



## Tips for the procurement of textiles

*How to procure textile products more sustainably?*

Several phases can be distinguished in the procurement process. We have indicated four ones in which you as a buyer can make a significant difference. The four phases are: gathering information, selection, contracting and after awarding.

### 1. Gather information

First of all, it is very important to be up-to-date about the industry, the brand(s) you are planning to buy from and multi-stakeholder initiatives known to the industry.

- What do you really know about the garment industry? Informing yourself about this will give you a stronger position when negotiating in the contracting phase and helps you to choose a brand more wisely.
  - Internal: if your organization is liaised with a trade union, this union will most likely have an international department which can provide you with information, for example on living wages.
  - External: check out websites like [CSR risk checker](#), [Fair Wear Foundation](#) or [WellMade](#) for background information (such as country studies).
- What do you know about the brand you are planning to do business with?
  - Investigate:
    - How does the brand communicate about their social compliance?
    - Is there a Code of Conduct posted on their website? Do they share any monitoring activities on this?
    - In which countries does production take place?
  - Ask the brand
    - What do they know about labour conditions in their factories?
    - Do they know all the production countries and specific locations of all factories they work with?
    - Do they visit the production locations themselves, how often and in what way do they monitor labour conditions while visiting?
    - Do they work with a third party monitoring initiative?
- If applicable, check with the third party initiative how the brand is doing

### 2. Selection

The most important part in the selection phase is setting up a tender. There is still quite some uncertainty on what can be asked for. There is not one clear set of instructions on how to set up your tender.

A few options to consider:

- Where do you place the labour conditions?
  - Within the award criteria as part of the sustainability description of the product
  - Within the contract clausal
- What standards do you ask for?
  - ILO labour standards
  - Fair Wear Foundation's standards
  - A more general concept of social compliance set up by the brand
- How do you verify the brand's efforts?
  - A Code of Conduct of the brand
  - Specifically asking a company to be part of a third party verification body like Fair Wear Foundation
  - A step by step plan on social compliance; what problems does the brand foresee, what plans do they have to improve labour conditions and how will they report on it

### 3. Contractmeeting

This is the last phase where agreements can be made. It is important to mention the importance of labour conditions in this meeting again.

- Ask the CSR person of the company to be present and, if existing, the labour rights expert within your organization. This will make the discussion run more smoothly.
- Check for inconsistencies
- Are production locations known? What problems does the company foresee in this production country? Is that realistic, given the information you have gained from resources such as country studies?
- What reporting methods are chosen? Is this sufficient for you?
- Is the company part of a third party verification body or planning to join soon?
- Make sure you make explicit all the points you have doubt on and don't hesitate to set up a final contract in which these points are rectified. If you don't put it in writing now, it will never be changed.

### 4. After awarding

After awarding there are still things you can do to continue working on the labour conditions in your supply chain by planning your next order correctly and ensure continuous monitoring.

- Agree on a monitoring process:
  - Set up an internal system to keep track of the audits or monitoring reviews you receive
  - Keep track of the monitoring schedule and discuss progress with the brand
  - If a problem has arises during one of the monitoring steps: ask what the company will do about it
- Make a realistic planning for your next order. Some products are used over and over again but ordered at the latest stage. This means time pressure for the factory and workers.  
Check with your supplier:
  - If these products are always in stock or especially ordered for you
  - What a realistic timeline is for your orders and stick to this, or better, leave some spare time