

IGS INITIATIVE FOR
GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

03/24

**Sustainability
Forward**
News from the IGS

DEAR READER,

We are very excited! You are looking at the fifth issue of our newsletter which we have given a new look. This has changed: you will find highlights of our activities bundled according to our four focus topics:

- [Data & Transparency](#)
- [Shared Responsibility](#)
- [Grievance Mechanisms](#)
- [The RBH Network](#)

As we have been active in eight partner countries since the end of last year, we have even more news to share with you. With this new design we want to make it easy for you to grasp how we are successfully driving forward our mission to promote human rights and environmental due diligence in global supply chains.

We are happy to receive your feedback and hope you enjoy browsing through the newsletter.



IGS team workshop in September 2023



**YOU CAN
ONLY
IMPROVE
WHAT
YOU CAN
MEASURE!**

Credible and standardised data on environmental and social risks is a prerequisite for the implementation of due diligence.



OBJECTIVES OF THE IGS

- Coordinated standards for social and environmental data are in place
- Suppliers have access to capacity building for the collection of sustainability data
- Publicly accessible data on supplier networks make supply chains more transparent

HOW DATA CAN HELP PROTECTING WORKERS FROM HEAT AND FLOODING

A collaboration between IGS and Mapped in Bangladesh (MiB) together with the Laudes Foundation enhances transparent mapping and data collection in Bangladesh's apparel supply chain – aiming to boost supply chain transparency to address human rights and environmental risks more efficiently.

Data from MiB has provided valuable support for a Cornell's University study on the impacts of climate change on Bangladesh's apparel sector. The study finds extreme heat and flooding are threatening key apparel production hubs and calls for climate adaptation finance that redistributes costs and risks away from apparel workers.

Background information

Mapped in Bangladesh is a research initiative by the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) of BRAC University that aims to map the export-oriented ready-made garment (RMG) industry across all garment-producing districts in the country.



Use Case of MiB

Case Study Coronell.ai (mappedinbangladesh.org)

Study of Cornell University

Higher Ground? Fashion's Climate Breakdown | The ILR School (cornell.edu)

THE VISION OF AN OPEN DATA PLATFORM

– and why open standards are important for HREDD

Q&A with Kate Chapman

– CTO at Open Supply Hub

(1) What is a data standard, and why is it important that they get created?

Standards are a common way of doing something, and a data standard is a common way of exchanging data. Specifically, an “open standard” is a commonly defined way of doing something, which has governance and decision making included so that it’s clear how other individuals or organizations can contribute to establishing and/or changing the standard. For example, the Internet runs on open standards; standards specifically developed by the World Wide Web Consortium are enabling you to read this interview today on your web browser.

(2) Why is Open Supply Hub focusing on an open supply chain data standard to drive due diligence?

Supply chains continue to be opaque and difficult to understand and many companies themselves don’t really know where all the pieces of their products come from. In many cases that data does exist somewhere, but not in a central place. By better enabling exchanging and combining data, we can bring greater transparency to supply chains, which will help in compliance against legislation, e.g. HREDD.

(3) What do you hope will happen once a co-created standard has been shared with supply chain stakeholders?

Right now, much supply chain software and databases exist in silos. We hope by having a common language and way of exchanging data it will be possible to combine that data to create insight and reduce duplication, especially when it comes to simplifying and improving processes around legislative reporting, e.g. HREDD.

Background information

IGS supports the development, scaling and dissemination of the Open Supply Hub to make supply chains more transparent. The accessible and collaborative supply chain mapping platform is used and populated by stakeholders across sectors and supply chains.

Impact

Through more transparent supply chains, human rights and environmental risks can be addressed more effectively and efficiently.



DISTRIBUTING RISKS FAIRLY!



The effective implementation of HREDD depends on cooperation between purchasing and manufacturing companies.



OBJECTIVES OF THE IGS

- International frameworks promote partnership-based implementation of HREDD
- Shared responsibility models reduce risks in supply chains
- Tools for responsible purchasing practices are available

PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Through a comprehensive series of training and advisory services, 290,000 employees including more than 200,000 female workers in Vietnam are better protected from sexual harassment in the workplace.

Beyond enhancing the knowledge and skills of managers and compliance officers of more than 110 enterprises, workers were also guided in recognizing and addressing instances of harassment. They were provided with skills to identify and report inappropriate behaviors, empowering them to take decisive action against workplace harassment.

Being able to assert own rights and creating a supportive environment, not only enhances the overall safety culture in the workplace but also increases productivity by minimizing disruptions caused by harassment incidents.

Background information

The initiative is a collaborative effort of the IGS, the Vietnam Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA), and partners including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Fair Wear that took place during 2022-2023.



Participants of one of the trainings in Vietnam to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING PRACTICES IN THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY

Q&A with Bart Devos

– Vice President of Public Policy at Responsible Business Alliance

(1) Why has RBA chosen to collaborate with IGS?

