Call for expression of interest

# Options for an ambitious and integrated EU strategy in support of fair and sustainable textile supply chains

Deadline for EOI submissions: 16th of June 2019

## **Commissioning organisations**

**Oxfam-Magasins du monde** (OMdm) is one Belgian affiliate of Oxfam International, a confederation of 20 organisations that fight worldwide against injustice and poverty. As a social economy organisation, it promotes alternative economic models through its network of Fair Trade shops in Brussels and in Wallonia, and its awareness raising campaigns supported by its movement of 4,500 volunteers.

The **Fair Trade Advocacy Office** (FTAO) is a joint Fair Trade movement political advocacy office, based in Brussels. The FTAO leads the Fair Trade movement political advocacy at European Union level and contributes to the strengthening of the political advocacy capacities of the global Fair Trade movement.

The **World Fair Trade Organization-Europe** (WFTO-Europe) is the European branch of WFTO (global), the worldwide network of Fair Trade organisations. It is formed by more than 100 members, among them Fair Trade enterprises, Fair Trade networks and Fair Trade support organisations.

This piece of research is commissioned in the framework of the EU-financed project entitled "***Trade Fair, Live Fair****: Raising Awareness and Mobilizing the European Public to Advance Consumption patterns that Nurture the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs*)”.

## **Background**

Following the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh in 2013, a series of attempts have been made for a **better regulation of the textile sector**. A few sectorial initiatives have thus been launched or accelerated, especially on workers’ rights aspects (e.g. the Bangladesh Accord, under the pressure of organizations such as the Clean Clothes Campaign). However, they were limited in number, ambition and/or scope, while being often set up at the national level (e.g. [German Partnership for Sustainable Textiles](https://www.textilbuendnis.com/en/) or the [Dutch Covenant for Sustainable Garments and Textiles](https://www.imvoconvenanten.nl/garments-textile?sc_lang=en))[[1]](#footnote-1). Progress at the European Union level has been particularly scarce: in spite of pressure by the European Parliament (cf. 2017 report[[2]](#footnote-2)), the Commission abandoned, after a long process, its ‘EU Flagship initiative’ and presented instead a less ambitious development cooperation package[[3]](#footnote-3). Meanwhile, a research analysis of regulatory options is still awaited from the European Commission´s DG Devco[[4]](#footnote-4).

In parallel, awareness around the **environmental impacts** of textile production and consumption patterns has increased, thanks to civil society organizations such as Fashion Revolution or Greenpeace. These impacts include the use of toxic chemicals[[5]](#footnote-5), depletion of water sources and forests, huge levels of pre and post-consumer waste, global climate emissions[[6]](#footnote-6) as well as water, soil, and air pollution. More recently, concerns arose about the release of plastic microfibres into the water supply during washing of clothes, strongly contributing to ocean pollution[[7]](#footnote-7). Measures at the EU level to answer these challenges are for now scattered throughout various and mostly nonspecific or non-binding policies. Examples: the [Textiles Regulation](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/fashion/textiles-clothing/legislation_en), Directives on [Packaging Waste](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/packaging/index_en.htm), [Landfill](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/landfill_index.htm) and [Waste](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.150.01.0109.01.ENG)[[8]](#footnote-8) (included in the 2018 [circular economy package](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm)), the ban of certain toxic substances under REACH[[9]](#footnote-9), or voluntary instruments such as the [EU Ecolabel](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/) and [Green Public Procurement](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm). But the Commission has identified textiles as a key area for further policy action in its Staff Working Document[[10]](#footnote-10), while Frans Timmermans, vice-president of the current EC and lead candidate in the next EU elections for the PES group, recently stated*[[11]](#footnote-11)* that *“there is a great need for a European Textiles strategy to tackle microplastics and recyclability”[[12]](#footnote-12)*.

**Objectives**

Given the EU policy and legislative context summarized above, the commissioning organisations identified the need for an **ambitious and integrated EU strategy for fair and sustainable textile supply chains**.

A key characteric of such a strategy would be the **covering of both social and environmental impacts** of the entire supply chain (from the growing of the fabrics to the consumer), in a logic of “*greater coherence between development cooperation, environmental, labour, trade and other external policy tools to promote sustainable garment value chains”*[[13]](#footnote-13)*.*

More specifically, the research commissioned by the present document should **review regulatory needs** to increase the fairness and sustainability of textile goods entering the EU market and **identify possible options for additional regulation / programs**.

The advantages and disadvantages of those different options should be analyzed and a **hierarchy of actions** provided in a set of final recommendations (recognizing that these actions are not mutually exclusive and can be combined in various ways).

## **Options**

Notwithstanding other options that the contractors may identify, the commissioning organisations would like a detailed analysis of the following options.

