



**LABS**  
Life And Building Safety

## Life And Building Safety Initiative

### Promoting safer working conditions for factory workers in apparel, footwear, accessories and home-textile sectors

In the global apparel, footwear, accessories and home-textile industry, safety and well-being of workers are paramount to ensure sustainable supply chains. However, many workers in key producing countries face significant risks due to unsafe working environments. Recognizing this urgent need for change, the LABS Initiative has undertaken a mission to promote sustainable safety practices, protect factory workers from preventable hazards, and ultimately improve their quality of life.

The LABS Initiative is working towards transforming the industry by promoting sustainable safety practices. Through rigorous assessments, targeted trainings, and collaborative efforts, **we aim to mitigate structural, fire, and electrical safety risks, thereby fostering safer workplaces for all factory workers.** Our mission extends beyond compliance; we strive to instill a culture of safety within the industry.

Countries we are working in: \_\_\_\_\_



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# How We Are Making a Difference

## Comprehensive Program Approach

Creating sector-level transformation



Supported by public-private dialogue and other constructive partners, LABS creates in-country capacity and long-term local and national ownership.

## LABS Engagement Model

LABS employs a multifaceted approach to safety, encompassing assessments, remediation frameworks, training programs, and support mechanisms for workers.



**Robust framework for assessments and remediation:** Factories are assessed by Inspection Firms based on the LABS Methodology & Standards that provide insights into the safety issues in a factory and recommend actions to guide factories in systematic remediation of issues identified.



**Transparent platform for assessments:** An online platform gives access to assessment reports and helps brands trace remedial actions undertaken by factories.



**Comprehensive safety training for workers:** Through targeted training initiatives, we empower the factory's safety committee members (including management and workers) to identify potential hazards and implement effective safety management systems and work collaboratively in monitoring, and improving workplace safety.



**Factory graduation and continuous improvement:** A factory graduates from the program after successfully establishing a resilient safety-management system and fulfilling required LABS graduation criteria. This milestone signifies not only compliance but also commitment to continuous improvement and worker safety as per the LABS Standards.



**Policy engagement at national level:** LABS set up National Stakeholder Committees (NSCs) in each country of operation. 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 achieving a harmonized standard by adaptation and incorporation of LABS into legislative and policy framework.

## Empowering Workers and Ensuring Accountability

Central to LABS' mission is the empowerment of workers to voice their safety concerns. We provide accessible channels, such as toll-free helplines and chat platforms, through which workers can report issues directly to LABS.

Beyond immediate safety concerns, LABS promotes broader industry reforms that prioritize responsible sourcing, gender empowerment, and sustainability. By collaborating with global brands and retailers, we leverage collective influence to accelerate the adoption of safer working conditions throughout the supply chain. LABS holds both businesses (brands and retailers) and factories accountable, ensuring adherence to safety standards and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.



## Industry Collaboration for Safer Workplaces

At the heart of LABS' approach lies the power of collaboration. We bring together diverse stakeholders, including brands, retailers, public organizations, industry associations, governments, International Institutions (such as ILO's Better Work, Better Factories Program) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) organizations to facilitate sector-wide transformations.



**Brands and Retailers:** Facilitated by the LABS Secretariat, Brands and Retailers engage with local stakeholders such as Industry Associations, CSOs, Governments, and institutes to create better safety policies and provisions.



**Factories:** Factories are key partners in our efforts to create better working conditions for workers in ways that also support business efficiency.



**Government and CSOs:** We actively engage with organizations in operational countries, including Local and National Government Agencies, Industry Associations, International Institutions, and CSOs to advance safety policies within the industry and embed long-term local and national ownership.

## Our Evidence

**Promoting better work environment:** LABS focuses on improving working conditions through assessments aligned with International Safety Standards, promoting safer working conditions by mitigating preventable fire, electrical and structural safety risks. LABS' public data disclosure enhances business transparency and accountability.

**Remediation monitoring and transparent reporting:** LABS monitors assessments and remedial actions, which are performed by vetted experts. LABS shares factories' reports, assessments, training information, and corrective action plans (CAPs) on Fair Factories Clearinghouse (FFC) online platform with participating brands. Summaries of the assessment data are also shared with wider stakeholders on the LABS website.

**Comprehensive information source:** The website also provides detailed information about policies and procedures, tool kits, standards, and methodologies used to ensure comprehensive safety and compliance in the factories.

**Expanding our reach:** After successful initial program launches in India and Vietnam (2019), LABS expanded to Cambodia (2022) and Indonesia (2023). LABS is dedicated to scaling our program to new geographies as part of our strategic vision, targeting areas that need our interventions the most to create sector-level change.



## Case Studies

### Sun Jade Vietnam Footwear Ltd.

Sun Jade Vietnam Footwear Ltd. in Thanh Hoa City, with 9,400 workers, joined the LABS program on March 12, 2020. The assessment conducted in the factory found 33 safety issues, including high temperatures in electrical panels and inadequate fire-safety measures. The factory, with the LABS team, swiftly addressed severe issues and implemented monthly thermographic scans. Key remediation steps included relocating chemical storage, installing fire-rated separations, upgrading sprinklers, and establishing loading plans for the second floor, ensuring adherence to safety standards.



**Before remediation**  
In-process storage in production area without fire-rated separation



**After remediation**  
Fire-rated separation provided to separate storage and production area

### Matrix Clothing Pvt., Ltd.

Matrix Clothing Pvt., Ltd. in Gurgaon, India, with 830 workers, joined the LABS program on February 18, 2019. The assessment conducted in the factory found 58 safety issues, including electrical, fire, and structural hazards. Immediate actions and regular thermographic scans addressed severe issues. Remediations included installing lightning protection, fire compartmentation, and hydrant and sprinkler systems, enhancing exit doors, and illuminating fire exits, smoke detectors, and seismic bracings.



**Before remediation**

Sprinkler system not provided in storage area



**After remediation**

Sprinkler installed in storage area

## Governance Structure

The success of LABS is underpinned by a robust governance structure comprising various committees. The Steering Committee, Finance Committee, Technical Sub-Committee, Communications Sub-Committee, and LABS Secretariat work together to oversee program operations, ensure financial integrity, drive technical development, guide communication strategies, and provide administrative support.



## Ready to make a difference?

Brands and factories play a pivotal role in shaping the future of worker safety. By joining LABS Initiative, organizations demonstrate their dedication to responsible sourcing and contribute to a collective effort to create safer workplaces for all.

Join LABS Initiative to become a catalyst for change in the apparel, footwear, accessories and home-textile industry.

For inquiries and partnership opportunities, reach out to [info@labsinitiative.com](mailto:info@labsinitiative.com).