

Life and Building Safety Initiative

ANNUAL REPORT 2022





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“Perhaps the most important ingredient in LABS’ success is our multi stakeholder-level approach. We realise that to achieve systematic and sustainable change in the industries we target, we must work with the key players: the brands and factories, national and local government, NGOs and CSOs. Because ultimately these are the institutions that can embed enduring and significant improvements.

At the same time, we put a large amount of our energy into working directly with and for the people this is primarily about: the factory owners, workers and management. It is this combination of strategic, high-level collaboration to pave the way for change on the one hand and on the other, the roll-your-sleeves-up, practical support on the ground that ensures real safety improvements are implemented in real factories.

Underpin those two elements with the strategies we’ve developed for scaling and expanding our operations quickly and effectively, and I believe you see why it is that LABS has achieved what it has. We continue to invite partners to join LABS and work towards safer working conditions.”

“ It is the combination of strategic, high-level collaboration to pave the way for change on the one hand and on the other, the roll-your-sleeves-up, practical support on the ground that ensures real safety improvements are implemented in real factories.

Pramit Chanda
Global Director Textiles & Manufacturing, IDH, and LABS Spokesperson



Executive summary

LABS (Life and Building Safety Initiative) strives to ensure better working conditions for Apparel, Footwear & Accessories workers. We do this by promoting a safe, secure working environment. Helping organisations identify serious structural, fire and electrical safety risks, and providing them with sustainable solutions and improvements to address those risks.

Impact on the ground...

The LABS program is currently active in India, Vietnam and, since 2022, Cambodia, and we will be expanding into Indonesia by mid-2023. Since our launch in September 2019, we have made significant progress. On the ground, we have collaborated with **over 400 factories** in India, Vietnam and Cambodia to address pressing safety issues, resulting in a positive impact on the lives of **over 843,000 workers**. As of December 2022, we had **successfully remediated 77% of issues** identified in factories (up from 66% in 2021).

...and in the board room

At a strategic level, LABS continued to engage with key organizations in the countries where we operate in order to drive joint industry commitment to safety and embed long-term local/national ownership. These include the National Stakeholders' Committees (NSC), industry associations, government agencies and international institutions such as Better Work, Better Factories.

For example, in Cambodia, with the support of the NSC, we provided the relevant ministry with a translated version of the LABS Methodology and Standards, and the ministry is now considering adopting them as a guideline or even incorporating them into the National Building Code they are currently developing.



As of December 2022, we had successfully remediated 77% of issues identified in factories



Cambodia



In 2022, LABS conducted its first Gender Workshop in Cambodia to bring together gender diaspora leaders, professionals and partners to discuss the gender issues Cambodia faces, coordinate and align current gender initiatives, develop possible strategies to raise awareness of and engagement with those initiatives, and see how LABS can help accelerate these initiatives via the new platform.

Vietnam



In Vietnam, a successful knowledge-sharing session was run with various representatives from Better Work Vietnam. The session helped us deepen our understanding of the building safety issues in the field so we further sharpen even more our efforts to promote safety in Apparel & Footwear factories.

India



In India, we made significant steps in 2022 towards expanding our Standards to cover Home Textile factories. The updated Standards are currently under review and due to be introduced in early 2023.

Achievements

Since inception

Proven business cases for field-level impact



394

Assessments conducted



581

Safety trainings delivered



843,232

Workers reached



18

Firms onboarded



55

Engineers trained



77%

Overall remediation achieved

Improved business practises



India

2019



406

Factories onboarded



Vietnam

2019



Cambodia

2022

Improved sector governance



Adoption of LABS standard into Vietnam Government's Guidelines



3 National stakeholder committees established

Technical guidance on fire safety assessment added on official website of Vietnam leather and footwear Association (LEFASO) and Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association (VITAS)



To ensure a safe working environment, retailers, suppliers, factory owners, industry associations, and the government play crucial roles. With our focused cross-sector collaboration, we have continued our efforts to convene the stakeholders and drive sustainable safety measures across the apparel and footwear industry. In 2022, we also worked towards engaging with key organizations in the operational countries to drive joint industry commitment towards safety and embed long-term local and national ownership while establishing various channels to share knowledge and ideas on safer workplaces. We continue to build on the learnings from work done in India, Vietnam and Cambodia and are now swiftly moving towards expanding our operations to Indonesia by mid-2023.

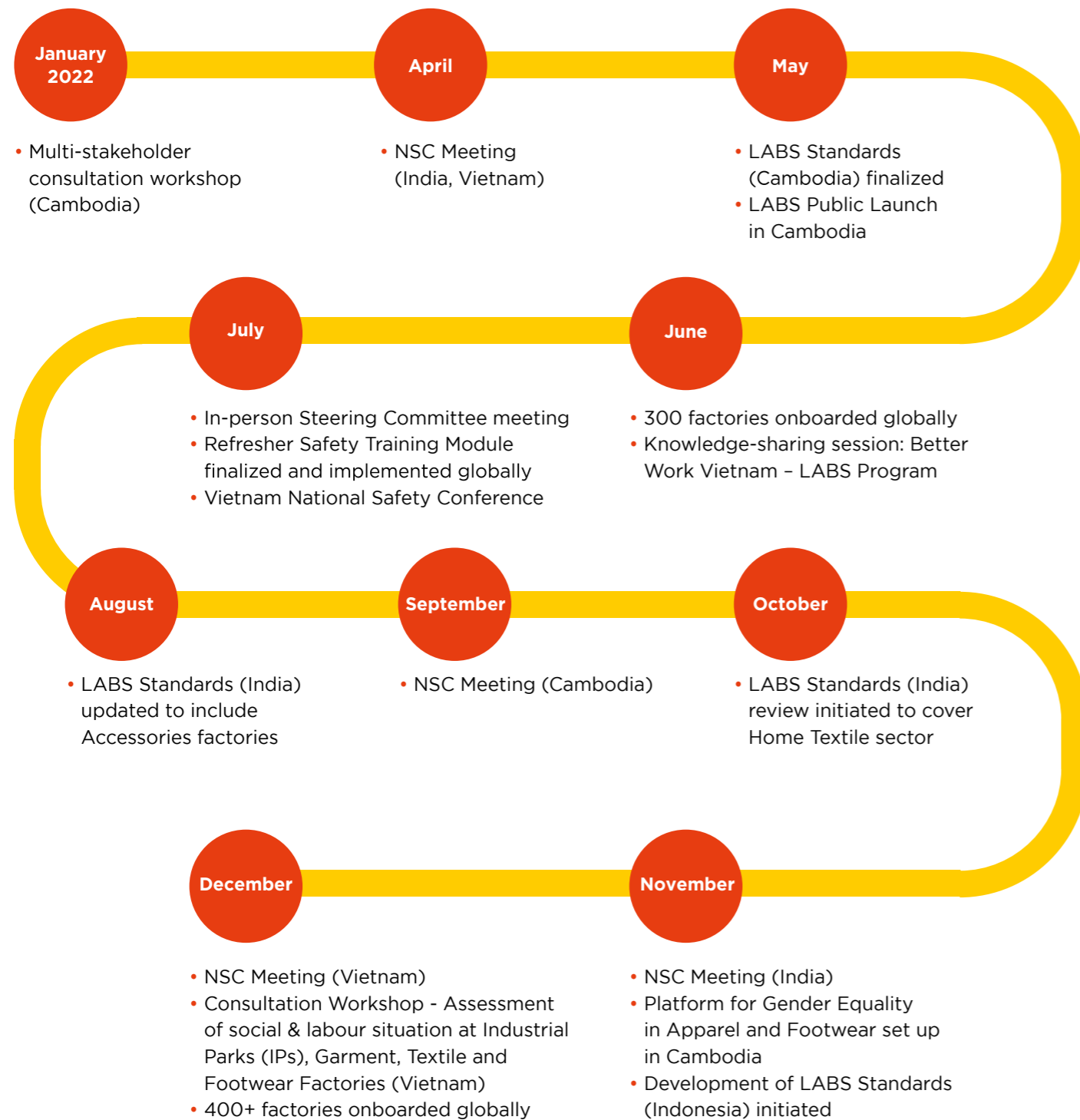
Sarobindo Malhotra
Global Program Lead LABS Initiative



