Social & Labor Convergence Project (SLCP)
Converged Assessment. Collaborative Action. Improved Working Conditions.

Public Stakeholder Consultation - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

A. About This Consultation
B. About the SLCP

A. About This Consultation

A1. What is the purpose of the consultation?
Over the last two years, important resources have been invested to create a converged assessment framework that supports stakeholders' efforts to improve working conditions in the global apparel and footwear supply chain. After successfully conducting two series of pilots, we are now ready for a broader stakeholder consultation on proto2 of the assessment tool that will shape the final version of the publicly available tool before its official launch in Q2 2018.

The project aims to be as <u>inclusive</u> as possible and is actively seeking input from various stakeholders, including those not as closely involved as the SLCP's 150+ signatories, the non-signatory stakeholder group, or the advisory group. As such, external stakeholders are invited to participate in the public consultation launching November 6, 2017. Feedback from the public consultation and stakeholder groups <u>will help to inform and shape this industry-wide effective assessment framework.</u>

A2. How will the consultation be conducted?

There will be three phases in this consultation process:

1. Education around the project and consultation:

To facilitate stakeholders' understanding of the project, the SLCP is holding two webinars that will present the assessment framework and the process that shaped it. To accommodate attendees in various time zones, webinars are scheduled for the following times:

*   For Asia Region: November 2, 2017 at 10 am CET/5pm Asia
*   For Americas Region: November 2, 2017 at 6pm CET/10am PST/1 pm EST

For those unable to attend, webinars will be recorded and will be made available to view on the SLCP website (www.slconvergence.org).

2. Conducting the consultation:

The <u>consultation will take place from November 6th to December 4th via an online survey</u>. Stakeholders are invited to provide their feedback and inputs on the three elements of the assessment framework:

1. Social and Labor Convergence Data Collection and Verification Tool
2. Social and Labor Convergence Verification Protocol
3. Social and Labor Convergence Verifier Guidance

Participants will access the survey and supporting material directly on the SLCP website.

3. Sharing the results:

The high-level, aggregated feedback gathered during the consultation will be posted on the SLCP website. No individual and/or organization will be tied to feedback or comments submitted. Survey participants will receive a more comprehensive communication on the feedback gathered during the consultation process in January 2018.

A3. Is the consultation anonymous?
The consultation is not anonymous, as we would like to be able to further engage with some of the stakeholders after analyzing survey results. Nevertheless, feedback will be aggregated and not attributed to any specific party.

A4. Who will participate?
The consultation is public, which means that any interested party can take part in the online survey. Please feel free to share the survey link within your network.

A5. Who will review the results?
The feedback will be analyzed by the SLCP working groups to help inform proto 3 of the assessment framework.

A6. How long does it take to complete the survey?
It's difficult to gauge as this will depend on how closely you are conducting your review. The online survey is comprised of 41 questions. On average, we anticipate it will take anywhere from 2-4 hours depending on the level and detail of feedback provided.

A7. What will you do with my feedback?
The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that the SLCP framework is as inclusive as possible. All of the feedback from our stakeholders will be reviewed and analyzed to help inform the next iteration of the assessment framework.

A8. Will my feedback be public? Who will see it?
See A7 response above. While the consultation will not be anonymous to internal project working group members as we want to be able to contact some of the stakeholders further to their inputs, feedback provided to the public will be aggregated and not attributed to any specific party.

A9. How will I know that my feedback has been taken into consideration?
The stakeholders' feedback will be analyzed and be integrated in next iterations of the assessment framework so it can contribute to shaping proto 3 of this industry-wide initiative.
The high-level feedback gathered during the consultation will be publicly available on the SLCP website. Survey participants will receive a more comprehensive communication on the feedback gathered during the consultation process. The final version of the tool will be publicly available and will aim to replace the current diversity of assessment tools in 2018.

A10. What if nothing changes?
Over the last two years, important resources have been invested to create a converged assessment framework that supports stakeholders' efforts to improve working conditions in the global apparel and footwear supply chain. The SLCP has successfully conducted one pilot that resulted in version two of the tools and is conducting a second pilot in parallel to the consultation. Experience tells us that piloting and consultation contribute to improving the tool so some of the elements of the assessment framework will evolve. Significant resources have already been invested in this work; the intention is not a major framework overhaul, but making improvements upon the existing framework, which has been developed thus far.

A11. How can I see the tools you want feedback on?

