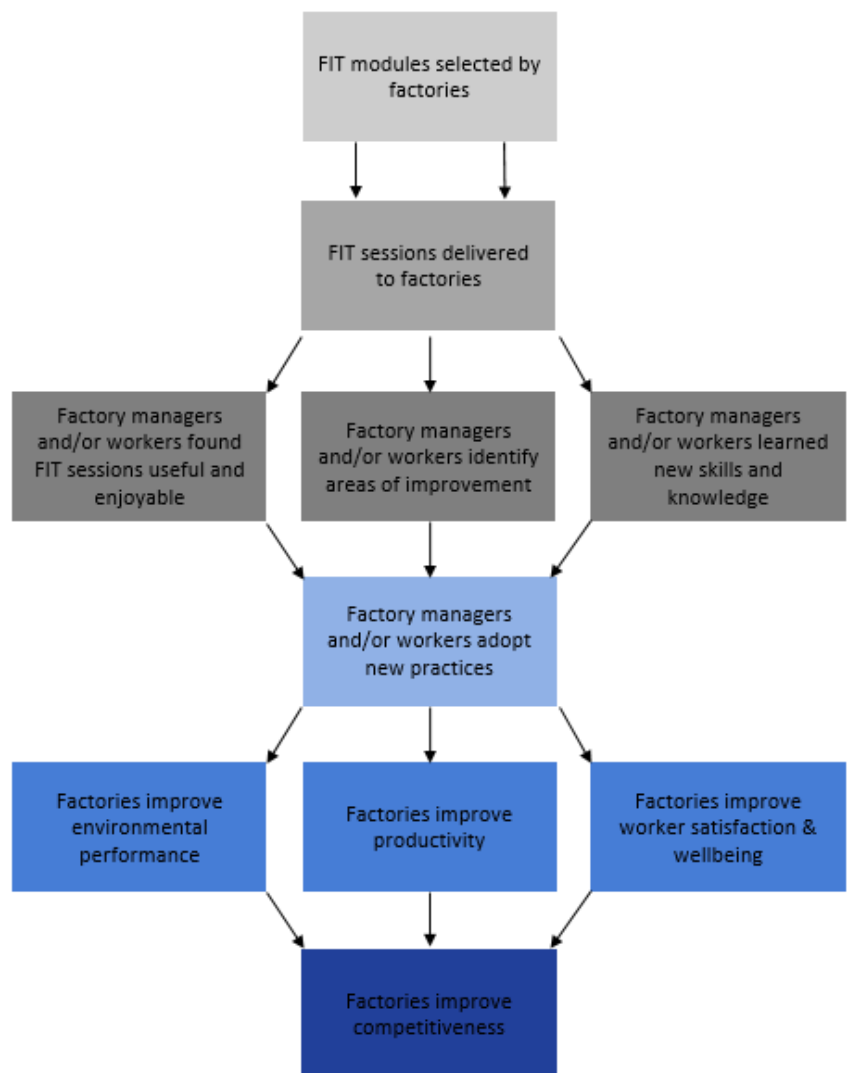
The FIT results chain

The results chain outlines the logical steps of the FIT programme and how activities will result in changes that ultimately lead to the anticipated impact of FIT at the factory-level. It is the foundation of the FIT monitoring framework, as any results captured through data collection are linked to the steps outlined in the results chain.

The first step in the results chain is the *selection of FIT modules* by factories. The monitoring framework for this step is focused on finding out how many modules factories select, what topics they choose and whether factories use the learning needs analysis tool offered by the ILO.

The next step is the *delivery of the FIT sessions* to factories. The FIT sessions can be organized in-factory or in an external venue, by factory staff or an external facilitator. In this step, the monitoring framework aims to capture information about how sessions were delivered and to whom.

The third step focuses on factories' *participation in the FIT sessions*. This step is monitored through a post-training survey with questions related to participants' perception of FIT sessions; did they enjoy the session and did they find it useful? The monitoring framework also aims to capture whether participants felt they learnt new skills and identified key improvements for the factory.



The fourth step in the results chain is the *adoption of new practices* by factories, which takes place after the FIT session if participants gained new knowledge and wish to apply it. The monitoring framework aims to find out whether participants apply their new knowledge by adopting new factory practices.

The fifth step focuses on whether *new practices adopted by factories* results in improvements of their operations. It is divided into three areas: environmental performance, productivity and working conditions. The monitoring framework tries to capture both quantitative and qualitative information that can attest that this is the case.

