Call to action from the Standards Convergence Initiative (SCI)

About SCI
The Standard Convergence Initiative (SCI) is an initiative of the International Apparel Federation (IAF) and the International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF) that aims to encourage alignment between industry & multi-stakeholder Initiatives as well as brand or retailer proprietary tools to help combat audit and standard fatigue in the textile and footwear sector.

SCI-Side Session at the OECD Forum on Due Diligence in Garment & Footwear Sector
On Monday, February 13th, 2023 (9-10 am CET), IAF and ITMF will jointly hold a virtual session about the SCI's view on progress in the reduction of audit and standard fatigue. Speakers from the industry (Pan Brothers, Indonesia), from SLCP, from ITC, from standard holders (OEKO-TEX andWRAP) and from SCI will share their perspectives.

Recent SLCP progress to reduce audit fatigue
To help accelerate the move towards a situation where manufacturers can suffice with a single audit, from its inception, IAF and ITMF have supported the Social & Labor Convergence Program (SLCP). SLCP has played a leading role in forging the path to converged assessments. Since launching in 2019, the Program has scaled rapidly, with over 7000 facilities worldwide choosing to complete an SLCP verified assessment in 2022 alone. There are now over 65 brands and retailers publicly committing to accept SLCP verified data from their suppliers[1] and manufacturers are reporting concrete reduction of audits and reallocation of resources towards improvements[2]

More needed faster (reduction of standard fatigue)
Building further on the progress in recent years, more can be done to further reduce the burden on suppliers and manufacturers. The rate of progress should be increased significantly. The next step really is reducing standard fatigue. SCI's research (performed by ITC) suggests great overlap between the main social standards, suggesting plenty of room for a fast reduction of standard fatigue for manufacturers.

SCI therefore has two key asks for brands & retailers as well as standard holders.

SCI ask to brands & retailers
SCI calls on more brands and retailers to quickly make the switch to converged schemes such as SLCP to further maximize the potential savings and benefits for manufacturers. SCI also calls on brands and retailers to drop their proprietary codes in favor of collaborative and harmonized third-party standards as this constitutes the quickest road to a reduction of the number of standards that manufacturers face. SCI works with the Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative (STTI) to ensure that brands and retailers make clear commitments to this end.

SCI ask to standard holders
Several of the leading schemes and standard holders are exploring alignment & data sharing to reduce the need for separate data collection and verification processes. SCI calls on all leading social schemes to work towards compatibility between the systems and accept and integrate SLCP verified data. SCI will work with its partners including ITC, SLCP, brands and retailers and standard holders to

[1] https://slconvergence.org/slcp-data-acceptance

[2] https://slconvergence.org/updates/workers-benefit-when-brands-and-retailers-accept-standardized-audits-from-suppliers

encourage and facilitate the reduction of standard fatigue through a fast and rigorous reduction of unnecessary and unproductive work by manufacturers caused by overlapping standards.

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