1. **Market access.** What are the legal options to ensure that textile products placed on sale on the EU market are required to meet minimum social and environmental criteria for responsible sourcing (ex. ban of toxic substances, respect of workers’ rights)? One specific area of interest concerns the legal obligations to provide easily accessible and transparent information on manufacturing conditions and materials’ properties.
2. **Incentives for good practices.** What measures could be put in place to incentivise the uptake of most virtuous products? An example of measure to consider would be public procurement rules in favour of fair, ethical and green products as well as mission-driven social enterprises, such as Fair Trade Enterprises. The optimal criteria for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes should also be considered, as collecting vast amounts of textile waste cannot automatically lead towards sustainability and circularity if waste is not limited, properly sorted for reuse or different high value purposes[[14]](#footnote-14).
3. **Ecodesign-style regulatory tools for textiles**. The [Ecodesign Directive](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/sustainability/ecodesign_en) currently applies to the energy efficiency of electrical products while the circular economy package mainly considers products at their ‘end of life’[[15]](#footnote-15). There is scope for developing new ‘Ecodesign-style’ legislation that would apply to other material streams such as textiles. This could help transform the clothing production market through high minimum design standards, taking a Lifecycle Assessment approach. The most ambitious criteria for durability and sustainability should be considered based on an analysis of existing voluntary standards and certification schemes.
4. **Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives** (MSI). This part would explore the feasibility of an EU-level MSI on textiles, potentially based on the ‘germ’ of level playing field created by the agreement between Dutch and German MSIs. The overarching goal would be to agree on common processes, methodologies and projects to improve social and environmental conditions along textile supply chains, e.g. implementation of due diligence procedures by companies or joint capacity building programmes in producing countries[[16]](#footnote-16).
5. Textile specific (mandatory) **Due Diligence on Human Rights and the environment**.Such a provision would place requirements on textile companies to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for risks of high social and environmental impacts within their supply chains. Here, the advantages of a sectorial due diligence legislation in such a high-risk value chain would be explored, drawing experience from similar initiatives in other sectors, e.g. Timber or Conflict Minerals Regulations. Elements to be considered would include: guidance to companies for operationalization, targeting the end part of the chains (e.g. cotton smallholders, artisans, homebased / informal workers), complementarity with multisectorial EU mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) and use of voluntary certification schemes.
6. **Development cooperation.** Building up on DG Devco 2017 package[[17]](#footnote-17), this part would provide additional and potentially innovative options in terms of policies, capacity-building programmes and financial assistance. The overarching goal being to further support the development of fair, transparent and sustainable textile supply chains, promote the proliferation of good practices and/or to improve the standards of governance and law enforcement capacities of producing countries.

## **Methodology**

* In a context of increasing concern for both fairness and environmental justice, this research will inform the debate around an ambitious and integrated EU strategy for fair and sustainable textile supply chains. In that sense, the strategy proposed should be designed with a ‘Commission-wide’ approach (e.g. DGs ENV, DEVCO, GROW, TRADE).
* Proposed methodology: desk research (especially on existing sectorial EU legislations, for potential adaptation to the textile sector), combined with interview of selected stakeholders, i.e. policy-makers, academics, NGOs experts.
* The commissioning organisations have partial analysis on various of the options identified above. They will be provided to the appointed contractors. This will allow the contractors to spend more time on those options for which the commissioning organisations have less existing available analysis.
* The expected target groups will be newly elected MEPs and other EU institutions staff willing to work collectively on the matter, as well as interested CSOs from social and environmental movements.
* Particular attention should be paid to the coherence with the EU approach to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 agenda[[18]](#footnote-18) as well as the 7th Environmental Action Programme’s goal for non-toxic material cycles.

**Maximum available budget**

* € 15,000 (including VAT).

## **Expected results**

* Draft report by 30th of September 2019, including, as a minimum, an in-depth analysis of most relevant options.
* Presentation at workshop (physical or on-line webinar) by 30th of September 2019: preliminary findings and feedback from relevant stakeholders.
* Final report due by 15th of November 2019. The final report should include, as a minimum, an executive summary, a detailed analysis of proposed EU interventions and section with conclusions and recommendations. The final report will be presented in the shape of a non-official (or “shadow”) proposal for an ambitious and integrated EU strategy in support of fair and sustainable textile supply chains.
* Presentation at workshop (physical or on-line webinar) by 15th of November 2019: summary of end results and recommendations to other FTOs / allied CSOs.
* Presentation during an event in the European Parliament (date to be determined).