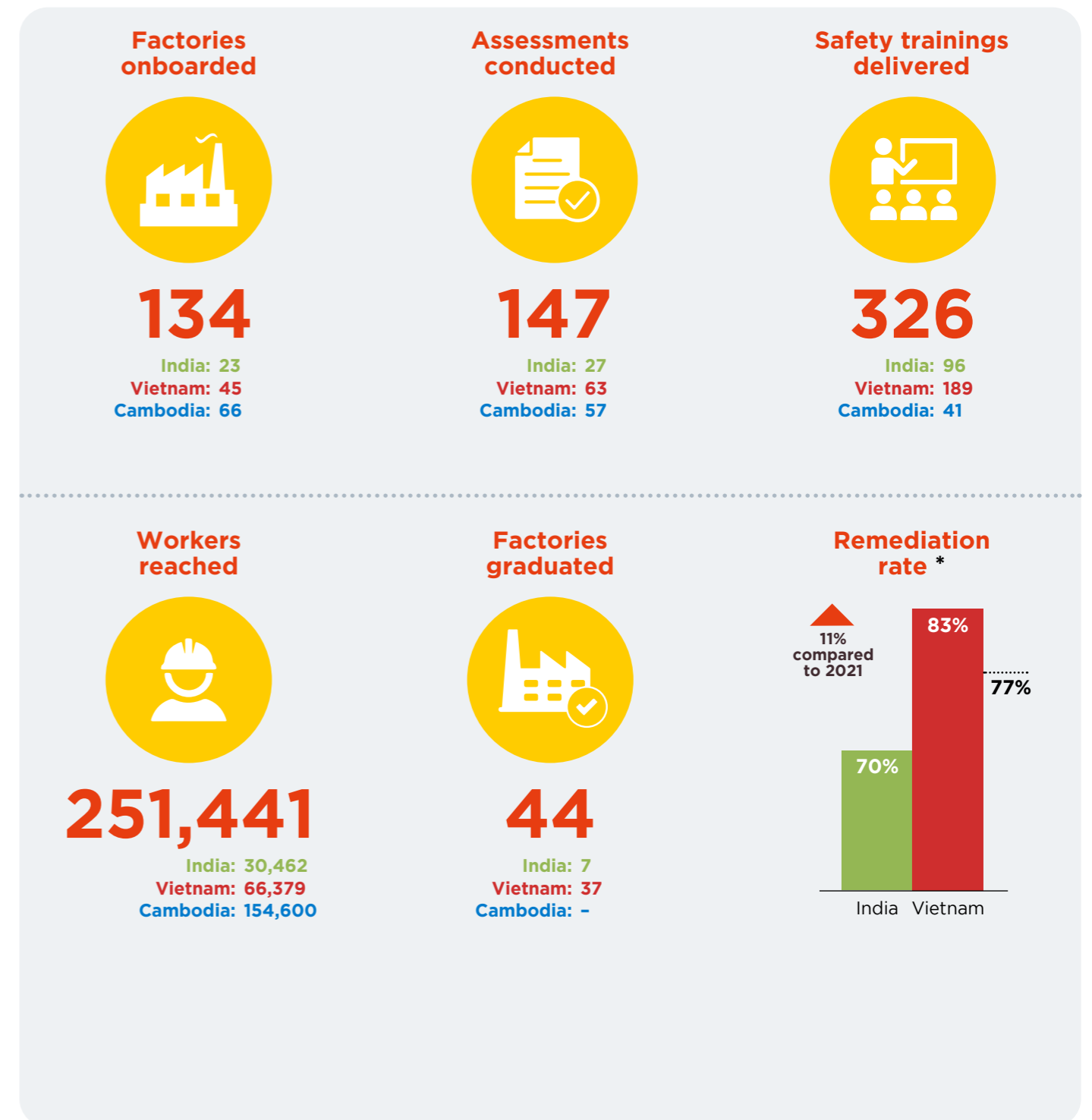
The year that was

The year that was

Highlights 2022



Field-level impact in 2022



Quality Assurance Plan

In 2022, LABS conducted various activities as part of its Quality Assurance. Key activities included:

- In Vietnam, joint factory visits were conducted by LABS Program Lead and Brand representative to monitor the quality and consistency of LABS follow-up visits.
- Follow-up and shadow visits were conducted by LABS Regional Coordinator with Country Managers (in India, Vietnam and Cambodia) to check consistency in assessments and follow-up visits.
- Good Practice Sharing webinar was conducted for factories in India and Vietnam.
- Refresher training session was conducted for inspection and quality assurance firms for Vietnam, Cambodia and India.



CEO IDH visit to India



In December, Daan Wensing (CEO, IDH) and Felia Palsenberg (Global Operations Director, IDH) visited one of the associated factories, Pearl Global Pvt Ltd located in Gurugram, Haryana, accompanied by Jagjeet Singh Kandal (Country Director, IDH), Jasmer Dhingra (Program Director, IDH), Sarobindo Malhotra (Global Program Lead, LABS) and other members of the LABS Team and brand participant GAP Inc.

It was an opportunity to see the impact and system change the program is driving at the factory management, technical maintenance team and worker levels. A demonstration by the inspection firm Intertek of the assessment process was followed by a walkthrough of successful

remediation by factory management. Daan confirmed how LABS' work aligns with the IDH vision for Better Jobs and how positive he is about the program's work on system change. He also took feedback from the factory on program impact on working conditions and how it could be further improved.



The year that was

Program Launch - Cambodia

On May 18th, 2022, LABS Program was publicly launched in Cambodia. Overall 207 people participated in the launch event. Those attending included representatives from:

- The Ministries of Labour & Vocational Training; Land Management; Urban Planning & Construction; Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation; Mines & Energy; Education, Youth & Sport; Environment; Tourism; Public Works & Transport; Commerce; and Information.
- The US Embassy, the Netherlands Embassy in Thailand, the Netherlands Consulate, the Swedish Consulate, an EU delegation.

- ILO's-IFC Better Factories Cambodia, the Cambodian Footwear Association, Cambodian Garment Training Institute, Electricite du Cambodge, Manhattan Special Economic Zone, USAID.
- Various brands, including H&M, American Eagle, C&A, Marks & Spencer, Primark, ITX Trading, Mott Mac, Levi's, Carters and Fruit of the Loom.
- Associated firms (such as inspection firms, training firms, etc.); representatives from factories and coalition partners, including senior global and regional functions.

 [READ MORE HERE](#)



“ The current lack of building codes in the country make it hard for factories to stay in compliance with safety protocols and LABS will help solve this issue.

.....
Mr. Kyle Bogler
Senior Director, Safe and Sustainable Operations,
Global Responsible Sourcing, VF Corporation



“ LABS is a very important program. Harmonization of standards within the Apparel sector at a national level is vital, and LABS will be invaluable in helping our efforts to increase accountability in safety-related inspections.

.....
Chhann Sorphal
Director General, Dept of Construction, Ministry of Land Management,
Urban Planning & Construction, Kingdom of Cambodia

Improved field-level impact

Improved field-level impact

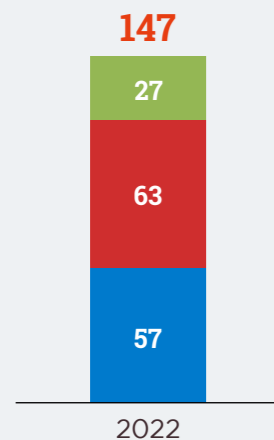
Assessments

Assessments are conducted at factories based on the LABS Standards. They provide insight into the safety issues in a factory. By the end of 2022, 394 assessments had

been conducted since the program's launch. In 2022, a total of 147 assessments were conducted at factories across India, Vietnam and Cambodia.

