



Staying Safe

Supporting the RMG sector through the Covid-19 Crisis

Project introduction

The DFID Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility has partnered with expert organizations and leading UK businesses to improve working conditions and access to healthcare and health information for workers in Bangladesh and other key supplier countries. This will help make workplaces safer, meaning employees can return to work and supply chains can keep moving and become more resilient.

To this extent, the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) has partnered with 7 corporate members – Primark, New Look, M&S, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Dimensions and Arco – to quickly and effectively address the risks related to a safe return to work following the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will start its activities at the end of August 2020 and run until July 31st, 2021.

An investment in workplace OHS is paramount for responsible business, and safe workplaces play a critical role in keeping workers safe from the virus while also acting as a conduit for cascading information on the crisis to inform and raise awareness between workers, their families, and communities.

Together with suppliers, the project hopes to establish a more resilient garment sector that collaborates to increase OHS practices which remain viable during crisis such as COVID-19 pandemic.

The project will trial a strong Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) component to a selected number of factories while working with its partner brands and other stakeholders through an Expert Support Network to scale and replicate best practices among further suppliers in Bangladesh as well as in similar production markets such as Myanmar.

Anticipated project achievements;

- 25,500 workers in 20 factories will have received digital tablet based OHS awareness raising training
- 6 factories will have strengthened their OHS capacity within the factory facilities to ensure safety and security in the workplace
- 1,000 factory managers have received comprehensive online OHS training
- Expert Support Network constituted by brand representatives and expertise for further replication/scalability mechanisms have been established and is functional
- Learning will be taken to other regions with a specific focus on SE Asia



Together with engaged and committed suppliers, the partnership anticipates that factories will gain increased capacity to adhere to and maintain OHS international and national guidelines; workers experience a safer working environment including a reduced risk of contracting viruses; and lessons learnt and best practices will be wider adopted beyond the suppliers engaged in the project in Bangladesh.

KEY ACTIVITIES;

- At the initiation of the project, brand partners will nominate suppliers for participation after which 20 factories will be selected for a needs assessment.
- The project will subsequently work closely with the factory management in 20 factories providing them with an online virtual face-to-face OHS training based on the same classroom methodology used by ETI's Social Dialogue training team.
- The factories with the greatest identified need will be selected to receive specific OHS technical assistance provided by identified expertise within the brand partnership and / or ETI giving direct advice and guidance on factory processes to ensure a safe work environment including the need for social distancing while also looking at production effectiveness.
- ETI will also work with the training supplier Quizrr to outline and incorporate an OHS awareness raising training module aligned with the Bangladesh context on tablets provided to the factories. The OHS component will take a wide approach to safety also focusing on the importance of adhering to safety guidance when traveling to and from work and maintaining social distancing in general. Awareness raising will also be rolled out on smart phones using a QR code to access the OHS training.



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