

The 2030 Agenda and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs): Briefing for a Stakeholder Dialogue Interactive Exercise

About this exercise

Compared to traditional models of international cooperation, MSPs are a relatively new and innovative approach that require **rethinking and new skills**. In addition to negotiation and compromise building, **understanding different perspectives** is particularly relevant in MSPs. Role-playing can help to learn and practice these skills. In general, role-playing is useful for developing perception, empathy, flexibility, openness, cooperation, communication and problem-solving skills, as well as self-observation and peer observation skills. Further information on the methodology and effects of role-playing can be found [here](#) (only available in German).

In addition, this specific role play provides practical insights into the early stages of developing an MSP. It can help participants identify challenges and opportunities in initiating and designing MSPs.

This interactive exercise can be used, for example, as part of trainings on the 2030 Agenda. It can be a tool for **different target groups**, such as government, business, academia, and civil society actors. It also offers many learning opportunities **regardless of the position within the organization** – participation in the role play is just as relevant for young professionals as it is for senior executives. The exercise can be conducted **both in person and virtually**.

For the purpose of this role play, an EU dialogue process on the topic of social and environmental standards in the textile value chain was chosen as an example. This topic is highly relevant in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, by means of this example, participants gain competencies that offer **added value regardless of the subject matter and region**.

About Partnerships2030

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned Partnerships2030, a **national platform for promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs)**. This platform supports the implementation of the **2030 Agenda**. Involved are the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH** and **Engagement Global – bengo**.

Partnerships2030 **strengthens existing MSPs, launches new initiatives and informs** on all partnership matters. To do so, we advise MSPs on their concerns, offer space to engage with new partners to develop new MSPs, as well as inform on the latest news regarding MSPs. More information about Partnerships2030 can be found on **our website**.

Outline

Time	Content
5 minutes	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and exercise overview<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Introducing the exercise, the groups and other important information.• Division into sub-groups of 5–6 persons each<ul style="list-style-type: none">· The roles per groups are: EU, company, NGO, trade union, moderator and optionally an observer.· The division into groups should best be done in advance in order to be time-efficient during the session.· The groups with 5 participants would have no observer role. In this case, the moderator could share their experience during the group discussion instead of the observer.• Time for participants to read one's own role description and the content briefing sheet<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Roles will be decided in advance, but role descriptions distributed shortly before the session.· Participants should not receive the other role descriptions.
30 minutes	<p>MSP Role play: How to best implement SDGs through partnerships – stakeholder awareness training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 min with 5 min buffer for transfer to and from breakout groups
15 minutes	<p>Joint review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back in plenary with all participants.• The observers present their summaries (each 1–2 minutes).• The group jointly reflects on the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">· What went well?· What was challenging?· What did we learn?· Any other thoughts to share?• The group reflection can happen in one of the following ways:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Individual brain writing: each person writes their own answers in their own notes2. Shared brain writing: each person writes their answers on a shared board, so everyone can see what others are writing.3. Verbal input: participants can share thoughts verbally (within the limited available time)4. Combining 1, 2 and 3: First, a short individual brain writing exercise (maybe even before observer presentation), which is then copied onto a shared board. Then a quick round allowing participants to comment on what they wrote• Final reflections (if useful in the flow of the discussion)



Role: Facilitator – Moderator

Introduction

A long dialogue process on the issue of social and environmental standards in the textile value chain has been ongoing in Brussels. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, global supply chains have recently been disrupted, which further complicates the issue.

The partnership “Alliance for Sustainable Textile Value Chains” is being launched with the purpose to find viable solutions. An EU institution has invited 30 organizations from the private area, civil society, academia and government to join the partnership. These partners are to successfully develop social and environmental standards for the textile value chain. The standards are to be officially agreed upon by all partners and subsequently to be officially recognized by the EU.

Today, a first stakeholder meeting is being held to discuss possible goals of the alliance. Individual interviews have been previously conducted with the invited stakeholders and a first common vision for the partnership has been formulated:

“The Alliance for Sustainable Textile Value Chains will connect different perspectives, knowledge and networks to develop standards for a more sustainable textile value chain.”

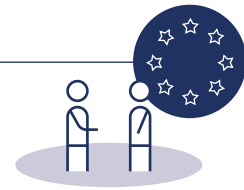
Task

Your role is to facilitate the discussion between the key stakeholders of the partnership: representatives of an EU institution, a company, an NGO and a trade union. You mediate between stakeholders and their interests and aim to achieve agreement on the next steps the partnership will take as well as common goals it sets for itself.