India Vietnam Cambodia

Assessments conducted



“ LABS guided us along the various steps to remediate our shortcomings in structural and electrical safety through on-going education, counselling and sharing of best practice. The LABS team are simply the best in the business and we've all benefitted from the journey. Ensuring a safe workplace has become a way of life for us.

.....
Mr. C.S. Lakshmanan
 General Manager Operations,
 Jay Jay Mills (India) Private Limited – Garment Division

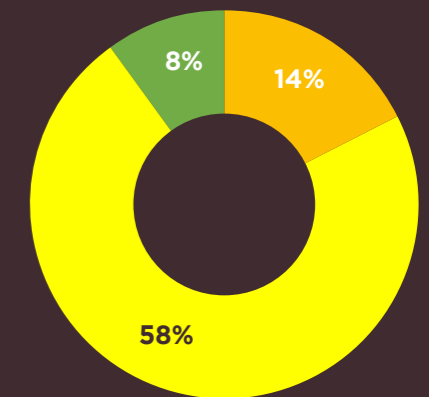


Assessment Ratings and Most Common Findings



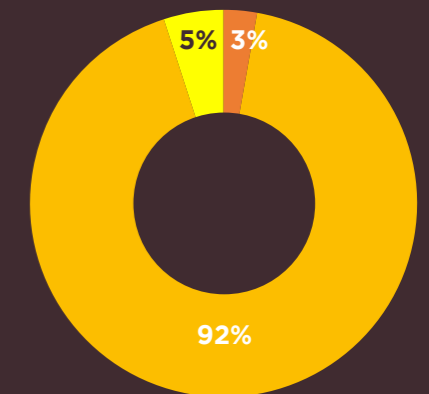
Structural safety

- Uneven floor load distribution on suspended floors without load plans.
- Exposed reinforcement on floor slabs, beams and columns.
- Cracks observed at bottom of structural and non-structural members (e.g. walls, columns, floor slabs).
- Missing documentation (e.g. structural diagrams, geotechnical report, floor load plans, soil reports).



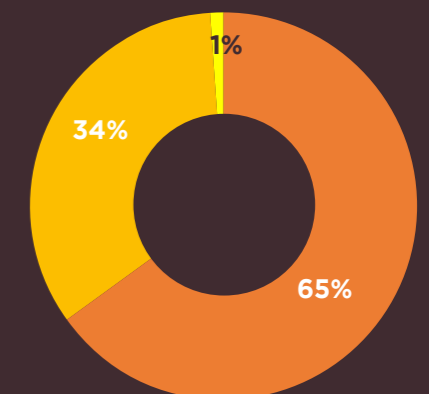
Fire safety

- Rolling shutters installed on exit doors.
- Fire-rated doors and enclosure not provided at staircases.
- Combustible goods stacked near electrical sources.
- Lockable devices/mechanism found on exit doors.
- Fire hose with no connection to water source.
- Handrails not provided on both sides of staircase.



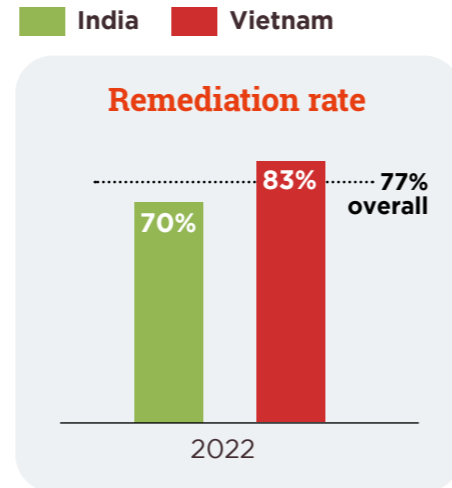
Electrical safety

- Inadequate back-up for emergency lights.
- Heavy lint and dust accumulation inside switchboards/distribution boards.
- Earthing to distribution boards, MS roof truss, transformer fencing and battery bank racks not provided.
- Lightning protection system not installed.
- High number of hotspots with temperatures between 80°C to 140°C.

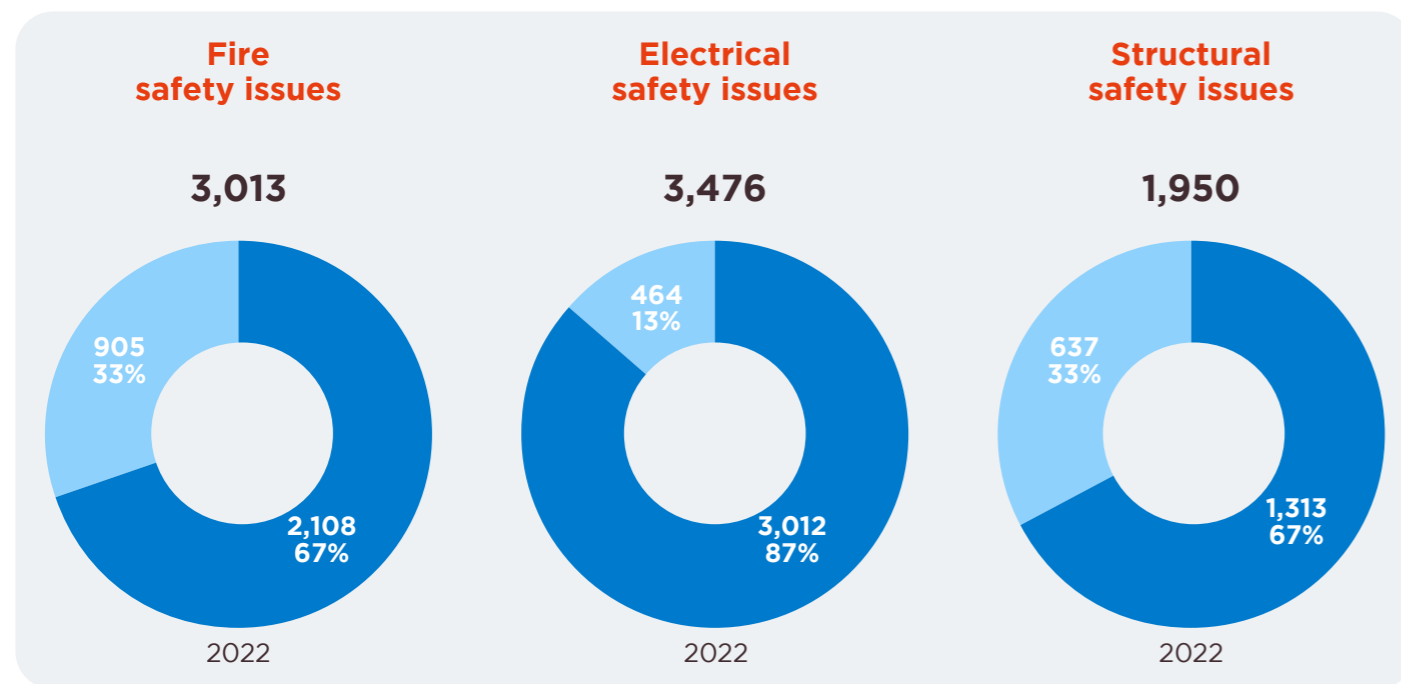


Remediations

Based on the issues identified during a factory's assessment, the factory then works on a corrective action plan to remediate the issues in line with LABS Standards. Since early 2022, LABS has steadily increased its overall remediation rate, reaching 77% at the end of 2022.



