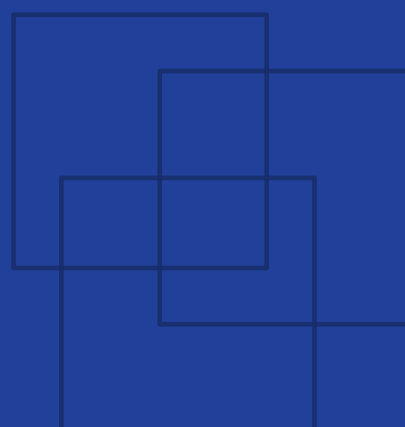




International  
Labour  
Organization

# Checking garments

Sewing room operations



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# Factory Improvement Toolset

The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT) is an innovative self-facilitated, activity-based learning approach 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 has been developed to be a sustainable, time- and cost-efficient option for supporting factories to enhance productivity through improved business practices and working conditions. FIT focuses on areas of production improvement and actions to be taken specific to each participating factory. It can be utilized as stand-alone learning tools or to complement other training programmes.

With each module lasting no more than 2.5 hours, FIT enables factories to train personnel, 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.

Working in small groups, participants review real-life situations and engage in discussions to determine improvements to be made in factory without an external trainer or specialist. This self-facilitated, activity-based and highly participatory learning approach positions participants as both student and teacher and makes the toolset self-tailored to the needs and interests of each group.

## About this module

This FIT module on Checking garments is a training for garment manufacturers to improve sewing room operations. Participants will work on detecting, recording and reducing defects. This module takes about 2 hours to complete.

## Upon completion of the training, participants should have:

- Learnt how to detect and categorize defects and how to carry out inspections.
- Learnt how to record in-line and end-of-line inspection results daily and precisely.
- Discussed how to reduce defects in the line to improve sewing quality.

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The **Factory Improvement Toolset** of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** are developed and provided by the ILO's **Enterprises Department**.

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# Guidelines for successfully using the training tool

## Read out-loud

The FIT tool is designed for participants to take turns reading the instructions in the modules out loud to the group. At least one member of the group should be selected in the beginning of the session to take this responsibility.

## Work as a group

Always work in groups of 5-7 during a FIT session. The programme will not be successful if participants work independently or do not collaborate with each other.

## Be active

Encourage everyone in the group to actively contribute to the discussion. Ensure that no group member dominates the discussion or does not participate at all.

## Monitor the time

Select one member of the group to monitor the time for each activity and remind the group when it is time to move to the next exercise.

## Complete the action plan

Complete the action plan at the end of the session. This will help ensure that FIT results in improvements in the factory. Review the plan a while after the session to make sure that actions in the plan has been completed accordingly.

# Icons

A set of icons is used throughout the modules to provide easy to recognize reference points for different tasks within each session and activity.



## Read out loud

One member of the group should read out loud to the rest of group.



## Knowledge link

Knowledge and skills are linked to other FIT learning resources and support.



## Time allotted

Indicates how much time each sessions and activity should take.



## Supplies needed

Indicates that supplies may be necessary to complete the session.



## Begin step-by-step instructions

Indicates that the step-by-step instructions for an activity are beginning.



## Think about it

Indicates additional information for the participants to think about.

# Measuring your performance

Measuring operational efficiency is a key aspect of running a productive factory. The box(es) below guides you in understanding which measurement indicator(s) can be used to measure and evaluate the performance of your factory in relation to the topics covered by the FIT sewing room series.