RBA intrinsically stands for a collaborative approach to implementing supply chain due diligence. As part of this, we believe that industry-government collaboration is important, both when it comes to addressing root causes as well as when it comes to implementing due diligence laws. We think IGS has rightly identified key areas where support measures are necessary, useful, and practical - from grievance to mitigating climate impacts.

(2) What do you hope to achieve with regards to Responsible Purchasing Practices?

We recognize the link between purchasing practices, responsible supplier engagement, and the occurrence of risks and impacts in supply chains. It is a complex and sensitive area, which can benefit from more clarity for businesses around what good - better - best practice looks like. Especially as this subject is increasingly being picked up by legislators, we need to identify collectively how companies can practically progress towards more responsible purchasing practices, while complying with emerging expectations, and explore what tools and guidelines can create clarity and the right environment.

(3) What are the upcoming highlights of the collaboration with IGS?

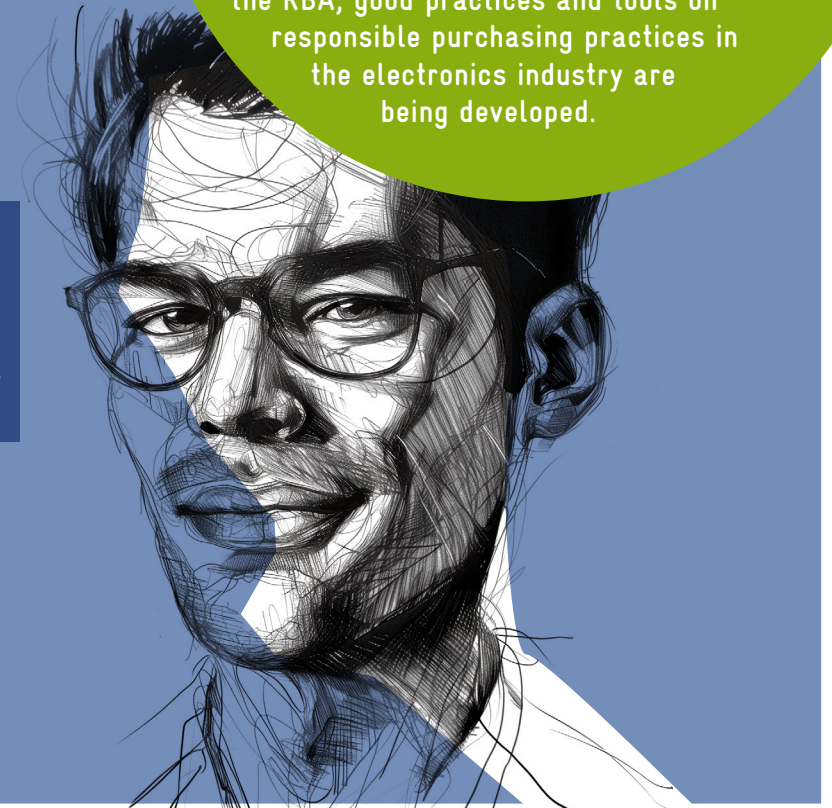
As we turn into the second year of the German supply chain due diligence act, and while EU regulators are busy finalizing key EU-level legislation, it's really important that we collectively take stock. First, we will analyse what we can learn from existing early experiences with implementing mandatory due diligence. Then, we will reflect about what learnings that teaches us for the design and implementation of emerging new due diligence legislation - and act on those findings. A conference we are co-hosting with the IGS in April, will be an exciting opportunity in that regard-bringing together industry, government leaders and other stakeholders. Click [here](#) to save your spot.

Background information

The collaboration between IGS and the Responsible Business Alliance (RBA), a coalition of the world leading companies from across electronics, automotive, toy, retail and other industries, is geared towards supporting RBA members to implement due diligence along supply chains collaboratively and in line with international expectations.

Impact

Together with a key group of members of the RBA, good practices and tools on responsible purchasing practices in the electronics industry are being developed.



Workers need a holistic ecosystem to report violations of human rights and to seek remedy in case of violations.

**SEE,
UNDER-
STAND,
IMPROVE!**



OBJECTIVES OF THE IGS

- Workers have access to effective grievance mechanisms
- Stakeholders are trained in the implementation of local grievance mechanisms
- Cooperation agreements promote the harmonisation of external safety nets for workers

EMPOWERING WORKERS IN SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS

More than 300 workers in 5 cities across Serbia came together to discuss and better understand their labor rights and how to navigate grievance mechanisms within the context of international due diligence legislation.

The workshop series took place between October 2023 and January 2024 and was organised in collaboration with representative trade unions in Serbia.

Recognising the pivotal role of workers' awareness in safeguarding human rights within their workplaces, experts from the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the Agency for the Peaceful Settlement of Labor Disputes and academia equipped the participants with knowledge and skills necessary to identify risks to human rights and possible channels to voice their complaints.



