

**Submitting Country, Organization, Company**

ICS

**If Organization or Company, please indicate the approximate number of employees**

4

**Title of the action**

Transparency & Traceability Project

**Relevant Website**

<https://www.sustainabilitymap.org/network>

**Associated Partners**

ITC

**Type of initiative**

Private initiative

### Description of action

In 2021, ICS intensified its collaboration with the International Trade Center (ITC), a United Nations and World Trade Organization agency, on the Sustainability Map platform. This free and publicly available platform offers users access to wide-ranging information related to sustainability initiatives and standards, allowing businesses to deploy better sustainability practices in international trade and allows them to connect with business partners.

One of the modules of Sustainability Map is the Virtual Network. The purpose of the project is to put forward validated information (imported directly from the ICS database), through an inclusive process for the factories and suppliers, providing them access to the information and in that way empower them. Finally, it aims to build traceability allowing end consumers to access information on goods they buy and where and how they were produced.

The platform is FREE and fully opened to any stakeholder. The public disclosure follows a step-by-step approach involving the factories and their suppliers to accept this public communication.

- 1- In the context of a global pilot project, hundreds of factories have already been invited by the ICS Members to accept the communication of their Factory ID displaying information on their name and location and on the ICS audit they have undergone (audit date, type, and category) on the Sustainability Map public view.
- 2- In parallel, ICS Members are virtually building their sub-contracting tiers using either the list of sub-contractors as declared by the tier 1 or by adding internal data they have gathered. In their private network, ICS members can identify the factories they have invited as the ones who accepted the public communication (green points) and the pending responses to a public communication (red points). This pilot showed that the awareness about data transparency's mutual benefits must be enhanced further down the supply chains as there can be forms of reluctance from the factories themselves in lowest tiers, this confirms that a progressive and communicative approach is a success factor.
- 3- The communication is available for any stakeholder and up to now 321 factories linked to at least

one ICS member and possibly audited have joined the Sustainability Map public network hence publishing audit data. If needed, the factory can provide additional data as the ICS audit's Corrective Action Plan detailing observed non-compliances, recommended corrective actions, associated deadlines and factory's comments.

Being conscious of the scale of the project, it is encouraging to note on the Sustainability Map platform that factories are embarking on the transparency journey and our common project on a day-to-day basis.

The ICS report provides data on the audit date, type, category as reported in Sustainability Map <https://www.sustainabilitymap.org/network>.

The factories audited against the ICS standard are also directly provided with the CAP – Corrective Action Plan – and the SOC – Summary of Content. This process is detailed in the Handbook for Factories available on ICS external website: <https://ics-asso.org/resources/>.

The requirements detailed in the Handbook for Factories that are not listed in the Corrective Action Plan have resulted compliant during the audit.

4- The transparency and traceability collaborative project on Sustainability Map started as a pilot in 2019 and is now integrated in the ICS audit process by default since early 2021. The factories are required to declare their organization (manpower structure, buildings, subcontractors etc.) through an online Factory Profile in the ICS database and doing so are invited to accept the public communication of their data in Sustainability Map. This engages them in a cascade effect and enhances the collaboration between factories, their sub-contractors and their client members of ICS. The process is organized as below in the ICS internal database to accompany the factories and their suppliers' step by step:

The project is supported by the European Commission funding the ITC for developing the Sustainability Map but all costs linked to the ICS database are funded by the ICS Members.

**Type of action**

Traceability

Transparency

**Please select the specific area/s of the action**

Norms and standards

Research and Development of Innovative Solutions

Awareness and Education

Collaborative initiatives

Business management systems or instruments

## Scope of the action, including a description of the value chain processes that are covered

### Objective

Full transparency and traceability of the supply chain

### Commitments

As detailed above, ICS is fully committed to disclose the defined information about the audits performed in referenced factories for ICS Members. In addition to the above, ICS conducted a specific pilot project in November 2020 using Workers Reporting solutions to gather feedback on auditors' behavior. This pilot was organized in Turkey but will be redesigned and extended to all ICS audits in the coming months using specific tools supported by the ICS database.

### Value chain scope

As detailed above, the purpose of the project organized between ICS and ITC is to populate the Sustainability Map with verified data coming from the ICS Database. The ICS database is not public but is designed for ICS Members as well as for the factories, the suppliers and the audit firms to allow access to audits documents, Corrective Action Plans and related information according to each user's rights.

## Timeframe and/or milestones for the action

The project has started by a pilot since 2019 and is now extended step by step with the commitment of the ICS Members.

323 factories have already joined the project working with 10 brands Members of ICS.

## Reference instruments and sources used

<https://www.sustainabilitymap.org/network>

ICS Framework and Methodology <https://ics-asso.org/resources/>

## Expected benefits and impact for the stakeholders involved

Enhanced visibility of compliance with sustainability requirements by industry actors/partners along the entire value chain

Enhanced traceability of the social/environmental/ethical attributes of product(s)/materials along the value chain; for example, for origin, quality, sustainability performance, and compliance with health and safety requirements for consumers and workers

Enhanced environmental and socially responsible consumption and production, and circularity of the value chain, that may be relevant to and inspire other countries and industry actors/partners

Management of reputational risk for manufacturers, brands and retailers who are selling the products concerned

Improved working conditions for workers along the

value chain and, particularly, those who work for “suppliers to suppliers” in parts of the value chain that today are often “hidden”

## Key performance indicators for the action

ICS audit reports

Commitment of brands, suppliers and factories together.

Engaging with the tiers further down in the supply chain.

## Good practices

<https://www.sustainabilitymap.org/network>

<https://ics-asso.org/resources/>

## How has this UNECE-UN/CEFACT Call to Action contributed to strategic engagement and/or public awareness in support of your commitment?

The recommendations provided by the UNECE were followed to define the project.

## Link to relevant goal(s) and specific target(s) of the United Nations