Lastly, the sixth and final step in the result chain is the *improvement of factories competitiveness*. To measure this type of impact, the monitoring framework tries to capture information related to factories' potential growth and profitability.

More information

For more information about the FIT monitoring framework and FIT service provider's role in monitoring factory improvements, please consult the FIT Monitoring guide. The guide was developed to give FIT service providers and others involved in the implementation of FIT more information about:

- Why are FIT activities monitored and evaluated?
- What is being monitored and evaluated?
- How are FIT activities being monitored and evaluated?
- When are FIT activities monitored and evaluated?
- Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating FIT activities?



Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

How does FIT work?

FIT has a flexible delivery model that is adaptive to the local context, the capacity of implementing organizations and to the necessities of benefitting factories. FIT can be used as a stand-alone toolset or to complement other factory upgrading, development or training approaches. With each module lasting no more than 2.5 hours, FIT enables factories to involve personnel in the factory improvement process, whilst minimizing interference with production realities. The easy-to-use methodology makes it possible to rapidly scale the implementation to reach a large cohort of improvement teams across multiple production facilities.

While working in small groups, FIT participants review real-life situations and engage in discussions to determine improvements to be made in factory without an external expert or specialist. This self-facilitated, activity-based and highly participatory approach positions participants as team members, both workers and management, in a common effort of improving their factory.

FIT focuses on areas of production improvement and actions to be taken specific to each participating factory. The tools sets out techniques, methods, and worksheets to guide groups through practical steps. By reflecting on local examples and sharing existing knowledge and experience, the programme becomes self-tailored to the needs and interests of each group.

Who can participate in the FIT sessions?

The FIT toolset was designed for underserved factories with less capacity. FIT can therefore be used to build the operational and technical skills of both larger and smaller factories, with less advanced factory management practices and processes in place.

There are FIT tools available for both factory managers and workers. In some cases, factories would benefit from forming groups consisting of a combination of managers and workers.

What is the FIT methodology?

FIT applies an activity-based approach, one which results in both a better understanding of factory processes and the improvement of the factory processes. The FIT approach is based on the assumption that factory improvement needs to be collaborative and encourages participants to actively take part in the change effort through engaging activities such as discussions, practice by doing, and by helping the team reach decisions on what needs to be done. Research demonstrates that the approach has many benefits, such as helping participants better understand the material covered, memorize and take action based on their new knowledge. The realistic problems and scenarios in the FIT tools enable participants to improve their problem-solving ability and creativity, while also making the material more relevant. The strong focus on group interaction helps develop the teamwork and social skills of participants.

The FIT approach has several advantages. The approach is highly inclusive as it recognizes that everyone has experiences, knowledge and insights relevant to share. Further, the approach is highly

cost-efficient and does not require organizations to have high capacity to deliver sessions, ensuring interventions that are highly scalable and that can reach vulnerable and often hard-to-reach beneficiaries even in resource or capacity constrained situations.

What kind of support can a service provider expect from the ILO?

FIT service providers will have the right to use and deliver the FIT toolset to factories, and could be supported through the following assistance:

- Orientation of service provider in the use, delivery, and marketing of FIT;
- Marketing support;
- Quality assurance and performance monitoring;
- Assistance to service provider in set-up of simple performance monitoring system; and
- Issuance of certification in collaboration with the FIT service provider (templates for issuing certificates are also available).

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

If you have further questions about the FIT programme, do not hesitate to contact any of the ILO staff members involved in the implementation of FIT.

Charles Bodwell

Enterprise Development Specialist, bodwell@ilo.org

Based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Sara Andersson

Enterprises Technical Officer, andersson@ilo.org

Based in Bangkok, Thailand.

David Williams

Project Manager, Decent Work in Garment Supply Chains in Asia project, williamsd@ilo.org

Based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Implementation guide

The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT) is an innovative self-facilitated, activity-based programme designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to create more decent and sustainable employment. FIT supports manufacturers in global supply chains to improve productivity, competitiveness and working conditions by upgrading production systems and factory practices.

FIT is being piloted in Asia under the regional Decent Work in Garment Supply Chains in Asia project funded by the Government of Sweden.

Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Building, 10th Floor
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue,
Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Tel.: 662 288 1234 Fax. 662 288 3058
Email: BANGKOK@ilo.org



ISBN: 9789220319802 (web pdf)