

**Terms of Reference (ToR) for
the Final External Evaluation of the Project:**

**“Toward Mutual Buyer-Supplier Collaboration: Supplier Capacity & Better Buying Platforms”
(also known as “FairCapacity Project”)
Funded by the European Commission (HUM/2018/403-956)**

1. Introduction

These ToR specify the details for the final external evaluation of the above mentioned project implemented by the organization Social Accountability International (SAI) and its partners GSCS and Vertru Technologies, and financed by the European Commission (HUM/2018/403-956) with co-financing by the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the project in achieving its objectives and to identify lessons learned and recommendations for future projects.

2. Project Overview:

The FairCapacity Project aims to address the risks of excessive working hours, unauthorized sub-contracting, and poor working conditions in the apparel industry, through a comprehensive program to quantify the impacts of purchasing practices on supplier production capacity, improve supplier production capacity calculation and planning, and improve labor performance.

Background Information

In today’s global apparel industry, factories face tight deadlines and cost pressures, which ultimately have a negative impact on worker safety and wellbeing. Common measures include scheduling excessive overtime, non-payment of overtime wages, hiring more workers than the factory can safely accommodate, and subcontracting to unauthorized and under-regulated facilities. Poor measurement and forecasting practices for factory capacity have contributed to this problem. In most facilities, managers measure their production capacity using calculations that only account for a small number of the relevant metrics and are based on impractical assumptions. They often ignore common capacity disruptions like worker absenteeism, supply delays, and production bottlenecks, resulting in inaccurate capacity measurements and unrealistic production targets. At the root of this is often the price, time, and volume pressures from brands and retailers (buyers), as their sourcing and purchasing practices prioritize short-term demand and cost savings over long-term stability.

Project Outputs

The Project focused on several key outputs:

- Understanding Production Capacity Variables – The Project collaborated with factory managers, academics, and industry experts to gain a holistic understanding of the factors affecting production capacity in garment manufacturing facilities.
- The FairCapacity Calculator – The Project created an algorithm (the FairCapacity Calculator) for calculating and predicting capacity based on those metrics.
- The FairCapacity Platform – The Project developed the FairCapacity Platform, a block-chain based technology, which incorporates the FairCapacity Calculator and allows buyers to connect directly with suppliers advertising more reliable production capacity.
- Tools, training and technical assistance – The Project provided assessments and customized tools and trainings to help buyers and suppliers improve their production planning, sourcing and purchasing practices, and labor practices.

- Buyer-Supplier Dialogue – The Project encouraged buyers and suppliers to cooperate on sourcing and production processes, and to explore ways to incentivize transparency and responsible practices.

Summary:

Total duration of the action	March 1, 2019 through February 28, 2023
Objectives of the action	<p><u>Overall Objective:</u> Improvement in working hours and working conditions in the apparel supply chain in Bangladesh through increased transparency and traceability in production planning and sourcing</p> <p><u>Specific Objective 1:</u> Increased transparency and improved labor practices in suppliers/factories</p> <p><u>Specific Objective 2:</u> Improved production planning by suppliers/factories through increased visibility on capacity</p> <p><u>Specific Objective 3:</u> Improved purchasing practices by buyers, considering impacts on production planning of suppliers</p> <p><u>Sub-Objective 1:</u> Disincentives and hurdles are addressed and incentives offered to onboard suppliers to a Platform that links buyers and suppliers</p> <p><u>Sub-Objective 2:</u> Buyers and Suppliers/factories have tools and skills to increase transparency and improve labor practices</p>
Partner(s)	Lead: Social Accountability International Partners: GSCS Ltd; Vertru Technologies
Target group(s)	1) Apparel Suppliers/Factories 2) Apparel Buyers/Brands
Final beneficiaries	Managers and workers in the apparel sector in Bangladesh

3. Purpose and focus of the Evaluation

To make an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of the above mentioned project, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

The evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned.

Key principles for the evaluation are:

- Impartiality and independence of the evaluation process from the programming and implementation functions
- Credibility of the evaluation, through use of appropriately skilled and independent experts and the transparency of the evaluation process, including wide dissemination of results
- Participation of stakeholders in the evaluation process, to ensure different perspectives and views are taken into account
- Usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations, through timely presentation of relevant, clear and concise information to decision makers

Key criteria for the evaluation are:

- Relevance
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Impact
- Sustainability
- Innovation and lessons learned

4. Methodology of the Evaluation

The consultancy should be carried on the basis of a desk study, virtual interviews, and an optional field visit to Bangladesh. The desk study should cover the following documents:

- Project contractual documents and further amendments;
- Documents produced throughout the project;
- Evidence of impact collected by the project, including mid-term reports
- Other relevant documentation.

Furthermore, the evaluation should be built on interviews with:

- Project staff
- Beneficiaries as well as partners and participants
- Funders
- Other stakeholders such as academics, associations, NGOs, unions, and other actors (to be defined).

The consultancy should adopt an evaluation methodology coherent with the participatory approach of the project. The consultant/s is expected to conduct a participatory evaluation providing for meaningful involvement by the project partner, its beneficiaries and other interested parties.

The evaluation should therefore focus not only on quantifiable results but also analyze processes and dynamics generated by the project, their scope (in terms of people and other actors involved) and their sustainability.

The evaluator/s are expected to engage with stakeholders and partners not only to collect information and insights, but also to make a (collective) sense of that in order to understand the following:

- Their engagement in the process, how it has been promoted and how it fits with their own work/aims.
- The difficulties they have endured to engage in the project (internal and external).
- Their perspectives on the issues.
- The capacity, awareness, relationships and resources developed during their engagement with the project and what they have been able to do with that.

The proposed framework of the evaluation can be subject to change based on the agreement between SAI, which approves the work plan, and the external evaluator/s.

5. Deliverables

Deliverables include:

- An inception report, to be submitted one week after the beginning of the evaluation, explaining the methodology, work programme and timetable for the evaluation.
- A final report to be submitted at the end of the evaluation, including at a minimum:

Executive summary

Main section:

Introduction:

Project description

Evaluation objectives and methodology

Analysis of the findings according to the evaluation criteria

Conclusions and recommendations

Lessons learned

Annexes, including List of actors consulted, Literature and documentation consulted, etc

6. Indicative Timetable

The consultancy is expected to be carried out during March-June 2023. The tentative schedule is as follows:

- Week 1-2: Desk review of core documents; initial meetings with project director; drafting and validation of the inception report (to be submitted by the end of week 1).
- Weeks 3-5: Interviews and field visits
- Week 6-8: Drafting of final report; debriefing to SAI.

7. Evaluation team

The Evaluation Team is expected to:

- Be composed of a team leader with documented extensive experience on similar evaluations of civil society projects in the field of human rights and business
- Have extensive experience in conducting external evaluations in the context of cooperation for development and a proven record delivering professional results.
- Have sound knowledge of evaluation and data-collection methods.
- Be able to communicate effectively in English.
- Have process management skills, such as facilitation skills.

8. How to apply

Interested candidates are requested to submit an expression of interest by February 24, 2023 with the subject *FairCapacity Project Evaluation 2023* to recruits@sa-intl.org.

The expression of interest should include:

- Professional profile of the evaluating team/ company (CVs of all individuals included in the consultancy team)
- Preliminary estimate of budget

Enquiries regarding the expression of interest/proposal process may be directed to recruits@sa-intl.org.