



Better Work, a unique partnership programme between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), was launched in February 2007 with the goal of improving compliance with labour standards and competitiveness in global supply chains.

Better Work involves both the development of global tools and the implementation of country-level services, with a focus on scalable and sustainable solutions that build cooperation between governments, employers' and workers' organizations and international buyers.

Better Work supports enterprises in implementing the ILO core international labour standards and national labour law. Compliance with labour standards in global supply chains can help protect workers' rights and entitlements, and distribute the benefits of trade to promote human, social and economic development.

Compliance with labour standards can also help enterprises be more competitive, providing access to new markets and buyers and to new sources of financing and credit. Compliance, along with better communication between workers and managers, can also contribute to higher productivity and quality.

## THE BETTER WORK STRATEGY

The Better Work strategy, combining practical workplace assessment and improvement activities with effective stakeholder engagement, is demonstrating that improving the lives of workers can go hand in hand with success in industry. It is making real, sustainable changes in the way global supply chains work.

### Practical Tools and Services:

- An assessment tool for measuring compliance with international labour standards and national labour law, as well as tailored advisory services that support continuous improvement. These tools are put into practice in factories in Better Work's country programmes, helping factory owners, management and workers improve compliance with labour standards.
- Specially developed training programmes and good practice guides addressing key issues in the garment sector, such as supervisory skills, human resource systems, and occupational safety and health.
- STAR, an information management system used to record, store and disseminate Better Work assessment and improvement reports. This system allows factories to share compliance information with international buyers quickly and easily.

### Stakeholder Engagement:

- Better Work engages and builds the capacity of national stakeholders to provide ongoing programme feedback through a Project Advisory Committee, whose members include representatives of ministries of labour and trade, employer organizations and trade unions.
- Government labour inspectorates contribute to country programme design and implementation, and often receive on-the-job training and other support from the Better Work programme.

- International buyers participate in the programme through the Buyers' Forums and by signing the Better Work Buyer Principles. Better Work offers buyers a cost-effective approach to managing supply chain risks, by reducing duplicative auditing at a supplier factory used by multiple buyers. Lower costs mean that more funds can be redirected to implementing solutions.

## PARTNERSHIP

### International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO has authority in labour issues through its tripartite membership, its development and substantive knowledge of labour standards, and its long-term technical assistance and engagement with member states. The ILO contributes critical experience in bringing governments and employers' and workers' organizations together to seek solutions that work for businesses and people.

### International Finance Corporation (IFC)

The IFC brings to Better Work its investment networks and expertise in private-sector development. The IFC's contributions include its experience in the development and implementation of social and environmental standards, and its ability to scale up sustainable programmes.

## GOVERNANCE

The Better Work Management Group—which reviews, discusses and approves Better Work's annual strategy, workplan, global programme budget and allocation of activities—comprises two senior decision-makers each from ILO and IFC.

Better Work's strategic and operational goals are guided by a global-level Advisory Committee, which comprises representatives of donor governments, employers' and workers' organizations, international buyers and academia. The Advisory Committee meets just prior to the Management Group semi-annual meetings to provide strategic input to the programme's operations and expansion.

## DONORS

Donor funding is critical to both global and national Better Work activities. These funds are used to launch new country programmes, adapt tools and develop targeted training services. In larger markets, where the industrial base can support such action, the goal of Better Work country programmes is to transition to local institutions that are self-financed on a services-based cost recovery model.

The following donors have supported Better Work country programmes: Canada, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United States. In addition, Australia, the Netherlands and Switzerland have contributed to Better Work at both the global and the national level.\* Four donor representatives (Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States) sit on the Advisory Committee to provide input to the Management Group on, among others topics, public policy related to labour issues in global supply chains within the framework of Better Work's strategy.

\* Better Work has also received contributions from companies, beyond fees collected for programme services. These donations account for approximately 2% of the global budget.

## BETTER WORK: NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Better Work has activities underway in 9 countries worldwide. Established national programmes in Cambodia, Haiti, Jordan, Lesotho and Vietnam will soon be joined by programmes being rolled out in Indonesia and Nicaragua. In addition, scoping and feasibility studies are being undertaken in Morocco and Bangladesh. Better Work is exploring expansion into other sectors as well, including electronics, agribusiness and tourism.



**BETTER WORK**

[www.betterwork.org](http://www.betterwork.org)

