



BRAND PERFORMANCE CHECK

Suit Supply B.V.

this report covers the evaluation period 01-01-2012 to 31-12-2012

ABOUT THE BRAND PERFORMANCE CHECK

Fair Wear Foundation believes that improving conditions for apparel factory workers requires change at multiple levels. Traditional efforts to improve conditions focus primarily on the factory. FWF, however, believes that the management decisions of the clothing brands have an enormous influence for good or ill on factory conditions.

FWF's Brand Performance Check is a tool to evaluate and report on the activities of FWF's affiliate members. The Checks examine how affiliate management systems support FWF's Code of Labour Practices.

In most apparel supply chains, clothing brands do not own factories, and most factories work for many different brands. This means that in most cases FWF affiliates have influence, but not direct control, over working conditions. As a result, the Brand Performance Checks focus primarily on verifying the efforts of affiliates. Outcomes at the factory level are assessed via audits and complaint reports, however the complexity of the supply chains means that even the best efforts of FWF affiliates cannot guarantee results.

Even if outcomes at the factory level cannot be guaranteed, the importance of good management practices by affiliates cannot be understated. Even one concerned customer at a factory can have significant positive impacts on a range of issues like health and safety conditions or freedom of association. And if one customer at a factory can demonstrate that improvements are possible, other customers no longer have an excuse not to act. The development and sharing of these types of best practices has long been a core part of FWF's work.

Improvement of supply chains is a step-by-step process, through which affiliates must address many different issues. FWF affiliates vary greatly in management structures, and have different strengths. The Performance Benchmarking system is designed to reflect these differences, and the many different ways that a company can support better working conditions.

During the Brand Performance Check, FWF staff speak to various employees at the affiliate who have important roles to play in the management of supply chains. FWF verifies the actions of affiliates based on several sources including documentation of activities, financial records, the affiliate's supplier register and staff interviews. Following the Brand Performance Check, FWF summarizes findings in this report, which is made public via www.fairwear.org. The [Brand Performance Check Guide](#) provides more information about the indicators and is available for download.

BRAND PERFORMANCE CHECK DETAILS

Date of Brand Performance Check:

31-07-2013

Conducted by:

Annabel Meurs, Rosan van Wolveren

Interviews with:

Marlou Scholtes (Legal Affairs, FWF contact person)

Roos Fleuren (Head of Purchasing)

Scoring:

Affiliate Benchmarking scores and Performance Benchmarking categories will be published starting in 2014. During 2013, FWF will be testing out the new system and evaluating the appropriate threshold levels for Benchmarking categories.

Audit Summary:

Publication of the audit summary section previously included in Brand Performance Checks has been suspended while Fair Wear Foundation develops a new information system to manage and summarize the data. Future Brand Performance Checks will include improved usability and transparency for audit data.

AFFILIATE INFORMATION	
Headquarters:	Amsterdam
Member since:	07-05-2007
Product types:	Fashion
Production in countries where FWF is active:	Portugal, Macedonia, Italy, China, Turkey
Production in other countries:	Spain, Peru
BASIC REQUIREMENTS	
Workplan for this evaluation period was submitted?	Yes
Projected supplier register for this evaluation was submitted?	Yes
Actual supplier register for this evaluation period has been submitted?	Yes
Membership fee has been paid?	Yes
All suppliers have been notified of FWF membership?	Yes
SCORING OVERVIEW	
% of own production under monitoring	86%

Summary:

Suitsupply is in process of implementing FWFs management system requirements. The sourcing practices of Suitsupply generally support effective implementation of the Code of Labour Practices. The company has a strong presence in China where they have permanent staff who contribute to a systematic approach towards improving working conditions. Suitsupply has a consolidated supplier base and maintains a business relation for more than 5 years with over half of its suppliers. Steps can be taken in the area of living wages and with regards to training workers on their rights. In 2012 the monitoring activities of Suitsupply covered 61% of its purchasing volume. Suppliers that are based in low risk countries (Spain, Portugal and Italy) represent 25% of the purchasing volume. This means that Suitsupply is just below the required percentage based on the duration of FWF membership (which is 90% for the fifth year of membership).