<b>Indicator 1</b>	<b>Target achievement (%)</b>
<b>Definition</b>	The percentage of the daily production target that was achieved (that was actually sewn in terms of good production). It can be calculated separately for each line, or for all lines together. The closer to 100%, the better.
<b>Purpose</b>	To understand how efficiently each sewing line operates, how realistic production targets are, and begin to identify how to improve efficiency in the sewing room.
<b>Calculation</b>	$(\# \text{ pieces produced today} / \text{daily production target}) \times 100\%$ Notes: The daily target should be based on the SMV, and line efficiency discounted. Target = $(\text{working hours} \times 60 / \text{SMV}) \times \text{line efficiency} \%$
<b>Frequency</b>	Calculate daily (for each line or all lines), then calculate a monthly average.
<b>Responsible</b>	Sewing room manager, Line supervisors

<b>Indicator 2</b>	<b>Defect per hundred units - DHU (%)</b>
<b>Definition</b>	The amount of defects found in average per 100 inspected pieces or garments. The lower the DHU, the higher the quality in your factory. It can be calculated separately for each line, or for all lines together.
<b>Purpose</b>	To understand quality in your sewing room, set a quality improvement target, and begin to identify ways to reduce defects and improve sewing quality.
<b>Calculation</b>	$(\text{total} \# \text{ defects found} / \text{total} \# \text{ of pieces or garments inspected}) \times 100\%$ Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is better to calculate this separately for in-line and end-line inspections.</li> <li>• If only the end-line calculation is taken but in-line inspection is also recorded, add defects found in in-line and end-line, however, do not add up garments inspected at in-line (only take the end-line count).</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency</b>	Calculate daily (for each line or all lines), then calculate a monthly average.
<b>Responsible</b>	Sewing room manager / Line supervisor / Quality checker





Session 1

# Business case study

## Goals

**Preparing you for the type of discussions you will have with other group members throughout the learning module and understanding the benefits of being exposed to different perspectives.**

**Understanding better why carrying out garments checking is important in the factory.**

# Session 1

## Overview



**One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group**



**15 minutes**



**Learning manual, pens, markers and poster paper**

A business case study presents a real-life situation for learners to reflect on and discuss with other group members. By discussing the case, students learn from others' ideas and perspectives, and develop an understanding of the topic at hand within the workplace.



**One group member reads the case study out loud**



**The whole group discusses the case study**



**Everyone develops a deeper understanding of the topic**

# Activities

Activity

1



15 minutes

## Case study review and respond

The case study below presents a situation that could happen in real life.



### Instructions:

- 1) As a group, listen to one member read the case study below while following along in your learning module.

Sopheak is a new sewing room manager at the HS garment factory. She notices that there is no in-line inspection at HS. There is an end-of-line inspection, but only 50% of garments are inspected, to save time and labour costs. Defective pieces are reworked or sent to finishing anyway depending on how serious the defects are. Nothing is recorded, so it is hard to say how high the defect rate is. As a result, a lot of material is wasted, and many shipments have been rejected because of sewing defects. This makes the factory lose a lot of money.

To solve these problems, Sopheak and the quality manager set up a new system, with random in-line inspections and 100% end-of-line inspections. Checkers carefully record defects, and work with line supervisors to identify the cause and prevent defects. Defective garments are always sent for re-work whenever possible to the operator responsible, so that they can learn from their mistakes. Sopheak reads inspection reports daily.

Thanks to these changes, supervisors can now better evaluate and track sewing quality. The defect rate goes down and quality improves over time, as defects are corrected and prevented as soon as possible. The factory now saves a lot of money on materials and rejected shipments.

- 2) Together, discuss Sopheak's situation by answering the three questions in table 1 on the next page.

**Table 1. Questions about Sopheak's situation**

1. What problems has Sopheak identified? What impact do these problems have on the factory and its workers?

2. What does Sopheak do or change in order to solve these problems?

3. What are the results of Sopheak's solutions for the factory and its workers?

This page has been intentionally left blank and can be used for note taking.



## Session 2

# Learning about the topic

### Goals

**Discussing and understanding the inspection process and its importance.**

**Understanding defects and discussing good practices for carrying out sewing inspections.**

**Learning how to record inspection results and evaluate sewing quality daily.**

**Discussing how to improve quality in the sewing lines by systematically working towards reducing defects.**

## Session 2

# Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



90 minutes



Learning manual, pens, and markers

This training module aims to help you improve the way your sewing room operates by focusing on how you check garments in the sewing lines. Inspecting garments during and after sewing is very important for maintaining quality and keeping buyers happy. It also helps you save costs and waste by detecting defects before garments are sent to finishing and packed. Reducing defects also improves productivity and overall quality. Throughout this module, you will work on the three steps below.