## **Request for Expression of Interest – due by 16th of June 2019**

The commissioning organisations invite experienced contractors to indicate their interest in undertaking the research described above. Please note that only consultants based in an EU Member State can submit offers. Interested contractors should provide:

* A brief description of their main areas of expertise and experience with regards to EU and other regulatory frameworks and with fair and sustainable textile supply chains ;
* A letter of intent (not exceeding 2 pages) indicating the approach they would take and their recommended methodology ;
* A financial proposal (including all expenses and VAT) along with a project timeline ;
* Interested applicants may choose to submit up to five pages of supplementary information (such as CV of main person in charge or case studies of previous work).

Please submit your expression of interest no later than the 16th of June 2019 to Patrick Veillard (Patrick.Veillard@mdmoxfam.be). The commissioning organisations reserve the right not to accept any expression of interest submitted.

1. Those Multi-Stakeholders Initiatives (MSI) typically bring together companies, trade unions, standards organisations, CSOs, etc., in dialogue, under the supervision of public authorities. Source: [ECDPM. March 2019. Multi-stakeholder initiatives on garments and textiles in Germany and the Netherlands. Towards achieving collective impact? Briefing note no. 100.](https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/BN-100-Multi-stakeholder-initiatives-in-Germany-and-the-Netherlands-1.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [European Parliament. 28/03/2017. Report on the EU flagship initiative on the garment sector.](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2017-0080_EN.html?redirect) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [European Commission. 24/04/2017. Sustainable garment value chains through EU development action.](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/garment-swd-2017-147_en.pdf)

[Commission staff working document.](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/garment-swd-2017-147_en.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. On 18/10/2018, in the framework of the annual EP Fair Trade breakfast, the EU Development Commissioner N. Mimica announced the “*launch a study to evaluate needs and analyze possible options to complement our current approach and instruments*”, but nothing has been published so far. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Historically, NGOs have mostly raised the alarm around the health and environmental hazards associated with toxic chemical used for textiles’ manufacturing, *inter alia* through the Greenpeace ‘Detox’ campaign. See for an assessment of the campaign: [Greenpeace International. 12/07/2018. Destination Zero – Seven Years of Detoxing the Clothing Industry.](https://www.greenpeace.org/international/publication/17612/destination-zero/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Producing vast quantities of natural and synthetic fibres and transporting textiles around the world throughout the different stages of manufacture results in over 1.2 billion tonnes of CO2 emissions a year. Source: [EMF. 2017. A New Textiles Economy. Redesigning fashion’s future.](https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications/a-new-textiles-economy-redesigning-fashions-future) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [EP briefing. January 2019. Environmental impact of the textile and clothing industry. What consumers need to know.](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI%282019%29633143_EN.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This new waste Directive requires separate collection of textiles at the latest by 2025. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [EC. 10/10/2018. Restriction of CMR substances in textile articles and clothing for consumer use under REACH. Regulation (EU) 2018/1513.](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cpatrick.veillard%5CDownloads%5CPART-2018-559267V1.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [EC. 04/03/2019. Sustainable Products in a Circular Economy – Towards an EU Product Policy. Framework contributing to the Circular Economy. Commission staff working document.](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/sustainable_products_circular_economy.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. As reported by the European Environmental Bureau, after a meeting between F. Timmermans and various environmental NGOs on 18th April 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. It should also be noted that at the 4th UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi in March 2019, the UN launched an ‘Alliance on Sustainable Fashion’ with the aim of driving ‘industry-wide action’ to reduce fashion’s negative environmental, social, and economic impact. [UN News. 25/03/2019. UN launches drive to highlight environmental cost of staying fashionable.](https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/1035161) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. [Council of the European Union. 19/05/2017. Council conclusions on Sustainable Garment Value Chains.](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24008/garment-value-chains-st09381en17.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. the obligation on Member States to separately collect textiles by 2025, which cannot work without a proper EPR system. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. [Mosmuller W. 25/04/2018. Time for an eco-design revolution on carpets and mattresses. Euractiv.](https://www.euractiv.com/section/circular-economy/opinion/time-for-an-eco-design-revolution-on-carpets-and-mattresses/) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [ECDPM. March 2019. Multi-stakeholder initiatives on garments and textiles in Germany and the Netherlands. Towards achieving collective impact? Briefing note no. 100.](https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/BN-100-Multi-stakeholder-initiatives-in-Germany-and-the-Netherlands-1.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [European Commission. 24/04/2017. Sustainable garment value chains through EU development action.](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/garment-swd-2017-147_en.pdf)

[Commission staff working document.](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/garment-swd-2017-147_en.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. More specifically SDG 12 (sustainable production and consumption). See also: [EC. 22/11/2016. Next steps for a sustainable European future. European action for sustainability. COM(2016) 739 final.](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-next-steps-sustainable-europe-20161122_en.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)