



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
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## *Better Factories Cambodia (BFC), Better Work Indonesia (BWI), and Better Work Vietnam (BWV) Independent, Mid-Term, Cluster Evaluation*

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam

**Mid-Term:** 7 September 2020 – 9 April 2021

**Evaluation Mode:** *Independent*

**Administrative Office:** *Better Work*

**Technical Office:** *Better Work*

**Evaluation Manager:** *Sharon Chitambo*

**Evaluation Consultant(s):** *Peter Allan, Somith Sok, Indah Budiani, and Anh Ngoc Nguyen*

**Project Codes:** *CMB/12/51/CMB, CMB/12/52/CMB, CMB/12/53/USA, KHM/15/50/NLD, KHM/16/51/AUS, INS/14/51/NET, INS/12/10/MUL/NLD, INS/12/10/MUL/CH, INS/12/10/MUL/AUS, VIE/14/01/NED, VIE/12/06/MUL/CH, VIE/12/06/MUL/AUS VIE/13/06/MUL/USA*

**Donor(s) & Budget:** BFC: Royal Government of Cambodia, GMAC, USDoL, Australia and The Netherlands. Budget US \$11,507,054.22 from 01 January 2019 to 31 December 2022. BWI: Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Australia. Budget US \$13,170,995.20 from 01 January 2019 to 31 December 2022. BWV: Switzerland, the Netherlands, Australia, European Commission, USDoL and VF Asia Ltd. Budget US \$27,340,000 from 01 July 2017 to 30 June 2022.

**Keywords:** *Better Work, Decent Work, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, cluster, impact*

*assessment, sustainability planning, compliance, tri-partite, Covid-19, social dialogue, technology*

### Background & Context

#### **Summary of the Programme purpose, logic, and structure**

*The Better Work (BW) Programme is a unique partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and was launched to improve Labour Standards and competitiveness in global supply chains. Better Work's vision is of a global garment industry that lifts millions of people out of poverty by providing decent work, empowering women, driving business competitiveness, and promoting inclusive economic growth.*

*In addition, BW supports garment producing countries to strengthen the policy and enabling environment for decent work and competitiveness to drive positive outcomes on a much larger scale. BW currently operates in nine countries and covers 1,700 factories. The Better Factories Cambodia (BFC), Better Work Indonesia (BWI) and Better Work Vietnam (BWV) Programmes aim to achieve this global vision whilst operating within their respective country context. All three Programmes operate with an in-country Programme Management Team with support from the Regional Office (RO) and BW Global.*

## **Present Situation of the Programmes**

*These three Programmes were selected for this cluster evaluation as they are all mid-way through their current phases.*

*BFC is currently in phase IV of its Programme which started in 2001. Its objective is to improve the lives of male and female workers, their families, and communities, and to strengthen the competitiveness of the Cambodian garment and travel goods sectors.*

*BWI is currently in phase IV of its Programme which started in 2011. Its objective is to ensure the garment workers are protected and women empowered to actively contribute to an inclusive business environment that respects workers 'rights and that is supported by responsible business practices in the supply chain, effective social dialogue and conducive labour market policies and institutions.*

*BWV is currently in phase III of its Programme which started in 2009. Its objective is to deliver an integrated service model to improve working conditions and business competitiveness by assessing compliance with national laws and international labour standards and offering integrated training and advisory services that support continuous workplace improvements. All three Programmes are in the mid-term of their current phases and are making good progress toward delivering their planned activities and outputs.*

## **Purpose, scope, and clients of the evaluation**

*This is a 'cluster' evaluation, which looks to provide both a country specific focus as well as drawing upon good practice and lessons learned across the BFC, BWI, and BWV Programmes. The main objective of this mid-term, cluster evaluation is to help all stakeholders reflect on what has worked well and what has not, and thus use best practice and lessons learned so far to feed into the*

*continued implementation of the Programmes. This includes the ambition of ensuring lessons learned and good practice can be shared across all three Programmes and the broader BW Global Programme. Additionally, the findings and recommendations of the cluster evaluation aim to provide valuable inputs to informing future Programme design.*

*The main clients of this evaluation are the donor community and BW Global Programme staff including all BFC, BWI, BWV in-country, Regional Office, and HQ staff.*

## **Methodology of evaluation**

*The evaluation followed a mixed-methods approach, considering both primary and secondary data sources, to ensure triangulation in order to arrive at credible, reliable and unbiased findings, as well as a gender-responsive evaluation methodology in line with United Nations (UN) Norms and Standards, guidelines and requirements.*

*A desk review of documentation supplied by the Programme management team was undertaken and virtual meetings held with BW Programme managers in ILO HQ (Geneva), the RO in Thailand and the country Programmes in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. These included both qualitative and quantitative questions. A Most Significant Change narration analysis was conducted. Five different presentations to i) ILO ii) BFC iii) BWI, iv) BWV, and v) Donors were held to present initial findings and gather feedback. The analysis focused on comparing the three Programmes to identify common success multipliers and inhibitors. From this country specific and broader BW Programme findings and recommendations were drawn.*

*The major limitation to the evaluation were the challenges presented by Covid-19. This restricted travel and no direct observation of BW activities was possible. Face-to-face interviews were rare,*

and the large majority were conducted virtually as were the workshops and presentation of initial findings to the stakeholders.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

**Relevance and strategic fit:** All 3 Programmes are still viewed as extremely relevant at the country level. This holds true across all stakeholder groups. The Programmes are relevant to the broader Better Work (BW) Programme and contribute to the strategic objectives of the BW Programme. There are some changing priorities within key stakeholder groups, which will require the Programmes to consider if and how they may wish to alter their support beyond that already provided. Any changes must be thoroughly considered and evidenced-based with suitable attention paid to a sustainability strategy.