Participants of one of the workshops in Serbia.

Background information

Through the cooperation with the International Labour Organization and its programmes Better Work and Better Factories, the IGS empowers local workers, worker representatives and employers in Serbia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia in their crucial roles within the grievance mechanism ecosystem.

Impact

Compliance officers from around 400 factories and over 1,000 relevant stakeholders are trained in the implementation of internal grievance mechanisms.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES!

Suppliers and stakeholders in producing countries need support in implementing due diligence obligations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE IGS

- Responsible Business Helpdesks in producing countries offer information, networking and advisory services for companies and other stakeholders to perform due diligence
- The capacities of companies and other stakeholders to perform due diligence are strengthened and they are increasingly implementing them

THE RBH NETWORK IS GROWING

While the RBH in Bangladesh, Serbia, Vietnam and Cambodia are in full swing, activities to establish helpdesks in four more countries kicked off.

TUNISIA — In December 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tunisian Union of Industry Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA) - representing 150,000 affiliated companies - was signed as part of the implementation of the RBH Tunisia. Read about the ceremony [here](#).

PAKISTAN — Textile associations like PHMA, TMA, and EFP and public agencies such as the Trade Development Authorities Pakistan (TDAP) and the National Compliance Center (NCC) gathered in Karachi and Islamabad in November 2023 to establish a task force for supporting companies with new regulations on sustainable supply chains under the roof of the RBH Network. In Karachi textile 60 factory representatives were already informed about HREDD and new regulations.

TURKIYE — In December 2023, The RBH Network hosted a session at the OECD event “Responsible Business Conduct for Sustainable Development: Middle East, North Africa & Türkiye”, where TURKONFED was announced as the upcoming host organisation for the RBH Turkiye. The non-governmental and nonpartisan business organisation represents 30 federations and 300 associations with more than 60,000 company as members. The launch of the RBH is planned for May.

MEXICO — During the event “Business Integrity and Due Diligence in Supply Chains: Open Debate to Define a Pathway for the Implementation of the Responsible Business Helpdesk in Mexico” in the Senate of the Republic in Mexico City, the Consejo Coordinador Empresarial (CCE) was announced as the host organisation for the RBH Mexico. The CCE represents more than 2,000 associations. Watch the full recording of the event [here](#). The opening of the RBH will take place in April.

Background information

Many suppliers all over the world are asking for support in adapting to HREDD regulations. Therefore, the IGS setting up a network of Responsible Business Helpdesks (RBH) to support businesses in partner countries. The RBH offer tailor-made information, awareness raising and advisory services around HREDD to local producers, associations, and service providers.

Impact

More than 700 companies have already benefited from the advice services offered by the RBH.



HOW THE RBH NETWORK IS SETTING THE COURSE FOR 2024

Following a successful first network meeting in Berlin in September 2023, the representatives of six RBH host organisations came together for the second virtual network meeting in January 2024 to review last year's activities, welcoming the newcomers from Tunisia and Turkey and manifesting their collaboration.

Priorities for this year are to foster peer-to-peer and expert learning, to lay the foundations for the sustainability of each helpdesk as well as The RBH Network and becoming more visible to global stakeholders active in Business & Human Rights.

In case you were not able to attend our side session during the OECD Forum on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear Sector about helpdesks as a means to close the action and knowledge gap on HREDD in producing countries, you can watch the recording (see link below).



Stay tuned on news and events of the RBH
[LinkedIn](#)

Watch our side-session during the OECD Forum
[YouTube](#)

Background information

The Responsible Business Helpdesks (RBH) are a gateway for local businesses that want to step up their sustainability performance and comply with provisions deriving from HREDD legislation. IGS provides technical support to the organisational development of the RBH and capacity building of the RBH hosts.

Impact

IGS supported the establishment of four successful running RBH in Bangladesh, Serbia, Vietnam and Cambodia. Four more are to come in Mexico, Tunisia, Turkey and Pakistan.



Our Objectives

The Initiative for Global Solidarity strives to achieve tangible improvements for people and the environment in producing countries.

425,000

Workers are exposed to fewer risks in the workplace.

Already achieved: 443,411



350

Companies take advantage of the RBH services

Already achieved: 714



500,000

Workers have access to grievance mechanisms

Already achieved: 224,871



150

Companies integrate sustainability indicators in their data management

Already achieved: 65



1,000

Stakeholders are trained in the implementation of grievance mechanisms

Already achieved: 1,629



Published by

Initiative for Global Solidarity

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As of March 2024

On behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

IGS INITIATIVE FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

The Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) promotes the implementation of human rights and environmental due diligence in global supply chains by scaling and harmonising proven approaches.

The IGS supports stakeholders along global supply chains to exercise shared responsibility for the impacts of business practices on people and the planet.

The IGS is working on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Further information about the IGS can be found [here](#)

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