Anchoring sustainability in textile supply chains

Become a member – because together we can achieve more than alone
No company can meet the challenges of global supply chains on its own. The only way we can make changes that benefit all is through our combined influence and coordinated joint action.«

Dr. Gerd Müller
Dear reader,

I cordially invite you to become a member of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles.

In the Partnership, companies, associations, trade unions, the German Federal Government, non-governmental and standards organisations work together hand in hand. Many strong members join forces to achieve ecological and social improvements alongside the entire supply chain – to benefit everyone. Together with our international partners, we have a greater influence on production conditions in the textile and garment industry. Become a part of our initiative for better labour and environmental conditions and profit from interacting with competitors, from the support provided by the Partnership Secretariat as well as from our collective engagement on the ground. The Partnership will provide you with information and assistance to help your company meet its due diligence obligations in a recognised manner. This is an essential precondition for you to be able to continue positioning yourself effectively and responsibly in the future market.

I would be very pleased if your company would join the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles.
Together we can achieve more than alone!

Sincerely,
Dr. Gerd Müller
Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development
What is the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles?

In response to tragic accidents in textile factories, Federal Development Minister Dr. Gerd Müller initiated the foundation of the Textiles Partnership in 2014.

**Members**
About 130 member organisations from five stakeholder groups (German Federal Government, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, standards organisations).

**Goals**
Together, the Partnership members want to achieve social, environmental and economic improvements alongside the entire textile supply chain.

**Approach**
All members actively pursue jointly defined goals under an established process. To do so they adopt verifiable measures and jointly become involved in Partnership Initiatives in producing countries.
How does the Partnership operate?

In order to achieve improvements alongside the entire supply chain, the work of the Partnership is based on three pillars:

1. **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY**
   - All members set individual and predetermined targets, pursue them and gradually raise their level of ambition. They specify the individual targets in annual action plans (so-called roadmaps) and report on their progress.

2. **JOINT COMMITMENT**
   - Under the Partnership Initiatives, members jointly work on specific solutions such as support and training offers for suppliers, negative lists for chemicals, or directly in broadly based initiatives in the producer countries.

3. **MUTUAL SUPPORT**
   - The Partnership is a platform for dialogue and learning for the members, offering a safe space for them to debate and work on even delicate issues. They share knowledge, experience and information effectively at regular meetings, on the member platform, in webinars, at workshops and in project work.
What have we achieved so far?

The Partnership spirit and trust:
Within the Partnership, members who are often perceived as opponents by the general public work together as partners. Despite having different interests, all of them have agreed on common goals, priority fields of action and a binding process of pursuing objectives.

Established structures and processes:
In what is now a well-proven review process, corporate due diligence for the textile sector is spelled out in concrete terms and defined with binding deadlines and quantitative targets – a necessary precondition for influencing the supply chain as a whole through modified management systems.

A thousand steps in the right direction:
In 2018 alone, members submitted and published 116 action plans with more than 1,300 specific improvements. In 2019, the members will report on their progress and dedicate to further targets.

Flexibility and obligation:
From this year on, members must set binding targets for specific themes and management steps. The members themselves decide how to flesh out these targets within a framework set by the Partnership, and they can draw on jointly developed recommendations to this end. For example, all members prepare a risk analysis, systematically capture business partners and producers, take specific measures to ensure that their suppliers do not use any toxic chemicals, and establish processes that prevent child and forced labour. The principle of 'comply or explain' obviously continues to apply, both in setting targets and in the progress reports.
Doing the hard work together:
The Partnership’s plan includes topics and challenges which single companies can hardly manage themselves, such as ensuring living wages or banning certain toxic chemicals alongside the entire supply chain. The Partnership can tackle these difficult tasks because many central actors from various stakeholder groups work together and form networks with the relevant partners at international level.

Jointly promoting sustainable cotton:
The Partnership members have agreed to use at least 35% sustainable and organic cotton by the year 2020. By 2025, the total proportion of sustainable and organic cotton is to rise to 70%.

International connections:
The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles is well connected. For example, together with Action Collaboration Transformation (ACT), we are promoting living wages. We are working with the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) and the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textiles (AGT) on aligning the corporate due diligence requirements with the current OECD guidelines. In this way, we advance the convergence of major processes at European and international level. Moreover, we are closely collaborating with the Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Foundation (ZDHC) on chemicals management and the substitution of hazardous chemicals. These partnerships will be continuously expanded, and more are to come.
Responsibility for global supply chains

Joint action and performance of due diligence are crucial success factors for improvements to the supply chain.