**Inspecting** garments for defects

**Recording** inspection results

**Reducing** defects

First, you will discuss inspection processes in your factory, and why they are important. Then, you will learn more about types of sewing defects, how to carry out inspections, and how to record and use the results of in-line and end-of-line inspections. Finally, you will discuss what to do in order to systematically reduce defects and improve quality in the lines.



# Activities

Activity

## 2a



20 minutes

## Garments checking



**Checking garments** in the sewing lines is a very important part of the production process. It should be done by checkers, who coordinate with the line supervisors, and the quality manager. In this activity, you will discuss inspection processes and their importance.



### Instructions:

- 1) Have a participant read aloud the two steps of garments inspection in table 2, and make sure everyone understands. Then, discuss:
  - Do you do in-line and end-of-line inspections in your factory? Why or why not?
  - What percentage do you inspect? Who is responsible?
- 2) Together, look at the chart and the different steps of inspection in table 3. Then, put the steps in the correct order by matching them with a number on the chart. Solutions are at the bottom of the page.
- 3) Together, discuss the two questions in table 4.

Table 2. Checking garments in two steps

In-line inspection	End-of-line inspection
<p>Checkers roam around the lines and randomly inspect a few garments at each work station. Inspection results are recorded in a form. If defects are found, the line supervisor is warned so that problems can be solved.</p>	<p>One (or more) checkers inspect 100% of sewn garments on an inspection table at the end of each line. The defects found are carefully recorded, and defective garments are returned to the lines for re-work.</p>
	



Sometimes, an inspection table can be set in the line after **critical operations** (difficult operations where mistakes are more likely to happen), and 100% of garments are inspected at that table.

Table 3. The inspection process

Chart	Steps of inspection	#
<pre> graph BT     1[1] --&gt; 2[2]     2 --&gt; 3{3}     3 --&gt; 5[5]     5 --&gt; 2     3 --&gt; 6[6]     6 --&gt; 7{7}     7 --&gt; 9[9]     9 --&gt; 6     7 --&gt; 8[8]     8 --&gt; 7     8 --&gt; 10[10]             </pre>	Line feeding	1
	In-line inspection	
	Defects found (2)	
	Defects found (1)	
	End-of-line inspection	
	Issue garments for finishing	
	Garments assembly (1)	
	Garments assembly (2)	
	No defects found (2)	
	No defects found (1)	

Table 4. Importance of inspection

1. How can good garment inspection help you **reduce costs** in the sewing room and finishing room?

2. How can good garment inspection help you increase **productivity** in the sewing lines?

Solutions: 1, 3, 9, 5, 7, 10, 2, 6, 8, 4.

Activity

# 2b



25 minutes

## Inspecting garments

During in-line and end-of-line inspections, checkers **inspect** work-in-progress, operator techniques and sewn garments for defects or lack of conformity to specifications. In this activity, you will discuss common defects and good inspection practices.



### Instructions:

- 1) There are 3 types of sewing defects: stitching, seaming, and assembly defects. Together, look at the list of defects in table 5, then write their number in the corresponding defect column.
- 2) Together, discuss: Which of these defects are the most common in your factory? Circle them in the table.
- 3) Together, read the list of good inspection practices in table 6. Put a ✓ in the column on the right if you apply it in your lines, then discuss: What can you do to improve your checking practices?