Role specifics

You are commissioned by the EU to moderate the first meeting of the core group of stakeholders and produce promising results. Your Terms of Reference state that the aim is to steer the meeting towards constructive results along common goals of the stakeholders and therefore to work out the common positions of the various stakeholders.

It is also your task to adhere to the allotted time and to steer the group through the moderation in such a way that the results are achieved within 25 minutes.



Role: Political Representative – European Union

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Task

Participate in the discussion with the other stakeholders. Bring in the interests of your organization and try to agree on common goals with the others in order to achieve the vision of the partnership. During this process, please take into consideration: What interests do you and your organization pursue? On what are you willing and unwilling to cooperate or compromise? Where are your red lines?

Role specifics

You work for an EU institution and are free to choose whether to specify if it is the EU Presidency, the Commission or another EU institution. The EU has great interest in putting sustainable textile value chains at the top of the agenda. In the context of rising movements trying to establish different sustainability labels for textile production, the COVID-19 pandemic has further increased public awareness of working conditions in developing economies within different EU Member States. Media reports suggest that in numerous textile factories in different countries employees continue working in crowded factories without or in violation of COVID-19 related distancing rules. Not only is it frightening that factories are not protecting their workers from the virus, but this could also amplify the pandemic in the surrounding communities and the countries in question.

The EU is concerned and hoping for positive and increased public visibility by taking relevant action. The topic has been high on the agenda of several EU bodies. They have announced that they will try to establish a voluntary multi-stakeholder partnership to identify and implement area-wide standards. However, if this does not work, they will consider further action such as legislation and possible sanctions.

You have been given the lead to establish the multi-stakeholder partnership. You, as the head of your unit spearheading this process within the EU, need to convey the seriousness of the situation. You know that non-governmental organizations have long been calling for legislation and that the private area wants to prevent this at all cost.

The political pressure from your upper-management is very strong. The first success stories of the planned partnership are to be announced during the next two months. The EU is to provide initial funding for activities of the partnership.



Role: Private Area – Company

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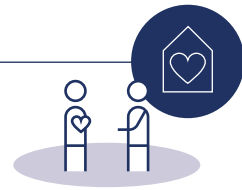
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Role specifics

You work as a department head for a large global fashion company. The company's management has set the goal to change public perception of the company in terms of sustainability. In line with this, your company has pursued several Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in the area of human rights and working conditions. It is cautiously open to the idea of implementing greater sustainability within the whole supply chain, provided costs are manageable.

In recent years, various non-governmental organizations have succeeded in using campaigns to generate massive public pressure. The non-governmental organization present was also significantly involved in this. In addition, there are indications that the EU is looking into legal regulation with regards to implementing high standards concerning human rights and working conditions. The situation for you is more complex. Your supply chains involve a large number of different suppliers and various sourcing countries for different products. Negotiations will not only be costly but also take time. You are concerned that some suppliers you rely on will be unwilling to make changes and that higher costs in the value chain will lessen the profit margin of your company and lower your department's standing within the company.

Your company wants to prevent regulation and to generate success stories in the media through pilot projects of the partnership.



Role: Civil Society – Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

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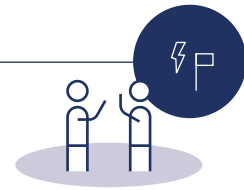
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Role specifics

You work in a managerial capacity for a well-known, international NGO. You may invent a name for your NGO if you like. Your institution has been campaigning for many years for better working conditions in line with human rights, especially within the textile industry. You have conducted several campaigns against some of the companies with which you are now sitting at the table. The campaign work has always been linked to the demand for stronger legally binding social and environmental standards along the entire value chain and calls for more transparency.

Now the leadership of your NGO has decided to join the new partnership as a founding member in an attempt to approach the subject of working conditions and value chains in a different way. You see great potential in the current political pressure to act but are you are also sceptical of the partnership and fear reputational losses in the medium term and thereby a loss of donations. You also want binding legislation rather than voluntary standards. You ask yourself: “Has cooperation with the private area ever led to more sustainability and any real change?”

In this first meeting, you should clarify the red lines of your NGO's involvement in the partnership and find out the risks that this involvement could entail.