**Design and coherence:** All 3 Programmes have based their current phase design on well-researched and documented analysis, drawing upon stakeholder input and previous reporting including past evaluations. Their design contributes to the overall objectives of the BW Global Programme as well as addressing national need. Each Programme's Theory of Change (ToC) is logical and key assumptions and risks (along with mitigating strategies) are well elaborated. The Results-Based Management (RBM) system is not fully utilised in respect of impact measurement and the identification of good practice and lessons learned. There is the potential to standardise elements of a fully functioning RBM that could help inform the broader BW Global Programme.

**Effectiveness:** All 3 Programmes are making satisfactory progress toward achieving their 2022 targets despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The reaction of BW Global, Regional Office, and BW country Programmes to the pandemic was consistently highlighted as effective. Consistent elements that drive effectiveness are; a) the role of the Programme as an independent, objective, and neutral body providing space for conversation, b) the level of

in-country knowledge and expertise of the BW Programme staff both national and international, c) the tailoring of capacity building activities and implementation to the national environment whilst still addressing the BW model for intervention, and d) the movement toward increased attention on social dialogue and brand/buyer engagement. Effectiveness can and should be raised in the areas of social dialogue and brand / buyer engagement.

**Efficiency:** All 3 Programmes use their resources in a broadly efficient manner although efficiency could be improved through the smarter use of technology. Whilst staff costs account for two thirds of all expenditure, the BW Model dictates a heavy staff focus with the need for a substantial and knowledgeable in-country presence, including Enterprise Advisors. The interaction and working relationship of the country offices with the Regional Office and HQ is broadly efficient.

**Impact:** The BW model as promulgated by the three Programmes continues to bring positive impact at worker, trade union, factory, and governmental (policy) level. Total numbers of compliant factories are rising, and the assessment process continues to mature although some aspects could be improved. The assessment process is still the main driver for creating and maintain positive impact. In looking to improve impact greater focus should be placed on social dialogue and the Programme relationship with brands / buyers needs to be re-focused.

**Sustainability:** Although the concept of sustainability is relatively well understood among all stakeholders the practicalities of how it can be achieved are not universally agreed across the three Programmes. Each Programme has taken its own, tailored approach to sustainability however common barriers to achieving sustainability exist across all three Programmes. The three Programmes have been operating for over 10 years when their intervention (under a sustainability lens) was only meant to last for 4 or 5 years. This suggests challenges continue to exist in achieving sustainability.



**Gender:** All 3 Programme's gender strategies are aligned both with BW Global Gender Strategy 2018 – 2022 and with their own country's individual needs and requirements. The Programmes have relatively quickly integrated gender awareness training and female empowerment into their activities and entered effective partnerships with various organizations including brands / buyers, IOs, and CSOs. There is a need to develop a more robust system of identifying the impact that each gender focussed activity has on improving the lives of women and girls. The current approach of counting the numbers trained or passing through Programmes or achieving leadership roles will not provide the data required to prove efficacy.

## Recommendations

### Main recommendations and follow-up

1. Through a maturing Results-Based Management (RBM) system the three Programme Teams in conjunction with M and E expertise at ILO Geneva to formalise the currently informal approach on measuring the outcomes of capacity building activity output. This includes not only activity at the factory level but encompasses all activities including at the macro policy level.
2. ILO BW Programme including representatives from all BW Programmes, and appropriate regional and HQ management to (re)consider the BW Programme's approach to sustainability. This should begin by creating a definition of sustainability and ensuring all partners and stakeholders to BFC, BWI, and BWV understand and accept this definition. The fundamental barriers to sustainability across all three Programmes should be identified and strategies developed to tackle those barriers. This should include a realistic timeframe which may include some form of ILO / BW presence for another decade.
3. At a country Programme level each new phase of a BW Programme to contain i) an express, discrete sustainability strategy, ii) each capacity building activity and output to be examined through a sustainability lens, iii) create an advocacy strategy for sustainability tailored to each stakeholder group.
4. All three BW Programmes to create a centralised repository for assumptions and risks, and the recording of the effectiveness of any mitigating strategies. This will require each CTA to initiate joint discussions to identify the best process and procedure to collect, collate, evaluate, and disseminate information held within this repository.
5. All three BW Programmes in conjunction with the Regional Office and brand / buyer engagement at HQ to consider how best to improve the partnership between brands / buyers and the other constituent partners to the Programmes. Specifically, there needs to be a focus on building a relationship with the brands / buyers which addresses the responsibility of all parties in ensuring continuity of regular, consistent orders.
6. All three BW Programmes to set up a cross-Programme working group to learn lessons, identify good practice, and develop strategies to promote and improve social dialogue.
7. All three BW Programmes in conjunction with the Regional Office and HQ to conduct a full cost / benefit analysis on the efficiency of the working relationship between the country Programmes, the RO and HQ. This should consider the type of support that is provided and how much could or should be transferred to the country Programmes.
8. All three BW Programmes in conjunction with the Regional Office and HQ to identify how the COVID-19 driven use of technology could be continued to improve the efficiency (and effectiveness) of core service delivery. This should include but not be limited to i) virtual factory inspections, ii) virtual training, and iii)

*information management for factory  
assessment analysis.*