1. PURCHASING PRACTICES

BASIC MEASUREMENTS	RESULT	COMMENTS
Percentage of production in low-risk countries	25%	Countries with relatively low risk of labour violations as defined by FWF.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULT	RELEVANCE OF INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION
1.1 Percentage of production volume from suppliers where affiliate buys at least 10% of production capacity	81%	Affiliates with less than 10% of a factories' production capacity generally have limited influence on factory managers to make changes.	Supplier register provided by affiliate.

Comment: Suitsupply has a consolidated supplier base with a limited number of strong suppliers. Over the past years, the company has increased leverage at its main suppliers. At all the factories in China, Suitsupply is the only international buyer.

1.2 Percentage of production volume from suppliers where a business relationship has existed for at least five years	68%	Stable business relationships support most aspects of the Code of Labour Practices, and give factories a reason to invest in improving working conditions.	Supplier register provided by affiliate.
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Comment: Suitsupply generally aims at having stable business relations with suppliers. The company maintains a business relation for more than 5 years with a large majority of its suppliers.

1.3 Labour conditions are considered when selecting new suppliers	Yes	Including labour conditions considerations in selecting suppliers supports responsible business practices.	Documentation of decisionmaking process; e.g. checklists for buyers, emails, etc.
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Recommendation: FWF recommends Suitsupply to cooperate with local stakeholders to further investigate the situation in a specific country, particularly with regards to China and Turkey. FWF advises Suit Supply to use information from FWF country studies and wage ladders. Health and Safety guidelines are made available by FWF for production staff who visit the factory frequently, to do an initial assessment of health and safety issues. A risk analysis as part of the decision-making process of selecting new suppliers is an important step to mitigate risk and prevent potential problems.

Comment: When selecting a new supplier, Suitsupply takes the level of working conditions into consideration. All production managers and buyers are instructed to conduct a visual inspection of the factory including paying attention to health and safety issues. Suppliers need to show a willingness to cooperate and to improve before Suitsupply can continue the business relationship.

1.4 All new suppliers are required to sign and return the Code of Labour Practices before first orders are placed	Yes	The CoLP is the foundation of all work between factories and brands, and the first step in developing a commitment to improvements.	Signed CoLPs are on file.
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Recommendation: FWF suggests to develop an internal procedure to check and demonstrate that the CoLP is sent to all suppliers. The procedure should be documented and known to all staff who visit suppliers.

Comment: Suitsupply sent the Code of Labour Practices to all new suppliers and has signed copies filed.

1.5 Company conducts audits at all new suppliers before placing orders	No	An important due diligence step. Before placing production orders, affiliates should conduct an audit at all new suppliers to assess risks for CoLP violations.	Audit documentation; must meet FWF audit quality standards.
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Recommendation: It is recommended to conduct an audit at new suppliers before placing production orders to assess risks for CoLP violations. Creating a FWF Wage Ladder to assess the level of wages can be part of the risk assessment.

1.6 Affiliate sources from an FWF factory member	No	When possible, FWF encourages affiliates to source from FWF factory members. The small number of factories in the programme means sourcing from FWF factory members cannot be a requirement.	Supplier register provided by affiliate.
1.7 Percentage of production volume from factories owned by the affiliate	0%	Owning a supplier provides clear accountability for and direct influence over working conditions. It reduces the risk of unexpected CoLP violations.	Supplier register provided by affiliate.
1.8 Supplier compliance with Code of Labour Practices is evaluated in a systemic manner	Yes	A systemic approach is required to integrate social compliance into normal business processes, and supports good decisionmaking.	Documentation of systemic approach: rating systems, checklists, databases, etc.

Comment: Product Managers draft an evaluation report after each visit in which they will also touch base on the main points of the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) of FWF.

1.9 The affiliate's production planning systems support reasonable working hours	Strong integrated systems in place	Affiliate production planning systems can have a significant impact on the levels of excessive overtime at factories.	Documentation of robust planning systems.
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Comment: Suitsupply has a strong production planning system that is a shared process with suppliers. Delivery times are around 6 weeks, depending on production location. Suit Supply is aware of the production capacity of each factory and integrates this in its planning. As a wholesale company they are not guided by deadlines of retailers. The company is flexible to place orders at suppliers in low seasons to limit the effects of peaks in demand and ease production pressure on suppliers in peak periods.