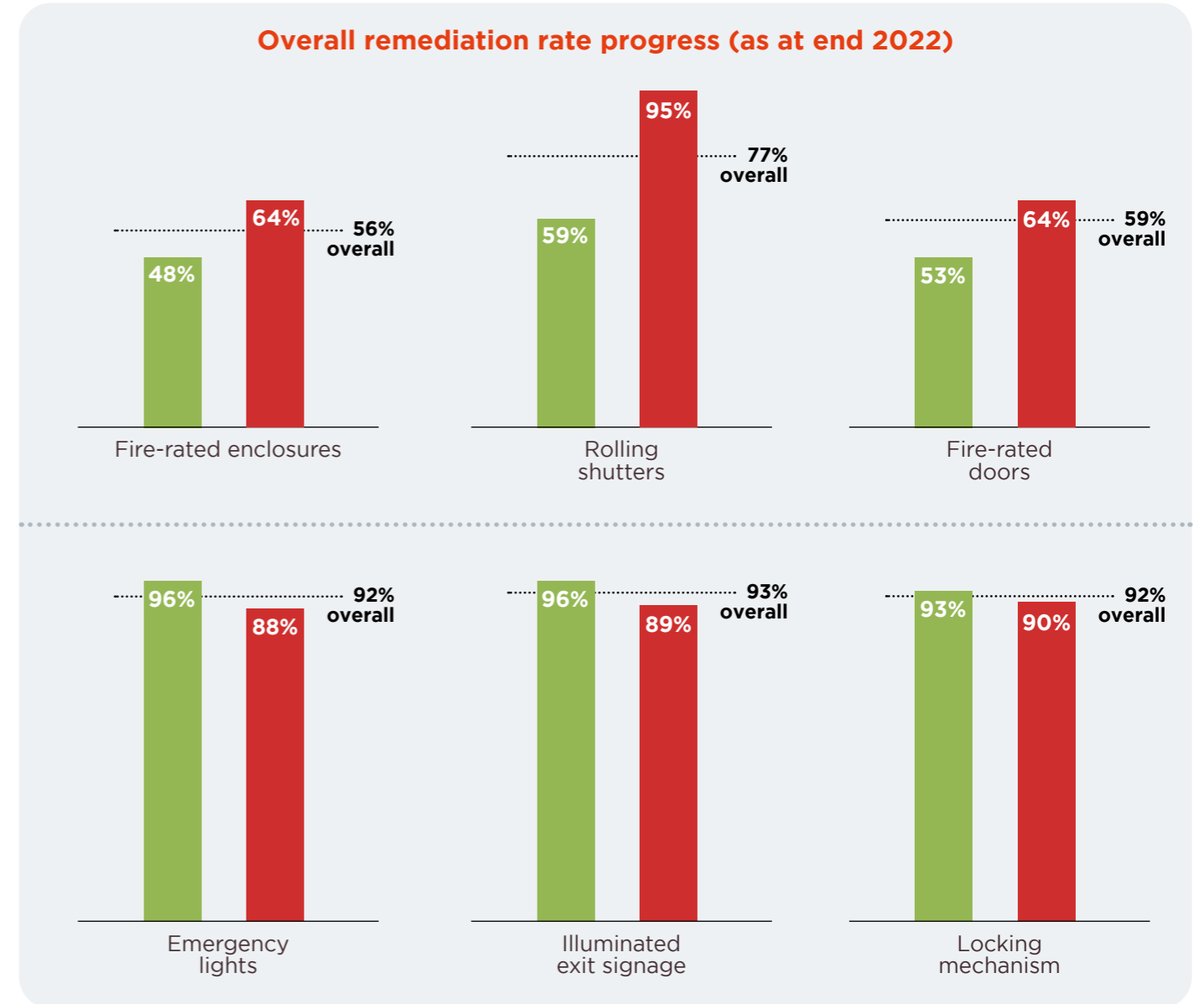
■ Issues Remediated ■ Issues remaining



“ The LABS initiative has been instrumental in bringing changes to manufacturing in respect of structural, electrical and fire safety. However, the program's biggest impact is the buy-in it has achieved from local outfits, which will ensure those changes are sustainable.

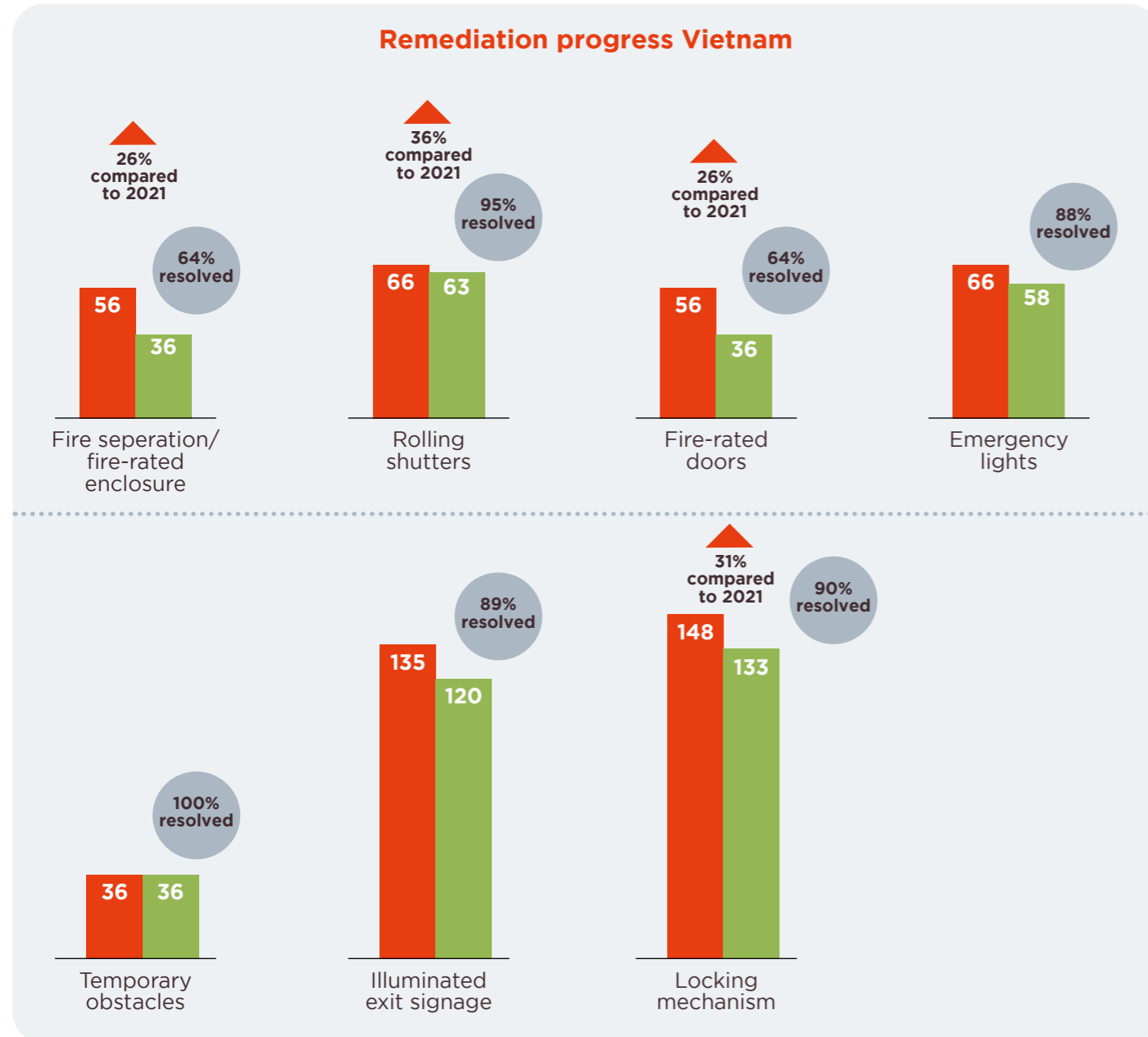
.....
Arindama Banerje
 Associate Director Client Services ELEVATE (an LRQA company)