The three elements of the assessment framework will be posted on the SCLP website along with recorded webinars on the project that will provide you with important background information about the project. (http://slconvergence.org/consultation/)

A12. What can I do if I have a problem with accessing the survey?
Please contact us at sandlconsultation@apparelcoalition.org

B. About the SLCP

B1. What is the objective of this project?
To create a converged assessment framework that supports stakeholders' efforts to improve working conditions in the global apparel and footwear supply chain.

B2. What are the deliverables?
- A simple, unified and effective industry-wide assessment tool, which
    - is descriptive – standard agnostic and judgement free,
    - collects relevant and essential social &labor data,
    - and assesses objectively social and labor conditions.
- A verification methodology that ensures the integrity and accuracy of the data collected via the tool
- Terms & Conditions for usage of the converged assessment framework by signatories and end-users (e.g. used without amendments)
- Operational plan to facilitate the adoption of the tool and verification methodology
- A future vision and strategic plan for continuing support and oversight of the SLCP converged assessment framework

B3. Why is this needed?
A common framework for data collection will promote the reduction of duplicated data and audits, and open opportunities to invest resources previously designated for compliance audits into the improvement of social and labor conditions. Collecting common data allows business partners to measure continuous improvement and increase the opportunity for transparency. A convergence of efforts is the first step towards moving the industry towards sustained improvements of working conditions.

B4. Is this a convergence of standards?
No, the mission of the project is to create a converged assessment framework that supports stakeholders' efforts to improve working conditions in the global apparel and footwear supply chain. The assessment framework will be standard agnostic and judgement free.

B5. Does the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) own the project?
No, the SAC is solely facilitating the project at the Project Management Team level. The SAC does not own the work, nor the outcomes. The project uses a multi-stakeholder governance approach. Several bodies have been established in order to create checks and balances, make a clear division between strategic level and operations and to recognize different involvement levels of stakeholders.

B6. How is the project organized?
This project is driven and owned by its signatories. The project has adopted a multi-stakeholder governance approach and several teams have been established in order to create checks and balances along our journey. We have made a clear division between the strategic level and operations to recognize different involvement levels of stakeholders. Established teams include:

- A Steering Committee (SC) that responsible for the strategic direction of the project. It has multi-stakeholder representation. Members are elected by and from amongst the signatories. The SC is led by an independent chair.
- A Project Management Team (PMT) is responsible for the operational aspects, coordinates the Working Groups and makes its recommendations to the Steering Committee.
- The Working Groups drive the development work and consist of representatives of signatories.
- Furthermore, there is a non-signatory Stakeholder Group. They are informed with regular project updates, and are requested to provide input and advice to the PMT.
- An advisory group of non-signatories, who are committed standard holders and multi-stakeholder initiatives, provides advice on key decisions and milestones to the PMT. They also have access to the working groups on Tool Development and Verification.

For more on the project working groups and structure, please visit:
http://slconvergence.org/project/

B7. Can the tool under development be used across industries or would it be specific only to textile/garment factories?
The current version of the tool (question set) is designed to apply not only to apparel and footwear facilities, but could also be used to measure social and labor conditions in facilities producing other products. Once we have successfully completed and rolled out the project in our industry, the next step would be to scale up to other industries.

B8. When will the tool and verification methodology be available?
This project launched in 2015 with an ambitious 2-year completion goal. The plan to launch this assessment methodology is Q2 2018. A working group is focusing on Adoption & Operation and will be developing an operational plan to facilitate the adoption of the tool and verification methodology beyond the initial timeline of the Project. With support from the Steering Committee, the group will create a future vision and strategic plan for continuing support and oversight of the SLCP converged assessment framework.

B9. How was the assessment framework developed?
Over the last two years, important resources have been invested to create a converged assessment framework that supports stakeholders' efforts to improve working conditions in the global apparel and footwear supply chain. To date, the SLCP has over 150+ signatories to the project, which represents a diverse set of stakeholders within the industry.

A project governance model was established and a multi-stakeholder steering committee was elected by the signatories. Additionally, four working groups have been set up, including:

1. Tool Development
2. Verification
3. Stakeholder Engagement
4. Communication and Public Relations
5. Adoption & Operation

2016 was about launching the project, setting up an independent multi-stakeholder governance structure, developing and approving the strategy, engaging with stakeholders and starting the work together with the signatories

The first version of the tool was launched at the end of 2016 and given for pilot testing in 43 facilities and review by all signatories early 2017. The feedback was used for improvement of the next iteration of the tool. The second version of the tool was ready in October 2017. Simultaneously, a verification methodology was set up. These are part of the assessment

framework that is included in this public consultation. In conjunction with the consultation, the second prototype of the tool, which includes verification, will be piloted.