1.10 Percentage of production volume from suppliers where excessive overtime is found by FWF	No audit within period	Excessive overtime is one of the most common labour rights violations in high-risk production countries. It is often caused by poor production planning by brands.	Audits conducted by FWF auditors; Complaints filed via the FWF worker helpline.
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Comment: There were no audits conducted in 2012.

1.11 Degree to which affiliate analyses and mitigates root causes of excessive overtime	Preventive approach	Affiliate production planning systems can have a significant impact on the levels of excessive overtime at factories.	Examples of root cause analyses and resulting changes in production planning/policy.
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Requirement: Suitsupply should investigate to what extent its current buying practices has an effect on the working hours at supplier level. A root cause analysis of excessive overtime should be done to investigate which steps can be most effective to reduce overtime.

Comment: The order placement of Suitsupply generally provides suppliers sufficient space to avoid excessive overtime. The company is aware of the peak months per factory and adjusts its production planning accordingly.

1.12 Affiliate's pricing policy allows for payment of at least the legal minimum wages in production countries	Policy at a country level	The first step towards ensuring the payment of minimum wages - and towards implementation of living wages - is to know the labour costs of garments.	Formal systems to calculate labour costs on per-product or country/city level.
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Requirement: Suitsupply needs to develop a pricing policy where the company knows the labour cost of garments and which allows the payment of at least legal minimum wages in production countries.

Comment: Suitsupply is aware of minimum wage levels in production countries. The company can demonstrate the production costs at a style level and is aware of the overall prices of the factory. Suit Supply does not know the exact cost of labour per product paid by the factory and how this relates to the wages of workers.

1.13 Affiliate actively responds if suppliers fail to pay legal minimum wages	No failures by suppliers to pay minimum wage were reported during the past year	If a supplier fails to pay minimum wage, FWF affiliates are expected to hold management of the supplier accountable for respecting local labour law.	Complaint reports, CAPs, additional emails, FWF audit reports or other documents that show minimum wage issue is reported/resolved.
1.14 Evidence of late payments to suppliers by affiliate	No	Late payments to suppliers can have a negative impact on factories and their ability to pay workers on time. Most garment workers have minimal savings, and even a brief delay in payments can cause serious problems.	Based on a complaint or audit report; review of factory and affiliate financial documents.
1.15 Degree to which affiliate assesses root causes of wages lower than living wages with suppliers	Basic approach	Sustained progress towards living wages requires adjustments to affiliates' policies.	Wage ladders, correspondence with supplier, other relevant documentation.

Requirement: Suitsupply is expected to take an active role in discussing living wages with its suppliers. The FWF wage ladder can be used as a tool to implement living wages. It demonstrates the gaps between workers' wages at a factory and living wages demanded by major stakeholders. The wage ladder can be used to document, monitor, negotiate and evaluate the improvements at its suppliers.

Recommendation: FWF encourages the affiliate to assess the hypothetical cost effects of increasing wages towards benchmarks that are included in the wage ladder. To support companies in this process FWF has developed a calculation model that estimates the effect on FOB and retail prices under different pricing models.

2. MONITORING AND REMEDIATION

BASIC MEASUREMENTS	RESULT	COMMENTS
Total % of own production under monitoring	86%	Measured as a percentage of turnover.
Minimum monitoring threshold based on years of membership (Threshold is 40% first year, 60% second year of membership and 90% thereafter)	Does not meet threshold	

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULT	RELEVANCE OF INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION
2.1 Specific staff person is designated to follow up on problems identified by monitoring system	Yes	Followup is a serious part of FWF membership, and cannot be successfully managed on an ad-hoc basis.	Manuals, emails, etc., demonstrating who the designated staff person is.
2.2 Degree of progress towards resolution of existing Corrective Action Plans	Moderate efforts have been made to address most CAPs	FWF considers efforts to resolve CAPs to be one of the most important things that affiliates can do towards improving working conditions.	Documentation of remediation and followup actions taken by affiliate.