■ India ■ Vietnam

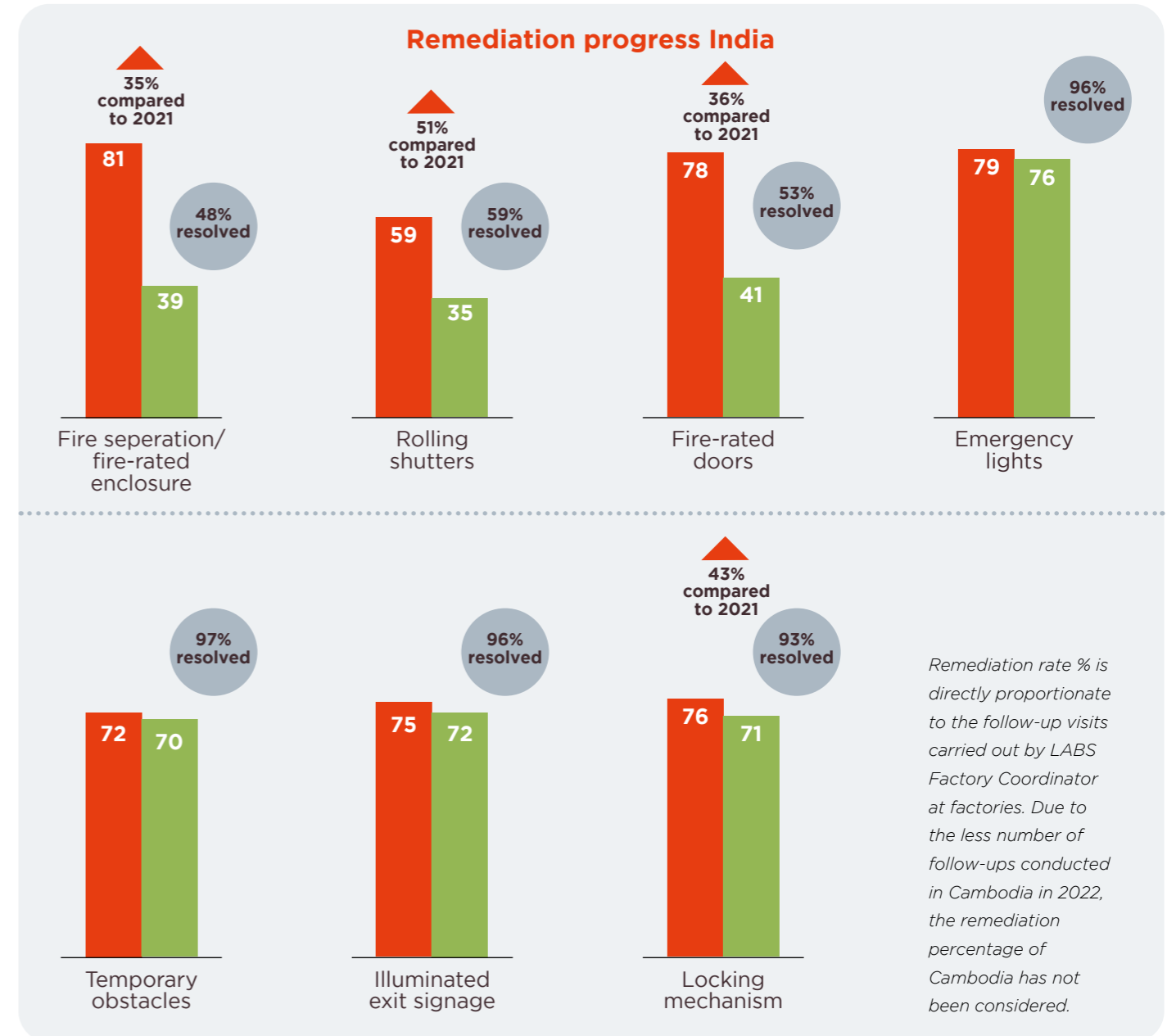


Fire water tank installed as a part of remediation at one of the LABS-assessed factories

Number of factories with issues identified Number of factories with issues remediated



Number of factories with issues identified Number of factories with issues remediated



“ LABS has enabled us to evaluate current safety levels, recognize danger signs, and plan timely remedial measures that limit the risk of costly accidents and dangers to employees and property. We now know more about structural, electrical and fire safety. So we can perfect our safety-management system, better manage and control risks, and investigate and find the root causes of incidents. The safety training also raises employees' awareness of the risks of unsafe situations. Our factory is now a step nearer its goal of creating the safest possible work environment for our workers.

.....
Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy
 Compliance Manager, Duc Thanh Garment Import Export Co., Ltd.

“ For us, LABS is a process that can change people's mindset. Helping factory management come to understand the risks and learn about best practice in comparable factories, so they can identify the approach most suitable for their factory. And giving them the technical safety knowledge to perfect their safety management system. Clearly there are costs to introducing and maintaining LABS Standards. But ultimately, by reducing risks and avoiding incidents, LABS is helping make factories more competitive. And protecting their most valuable asset: their people.

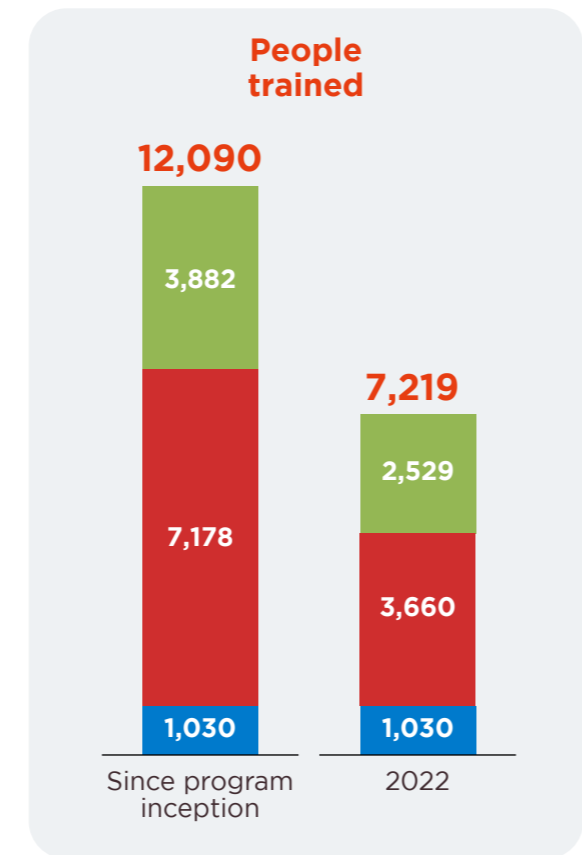
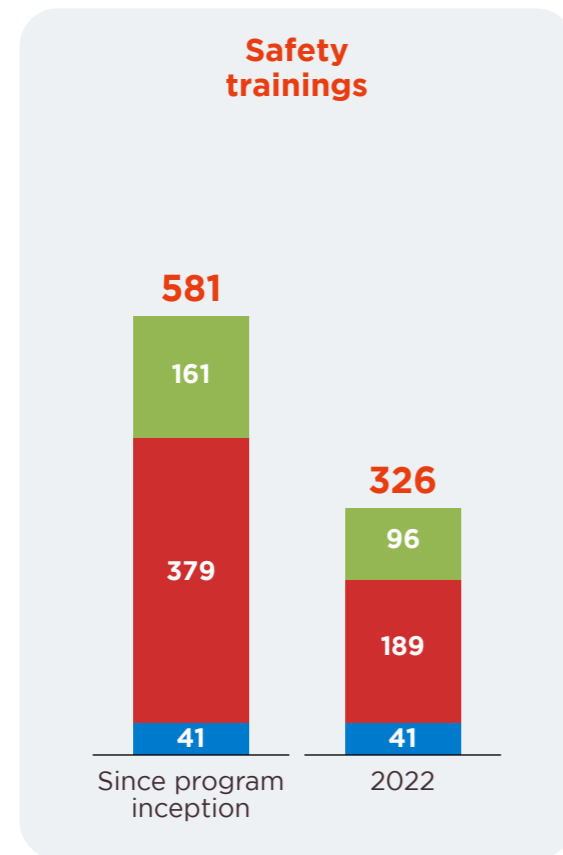
.....
Compliance Team
 Chutex International Long An, South Vietnam. Graduation, November 2022

Safety training

Through the associated safety training firms, LABS enhances the ability of OHS committees, staff members and factory safety personnel to flag up and raise awareness of structural, electrical and fire safety issues. We offer factories four safety training levels, dependant on their safety proficiency check and LABS assessment: Basic Safety Training, Advanced Safety Training Level 1, Advanced

Safety Training Level 2 and Refresher Safety Training. We introduced the refresher training for factories in the third year of their association with LABS. It amalgamates key elements from the first three training programs with a detailed factory tour on issue detection and remediation, and establishing safety management systems that will help the factory eventually graduate from the program.