Role: Trade union

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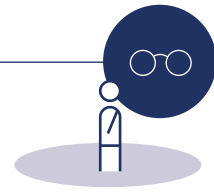
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Role specifics

As chair of the international network within your trade union, you have in-depth knowledge about the situation on the ground. Your demands are especially oriented along SDGs 1, 3, 5, 12 and 13 – no poverty, good health and well-being, gender equality, responsible consumption and production as well as climate action. You have insights regarding the working conditions people are currently facing due to COVID-19. In some countries production has stagnated if not ceased altogether as lockdowns were enforced but many people have tried to return to work as they are running out of money – in most cases no one was compensated for lost working time and no health insurance is provided by the employer. You support the idea that wage compensations, secure contracts and health insurance would both benefit combating the COVID-19 threat and improve working conditions. In addition, in the long run, unions themselves have to be strengthened to fight their own battles effectively on behalf of workers.

The idea of a new partnership between various stakeholder groups is interesting. You are, however, worried that conditions will worsen once the public health situation has stabilized and the public focus has shifted. You agree that solutions must fit each country case and local needs. You want binding legislation rather than voluntary standards and favour identifying good practice examples and scaling them up. You wonder whether it might be possible to generate funding to support (local) programs to strengthen unions.



Role: Observer

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Task

Observe the discussion and listen closely. How do the different stakeholders interact? Which dynamics are particularly helpful, and which are particularly challenging in order to achieve results for the partnership? Your task is to listen, reflect and analyse the communication and relationship dynamics you observe, in order to summarise your insights later for the plenary group. Ideally, also note learning effects within the communication that you are able to observe. On which level are the stakeholders communicating – are these facts, emotions, needs or requests and how actively are they trying to react to and include others’ perspectives?

Role specifics

You observe the stakeholder meeting of the core group of the planned partnership. You closely observe what happens in the meeting, especially conflicts, alliance building or compromise processes.

You summarize your observations and then present them to the plenary in a contribution of 1–2 minutes. You are asked to succinctly describe the main challenges of the group, how the group responded and what facilitated agreements. If relevant, share your personal learnings and highlights.

Background Information about the Fashion Industry

Profit

International Trade:

- The **EU textile and clothing industry is a leader in world markets**, generating a turnover of EUR 178 billion (2018).¹
- **EU exports** to the rest of the world represent **more than 30 % of the world market**.²
- Italy provides the greatest export value, followed by Germany, Spain and France (2017).³
- **More than 70 % of EU imports** of textile and clothing come **from Asia** (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam) (2014)⁴; other main global textile suppliers are China, Turkey, India.⁵

COVID-19 Impact on Countries of Consumption:

Clothing and retail stores recorded **high losses in sales**; the dependency of European clothing retailers on global suppliers meant that many companies had to **cancel, reduce, or even fail to complete already-placed orders**.⁶

People

Employment Figures:

- The EU textile and clothing industry employs 1.7 million people.⁷
- Worldwide over 75 million people work in the area.⁸

Main Rights Issues Facing Fashion Workers in Manufacturing Countries:

- **Inhumane working conditions/“Slave labour”**⁹: Long working hours (~14–16 hours per day, 7 days per week), low wages (in many Asian nations, the area’s minimum wages are less than half of what can be considered a living wage), lack of regular contracts, and systemically hazardous conditions are often reported.¹⁰
- **Gender equality**: Women are particularly vulnerable to low wage levels due to persistent gender pay gaps and are more likely than men to be paid below the minimum wage.¹¹ 75 % of all garment workers are women (2017).¹²
- **Child labour**: ~168 million children in the world are forced to work (e.g. the Sumangali scheme, a practice in South India, which involves sending young girls from poor families to work in a textile factory for three or five years in exchange for a basic wage and an lump sum payment at the end to pay for their dowry).¹³
- **Unacceptable health & safety conditions**: In 2013, 1,134 garment workers lost their life when a textile factory collapsed in Dhaka. Already in 2012, 114 people were killed in a fire at the Bangladeshi firm Tazreen Fashions. In Turkey, 50 workers have died and another 5000 are sick due to blasted sand inhalation in denim factories.¹⁴

1 <https://euratex.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Euratex-annual-report-2018-LR.pdf> (accessed 25 August 2020).

2 https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/fashion/textiles-clothing_en (accessed 24 August 2020).

3 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/422473/european-union-clothing-exports-by-country/> (accessed 24 August 2020).