Recommendation: FWF recommends further systemizing internal data with regard to CAPs. By including an overview of discussion points that were covered during meetings with suppliers in the CAP and storing these on the corporate server, the company could keep track of improvements.

Comment: Suitsupply actively works on resolving corrective actions. The CAPs are always shared and discussed with suppliers. Two Suitsupply production managers based in China follow up on CAPs, monitor locally and share status updates with colleagues at the European headquarters.

2.3 Percentage of production volume from suppliers that have been visited by the affiliate in the past financial year	90%	Formal audits should be augmented by annual visits by affiliate staff or local representatives. They reinforce to factory managers that affiliates are serious about implementing the Code of Labour Practices.	Affiliates should document all factory visits with at least the date and name of the visitor.
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Comment: Suitsupply visits all its suppliers at least once a year. The Product Managers visit the suppliers in China and new suppliers four times per year, the other suppliers twice a year. The suppliers in Portugal and Italy are visited more frequently. In China, Suitsupply has two production managers who locally monitor the Chinese suppliers.

2.4 Existing audit reports are collected	No	Existing reports form a basis for understanding the issues and strengths of a supplier, and reduces duplicative work.	Audit reports are on file; evidence of followup on prior CAPs. Reports of quality assessments.
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Recommendation: Existing reports form a basis for understanding the issues and strengths of a supplier, and reduces double work. Suitsupply can ask its suppliers if they have been audited before. Existing audits can be counted towards the monitoring threshold if the quality of the report is assessed using the FWF audit quality tool and corrective actions are implemented.

2.5 Audit Report and Corrective Action Plan (CAP) findings are shared with factory. Improvement timelines are established in a timely manner	Yes	FWF audit reports should be shared and discussed with suppliers within two months of audit receipt. Timely sharing of information and agreement on corrective actions is essential for improvement. A reasonable time frame should be specified for resolving findings.	Corrective Action Plans, emails; findings of followup audits; brand representative present during audit exit meeting, etc.
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2.6 A structured approach is used to address issues that occur at multiple suppliers	Yes	Issues that occur in multiple factories often need to be addressed in a systemic manner, especially when the root causes are located in brand management choices or from regionally specific issues (e.g. fire safety, gender discrimination and harassment).	Documentation of a systemic approach: root cause analyses, productivity assessments, guidance documents, internal system changes, etc.
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Recommendation: FWF suggests that Suitsupply analyses whether findings from a factory audit could occur at other suppliers as well. This will lead to a preventive approach where issues are addressed in a systematic manner. The analysis should focus on own brand practices as well as regional or country specific issues (such as fire safety or gender discrimination). Suitsupply can focus more on those issues for suppliers in Macedonia and Turkey and research the link with own brand practices.

Comment: Suitsupply has a regional approach where it comes to its suppliers in China; issues are addressed in a systematic manner as a result of having staff permanently available in China.

2.7 Affiliate cooperates with other customers in resolving corrective actions at shared suppliers	No CAPs active or no shared suppliers during past year	Cooperation between customers increases leverage and chances of successful outcomes. Cooperation also reduces the chances of a factory having to conduct multiple Corrective Action Plans about the same issue with multiple customers.	Shared CAPs, evidence of cooperation with other customers.
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Recommendation: Cooperation among costumers increases leverage, the chances of successful outcomes and long term improvements. A first step can be identifying other clients and their commitment to improving working conditions.

2.8 Monitoring requirements are fulfilled for production in low-risk countries	Yes	Low risk countries are determined by the presence and proper functioning of institutions which can guarantee compliance with basic standards.	Documentation of visits, notification of suppliers of FWF membership; posting of worker information sheets, completed questionnaires.
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Comment: Suitsupply visits its suppliers in low risk countries frequently. The suppliers are informed of FWF membership and the Worker Information Sheet is posted.