India Vietnam Cambodia



Fire extinguisher demonstration



Classroom training session

4,700
Over 4,700 women have been trained on safety parameters through LABS Safety Trainings since program inception

“ LABS safety training sessions have helped us strengthen our safety management capacity. We have developed a monthly safety training program for employees that enhances the safety culture amongst workers by raising awareness. So they can protect themselves and those around them.

.....
Ho Sy Hanh
HSE Department, Eclat Textile Co., Ltd.

“ LABS training is an amazing initiative to help companies improve their safety performance. The detailed handholding for electrical and fire safety has brought in a lot of changes at companies. Interactions I had with the operators and supervisors were insightful and their keenness to learn was great. I’m happy to have been able to share my knowledge with the companies during the training.

.....
Gayathri Ramanna
Consultant, Confederation of Indian Industry Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development – Safety Training Firm (India)



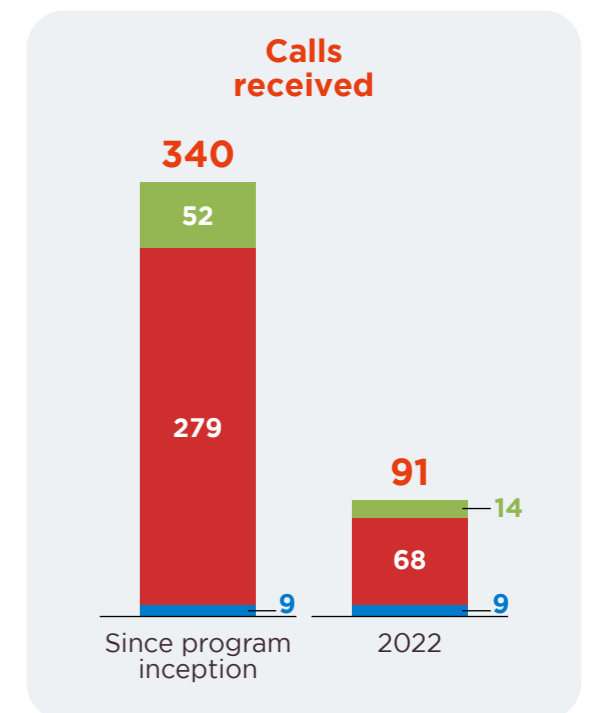
LABS Helpline

As part of the LABS program, a toll-free workers helpline is provided for factories linked with the program in India, Vietnam and Cambodia. Workers can anonymously report safety issues, primarily related to structural, fire and electrical safety.

When safety issues are reported on the helpline the case is shared with the factory, which then comes back to LABS with its remedial actions. LABS Factory Coordinators check the remediation action during upcoming visits. If the action is deemed sufficient the issue is marked "Resolved" from LABS' side. Quite a few non-LABS calls (i.e. not related to safety issues) are also reported on the helpline. These cases are shared with the factory or brand and marked "Closed" as per LABS procedure.

A study for was conducted to understand and address gaps in Helpline penetration in factories. In 2023, the Helpline will be revamped and a Chat feature will also be introduced to improve reach and reporting mechanisms for the factory workers.

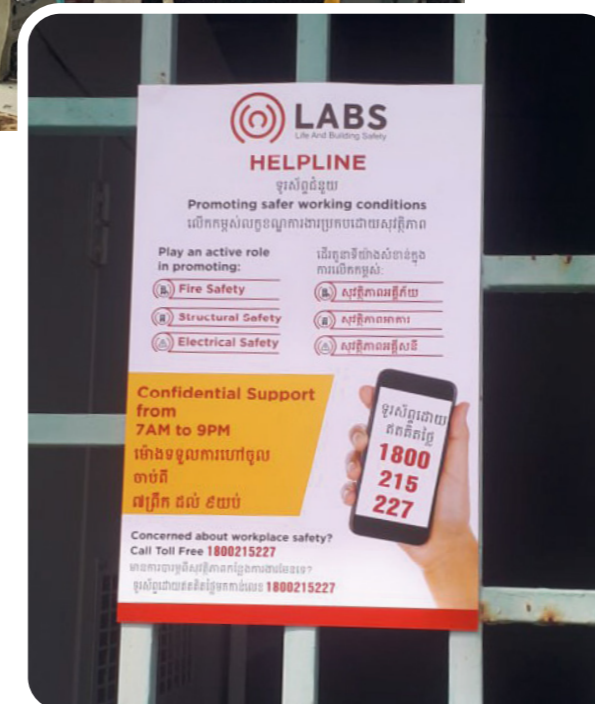
India Vietnam Cambodia



“ LABS helpline material has been posted throughout the factory and the helpline was announced by factory management. We can raise any workplace safety issues directly with the LABS program, who will then help resolve the issue as quickly as possible. The LABS Helpline means we can be assessors and reduce the risks in our factory.

Le Thi Truc Linh

Worker Production Department,
Pungkook Ben Tre One Member Co. Ltd, South Vietnam



Improved sector governance

Leveraging National Stakeholders Committees (NSC) to create sector-level change

The NSC guides the monitoring and institutionalizing of the program at country level. It helps identify and address challenges and opportunities while promoting the importance of safety for workers, and works with the government towards a harmonized, standard adaptation and incorporation of

LABS into legislative and policy framework. Ensuring key government support for NSCs is vital. In 2022, 5 NSC meetings (2 India; 2 Vietnam; 1 Cambodia) were held to help strengthen policy/regulations and ensure joint industry commitments to safety with long-term local/national ownership.

Some of the key National Stakeholders Committee Members



India

- Ex-Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India
- Director General, National Safety Council, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India
- Dean - Planning & Development, School of Planning and Architecture
- Ex-Chief, Department of Delhi Fire Services, Government of India



Vietnam

- Deputy Director, Institute of Building Structures, Vietnam Institute for Building Science and Technology (IBST)/Ministry of Construction
- Vice-chairman of Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association (VITAS)
- Ex-Chairwomen of Trade Union of Hai Phong Economic Zone in Hai Phong City (VGCL)
- Vice-Director, Institute of Innovation & Technology- Vietnam Leather, Footwear, and Handbag Association (LEFASO)
- Chairman of The Young Enterprise Association of Bac Giang province (YEA)



Cambodia

- Director General, Dept. of Construction, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning & Construction (MLMUPC)
- Director General, Institute of Standards of Cambodia, Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation (MISTI)
- Director General, Dept. of Occupational Safety & Health, Ministry of Labour & Vocational Training (MoLVT)
- Secretary General, TAFTAC (Textile, Apparel, Footwear and Travel Goods Association in Cambodia)
- Programme Manager, Better Factories Cambodia (BFC)
- Secretary General, Cambodian Footwear Association (CFA)



In Cambodia, with support from the NSC, we shared a translated version of the Cambodia LABS Methodology and Standards with the Director General of the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning & Construction. A technical sub-committee was then set up to review the Standards with a view to adopting them as a guideline or even incorporating them into the National Building Code that is currently under development.



