



Terms of Reference (ToR)

Annual Report on Human Rights Due Diligence and Core Labour Standards in Bangladesh's RMG Industry

01. Summary

This 'Terms of Reference' details the working modalities for preparing the annual report on Human Rights Due Diligence and Core Labour Standards in Bangladesh's RMG Industry. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies - BILS is the implementing partner of this annual report. This annual report constitutes an essential part of a partnering project between BILS and Mondiaal FNV titled 'Effective Social Dialogue for Decent Work in RMG industry' in which 'Mondiaal FNV' is the main funding partner.

02. Context

The concept of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) encompasses two basic principles: "Human Rights" and "Due Diligence". Human rights refer to the fundamental rights and freedoms to which all individuals are entitled in all areas of life, including the workplace (Further explained in the following chapter). On the other hand, due diligence is understood as a standard of expected conduct or actions that are considered reasonable to take in order to avoid harm and manage the impact. According to ILO (2024), due diligence consists of a process that allows companies to identify, prevent and mitigate their actual and potential adverse impacts on human rights and account for how they address such impacts in their business operations. The directive defines due diligence and outlines key steps that companies are required to take to comply with it. It applies to the company's own operations and in relation to businesses involved in production, distribution, transport, and storage of the company's products. It empowers regulators to oversee the due diligence measures and impose penalties where companies fall short and, in some scenarios, provides a legal avenue for victims of corporate abuses to bring civil claims before European courts.

One of the most interesting features of the EU directive is the obligation on brands to "meaningfully engage" with stakeholders to design their due diligence measures. This includes workers and communities whose rights will be affected, and groups representing their rights and interests. The directive opens the doors for independent local unions, women's rights groups, sexual and reproductive and mental health rights organisations, and privacy and data protection experts who have demonstrated expertise working in Bangladesh to provide feedback to brands and retailers as they assess human rights and environmental risks in their value chains and develop measures to prevent and remedy harm.

The act is designed to apply to companies in a staggered way, depending on a company's size. While a subset of companies should start following the rules in 2027, all companies covered by the directive will only have to conform from 2029. Thus, there are some core responsibilities from Brands, Buyers and Employers need to address first. Trade Union is also a core stakeholder in ensuring the labour rights issues for the workers including supply chain.

Lying on the aforementioned circumstances, this initiative to prepare an annual has been thought of. The mainstay of this initiative is to capture the existing practice, preparedness and future planning/ initiatives of the employers, brands and trade unions in RMG sector and NTUCs in Bangladesh. Considering the issues, BILS has already prepared the annual report for 2024 on Human Rights Due diligence. This prepared annual report presents a comprehensive analysis of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) initiatives within Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector, with a particular focus on developments in 2024. In the current circumstances, the annual report for 2025 on HRDD is also important to see the progress and incorporate recent development focused on national and international perspective, commitment, and necessary initiatives.

03. Overall Objective

The Overall objective of this annual report is to capture the status of existing practices and initiatives from the employers, brands and trade unions to address the Human Rights Due Diligence Processes for Bangladesh's RMG industry.

Specific Objectives

- To the existing practice including assessing of real and potential rights violation, follow up actions and monitoring mechanism for the promotion of human rights due diligence at the global supply chain of the Bangladesh's RMG industry.
- To capture the preparedness, challenges and opportunities of employers, Brands and national trade unions/sectoral trade unions to act effectively in advancing human rights due diligence in the RMG industry of Bangladesh.
- To track the future forecasting and schedule planning from both employers, Brands and national trade unions/sectoral trade unions to act effectively in advancing human rights due diligence in the RMG industry of Bangladesh.

04. Expected Outputs

Annual report output shall consist of an edited detailed report including the following;

- A complete portrait of status, action, actor, factor and process of human rights due diligence at the global supply chain of the Bangladesh's RMG industry;
- A concrete analysis the existing practice including assessing of real and potential rights violations, follow-up actions and monitoring mechanisms for the promotion of human rights due diligence at the global supply chain of the Bangladesh's RMG industry;
- Captured the preparedness, challenges and opportunities of employers, Brands and national trade unions/sectoral trade unions to act effectively in advancing human rights due diligence in the RMG industry of Bangladesh;

05. Scope of Work

- Mapping, review and analysis of the existing practices on Human Rights Due Diligence of diligence in the RMG industry of Bangladesh
- Review and analysis of the other published and non-published materials and resources on Human Rights Due Diligence in the RMG industry of Bangladesh
- Interview/consultation/meeting with TU leaders (RMG sector, GSKOP, IBC, SKOP and others) and collection of necessary primary information
- Interview/consultation/meeting with experts/academics, employers, CSOs/NGOs, relevant GOV institutions and officers and collection of necessary primary information

- Interfacing between primary and secondary information
- Documentation and report writing

06. Methodology:

Considering the nature it is expected that this annual report shall employ qualitative research approaches and respective tools and techniques. Data needs to be collected both from primary and secondary sources.

Please note that, this is only an indicative methodology. Lead/principal consultant is requested to develop a detailed methodology plan and a complete research plan and agree with the project authority the same before preparing the annual report.

07. Key Sources and Peoples to be Consulted:

Primary sources:

Employer, Brands, TU leaders, Experts/academics, s, CSOs/NGOs, Relevant GOV institutions and officers

Secondary Sources:

Both electronic and non-electronic published and non-published books, research reports, articles, policy briefs, journals, newspapers, policies and laws, and Conventions and Recommendations.

08. Audience of Research Report

- TUs
- NGO/CSO
- Related government institutions
- Employers
- Policy experts/academics
- BILS-Mondiaal FNV
- Academics/Experts
- Donors & Foreign Missions

09. Style and Length of Report:

The lead consultant needs to prepare and submit both an electronic version and signed hard copy. The document should be very precise, and must answer each specific objective and research question. The main body of the annual report shall be plus/minus a 20-25 pagers document including a 3-4 pagers executive summary. The executive summary is expected to develop in the form of a briefing paper for the purpose of dissemination immediately among the audiences. Necessary supplementary information (if any) like transcripts of consultations and interviews (if required) and references are to be attached as annexes.

10. Timeline:

Starting from 1 July 2025, particularly end up to 20 October 2025.

11. Ethics and Risks:

The annual report must avoid any kind of plagiarism and provide due acknowledgement to the sources. Objectiveness is the key to mitigate the risks where researchers have to be strategic and analytic in arguments but not biased.

12. Documentation:

- Checklists, and interview notes should be submitted, signed and dated by the consultant or other interviewer (if needed).
- Final report must provide endnote references for all specific facts and statistics used. The report must also include a bibliography of the major references used.
- Primary sources must be used wherever possible over secondary sources. For example, the Consultant should reference a statistic to its original report, not where it is cited second hand by a newspaper or website.

13. Research Cost and Payment Procedures:

The payment shall be made in two (2) installments as per following plan;

Installments	Amount	Conditionality
1st Installment	50% 1st installment	On signing of the agreement
2nd Installment	50% final installment	On receipt of final report and necessary endorsement from the concerned person.

14. General Terms & Conditions:

- Any document, information or data entrusted to or produced by in connection with this assignment, shall be strictly confidential. After completion of this assignment only BILS shall be eligible to use them. However, in case of any emerging need to use it or any part of it by any academics or other users, prior informing and written endorsement from BILS is mandatory. The copyright of the final product will be endowed with the BILS.
- In the event of any emerging priorities and needs, concerned authority at BILS shall enjoy all authority to reschedule the operational framework of this research assignment.
- BILS 's Finance section shall follow the country's legal framework to deduct VAT & Tax as per requirements.

Application deadline: 25 June 2025