2.9 External brands resold by the affiliate who have completed and returned the external brand questionnaire. (% of external sales volume)	No external brands resold	FWF believes it is important for affiliates that have a retail/wholesale arm to at least know if the brands they resell are members of FWF or a similar organisation, and in which countries those brands produce goods.	Questionnaires are on file.
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Requirement:

2.10 External brands resold by affiliates that are members of another credible initiative. (% of external sales volume)	No external brands resold	FWF believes affiliates who resell products should be rewarded for choosing to stock external brands who also take their supply chain responsibilities seriously.	Supplier register; Documentation of sales volumes of products made by FWF or FLA members.
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3. COMPLAINTS HANDLING

BASIC MEASUREMENTS	RESULT	COMMENTS
Number of worker complaints received since last check	0	At this point, FWF considers a high number of complaints as a positive indicator, as it shows that workers are aware of and making use of the complaints system.
Number of worker complaints in process of being resolved		
Number of worker complaints resolved since last check		

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULT	RELEVANCE OF INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION
3.1 A specific employee has been designated to address worker complaints	Yes	Followup is a serious part of FWF membership, and cannot be successfully managed on an ad-hoc basis.	Manuals, emails, etc., demonstrating who the designated staff person is.
3.2 System exists to check that the Worker Information Sheet is posted in factories	Yes	The Worker Information Sheet is a key first step in alerting workers to their rights.	Photos by company staff, audit reports, checklists from factory visits, etc.

Recommendation: Suitsupply does not have a formalized internal system to check whether the CoLP is posted. However, staff of Suit Supply who frequently visit suppliers always check whether the CoLP is posted. FWF recommends to document and track this process of ensuring the CoLP, including contact information of the local complaints handler of FWF, is posted in factories in a location that is accessible to workers.

<p>3.3 Percentage of audited factories where at least half of workers are aware of the FWF worker helpline</p>	<p>No existing/active CAPs</p>	<p>The FWF complaints procedure is a crucial element of verification. If factory-based complaint systems do not exist or do not work, the FWF worker helpline allows workers to ask questions about their rights and file complaints.</p>	<p>Percentage of audited factories where at least 50% of interviewed workers indicate awareness of the FWF complaints mechanism.</p>
<p>3.4 All complaints received from factory workers are addressed in accordance with the FWF Complaints Procedure</p>	<p>No complaints were received during past financial year</p>	<p>Involvement by the FWF affiliate is crucial in resolving a complaint at a supplier.</p>	<p>Documentation that affiliate has completed all required steps in the complaints handling process.</p>
<p>3.5 Cooperation with other customers in addressing worker complaints at shared suppliers</p>	<p>No complaints were received during past year</p>	<p>Because most factories supply several customers with products, involvement of other customers by the FWF affiliate can be critical in resolving a complaint at a supplier.</p>	<p>Documentation of joint efforts, e.g. emails, sharing of complaint data, etc.</p>

4. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULT	RELEVANCE OF INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION
4.1 Staff at affiliate is made aware of FWF membership requirements	Yes	Preventing and remediating problems often requires the involvement of many different departments; making all staff aware of FWF membership requirements helps to support cross-departmental collaboration when needed.	Emails, trainings, presentation, newsletters, etc.

Comment: Suitsupply staff is kept informed about the requirements of FWF membership through internal meetings. All new employees are introduced to FWF membership.

4.2 Advanced training is provided to staff in direct contact with suppliers on CoLP requirements	No	Sourcing, purchasing and CSR staff at a minimum should possess the knowledge necessary to implement FWF requirements and advocate for change within their organisations.	FWF Seminars or equivalent trainings provided; presentations, curricula, etc.
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Recommendation: It is recommended to enrol staff of Suitsupply in the trainings and seminars FWF offers in order to strengthen integration of FWF requirements throughout the company.

4.3 Agents are informed of CoLP requirements and act to support their implementation	Yes	Agents have the potential to either support or disrupt CoLP implementation. It is the responsibility of affiliate to ensure agents actively support the implementation of the CoLP.	Correspondence with agents, trainings for agents, FWF audit findings.
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Recommendation: FWF recommends Suitsupply to further strengthen the involvement of agents to support the implementation of the CoLP.

4.4 Factory participation in Workplace Education Programme (where WEP is offered; by production volume)	0%	Lack of knowledge on best practices related to labour standards is a common issue in factories. Good quality training of workers and managers is a key step towards sustainable improvements.	Documentation of relevant trainings; participation in Workplace Education Programme.
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Recommendation: Suitsupply is recommended to enrol a greater number of its suppliers in FWFs Workplace Education Programme (WEP), which offers trainings factories producing for FWF members. WEP trainings contribute to social dialogue between workers and management. The introductory training of WEP builds awareness of labour standards and strengthens dispute handling mechanisms. It is made available to FWF members free of charge.