In India, the NSC is helping the LABS secretariat set up a “Platform for Safety in Apparel & Footwear Industry in India” to drive improved governance on worker safety in the sector. The platform is due to take place around April 2023 and will have representation from government, brands, factories, CSOs and safety experts.



I’m delighted to be a part of the LABS Cambodia NSC. LABS is a great initiative, and quite similar to what we do at the Department of Occupational Safety & Health in terms of factory audits and safety training. LABS utilizes international best practice in their Standards, which make their assessments technically excellent. Ensuring safety in the factory, protecting buyers’ reputations and helping make Cambodia an attractive sourcing country.

Leng Tong

Director General, Department of Occupational Safety & Health, Ministry of Labour & Vocational Training, NSC Cambodia



“ At Better Work Vietnam, we know that building safety and fire prevention call for a preventive approach from businesses. The technical support from initiatives like LABS are a vital resource for factories. BWV will continue to explore opportunities to synergize with LABS and other industry initiatives so that together we can support the garment industry in Vietnam even better.

.....
Ms. Pham Thi Hoang Lien
 National Operations Manager Better Work Vietnam



“ I’m extremely happy to be associated with LABS. The Apparel & Footwear industries employ thousands of men and women in manufacturing and other processes. Their health and safety are paramount, and LABS is doing a very commendable job of instilling a culture of safety within the industry. LABS initiatives will also help the industry in India find new and better global markets.



.....
Lalit R. Gabhane
 Director General, National Safety Council of India

Working with brand participants to strengthen the program

LABS brand participants are a group of global apparel brands and retailers collaborating to create safer working conditions in their industry. In 2022, LABS continued to work closely with the brand participants to accelerate the remediation and implementation of safety management systems in sourcing factories. The result was a major increase in remediation rates on high-priority issues (see Remediations section

above) and the timely execution of LABS processes at factories. This resulted in another 44 factories successfully adopting LABS Standards into their operational processes and thereby graduating from the LABS program.

In 2022, two of the brand participants - Gap Inc and VF Corp. - made the LABS program a mandatory sourcing requirement.

Brand participants



Working with associated firms to achieve operational excellence

LABS associated firms are the inspection, quality assurance and safety training firms that deliver LABS mandated processes across our operational countries. In 2022, 5 additional firms (2 inspection, 1 quality

assurance, and 2 safety training) were trained and added to the program to further strengthen operations in Cambodia and other countries of operation.

Changing business practices

Factory Graduations

- LABS Factory Coordinators monitors factory's progress on fulfilling criteria for graduation.
- Factory triggers graduation by confirming completion of all elements.
- The Factory Coordinators reviews checklist and schedules Graduation Verification Visit to factory with same IF that conducted CAP closure visit.
- Graduation verification checklist adherence is conclusive for issuing graduation letter and the certificate to the factory.

In total, 51 factories (India 7; Vietnam 44) have successfully graduated from the program, of which 41 (India 7; Vietnam 37) in 2022.

Graduation Success Story: Unisoll Vina Co. Ltd

Unisoll Vina Co. Ltd. joined the LABS Program in 2020. The factory has more than 5,000 workers and supplies to several brands within the LABS Program. During the assessment, it was noted that the smoke detectors and sprinkler systems were installed quite far from the ceiling. This compromises the efficacy of these systems with respect to its coverage and

activation time. The factory remediated these issues by re-installing the smoke detector and sprinkler system closer to the ceiling, which is in line with the LABS Standards. After completing all remediation activities, the factory successfully graduated the program in December 2022.

Example of issues identified & remediated



Locking mechanism on exit door



No fire rated enclosure for external staircase



Sprinkler system installed far beneath the ceiling



Locking mechanism replaced with push bar door mechanism



Fire rated enclosure provided for staircase



Sprinkler system re-installed closer to ceiling

Graduation Success Story: Jay Jay Mill India Pvt. Ltd

Jay Jay Mill India Pvt. Ltd. joined the LABS Program in 2020. During the assessment, the inspection firm identified 31 issues (10 electrical, 15 fire and 6 structural safety). Within a year, the factory had remediated every issue, undergone Advanced Safety Training Level 2 and documented the steps it needed to meet the LABS graduation

criteria. Key issues the factory addressed included installing fire alarm hooters, removing locking mechanisms on exit doors and upgrading the cables used for compressors. The factory graduated in July 2022.

Example of issues identified & remediated



Exposed battery terminals



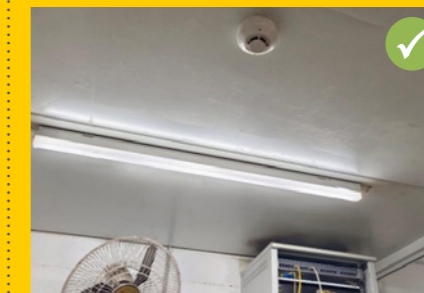
Fire detection not installed



Illuminated exit sign not provided over exit



Covers provided for battery terminals



Fire detection installed




Illuminated exit sign provided over emergency exit

Extending the Standards to include Home Textile factories

In October 2022, we began work on extending the LABS program to cover Home Textile factories and identified India as our first priority. The updated Standards are currently being externally reviewed by the quality and compliance company, QIMA, and will be finalized in early 2023. Home Textiles

include, for example, bedsheets, pillows, towels, bath and kitchen linen, blankets and carpets.

 **The updated LABS Standards (India) will be accessible to all at www.labsinitiative.com.**



“ As a LABS founding member, VF has witnessed the huge impact LABS has made in the Apparel & Footwear industry, improving safety conditions for thousands of workers, while also promoting gender equality. VF is proud to be part of this transformative program and we eagerly anticipate its continued expansion, for example into **Indonesia in 2023.**



Kyle Bogler
Senior Director Safe And Sustainable Operations,
Global Responsible Sourcing, VF Corporation

“ LABS' work to create safer working conditions for people in the apparel supply chain is invaluable. Retailers, suppliers, factory owners, industry associations, and government, all play a role to keep workers safe and the industry thriving and LABS is helping bring all of the players together for a common goal.



Marco Reyes
Senior Director Strategic Initiatives, Walmart

Promoting gender empowerment

At LABS we integrate gender equality and related issues into all our work, but also recognize the need to catalyze progress through issue-focused strategic initiatives, such as described in this section.

Gender Workshop: Platform for Gender Equality in Apparel & Footwear in Cambodia

On 2 November 2022, LABS ran its first Gender Workshop in Cambodia. The 44 people who took part included representatives from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Labour & Vocational Training, Better Factories Cambodia, CARE Cambodia, GMAC, American Chamber of Commerce, GAP Inc, H&M, C&A, VF Corp, Target, M&S, CGTI, UNDP and other factories, LABS & Non-LABS brands, NGOs and CSOs.

The workshop's primary goal was to bring together gender diaspora leaders, professionals and partners to (i) openly discuss the gender issues Cambodia faces, (ii) find ways to coordinate and align current gender initiatives, (iii) develop possible strategies to raise awareness of and engagement across the diaspora with initiatives currently taking place in Cambodia, and (iv) see how LABS can help accelerate these initiatives via this new platform. Other topics discussed included women's empowerment, and sexual harassment and its cost on businesses.

Keynote speaker

Koung Sorita, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Outcomes

- Briefing paper on workshop highlights, and risks and opportunities in Apparel & Footwear sector [Gender Workshop briefing paper](#).
- Strengthened cooperation between government, NGO, CSO and private sector stakeholders.
- Commitment to set up an action/guidance plan for government to implement.
- Decision to hold Cambodia Gender Workshop annually.

“ We need actors from the public and private sectors to come together to solve the problem. Women are the backbone of our economy, and supporting women contributes directly to economic growth and jobs creation in Cambodia. This is particularly true in the garment sector, where women are about 90% of the workforce, yet senior positions are dominated by men. Women's potential can be harnessed when they are protected and supported, and Cambodia will benefit from efforts to empower women in and outside the workplace.