Table 5. Common defects

Stitching defects	Seaming defects	Assembly defects
1	12	24

### List of common defects

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Needle damage</li> <li>2. Skipped stitches</li> <li>3. Broken or open stitches</li> <li>4. Thread breaks</li> <li>5. Seam grin</li> <li>6. Seam pucker</li> <li>7. Wrong / uneven stitch density</li> <li>8. Staggered stitch</li> <li>9. Improperly formed stitch</li> <li>10. Incorrect / uneven width</li> <li>11. Irregular / incorrect sewing line</li> <li>12. Twisted seam</li> <li>13. Mismatched checks or stripe</li> <li>14. Mismatched seam</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Other part caught in a seam</li> <li>16. Blind stitch showing on the face</li> <li>17. Wrong seam or stitch type</li> <li>18. Wrong / uneven shade of thread</li> <li>19. Reversed garment part</li> <li>20. Incorrect size of part / garment</li> <li>21. Missing part, closure or feature</li> <li>22. Missing button hole</li> <li>23. Parts are misaligned</li> <li>24. Lining too tight or too loose</li> <li>25. Wrong shade of garment part</li> <li>26. Part wrongly positioned (pocket)</li> <li>27. Part pleated, twisted, bubbled, tense</li> <li>28. Raw edges instead of covered</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

Table 6. Carrying out inspections

Good practices	✓
1. Checkers conduct in-line inspections randomly from one operator to another.	
2. During in-line inspection, checkers inspect only a predetermined number of parts from a finished bundle to reduce inspection time.	
3. During end-line inspection, checkers inspect 100% of garments, checking for defects and conformity with buyer specifications.	
4. During in-line inspections, checkers pay special attention to critical operations, and set up a check point if it is necessary.	
5. If parts of a bundle are defective, the whole bundle should be taken out of the line and brought to the line supervisor so that he/she can ensure quality.	
6. Inspection should be carried out by reference to approved measurement specifications, line sample and trim cards.	
7. When a defect is found at a station, the following few bundles are inspected until all are found defect-free.	
8. Carry out the inspection quickly, so that you can inspect every station several times daily (for in-line inspections).	
9. To save time, the quality department should have drafted an inspection checklist for the style that checkers can use.	
10. Checkers record defects in a form. The line supervisor should consult the form several times a day to evaluate overall line quality performance.	
11. Based on the form, line supervisors should identify and work with operators / operations producing the most defects.	
12. Quality reports should be issued daily, recording defect rate, type, frequency, cause, and what has been done to correct and avoid defects.	



If in-line finishing is used in your factory, an extra inspection station is needed to check for washing, pressing, folding and packing defects. To learn more, ask for the “Final checking” module.

Activity

# 2c



25 minutes

## Recording results

**Record-keeping** is important to identify problems and improve quality in your sewing lines. Checkers should carefully record inspection results, and line supervisors should consult them often. In this activity, you will learn how to record in-line and end-of-line inspection results.



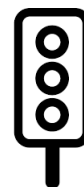
### Instructions:

- 1) Together, discuss: Do you record inspection results in your factory? If so, how (for in-line and end-of-line inspections)?
- 2) Have a participant read aloud table 7 about the traffic light system below, and look at the example below the table. Then, discuss: Would this system be good for your factory? Why, or why not?
- 3) Have a participant read aloud the scenario in table 8 while looking at the inspection report. Make sure everyone understands, then discuss: Would you use this form in your factory? Why or why not?
- 4) Have a participant read aloud the text box above table 9. Then, together, answer the five practice questions in table 9.

Table 7. The traffic light system

The **traffic light system** is a way to record **in-line inspection** results and track quality and operator performance at each workstation. A form is hung at each station, indicating operation, operator name, line supervisor and month. During each in-line inspection (for example, every 2 hours, 4 a day), the checker inspects a set amount of parts (5 for example), then colours the circle depending on the result:

- **Green**, if no defect has been found
- **Yellow**, if 1 defect has been found
- **Red**, if 2 defects or more have been found



Mark Green  if no defect found, Mark Red  if found 2 defects, Mark Yellow  if found 1 defects.

Date																
I	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
II	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
III	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
IV	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
QA auditor																
Line super																

**Table 8. Inspection report form**

**Scenario:** Today, checker Vijay is responsible for carrying out the hourly in-line inspection for line 4, style #67956. When he finds a defect, he adds a bar (/) in the corresponding line (critical operation / defect type) and column (hour). At the end of the day, he calculates the total for each operation, each defect type, the total amount of defects and defective garments, and the percentage of defective garments.