4 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/140841REV1-Workers-conditions-in-the-textile-and-clothing-sector-just-an-Asian-affair-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 24 August 2020).

5 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/422241/eu-european-union-clothing-import-partners/> (accessed 24 August 2020).

6 <https://www.statista.com/topics/6766/coronavirus-covid-19-impact-on-apparel-and-textiles-in-europe/> (accessed 24 August 2020).

7 <https://euratex.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Euratex-annual-report-2018-LR.pdf> (accessed 25 August 2020).

8 <https://www.unecce.org/info/media/presscurrent-press-h/forestry-and-timber/2018/un-alliance-aims-to-put-fashion-on-path-to-sustainability/doc.html> (accessed 10 September 2020).

9 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/140841REV1-Workers-conditions-in-the-textile-and-clothing-sector-just-an-Asian-affair-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 24 August 2020).

10 <https://www.globalfashionagenda.com/publications-and-policy/pulse-of-the-industry/> (accessed 24 August 2020).

11 ebd.

12 https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/garment-swd-2017-147_en.pdf (accessed 24 August 2020).

13 <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/en/who-we-are> (accessed 24 August 2020).

14 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/140841REV1-Workers-conditions-in-the-textile-and-clothing-sector-just-an-Asian-affair-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 24 August 2020).

- The **COVID-19 outbreak** increases the **risk of loss of wages and dismissals** due to cancelled orders, closed factories, illness, and lack of social safety nets to compensate for the loss of wages. The **risk of infection in production facilities** is high since workplaces often only have a short distance between them, many workers meet at the same time during shift changes and often there are no sanitary facilities for handwashing. In case of illness, many cannot afford treatment because they have no health insurance and many workers feel forced to continue working to secure their income.¹⁵

Planet

Environmental Impact of the Textile and Clothing Industry:

- Clothing accounts for **between 2 % and 10 % of the environmental impact of EU consumption**.¹⁶
- Looking back to the year 2015, the global textiles and clothing industry was responsible for the consumption of 79 billion cubic metres of water, 1,715 million tons of CO₂ emissions and 92 million tons of waste. It is estimated that **by 2030, under a business-as-usual scenario**, these numbers would **increase by at least 50 %**.¹⁷
- The process stages of textile production that cause particularly severe environmental pollution are the **cultivation** and **production of raw fibers** and **textile refinement**.¹⁸

- **Cotton cultivation** accounts for about 25 % of the global insecticide market, about 10 % of the pesticide market and about 3,600–26,900 m³ water per ton of cotton.

Trends

Various ways to address these issues have been proposed, including developing **new business models for clothing rental**, designing products in a way that would make re-use and recycling easier (**circular fashion**), convincing consumers to buy fewer clothes of better quality (**slow fashion**), and generally steering consumer behavior towards choosing more sustainable options.¹⁹

Just to name two examples:

- Brands like Filippa K. are taking pioneering steps by **selling their used clothes in their regular shops** to make buying second-hand clothes easier. Others are offering **long-term warranties** that include offering free repair or replacement of a product, offering repair or instructions for repair, or offering upcycling or instructions for upcycling.²⁰
- The environmental impacts of **bio cotton** can be drastically reduced compared to conventional cotton, as it **uses less water and pollutes less**.²¹ According to a Textile Exchange report, the **share of sustainable cotton increased** from 6 % in 2012 to 2013 to 19 % in 2016 to 2017.²²

¹⁵ <https://www.textilbuendnis.com/en/covid-19/> (accessed 21 August 2020).

¹⁶ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)633143_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI(2019)633143_EN.pdf) (accessed 20 August 2020).

¹⁷ <https://www.globalfashionagenda.com/publications-and-policy/pulse-of-the-industry/> (accessed 20 August 2020).

¹⁸ <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/wirtschaft-konsum/industriebereiche/textilindustrie#die-umweltauswirkungen-der-textilindustrie-> (accessed 24 August 2020).

¹⁹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)633143_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI(2019)633143_EN.pdf) (accessed 31 August 2020).

²⁰ ebd.

²¹ ebd.

²² http://www.biore-foundation.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/Newsletter/Textile-Exchange_Organic-Cotton-Market-Report_2017.pdf (accessed 31 August 2020).

Further practical tips and studies in relation to MSPs are available on our website:
www.partnerships2030.org

Contact: info@partnerships2030.org

As of June 2024