.....
Koung Sorita

Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Women's Affairs



“ PACE (Personal Achievement and Career Enhancement) is an innovative factory-based program to help women and girls fulfil their potential and find their voice. It provides garment workers with life and technical skills to help them advance in the workplace and their lives.

.....
Khoun Soklay

Senior Manager, Gap Inc.

“ Studies show that sexual harassment is responsible for 112,000 days of worker absenteeism and 40% loss in productivity. The private sector needs to actively implement policies and practices that create a safer work environment both to protect their employees and improve productivity.

.....
Neou Sovattha

County Director, CARE Cambodia

Stakeholder outreach

Country meetings/workshops/conferences



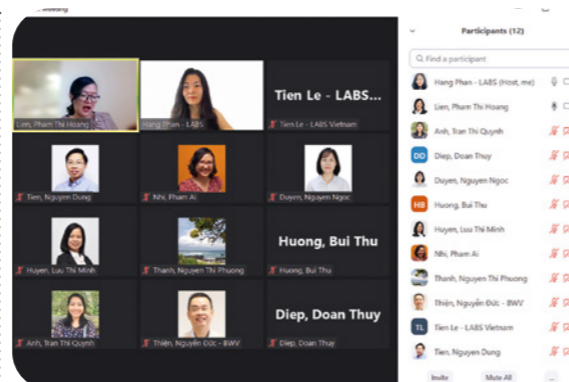
Multi-stakeholder consulting workshop
CAMBODIA, 12 JANUARY 2022

The workshop discussed a first draft of the LABS Standards and Methodology for Cambodia with industry stakeholder groups, with their input incorporated into the final version.

The 87 participants represented 35 organizations, including the Ministries of the Interior (Fire, Police), Labour & Vocational Training, and Land Management, Urban Planning & Construction; the National Quality Inspection Center for Fire Safety Systems; Phnom Penh Municipality (Fire, Police); ILO Better Factories Cambodia (BFC); Cambodian Garment Training Institute; apparel brands H&M, Amazon, Nike, Li & Fung and Kontoor; and various LAB coalition partners.

Key takeaways

- BFC said that, while it works with the government and brands to improve working conditions, assessments don't cover engineering or structure-related safety issues, which is where LABS' expertise will add real value.
- In developing a National Building Code, the government representatives said it will review the LABS Standards and explore areas to integrate the two standards.



Knowledge Sharing Session: Better Work Vietnam - LABS Program
VIETNAM, 27 JUNE 2022

The meeting's 20 participants included representatives from Better Work Vietnam (BWV) including its Program Manager, Management Team and Auditors. The goal was to better understand shared issues in the field of life and building safety.

Key takeaways

- Common issues observed in LABS and BWV reports.
- Practical challenges in the LABS/BWV remediation process.
- Sharing of inputs and good practice implementation.

Outcome

- BWV adopted LABS report for building safety.
- Commitment to investigate collaborating on enhancing workplace safety.



Vietnam National Safety Conference
HO CHI MINH CITY, 17 JULY 2022

The conference was organized by VITAS, LABS and WWF. The approximately 80 participants included representatives from VITAS, LEFASO, the Ministry of Construction, Department of Science Technology & Environment, Vietnam Productivity Institute, WWF, VITAS and LEFASO members (including brands and key factory representatives), engineering and safety training firms, Better Work Vietnam and the media.

Presentation

"Safety within the Apparel & Footwear industries" – LABS.

Key discussion topics

- Analysis of fire-related accidents in the Apparel & Footwear industry in Vietnam.
- Technical and engineering knowledge in the field of fire, electrical and building safety.
- Applying best practices to fire, electrical and building safety program implementation.

Outcomes

- Established channel to share knowledge, learning, technical aspects and ideas to increase industry transparency.
- Better Work Vietnam considering adopting the LABS report for building safety.



Consultation Workshop: Assessment of Social & Labor Situation in industrial park Garment, Textile & Footwear Factories
VIETNAM, 2 DECEMBER 2022

Some 50 participants included representatives from Vietnam Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Vietnam Textile & Apparel Association; Leather, Footwear & Handbag Association; LAB members; international brands Puma & Nike; local brands; key factory representatives and the media.

Presentation

"Building safety within the Apparel & Footwear industries" – LABS team.

Key discussion topics

- Analysis of fire-related accidents in Apparel & Footwear industry.
- Update on impact of shortage of production orders and other current challenges, and possible solutions.

Outcomes

- Established channel to share LABS knowledge, learning and ideas on safer workplaces.
- Engagement with local organizations and securing of partnerships.

Collaborative Work with Better Factories Cambodia and Better Works Vietnam

During 2022, the LABS secretariat held several key meetings with BFC and BWV. Highlights include:

- **23 May:** meeting with Nguyen Hong Ha, Program Manager, BWV on further collaboration. Agreed to maintain regular communication and arrange a knowledge-sharing session that was duly held in June (see Stakeholder Outreach section).
- **2 February:** meeting with Sara Park, Program Manager, BFC to better understand

points of collaboration and engagement with various key ministries. Planned a knowledge-sharing session with BWV to share experiences and learnings.

- **2 February:** meeting with Chhe Lidin, Director General, Department of General Affairs, Ministry of Mines & Energy to discuss potential areas of collaboration, and streamlining policies and standards across key ministries.



Expansion into Indonesia

The program will officially launch in Indonesia as a full-scale operation in May 2023, with the Standards expected to be finalized by April 2023.

The LABS Methodology & Standards will be based on international best practice and codes such as NFPA, IBC and others, as well as experiences from India, Vietnam and Cambodia; but also tailored to codes, regulations and circumstances that currently exist in Indonesia.

The Methodology and Standards for Indonesia are being prepared by Archetype

Group, a global engineering firm that has executed over 1100 large infrastructural and highly technical projects in the Asia-Pacific region. Archetype Group developed the LABS Methodology and Standards for Cambodia.

The inspection firms, quality assurance firms and safety training firms have been selected and will be onboarded by mid-March 2023. The LABS office is in Bandung.



“ Working with LABS has helped us develop a robust system based on high safety standards. LABS interacts with the parties involved during a project, but also follows that up with annual training seminars on the latest know-how and expertise. Ensuring the work of the QA firm and LABS combine to create a safer world for factory workers.

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Le Tuan Ha
 I&F North Manager, Bureau Veritas, Vietnam



Looking ahead

Creating systemic changes

In 2023, LABS will continue working for a coordinated and systemic approach for addressing life and building safety issues in our targeted countries and industries.

To drive improved sector governance, we will carry on deepening our engagement with NSCs and key stakeholders, including industry associations, government agencies and international institutions (e.g. Better Work, Better Factories) to drive pan-industry commitment to safety and embed long-term local and national ownership.

We will share data-driven insights & learnings through workshops and Public-Private Partnership platforms, leading to new and/or strengthened policies, standards and enforcement, and greater awareness of the workplace safety learnings and experiences from the LABS program.

As global brands, retailers and suppliers increasingly align their business practices with the LABS Methodology and Standards, we will focus on scaling responsible sourcing, increasing brand participation in the program, and securing the commitment of companies in order to increase value-chain transparency and adoption levels amongst brands and factories of the LABS Standards.

Progress in the field

At the field level, we will continue to provide a transparent platform for assessment, remediation and monitoring of factories' safety conditions, underpinned by safety training and the national LABS Helplines for workers to raise their concerns.

In 2023, we plan to onboard an additional 200+ factories in India, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia, while supporting Better Jobs for some 375,000 workers (65% female), ensuring they appreciate the importance of risk mitigation, and are equipped to voice life and building safety concerns.

Our overall targets include an 85% remediation rate and 415 safety trainings. Using a train-the-trainers methodology, we aim to train over 6750 safety-related professionals (including supervisors, machine operators, electricians, boiler operators and compliance in-charges). This will help us in improving our capacity to maintain and scale responsible production methods and business management in respect life & building safety.