INTERVIEW
Dr. Jürgen Janssen, Head of the Partnership Secretariat

How do members benefit from the Partnership?
Janssen: In simple terms, companies can implement their own sustainability goals more effectively and efficiently within the Partnership than outside of it. The Partnership approach enables members to demonstrably meet political and social demands being placed on responsible business conduct. Essentially, it is about knowing the supply chain, minimising its risks and negative impacts, developing new and more sustainable business ideas and thereby making their company fit for the future.

Regulation: voluntary or mandatory?
Voluntary undertakings and mandatory regulations do not have to be mutually exclusive but can achieve a smart mix of complementary targets. In the Partnership, we rely on voluntary targets but link them with a set of binding processes: in line with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance, all members must demonstrably introduce suitable processes. That is the basis on which each member individually and the Partnership as a whole achieve substantial progress. The Partnership is an industry platform that enables genuine improvements to labour and environmental conditions in the supply chains through the three elements of binding processes, joint initiatives in producer countries and mutual support and learning.

As a German initiative, how does the Textiles Partnership intend to achieve substantial results?
Through its own ambitions and by cooperating with the relevant stakeholders. We want to
reduce the workload for members, for example with regard to the review process, and avoid duplication of efforts. We also want Partnership Initiatives to have more influence and greater impact. By gradually aligning the requirements and strengthening existing promising approaches, and by expanding our cooperative relations with SAC, ACT, ZDHC\(^1\) and the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textiles, for example, we want to contribute to creating a level playing field and increasing our leverage as a national initiative in Europe and internationally.

Companies and organisations of the textile and garment industry should join the Textiles Partnership because ...

first of all, substantial improvements in the supply chain, especially in the deeper supply chain, can barely be achieved alone. Joint action is required here, and that is what the Partnership is for. Second, successful, risk-based supply chain management based on the due diligence logic and implemented within the Partnership is increasingly becoming a crucial factor for successful business development.

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1 SAC = Sustainable Apparel Coalition;  
   ACT = Action Collaboration Transformation;  
   ZDHC = Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals
Why the Textiles Partnership?

Joining the Textiles Partnership is the right answer if you...

- are generally keen to improve environmental and social conditions in your supply chain, but constantly face new challenges.

- want to be prepared for existing or future national or international requirements — whether in the context of CSR reporting duties, the German Federal Government’s National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights, or far-reaching regulations.

- need a good response when your stakeholders and customers ask for information regarding sustainability and responsibility in your supply chain.

- are thinking about how to ban toxic chemicals from your supply chain, or if child labour is a particular risk factor in your supply chain.

THE TEXTILES PARTNERSHIP WORKS ON IMPROVEMENTS AT ALL STAGES OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN, SUCH AS...

**NATURAL FIBRES**

Promotion of the use of sustainable natural fibres, improvement of working conditions and combating child labour

**MAN-MADE FIBRES**

Environmental protection and occupational safety, fibre innovations, improvement of working conditions
■ are asking yourself how you can reconcile living wages and competitiveness.
■ want to assert your influence but are not always sufficiently heard on your own.
■ want to work on developing internationally accepted standard requirements.
■ want to know what exactly corporate due diligence means for the textile industry and how you can implement it in a structured manner.
■ are looking for up-to-date information from the industry, policy-makers and researchers on all sustainability topics that are relevant to the textile industry and wish to discuss this information with colleagues and experts.

FINISHING
Protection of environment and health, prohibition of specific chemicals, e.g. in bleaching and dyeing, improvement of working conditions

GARMENT ASSEMBLY/STITCHING
Improvement of occupational safety, building safety and working conditions, higher wages
Why did we join the Textiles Partnership?

The greatest opportunity of the Textiles Partnership is that together we can promote issues that no one can advance alone.«

DR. JOHANNES MERCK, OTTO GROUP

»Each enterprise that demands sustainable products here has a pull-effect on its entire supply chain. However, that does not come for free. In the Textiles Partnership we have the chance to really pull big levers together.

CLAUDIA KERSTEN, GOTS
»The Partnership aims to bring genuine transparency into the textile supply chain so that issues such as living wages and co-determination can finally be tackled on a broad basis.

FRANK ZACH, MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE GERMAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
I am convinced that we are on the right track. No one can durably improve production conditions in the supplier countries on their own. But together we will be able to achieve continuous improvements and address increasingly ambitious targets.

DANIEL HOPP, HOPP KG

»What is particularly valuable to me is being able to share experiences with other workshop participants and seeing how other companies address the issues and implement requirements.

MARTINA EDER, KOPPERMANN & CO. GMBH
How to become a member

Be a part of it! Find common solutions to industry challenges in the framework of a multi-stakeholder initiative. Benefit from joint activities, knowledge-sharing, networking and support services. Make responsibility a competitive advantage and turn the industry into a level playing field.

You can find the membership application online at www.textilbuendnis.com/en, or just send an email to mitglieder@textilbuendnis.com. Phone: +49 228 4460-3560