4.5 Factory participation in trainings (where WEP is not offered; by production volume)	0%	In areas where the Workplace Education Programme is not yet offered, affiliates may arrange trainings on their own. Trainings must meet FWF quality standards to receive credit for this indicator.	Curricula, other documentation of training content, participation and outcomes.
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Recommendation: FWF recommends affiliates to arrange trainings on their own in areas where the Workplace Education Programme is not yet offered. Trainings must meet FWF quality standards to receive credit for this indicator.

5. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULT	RELEVANCE OF INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION
5.1 Supplier register for the previous financial year is verified as being complete and accurate	Yes	Any improvements to supply chains require affiliates to first know all of their suppliers.	Completed supplier register; Financial records of previous financial year.

Comment: FWF has been able to verify the supplier register as complete and accurate. Suit Supply states no part of its production is outsourced to subcontractors.

5.2 A system exists to allow purchasing, CSR and other relevant staff to share information with each other about working conditions at suppliers	Yes	CSR, purchasing and other staff who interact with suppliers need to be able to share information in order to establish a coherent and effective strategy for improvements.	Internal information system; status CAPs, reports of meetings of purchasing/CSR; systematic way of storing information.
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Recommendation: FWF recommends Suitsupply to publish one or more of the following reports on its website: Brand performance check, Audit Reports, suppliers register. Good reporting by members helps to ensure the transparency of the affiliate and FWF's work.

6. TRANSPARENCY

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULT	RELEVANCE OF INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION
6.1 Communication about FWF membership adheres to the FWF communications policy	Yes	FWF membership should be communicated in a clear and accurate manner. FWF guidelines are designed to prevent misleading claims.	Logo is placed on website; other communications in line with policy. Affiliates may lose points if there is evidence that they did not comply with the communications policy.

Comment: Suitsupply informs its customers about FWF membership through its website in a clear and accurate manner. It also sends weekly newsletters to customers worldwide.

6.2 Affiliate engages in advanced reporting activities	No	Good reporting by members helps to ensure the transparency of FWF's work and shares best practices with the industry.	Affiliate publishes one or more of the following on their website: Brand Performance Check, Audit Reports, Supplier List.
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Recommendation: FWF recommends the affiliate to publish one or more of the following reports on its website: Brand performance check, Audit Reports, suppliers register. Good reporting by members helps to ensure the transparency of the affiliate and FWF's work.

6.3 Social Report is submitted to FWF and is published on affiliate's website	No	The Social Report is an important tool for brands to transparently share their efforts with stakeholders.	Report adheres to FWF guidelines for Social Report content.
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Requirement: FWF approach requires transparency on affiliates work towards social standards. The social report needs to be submitted to FWF and published on affiliate's website.

7. EVALUATION

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULT	RELEVANCE OF INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION
7.1 Systemic annual evaluation of FWF membership is conducted with involvement of top management	Yes	An annual evaluation involving top management ensures that FWF policies are integrated into the structure of the company.	Meeting minutes, verbal reporting, Powerpoints, etc.

Recommendation: It is advised to conduct an annual evaluation involving top management that ensures FWF policies are integrated into the structure of the company. Evaluation should include input from relevant external stakeholders and feedback from suppliers.

7.2 Percentage of required changes from previous Brand Performance Check implemented by affiliate	45%	In each Brand Performance Check report, FWF may include requirements for changes to management practices. Adherence to these requirements is an important part of FWF membership.	Affiliate should show documentation related to the specific requirements made in the previous Brand Performance Check.
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Comment: Suitsupply has improved significantly on information management. The requirements regarding the supplier register have been follow up on. Moreover, Suit Supply has remediated findings from earlier audits where noncompliance with local law was found. The social report requirement has not yet been followed up.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FWF

Suitsupply would appreciate less documentation required by FWF that takes up a lot of time and resources of the FWF contact person. Also, Suitsupply sees more opportunities for FWF to positively communicate about the brand's activities and successes.