**Inspection report**

<b>Date:</b> 6 March	<b>Style #:</b> 67956	<b>Line:</b> 4	<b>L. supervisor:</b> Som
<b>Inspection:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-line <input type="checkbox"/> End-of-line			<b>Checker:</b> Vijay

**PART 1: OPERATIONS**

#	Critical operations	Hour								Total	%
		8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5		
1	Collar join									0	0
2	Shoulder join	//	/	//	/	//			//	10	25
3	Sleeve hem		/					/		2	5
4	Sleeve join			//		/		//		5	12.5
5	Body hem	/								1	2.5
6	Side seam						///	/	### /	10	25
7	Pocket outline		/	//	/	/				5	12.5
8	Button holing	//								2	5
9	Front neck top	/				/			/	3	7.5
10	Back neck top						/		/	2	5
<b>Total</b>		6	3	6	2	5	4	4	10	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**PART 2: SUMMARY**

Code	Defects	Hour								Total	%
		8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5		
A	Seam pucker	/	/	/						3	7.5
B	Missing hole		/	/			//		//	6	15
C	Thread breaks						/	/	### /	8	20
D	Wrong shade					//				2	5
E	Needle damage							/		1	2.5
F	Broken stitch	///								3	7.5
G	Reversed part		/	///	//	/		/		8	20
H	Raw edge			/						1	2.5
I	Wrong stitch	/				/	/			3	7.5
J	Wrong size	/							//	3	7.5
K	Other					/		/		2	5
<b>Total</b>		6	3	6	2	5	4	4	10	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Total checked</b>	400	<b>Total defective garments</b>	35
<b>Total defects</b>	40	<b>% defective garments</b>	



The quality team should come up with a **checklist** of potential defects for each style, which checkers can use during the inspection. This helps save time and ensures a thorough inspection.



To track and evaluate quality, it is important to calculate daily:

1. The proportion (percentage) of defective garments.  
 $(\# \text{ of defective garments} / \# \text{ of checked garments}) \times 100$
2. The amount of defects per hundred garments checked (DHU).  
 $(\# \text{ of defects} / \# \text{ of checked garments}) \times 100$

### Table 9. Practice questions

1. When (at which hour) were the most defects made? What could be the reason?
2. Which defect(s) was/were the most common today? What could be the reason(s)?
3. Which critical operation produced the most defects today? What could be the reason(s)?
4. If Vijay checked a total of 400 garments today, what is the percentage of defective garments today? *See formula above.*
5. If Vijay checked a total of 400 garments today, what is the amount of defects per hundred units (DHU)? *See formula above.*

Solutions: 1. 4~5pm; 2. Thread breaks & Reversed parts; 3. Shoulder join & Side seam; 4. (35 / 400) x 100 = 8.75%; 5. (40 / 400) x 100 = 10%.

Activity

2d



20 minutes

## Reducing defects

Inspecting garments helps you correct defects. It should also help you improve sewing quality continuously by **reducing defects**. In this activity, you will discuss how to correct and prevent defects.



### Instructions:

- 1) Together, look back to the report in table 8, then brainstorm: How could the report be used to track, evaluate and improve sewing quality? Write down your ideas in table 10 below.
- 2) There are two main causes for defects: machine and method. Have a participant read aloud the explanations in table 11, then, for each cause, discuss: What do / could you do to prevent them?
- 3) Together, look at the list of steps for addressing defects in table 12, and put them in the correct order by writing a number from 1 to 10 in the right column. Solutions are at the bottom of the page.

Table 10. Improving quality

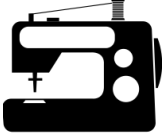

How can inspection reports be used to track, evaluate and improve sewing quality?





Based on inspection reports, line supervisors should systematically identify the operator(s) with the lowest quality performance (most defects), analyze the problems, and solve them with the operators.

