



## Global apparel and footwear brands join the Life and Building Safety (LABS) Initiative in India and Vietnam

-- LABS is designed to protect workers from structural, fire, and electrical safety risks in apparel and footwear producing factories

-- Major brands including Bestseller, Gap Inc., PVH, Target, VF Corp., and Walmart participate in the LABS Initiative

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Vietnam, August 6, 2019/ India, August 28, 2019: IDH, The Sustainable Trade Initiative has launched its Life and Building Safety (LABS) initiative for the apparel and footwear sectors in India and Vietnam. Major brands including Bestseller, Gap Inc., PVH, Target, VF Corporation, and Walmart have joined the program that will operate in all major industrial hubs, covering small, medium, and large enterprises in these countries.

Together, in 2019, these brands cover hundreds of factories and around 163,400 workers in Vietnam, and 125,000 workers in India.

With a pressing need to protect workers from structural, fire and electrical safety risks, several leading apparel brands approached IDH to leverage learnings from Bangladesh and replicate them in other key apparel sourcing countries. This led to the development of the LABS Initiative. The LABS participants include a group of European, Asian and US-based businesses, facilitated by the LABS Secretariat, which engages with local

stakeholders such as industry associations, CSOs, governments, and institutes to create better safety policies and provisions. The LABS standard and methodology are based on international best practices and codes, such as the International Building Code, National Building Code of India among others. Under LABS, in addition to applicable country laws, factories commit to adhering to a harmonized, country level standard around structural, fire, and electrical safety.

The LABS initiative has been launched in Vietnam on August 6, and in India on August 28. IDH will support the overall facilitation of LABS and development of operational set up in the two countries.

Pramit Chanda, LABS Spokesperson said, *"The tragic events at apparel factories in the last few years have brought to fore the pressing need to address life and building safety in the industry. Learning from such events, the Life and Building Safety (LABS) Initiative was*

### Key points:

- The program will operate in all major industrial hubs in each country, covering both small, medium, and large enterprises.
- Together, these brands cover hundreds of factories and around 163,400 workers in Vietnam, in 2019.
- In India: Assessments will be carried out pan India in Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Chennai among other states.
- In India, about 125,000 workers will benefit, in 2019.

*established. Aimed at improving worker safety in the apparel and footwear industries, LABS effectively identifies and mitigates the potential risks related to fire, electrical, and structural building safety and evacuation. LABS is a coherent and consistent worker-safety program to assess factories and provide a framework for monitoring, mitigation and remediation.”*

LABS is aimed at setting a benchmark safety standard against which apparel, and footwear factories are assessed. The LABS assessment is not a code-compliance check; however, it defines a required level of safety based on international best practices, considering the local context. All technical standards consist of an interrelated set of measures which, taken together, are assumed to provide an acceptable level of safety in a building.

**About LABS**

The Life and Building Safety (LABS) Initiative is an industry-driven program, in which multiple brands and retailers are joining forces together with public and civil society organizations, to mitigate preventable fire, electrical and structural buildings safety risks in key apparel and footwear producing countries.

**Key Contacts:**

Mrinalini Prasad, Communication Officer, IDH  
[prasad@idhtrade.org](mailto:prasad@idhtrade.org)

Elske Stevenson, Communication Manager, IDH  
[stevenson@idhtrade.org](mailto:stevenson@idhtrade.org)

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