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# From Technical Knowledge to Steering through Advisory

A Methodological Example of engaging with Garment Factories in Bangladesh



Export-oriented garment factories' success hinges on the adherence to evolving international requirements that mandate sustainable and ethical manufacturing practices. Factories can lose contracts if they are not able to practice and document compliance requirements.



**GREEN**   
**BUTTON**  
GOOD FOR PEOPLE.  
GOOD FOR NATURE.

Such compliance requirements are frequently checked and documented by a range of standards and certifications. Towards the consumers, the German Government has issued the **Green Button** | **Grüner Knopf** ([gruener-knopf.de](http://gruener-knopf.de)) label as a sustainable textile production.

In order to obtain that certification label in Germany, brands and retailers must prove compliance in their supply chain. The Green Button recognizes various standards for this, amongst them the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and Made in Green by OEKO-TEX (Standard 100 by OEKO-TEX and STeP by OEKO-TEX).

The GIZ STILE project (2020-2024) was commissioned to prepare export-oriented RMG and textile factories of Bangladesh for qualifying a relevant international certification process -that would enable access to the Green Button.



STILE



## Methodological Support

When preparing the implementation phase, which was designed to consist of a training, gap assessment, advisory services, and other forms of capacity development measures, the GIZ advisors in charge identified checklists as the core vehicle to ensure the successful implementation of the project.

The success for steering the training/qualification process of factories and their staff was identified to lie in the initial setup: together with consultants - GIZ focused on developing technically sound checklists and training materials in accordance with the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and Step by Oekotex standard.



The checklists were used for carrying out gap assessments in the participating factories and measuring development with the scoring system to check the readiness of the factories to pass certification audits as per GOTS or Step by Oeko-tex standard requirement. Upon request, GOTS officials supported in reviewing the developed checklist.



277 factories participated in two 3-day long training sessions on **(1) Social Standards, Health & Safety and Quality Management** and **(2) Environmental Management System and Chemical Management**. After that, each factory benefitted from 9 follow-up visits by consultants that were conducted within a period of 12 to 15 months after the trainings.

## Support in Addressing the Right Target Audience

After onboarding the factories, which is a tricky thing considering how overwhelmed factories are by audits and trainings from brands and other stakeholders, the participating

factories tended to send the compliance department officials to the training sessions. But their influence over the specific production processes is not always too big. That is why we started to target the officials from the merchandising department to attend the trainings and prepare the implementation of the checklist criteria.



A woman wearing a bright yellow hijab and a floral patterned top is focused on working on a purple garment. She is in a factory or workshop setting, with a blurred background showing industrial equipment. A semi-transparent red box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

This was especially relevant for topics like Chemical Management, Environment Management, Environmental Performance, Health & Safety, Social Responsibility, Quality Management, etc. to ensure proper development of the factories as per standard requirements.





## Technical advisory that goes beyond the Green Button Qualification Programme (GBQP)

131 factories are ready for the GOTS certification process and 85 for STeP by Oeko-Tex certification process.

The offer was so attractive to the factories, that by May 2024 already 40 factories had applied for and received the GOTS certificate, 13 factories were certified by STeP by Oeko-Tex. Additionally,



Overall 176 factories participated in the Green Button Qualification Programme for the GOTS certification and 101 factories for the STeP by OEKO-TEX certification to meet the requirement of Made in Green by OEKO-TEX as well as the Green Button. While Member brands from the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles in Germany were requested to nominate their producers, only three did.

The 277 participating factories generated a large database from which GIZ can analyse and conceptualise further steps and improvements.

These tools and methodologies employed by GIZ have not only facilitated factories to engage in compliance but have also set a standard for quality and reliability in implementing sustainability practices.



**Handed over:**

BGMEA / BKMEA and other factory enhancement training offers

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