Table 11. Causes of defects

Machine	Method (Operator)
<p>There is a mechanical issue with the machine, its components or work aids.</p> <p>These issues should be identified and handled by <b>mechanics!</b></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machine is dirty</li> <li>• Needle needs replacement</li> <li>• Incorrectly threaded</li> </ul> 	<p>The operator is performing the operation in an incorrect way.</p> <p>These issues should be identified and handled by the <b>line supervisor!</b></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper feeding</li> <li>• Improper tension</li> <li>• Inaccurate marking</li> </ul> 
How to prevent?	
<p>Example: Keeping machines well maintained.</p>	<p>Example: Assigning operators in function of their skills.</p>



Some defects are caused by fabric and thread quality (for example, thread breaks), or other operations such as storing, spreading and cutting. When those defects are identified, the sewing manager should coordinate with the other departments to avoid them in the future.

Table 12. Addressing defects

Steps	#
Contact the line supervisor to identify the cause of the defect.	1
Ask the operator to practice, observe, and make sure the correct method is used.	
Show the operator the correct method (how to perform the operation correctly) to avoid this defect.	
The supervisor takes the part / garment to the operator as soon as possible.	
Review the operator's traffic light card to see whether this is an isolated or recurring quality issue.	
Explain the defect to the in-line checker, and ask them to check the next few bundles until all are defect-free.	
Explain the defect to the operator, and make sure that the operator understands why it is defective.	
Ask the operator to show how they perform the operation and observe. Find out why the defect was made or why it was not detected (e.g. fatigue).	
Ask the operator to inspect the current bundle for similar defects, and repair immediately if defects are found. Motivate and encourage him / her.	
Come back a little later to check that bundles have been inspected and defective parts / garments have been repaired.	



Defective garments should be sent for **re-work** (repair) whenever possible rather than kept somewhere on a side. This avoids waste and saves costs, but it also takes time. So, the priority should be to prevent defects.

Solutions: 1, 7, 6, 2, 5, 9, 3, 4, 8, 10.

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## Session 3

# Action items

### Goals

**Summarizing and revising the new knowledge gained.**

**Identifying concrete applications of the new knowledge that benefit your factory.**

## Session 3

# Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



20 minutes



Learning manual, pens, and markers

Throughout this module, you gained new knowledge on how to detect, record, and reduce defects through garments inspection in the sewing lines.

**Inspecting** garments for defects

**Recording** inspection results

**Reducing** defects

In this session, you will think of ways to apply your new knowledge to improve garments checking in your sewing room by reviewing best practices and drafting your own action plan.



Inspection report and traffic light report form templates are available online for you to print out and use in your own factory. To obtain it, contact your factory's FIT coordinator!

# Activities

Activity

## 3a



5 minutes

### Best practices checklist

In this activity, you will review best practices for garments checking as a next step for evaluating your own and implementing improvements.



#### Instructions:

- 1) Together, look at the list of best practices in table 13, and put a ✓ in the column on the right if you use these practices in your factory.

Table 13. Checking garments

Best practices	✓
1. In-line and end-of-line inspections are carried out by checkers in each line.	
2. Defects and lacks of conformity are carefully identified and recorded for all inspections.	
3. Checkers calculate the total amount of defects, defective garments, and defective percentage daily based on inspection reports to track quality.	
4. Line supervisors work together with checkers to identify defects, their causes, and how to reduce them to improve quality.	
5. Defective parts or garments are sent back in the line for re-work when identified.	
6. Line supervisors re-train operators to correct and prevent defects whenever a method defect is identified.	

Activity

# 3b



15 minutes

## Your action plan

In this activity, you will think of ways to apply your new knowledge to improve garment checking in your sewing room by drafting your own action plan.



### Instructions:

- 1) Together, fill in the action plan (table 14) on the next page. Identify a key problem that you want to solve and write down the solutions you identified while working on this module.



**Table 14. Checking garments – Action Plan**

<b>Problem identified</b>				
<b>Solutions identified</b>	<b>Action(s) to be taken</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>By when?</b>	<b>How will improvements be measured?</b>

# Checking garments

The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT) is an innovative self-facilitated, activity-based learning approach 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 the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia project funded by the Government of Sweden.

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